

Loatree Presents: New Shoes...Smaller Footprint
Ways To Green Your Way Into A New School Year
"No Waste Lunch Box"
August 27, 2007

With the last days of summer simmering down, and the excitement and anticipation of the new school year beginning - getting back to early bedtimes, setting alarm clocks, and of course making lunches. I was inspired to write about ways to "green" your child's lunch in order to decrease the size of their environmental impact on our Earth - by just making a few small changes. Though these changes your children will learn responsibility by having to remember to bring their reusable containers home, and they will become a model of change for their classmates!

The goal of the year is to have a "no waste lunch box" and there are a few simple steps to making this happen.

- **Reusable Lunch Box** - compost the idea of having a brown paper bag and Ziplocs for every item, and invite the idea of using alternative reusable containers for your child's lunch.

The LapTop Lunch Bento Box was created by 2 eco-conscious moms to create low waste lunches. It is made of lead free plastic and comes with single serve reusable containers, utensils and water/juice bottle. It can be found on line at ranging in price from \$23.00 to \$33.00 at:

www.laptoplunches.com

www.greenfeet.com

www.reusablebags.com

- **Cloth Napkins and Reusable Utensils**- the BEST place to find fun and cheap cloth napkins and utensils is at the thrift store. By promoting cloth napkins and reusable utensils, your children will be setting an example for others and cutting down on their environmental footprint. There is a bamboo utensil kit that comes with a bamboo fork, spoon and knife in a napkin, that is a great way for your kids to reuse (www.reusablebags.com).

- **Reusable Containers** - Ziploc bags are easy to use, but there are SO many reusable alternatives. www.reusablebags.com has a variety of lunch box alternatives and they sell a "wrap-n-mat" which is a reusable sandwich wrap that folds out to be a placemat, and it can be used over and over again! They can be found at www.reusablebags.com for a set of 3 for \$18.00.

Also, reuse yogurt and hummus containers, and have our friends and family members without kids saving their containers for you! It is a great way to reuse and to get them to think about where their containers are going!

- **Prepackaged Foods** - Try to steer clear of prepackaged foods (juices, plastic water bottles, individually packed snacks) and try buying in bulk and reusing containers to pack your children's lunches! The farmers market, Lazy Acres, Lassens and the Isla Vista Co-op all have wonderful bulk sections for fabulous snacks for lunches!

- **School Lunches** - If your child gets school lunch there are a few things you can do to cut

down on the waste. Have your child bring their lap top lunch box with them to the lunch line so they don't take a disposable tray, plastic utensils wrapped in plastic and a paper napkin. They can bring their own container up to the line and use their own utensils and cloth napkin for lunch! A fantastic way to show they care, and believe me they will be the talk of the school in only the most positive way! Even just providing them with their own utensil kit will cut on their footprint!

The Challenge

Sit your children down before the year starts and offer them up a challenge for the year! Talk to them about why together you are making these changes to their lunches, and that it is going to be their responsibility to bring home their containers and their napkins. Have them observe what others are using and to take notice in the trash how much waste is being accumulated everyday by the things we use. Have them look around their schools and take notice of the trash around their classrooms and playgrounds. Make it a point to spend 5 minutes afterschool going around picking up trash and recycling - it is a wonderful opportunity to work together with your children and to talk about their day while making a positive change! They are going to be a model of sustainability and through your efforts, together; you can be the change we want to see in the world!

Our two girls were offered up the challenge last school year, and we are still using the SAME containers that we started last year with! They have never had a lunch bag before and for their efforts in meeting their challenge they asked for a new lunch box this year. So this year they were able to choose a new lunch bag off of www.reusablebags.com for their efforts in being the change.

Resources:

www.reusablebags.com

www.greenfeet.com

www.laptoplunches.com

Happy Lunching!

The Loatree Community
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www.loatree.com
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