

Zero Waste Schools

Parent & Caregiver Guide



Introduction

This fall, **100** schools in Brooklyn & Manhattan will be **Zero Waste Schools**. This is a partnership between Dept of Sanitation (DSNY), Dept of Education (DOE), and GrowNYC's Recycling Champions Program (RCP). Zero Waste schools will be set up as models for recycling and organics collection with the goal to identify best practices for diverting waste from landfills that can be expanded citywide.

What is Zero Waste?

The majority of materials discarded by schools can be recycled or composted!

Most school waste is made up of classroom **paper and cardboard**, and **food scraps** from the cafeteria. Other common products include **metal items** like aluminum foil and cans, **rigid plastic** like yogurt containers and beverage bottles, and milk and juice **cartons**.

The **Zero Waste Schools Initiative** supports the ambitious goal of diverting all recyclable and compostable waste from New York City schools by 2030.

Why Zero Waste?

Environmental:

Recycling reduces our need to extract raw materials from the earth. Recycling also saves energy & reduces the amount of waste that is sent to landfills in barges, trains and trucks.

Economic:

NYC spends over \$300 million annually to dispose of its waste in landfills.¹ Recycling creates jobs – 10 jobs for every 10,000 tons of waste. Compare that to 1 job created in the landfill sector per 10,000 tons of waste.²

Social:

Recycling empowers individuals to be environmental stewards, creating a cleaner and healthier environment for the next generations

How will schools benefit?

Zero Waste Schools will receive free education and outreach programs from GrowNYC's RCP. From assemblies for students to professional development for faculty and staff, all levels of stakeholders will be empowered to recycle more and waste less.

Schools will also receive free uniform recycling bins and signage. Partners at DOE & DSNY will provide institutional support for improving recycling practices.

Zero Waste starts at home.

Recycling is a habit just like brushing your teeth or washing your hands. All it takes to succeed is time and practice. Establishing **Zero Waste** practices at home will help your child develop good habits that will be beneficial at school and beyond. The following activities can be used to kick start your own zero waste week at home.

¹ DSNY "2013 Annual Report", December 2013, page 35.

² EPA "Creating Green Jobs Through Recycling", February 2011, Newsletter, Web page.

Great! How can I help? You don't need to be a sustainability expert to build great recycling habits, but knowing the recycling rules helps!

<p>Visit DSNY's website for all of the recycling details. www.nyc.gov/dsny</p>	<p>Get set up. Establishing recycling bins at home is a great way to reinforce habits for the whole family.</p>	<p>Designate recycling bins. They don't need to be fancy, but they should be clearly labeled and stay in the same place every day. Order free labels for your bins from DSNY's website.</p>
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Pack a zero waste lunch.

The average American creates 4.4 lbs of waste daily.³ Pack items that can be recycled, composted, or reused. For details on packing a waste-free lunch, visit www.epa.gov/students/pack-waste-free-lunch

- 1 Choose** bulk items over single-serve. Bulk items are cheaper, can be packed in durable containers, and create less waste.
- 2 Try It!** Use durable lunch bags and reusable snack bags instead of disposable bags and plastic wrappers to pack your child's food. It saves money and creates less waste.
- 3** Didn't finish the lunch? **Compost it!** This is a great way to turn your leftover food scraps into a valuable fertilizer. Don't have a yard or curbside compost collection? Don't worry.



Bring leftover food scraps to one of our many food waste drop-off sites. To find a site near you, visit www.nyc.gov/organics

Don't forget about the other R's.

Rethink your waste. **Repair** and **reuse** what you can. Donate what you no longer need.

Visit one of New York City's many reuse organizations, like thrift stores, flea markets, or community swaps. GrowNYC hosts free swap events throughout the five boroughs. To find a location near you, visit www.grownyc.org/swap

Find places to donate, sell, buy, rent, and repair items at the NYC Stuff Exchange. Visit www.nyc.gov/stuffexchange for resources near you.

Contact: ZeroWasteSchools@schools.nyc.gov for more information about assistance and free education programming.

DOE Zero Waste Schools Initiative:
<http://schools.nyc.gov/community/facilities/sustainability/>

