

My Way to School

Objectives

The goal for this activity will be to focus on the behavior of littering, not the littered items. The educator should emphasize that what is littered helps to identify who is littering.

The student will be able to:

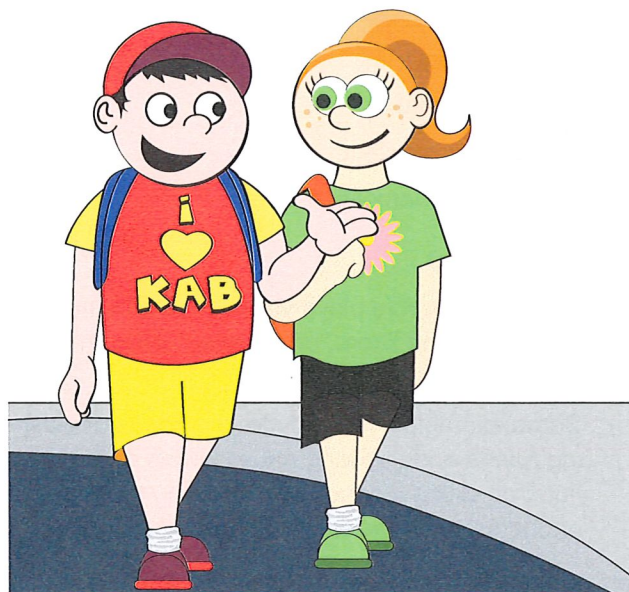
- understand the attitudes that formulate people's thinking about handling litter, and
- identify the seven sources of litter.

Method

Students will go on a walk and put into action picking up litter.

Materials

- Tissue paper, paper towels, and food wrappers (littering items for role playing)
- Large chart paper sectioned off in graph form with pictures of: feet, bicycle, car, school bus, childcare bus, and other modes of getting to school each day
- Small-sized photocopied pictures of students (2" x 2") – the small size often received with photo school packages or use name tags
- Litter bags
- Plastic gloves
- 7 medium-sized boxes (copy paper boxes)
- Labels with the following:
 - Household refuse, commercial refuse, construction/demolition sites, uncovered vehicles, loading docks, motorists, and pedestrians
 - Each label should be largely printed on different colored construction paper for students to see. For example, household refuse = green, commercial refuse = yellow, etc. (The educator might also want to



provide a simple picture next to each label to help young children “read” the labels).

- Paper and crayons or markers for each student.
- Digital camera for capturing litter walk experiences

Time

1 hour

Vocabulary

- refuse
- biodegrade
- litter
- attitudes
- behaviors

Background

Developed as a result of three years of research, The Keep America Beautiful, Inc. System is a behavioral-based, systematic approach to changing attitudes and practices related to proper solid waste handling.

The research identified three attitudes that rule our thinking about litter. It found that the three main reasons why people feel it is acceptable to litter are: They feel...

1. no sense of ownership of the property;

2. someone else will clean up after them;
3. trash has already accumulated.

The sources of litter that Keep America Beautiful identified are:

- motorists
- pedestrians
- uncovered vehicles
- loading docks
- household refuse
- commercial refuse
- construction/demolition sites

Procedure

1. The educator role plays various tasks in the classroom and litters “on purpose” while the students watch.

Some examples can include: the educator washing hands and throwing paper towels on the floor, or eating a snack and throwing the wrapper on the floor/out the window while “driving.”

2. Ask the students the following question(s):












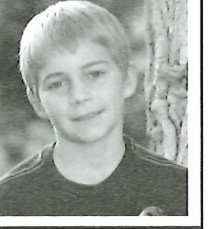
Why do you think people litter? At school?
In our neighborhood?

- Discuss and record their answers on the smart board, chalkboard, overhead, or on a chart tablet.
- Look at the list generated to see if their reasons can be grouped into different categories.

Educators may receive answers coming from the home experiences, which may include seeing family members or adults littering on a daily basis or putting trash in appropriate places.

3. The educator asks the students how they get to school from home. Some responses may include:
 - Walking
 - Car
 - Bicycle
 - School Bus
 - Childcare Bus
 - Other methods
4. Graph their responses on chart paper with pictures of feet, car, bicycle, or other methods of transportation going horizontally across the paper. The students can paste their 2 x 2 photocopied pictures under the appropriate picture of how they get to school each day.
5. At a glance, the class can visually see how each student comes to school each day. The totals can be tallied at the end of the chart. (See example below).
6. Ask each student what they see on their way to school. Some answers may include: houses, stores, buildings, park, etc.
7. Give each student paper and crayon or markers. Have them draw a “map” of what they see each day on their way to school, including any litter seen. (This activity can be done in small groups so the educator can meet with each student to discuss the drawings).

Many Different Ways We Get to School

					
					
4	2	5	3	2	1

8. Ask the students if they ever see any litter on their way to school in the: streets, parking lots, and parks? If so, discuss what type of litter is seen. Ask who do they think is doing the littering?
9. Explain to students that they will take a "litter walk" around the school. The focus of this walk will be to center on the behavior of littering, not the littered items found. The litter collected will be inspected to help identify who is littering.
10. Take digital pictures of each litter walk so students can remember their experiences. (These pictures can also generate questions and interesting discussions).
11. During the litter walk, put all found litter in litter bags. The students can help the educator locate litter around the school. For health and safety reasons, the educator may want to be the only designated "litter picker." For this activity, gloves should also be worn and/or introduce a litter tool – the device that looks like a stick with a claw – and explain that it can be used to pick up litter without actually touching it.
12. Once the litter walk has been conducted, all litter bags should be brought back to the classroom for refuse identification into the labeled boxes with color coded labels: household refuse, commercial refuse, construction/demolition sites, uncovered vehicles, loading docks, motorists, and pedestrians. The different colored labels and pictures will help the students identify the possible sources.

A prize or recognition could be given everyone or to the individual or team who identified the most litter.

Suggested prize: badge stickers that say "Litter Picker of the Day."

13. For two additional days at varying times, have the students take their litter walk. By varying the time of the litter walk, they may find different types of litter. Also, varying the time for each litter walk can be incorporated after the class has been outside for lunch or recess.
14. Have the students discuss their findings. They can identify and label the litter found for each litter walk. If the area is clean, have students discuss why it is clean. For example, there are trash cans in the area. The area was recently cleaned or adopted by a group to maintain, or students took responsibility.
15. After the sorting of found litter into the boxes, discuss the three reasons why people feel it is

acceptable to litter. Ask how they think they can change their thinking.

Assessment

Remind the students of their litter walk(s). Lead a discussion using the following questions as a springboard? Use Litter Prevention Sheet.

- Did you notice any patterns? How did you know?
- What places did the class identify as major locations for littering?
- Why do you think people litter there, or where was litter generated?
- Where are some of the places that are not littered? Why or why not?
- Will cleaning up litter after it's been thrown on the ground really solve the littering problem? Why or why not?
- How can student educate family and friends about litter prevention?
- What are some things we could do as a class to prevent littering from occurring in our community?
- What are the sources of litter identified?
- What are three reasons why people think it is acceptable to litter?
- How can those feelings be changed?

Technology Connections

- Take pictures during the litter walks.
- Print out school maps for the groups of students.

Enrichment

Divide the class into three groups. Have the students work together to create three large posters showing the three different reasons why people feel it is acceptable to litter:

1. no sense of ownership of the property;
2. someone else will clean up after them; and
3. trash has already accumulated.

The educator can help with the planning and writing captions for each poster.

