



TEACHER GUIDE

REDUCING OUR IMPACT ON EARTH GRADES K-2

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

- **Children may think that everything can be recycled.**
It is difficult to set rules on what can and cannot be recycled since common items can be made out of different materials. In general, you can recycle all bottles, cans and paper. Beyond that you should look for the recycling symbol as an indicator.
- **Children may think that we have an unlimited supply of usable water.**
Children see water everywhere and have access to water through plumbing in their homes. This may lead them to believe that there is plenty of clean water available. In reality, only a tiny percentage of water on Earth (less than 1%) is usable by humans. The rest is in the oceans and glaciers.
- **Children may think that trash disappears when they throw it away.**
Children rarely have the opportunity to see what happens to their trash once it's thrown away. They may forget that it all has to go somewhere. Teaching students about landfills, and how the trash we produce is handled will help them make a connection to the importance of reducing our impact on the environment.

THE THREE R'S

Teaching students to reduce, reuse and recycle empowers them to be proactive. To go beyond the classroom, encourage students to teach others what can be recycled and the importance of recycling.

REDUCING OUR NEGATIVE IMPACT

Young children take problems to heart, so be sure to emphasize the positive impact that each person can make rather than focusing only on the negatives. Once there is awareness, they can try to develop solutions that will reduce the impact of humans on the land, water and air.

TIPS FOR TEACHERS

You can provide hands-on sorting materials for students to analyze, discuss and categorize to help them understand what is recyclable and what is not. Be sure to point out the recycling symbol on things like cans and bottles. You can also look around the classroom at different items and check if they have a recycling symbol.

