

Parents should pack litter-free lunches

By MARILYN COXE

Many students had activities around Earth Day to better prepare students to take care of our planet. The students in one local elementary school were encouraged to bring "litter-free lunches." One day the classes weighed the litter that was left after they had eaten their lunches to see which class had the least garbage to throw out. Now that we are more enlightened about the environment it is exciting to see the directions our children are taking.

Although "litter-free lunches" is now a new buzz word, it is an ideal that I have worked toward for many years. Sometimes, I found more success than other times, depending on the ages of my children and the peer pressure (sometimes real, sometimes imagined) which surrounded them. As a former teacher, I remember noticing the frequency of replaced plastic lunch boxes. They just did not stand up to use by students.

So when my oldest daughter started school, I found a lunch kit sold by Tupperware which she used from Kindergarten to Grade 6. We still use it to store ice cream (it exactly holds a 2 litre carton of ice



cream). There are many reusable plastic containers on the market for sandwiches and other lunch foods. Margarine and yogurt containers can be used for some foods. The one litre milk bags are easily washed and reused for sandwich bags.

For drinks, we have relied on the Tupperware tumblers with seals. In the evening, we fill a tumbler about one third full and place it in the freezer. Then in the morning we fill the tumbler almost to the top with juice and put the seal back on. By lunch time the frozen juice has pretty well melted but the drink is still refreshingly cold. To make it leak-proof, be sure to "burp" it. (To the uninitiated, that means to let the air out from under the lid.) Again, at one point, she decided that she no longer wanted to use a plastic tumbler. I,

however, didn't want to use a disposable container nor did I want the expense of buying an individual drink each day. So I bought a few of the Everfresh juices in glass bottles with a screw on cap. We wash them in the dishwasher and fill them with juice each day. My concerns with broken bottles have not materialized.


In the two years she has been using them, we have not had a single broken bottle. The school bags with pockets on the outside seem well suited to carrying drinks this way.

children would throw in the garbage. When my children started school, I asked them to bring home what they couldn't eat at school. They we could compost it or give it to the dog or they might be hungry and eat it as an after-school snack. This way, I also knew how much they were eating and could more accurately pack a suitable sized lunch for their needs.

Also as a teacher, I didn't like to see the amount of food that the

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