

Be Smart - Buy Right

OBJECTIVE: Children will learn how their purchasing habits can reduce their waste.

MATERIALS: HANDOUT: **Supermarket Survey** (B41)

VOCABULARY: reduction, environmentally friendly, consumers

BACKGROUND:

Reduction is simply a matter of choice. By purchasing products that are "environmentally friendly" the amount of waste an individual generates can be significantly reduced.

The elementary school children of today may not spend vast amounts of money but they will soon become tomorrow's adult consumers. Today's students will be future car and home owners. They will be buying groceries and other necessities. If children can be taught to think before they buy, hopefully they will grow to become "Earth friendly" adults.

PROCEDURE:

1. This activity can be conducted either as a field trip or an independent homework assignment. If a field trip is to be conducted, you should contact the manager of a grocery store to arrange permission for the class visit.
2. Begin the activity by asking the children to raise their hands if they have been to a supermarket or grocery store. Ask them to name some of the things they saw (i.e. meat, fruits, vegetables, cookies, laundry soap, cases of pop, etc.).
3. Write 12 of the items the children have suggested on the chalkboard. Have the class copy this list onto the HANDOUT: **Supermarket Survey** (B41), in the ITEM column.
4. Explain to the class how some products in a supermarket are overpackaged. Most packaging becomes waste. Overpackaging can be avoided by purchasing the packaged item in bulk (i.e. cheese slices can be replaced by a block of cheese) or by choosing a brand that has the least amount of packaging. Mention to the students that other products can be replaced. Vinegar and water make an excellent all purpose cleaner. This solution can replace glass cleaner, tub and tile cleaner, etc. around the home.

Be Smart - Buy Right (cont.)

PROCEDURE (cont.)

5. Tell the children they are going to visit a grocery store to complete the rest of the Handout. For each of the 12 items in the first column, the student finds a brand name (i.e. laundry soap could be Tide or Clorox) what it is packaged in and whether or not it is environmentally friendly. Finally, the children decide on alternatives to each product. In the ALTERNATIVES column, students should write whether each item could be replaced or bought in bulk. If neither of these are suitable the student can suggest a brand that has less packaging.

EXTENSION:

1. Total the cost of the twelve items and their alternatives, calculate the difference in order to find the actual cost saving for being Earth friendly.
2. Collect the packaging from the brand name items and their alternatives and compare.
3. Write to the manufacturers suggesting simpler methods of packaging their products.

EVALUATION:

1. Has the activity affected the children's buying habits?
2. How easy is it to avoid excessive packaging?
3. Where could a person shop to avoid unnecessary packaging? (Grow your own foodstuffs, shop at bulk food stores, etc.)