

Ben Franklin Waste-free Lunch Program

In one day, Ben Franklin produces approximately 26 pounds of food waste. Over the entire school year, this amounts to 4160 pounds! While many families have taken steps to become more environmentally focused, only 11.5 pounds of our daily lunchroom is recyclable.

What are Waste Free Wednesdays?

Ben Franklin is launching a waste-free lunch program in an effort to dramatically reduce waste generated by our student lunches. In addition to the benefit for the environment, we are also aiming to educate our kids on the importance of taking care of our planet by reducing, reusing and recycling. While the families of our students need to be informed to support our efforts, we hope to educate and excite the kids to make this happen! As we begin this program, we welcome your thoughts, ideas and participation.

The waste-free lunch program will begin on January 14, 2009 and continue through the remainder of the year. On Wednesdays ONLY, all students are required to bring a waste-free lunch.

We are hoping this will lead to waste-free everyday, but one step at a time.

What is a Waste-free lunch?

A waste-free lunch is one where the lunch preparer uses as few products as possible that ultimately make their way into the landfill. Waste-free lunch programs favor the use of reusable food containers, drink containers, utensils, and napkins. They discourage the use of disposable packaging, such as prepackaged foods, plastic bags, juice boxes and pouches, paper napkins, and disposable utensils.

As part of the waste-free lunch program, any and all lunch items will be returned home in the lunchbox each day, with the exception of recyclable items listed below. This includes all food that has not been eaten.

Items recycled in Ben Franklin lunch room:

- Milk cartons
- Juice cans/box cartons – only juice box cartons marked with one of the numbers below (no foil pouches)
- Recyclable items #: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 (not 6)

Tips for packing a waste-free lunch

Talk to your kids about the importance of reducing waste by eating what is packed for them. Start fresh by engaging the kids in food shopping and/or food selection. Try having the kids participate in packing a lunch that they will eat. Being an active participant will help our kids support the process, along with parents.

Some tips:

- ☑ Buy chips, raisins, cookies, crackers, applesauce and yogurt in larger quantities and pack in reusable containers
- ☑ Buy juice in bulk and bring to school in reusable plastic water or juice bottles
- ☑ Pack reusable cloth napkins
- ☑ Use reusable food and drink containers, including previously used margarine or large yogurt containers
- ☑ Pack lunches in canvas or nylon lunch sacks, plastic or metal lunch boxes
- ☑ Save leftovers for worm bins or composting bins

A Typical American Lunch <i>DISPOSABLE</i>	A Waste-Free Lunch* <i>REUSABLE</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sandwiches sealed in plastic bags • fruits and vegetables in plastic bags • prepackaged chips, cookies, fruit bars, granola bars, cheeses, and fruit leathers • prepackaged yogurt, applesauce, and pudding • crackers, pretzels, chips, and other snack foods sealed in plastic bags • disposable juice boxes, juice pouches, soda cans, water bottles, and milk cartons • plastic forks and spoons • paper napkins • disposable paper and plastic bags 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sandwiches and other main dishes, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, and treats in a reusable lunch container • cloth napkins • stainless-steel / reusable forks and spoons • reusable drink containers • reusable lunchboxes <p>*With this type of lunch, lunch food items can be bought in larger quantities. The packaging can be left at home for reuse or recycling. Waste-free lunches are not only a wise environmental choice, but they are less expensive as well.</p>

Questions? Contact a Ben Franklin Green Team member

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