



Packaging And Ways That It Can Be Reduced*

Activity P./E.dd

GRADE LEVEL: K-6

OBJECTIVE: To help make children conscious of packaging and ways that it can be reduced.

VOCABULARY: ecological packaging, green product

MATERIALS: Construct a visual aid in the form of a bulletin board or display using packages and pictures of packaging brought from home by teachers and children. Actual packages work best, but carefully chosen pictures are also valuable. The bulletin board display can evolve into comparison of “good” and “bad” packaging. The board can be broken down into three categories:

1. Nature’s packaging: coconut, bananas, peanuts, etc.
2. Older types of packaging: paper bags, pottery, returnable bottles.
3. Modern packaging: plastic wrap, plastic foam, plastic-coated milk and juice containers, and individually wrapped packets.

PROCEDURE:

Ask the following questions:

- What are these packages made of?
- What natural resources were used to make them?
- Which packages can be reused?

Ask children to consider what materials might need elaborate packaging and why (for example, aspirin capsules need to be sealed for health reasons). Point out the ways in which packaging can prevent waste by reducing spoilage and providing individual servings. Ask if some packages use excessive materials, and thus contribute to the waste problem (for example, packages of gum in which each piece is individually wrapped in two wrappers).

- How would you design an ecological package (one that requires as little energy and as few resources as possible for its production or disposal)?

Tell children that another name for a product that uses ecological packaging and does not harm the environment is a green product. You might ask children to take a trip to the supermarket or drugstore and look for the most ecological and the most wasteful packaging.

Remind children that cutting down on product packaging and reusing packaging materials are important aspects of source reduction. Tell children that they can encourage their households to buy products with less packaging and to bring containers from home when they shop. You might have them prepare a list of source reduction “shopping tips,” individually or as a class.

* Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Let’s Reduce and Recycle: Curriculum for Solid Waste Awareness