

Toronto, ON, October 24, 2013

## Can School Supplies Teach Our Children about Sustainability?



Toronto, ON – October 24, 2013 - Adults and kids who are concerned about the environment often focus on the “stuff” they use, making efforts to waste less, recycle more, and purchase products made with recycled plastics and other materials. But what happens when our kids head off to school? What can parents and kids do to contribute to sustainability during the school day?

Many of the same things! More and more school supplies today are made with recycled plastics—so kids can help the environment during the school day, and parents can feel good about their purchases. For example ...

Every kid wants a cool backpack for the school year, and parents want to make sure it will stand up to months—or hopefully years—of heavy lifting. And dropping. And dragging. Some companies now make tough, durable backpacks using fabrics made with recycled plastics. The fabrics typically begin as water and soft drink bottles that are melted down, stretched into a fine thread, and woven. These backpacks help divert plastic bottles from landfills, and they’re available in all sorts of sizes, colours, and patterns to suit your child’s style.

Anyone who shops for school supplies is confronted with a seemingly infinite selection of pens and pencils. You can steer your kids toward sustainable options by looking for those made with recycled plastics. Some contain plastics from unlikely sources, such as used compact discs, car headlights—even cell phones—so they’re durable, long lasting, and sustainable. Now if the kids would just remember to bring them to class!

Reusable lunch bags and resealable containers help reduce waste all school year, and now you can find them made with recycled plastics. Several of these durable bags also have

insulating properties to help keep food fresher until lunchtime, and the plastic cloth is easy to wipe clean. Reusable, resealable containers help protect your child's food, and many are built to last for years—and many can then be recycled again.

Many schools ask students to bring art supplies to class. A shopping excursion is a great opportunity to look for arts and crafts supplies made with recycled plastics—rulers and scissors, for example—at many major retailers. And some major art supplies companies now sell products, such as markers and crayon sharpeners, with recycled plastic content.

If you're the parent of a student who will be tackling complicated math problems, you'll want to invest in a reliable calculator—and several recycled-plastic models now are available. And there are reusable mechanical pencils made with recycled plastics for those long (and fun!) nights of math homework.

Kids are showered with messages to do more and to buy more every school year. School supply shopping—throughout the year—can be a great time to talk with your kids about how recycling can help the environment by using less material and energy and requiring less landfilling. And how recycled products can help you and your student do more ... with less.

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