

Less to Landfill Challenge feedback from schools

Overview

The Less to Landfill challenge is run by Wipe Out Waste, and the challenge is this: To reduce the material that a class sends to landfill each day to one mini wheelie bin (300ml) or less! It can be done. It may be one class or several which takes on this challenge.

Students and teachers provided the Wipe Out Waste team with some interesting and valuable feedback.

Ellen Conroy, Angle Vale Primary:

“Our school did quite well in the less to Landfill challenge over the six week period.

I had 10 classes interested and 7 of them completed the data sheet. It was great to see an improvement with the reduction in packaging being brought to school. In the first few weeks we noticed a lot less litter in the yard. Most classes began really well but energy and enthusiasm waned throughout the time. I think parents find it too easy to buy packaged food for recess and lunch. We informed parents through the newsletter and many children in my class, in particular, purchased great reusable containers. Some families found it too challenging to reorganise their buying and packaging. Fruity Friday has been a huge success all year and Waste less Wednesday began well and then faded out without constant reminders. Most classes used the information for graphing in Maths. I plan to keep up the good habits again next year.”

Simon Hutchinson, Brighton Primary School:

“The response after the show and audit has been more than i could have imagined. There is a real buzz now around the mini bin challenge and kids and teachers are really on board.

I walked past the cleaner on Tuesday and he was holding a tinny bag of rubbish and i asked him if that was it from the whole of area 3 and he smiled and said “yes”. So amazing!”

Joel Catchlove, Black Forest Primary School:

“We conducted an adapted Less to Landfill Challenge following the KESAB Bin Materials Audit we held. Some classes used the Audit as a context and explored it in maths especially, which provided a valuable context.

In future I think we could be more integrated with our participation in the Less to Landfill Challenge, as a number of kids didn't understand the value of the challenge and became frustrated with having a mini bin. In future I can see how we would broaden the program by tying it in more deeply with science (especially the Chemical Sciences strand for Year 4/5, which explores packaging, combined with some of the interesting work Teach Wild has produced on marine debris linked to the Australian Curriculum), and Maths (particularly measurement and representing data).”

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Sue Cox, Woodcroft Primary School:

“Summary of results:

- *20 classes responded to the challenge.*
- *Results were mixed – with some classes/teachers really getting behind the challenge.*
- *In hindsight perhaps we should have commenced the challenge a week before the Performance of “Wally and the Wipe Out Waste Wizard” to gauge greater impact.*
- *Straddling the challenge over a term break may also have impacted on the results*
- *We have made a start – and teachers are still commenting on the “Wally” performance.*
- *We have been successful in obtaining 7 Recycling bins and 3 Organic waste bins from our Council to assist with waste management. Compostable paper is now being composted and plastic lids and used glue sticks will now be recycled correctly. Many classroom teachers are insisting that food wrappers etc are taken home.*
- *Nude food days will be promoted from the beginning of 2014.*
- *Ongoing education will be a priority from the beginning of next year. All classrooms will be expected to have a waste management space in their classrooms to encourage children to make choices where their waste goes. These will consist of:*
 - *Reuse container for scrap coloured paper, cardboard, newspaper etc*
 - *Recycling bin for white paper (used on both sides) – to be collected by our paper contractor*
 - *Small red landfill bin*
 - *Organic Lidded) bin – foodscraps*
 - *Compostable paper bin*
 - *Lid/used glue stick container*
 - *Battery collection container.”*

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Jayne Reilly, Victor Harbor R-7 School:

“My year 4 class participated in the challenge during term 3 and were so impressed with our results that we continued this term as well. We began recording our results, but with interruptions to our days we weren't always successful in recording every day. Initially the children didn't think that we could get down to one small wheelie bin, and neither did our cleaner. However we spoke a lot about sorting our waste and a guest speaker from Fleurieu Waste came to speak to us about recycling and what could be put in our different bins at home. This fitted in nicely with our Materials unit as a part of the Year 4 science curriculum. We developed different classroom bins which we labelled - recycling, paper and cardboard, compost, chook scraps, 10c recycling and our small landfill wheelie bin. It was great to see the kids think about every piece of waste and where it should go, as well as referring to unusable waste as "landfill". We had a focus on reducing rubbish in our lunch boxes and participated in the Nude Food Day during Week 1 of this term. I wrote an article in our weekly bulletin that is read by all staff, and several teachers asked students from our class to speak to their classes about our new bin system. We shared our bin labels with them so that they could take on our ideas. My students also spoke at assembly to spread our message about recycling and wiping out waste. It has been easy to continue using our different bins and I will continue this with my new class in 2014. The children have carried the recycling message home, through talk with their families and newsletter articles. Lunch box litter continues to be a constant battle though, however many new lunch boxes, with different compartments, have been purchased and I am seeing less ziplock bags. I have used resources from your website, including your video clips about recycling. It has been a great learning opportunity and the kids really got on board.”

Diem Savy, St Patricks Mansfield Park

How did you find the challenge?

“Kids loved it and it was a great way to introduce good waste management practices to the children.”

Did recycling or composting increase?

“Recycling and composting increased. Port Adelaide Enfield Council provided us with extra green and yellow bins. We had 3 yellow bins which was inadequate, had 6 more delivered and still struggle to fit all our recyclable material in the 9 bins we now have. Students were also using Freddy (caddy) in their classrooms and once we had green bins in the yard, they started using that too.”

Did you notice a change in behavior with your students towards materials being sent to landfill or recycling?

“Absolutely. Students were stopping to ask questions about what goes where. Children were also beginning to engage with our Nude Food Tuesdays. There is still more work to be done though to make these practices a part of the norm.”