

Before You Throw it Out:

Reduce

Reducing means producing less waste in the first place so you don't need dispose of the waste or recycle it later on. When a new item is produced, natural resources must be taken from the earth, produced into the product and then transported to wherever it will be sold. As a result, reduction is one of the most effective ways you can save natural resources, protect the environment, and save money. The key to reducing is making wise decisions while at the store, at work, at home and at play.

- Buy products with the least amount of packaging.
- Rent or borrow instead of buying infrequently used items like party supplies, tools or furniture.
- Purchase quality items that will last many years instead of cheaper goods that will need to be replaced many times. An added bonus is that you will save money in the long run!
- Buy products that can be refilled or reused.

Examples:

Refillable water bottles or canteens instead of disposable plastic bottles

Reusable containers instead of plastic bags for packing lunches

Reusable dishes and cutlery instead of paper plates, plastic cups, and plastic cutlery

Reuse

Reusing is another effective way to save natural resources and the environment. Some ideas for reusing items:

- Buy used items. Many times you can purchase a product of higher quality for less money by buying used.
- Reuse product packaging containers for storage at home.
- Use the back sides of paper for making lists or for scrap paper.
- Use paper and other items for children's crafts before recycling them.

Sell or Donate

One man's trash is another man's treasure. Instead of throwing out unwanted household items, appliances or clothes, try selling or donating them. Not only will you be keeping usable items from ending up in a landfill, but you'll also help those in need or recoup money on past purchases. Tax benefits are available for many donations. Church groups, shelters, and stores like Goodwill, Savers and Salvation Army and the website www.freecycle.org take donations of many household items, clothes, furniture and appliances. Used items may be sold on websites like www.ebay.com, www.craigslist.org and www.etsy.com.