

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Upcycling craft activities

Talking to children about recycling can develop their understanding of sustainability and looking after the planet. This week's activity offers a range of opportunities to re-use every day items to create activities for children to enjoy.

Learning aims

- Develop understanding of recycling
- Introduce new vocabulary
- Work cooperatively with others
- Talk about things that are familiar to them
- Mathematical language and concepts
- Physical development.



Resources

- Gather together a range of recyclable objects that you are going to use in the activities (wellies, snapped wax crayons, plastic bottles, straws etc.). Ask children to talk about how the items are used, e.g. wearing wellies in wet weather to keep our feet and clothes dry. Ask children to share what happens to the items when they are no longer needed, e.g. when our feet grow too big for the wellies or we finish the bottled drink
- Talk about how things can be re-used or re-purposed. Look for examples you may already have in your environment, e.g. large vehicle tyres or milk crates. Ask children if they have any experience of recycling at home or visiting a recycling centre with their parents or families
- Invite the children to take part in the upcycling activities below.

Activity outline

Crayon upcycle

Resources:

- Broken pieces of wax crayons
- Moulds
- Oven or microwave/oven gloves.

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Activity outline:

- Gather together all your small or broken wax crayons and discuss how the pieces can get so small they are difficult to use so they go into the bin and new ones are bought
- Remove any paper labels and break up the crayons asking children to create very small pieces, add the pieces into a mould (you can choose shapes, animals, number moulds etc. Ensure moulds are oven and/or microwave proof). Once filled, place the moulds into the oven (10-15 mins) or microwave (2 mins, checking every 30 seconds) until the crayons have melted. Leave to cool and set.
- Ensure adults handle the moulds when placing and removing moulds into the oven/microwave and keep children away from the melted crayons. Talk to children about the difference they can see from the small hard pieces of crayons to the newly melted mix of colours they can now see
- Once the moulds are cooled and set into a hard form, pop them out of the moulds and offer them to the children to use
- Discuss how you have saved throwing the small broken pieces into the bin and have now recycled them, which saves buying more resources.

Wellies upcycle

Resources:

- Old wellies/boots
- Soil
- Plants/vegetables
- Watering can.

Activity outline:

- Ask families or your local allotment society or garden centre for donations of plant cuttings, seeds, top soil or left over compost, vegetables to plant, etc.
- Prior to the activity drill some holes through the bottom of the wellies for drainage
- Line up the wellies and boots and discuss the different sizes, colours, patterns on the boots. Encourage children to choose a welly for planting
- Ask children to fill the welly with soil (about $\frac{3}{4}$ full) and to add either a plant or some seeds to their welly and then top up with soil and water well
- Find a space for your welly planters and encourage children to water regularly
- Discuss what other items might be useful as planters (teapots, old sinks etc.).

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Plastic bottle upcycling

Resources:

- Plastic bottles (ask for donations prior to the activity date)
- Sand and spade
- Funnel
- Small tennis/soft ball.

Activity outline:

- Talk to children about what they do with plastic bottles at home, once they are empty. Do they put them in recycling bins so they can be recycled? Discuss some of things they can be recycled into, e.g. drinks bottles and food trays, polyester fabric for clothing, refuse sacks and carrier bags, wheel arch liners and bumpers on cars, flower pots, seed trays, watering cans and water butts
- Explain that you are going to re-use your plastic bottles to make a bowling game that children can play
- Explain that the plastic bottles are going to be the bowling pins and stand them up to see how easy it is to knock them down (they fall over very easily). Feel how light the empty bottles are and ask children for ideas to stop them falling over so easily. Talk about adding a little bit of weight to the bottom to help them stand up and how using sand can provide that weight
- Experiment with the amounts of sand you add (you need just enough so they don't fall over on their own before a ball has been launched). Try throwing the ball at the bottles to see which amounts enable the 'pins' to be knocked down
- Once you have decided on the right amount of sand, set up your bowling game and encourage children to bowl the pins and see how many they can knock down.

Extension ideas

- Introduce recycling bins into your setting
- Plan activities and take part in Recycling Now Week.