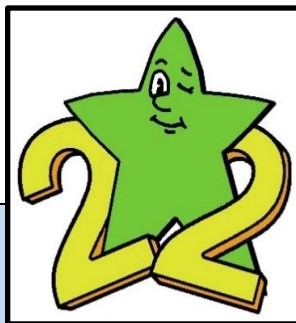


Carton/Drink Container Recycling Campaign



Snapshot

This campaign and prize drawing (conducted with multiple schools or grade-levels within a school) can have a significant effect on the volume of drink containers recycled in the cafeteria and throughout the school building.

Objective: Students will learn which drink containers are recyclable and help their grade-level or school increase the volume of containers diverted from the landfill.

Age Groups: K-12th grade

Setting: School building

Project Duration:

- Preparation and campaign: 2 weeks
- Collections: ongoing

Materials:

- Recycling bins
- Posters
- Handouts
- Drink containers (milk/juice cartons, juice box, aluminum can, steel can, plastic bottle, juice pouch)
- Plastic straws from cartons and juice pouches
- Prizes

Why This Project Matters:

The most commonly recycled materials in schools are paper and cardboard. Milk and juice cartons (which are composed mostly of paper fibers) are the most prevalent drink containers in school lunches. To increase the environmental benefits of a school's existing recycling program, adding drink container recycling in the cafeteria and/or classrooms is an important expansion. It greatly increases the variety of materials diverted from the landfill and the types of natural resources saved.

Project Summary:

Through posters, announcements, family letters, and bin distribution, this campaign and prize drawing promotes carton and drink container recycling at school and at home. For significant diversion, cartons are targeted in communities that recycle this packaging. Other drink containers, made of aluminum, steel, and plastic, are usually commingled together with cartons for collection.



Implementation:

This recycling campaign can be conducted as a district-wide project where individual schools participate, or as a school-wide project where individual grade-levels participate. Either way, the project incentivizes schools to fully implement drink container recycling by providing infrastructure (collection bins) where needed, educational messages (posters, announcements, letters), and a motivational prize drawing.

Many schools in the U.S. provide Breakfast in the Classroom programs, which generate more drink containers (usually cartons) in the classroom than schools without the program. Emphasize drink container collections in classrooms if a Breakfast in the Classroom program is in place.

Ways to involve a student group:

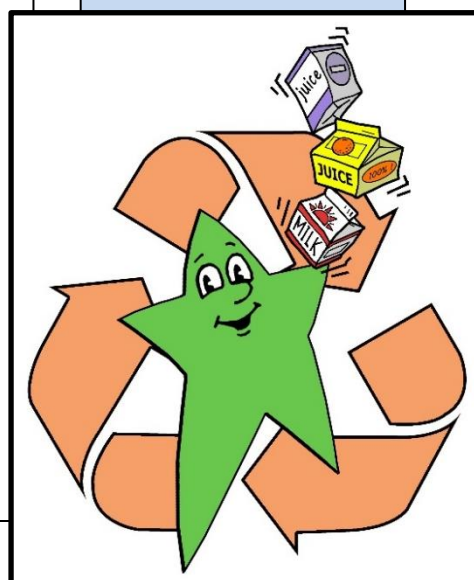
A student sponsor group can help promote the campaign within an individual school, whether the contest is being conducted between several schools or between grade-levels in one school. Find a student group that is interested, such as student council, eco-club, a science class, or a leadership group.

Project tasks:

1. At the district level, survey all school head custodians to determine current participation in drink container recycling and if they need additional bins to enhance collections. For a grade-level contest, determine which classrooms and other areas of the school already collect these materials and which need bins. Ideally, collection bins will be placed in classrooms (5 gal.), kitchens (11-20 gal.), staff lounges (11-20 gal.), cafeterias (32 gal.), and school hallways with vending machines (20-32 gal.).
2. Acquire funds or donations to provide the needed containers and prizes for the contest. Determine the prizes based on what will motivate the schools or grade-levels to participate (\$200-\$500 cash prizes for winning schools; pizza party, principal recognition, or \$50-\$100 for classroom supplies for winning grade-levels).
3. Distribute a promotional flyer (see sample below) to all schools in the district or all grade-levels in the school.
4. Once all schools/grade-levels have registered, provide them with a prize-drawing checklist (see sample below) and a container-order form. Order the containers and classroom/cafeteria posters needed for all participants.
5. Meet with participating custodians to discuss the specifics of bin placement and emptying procedures. Provide hall, kitchen, cafeteria, and staff lounge recycling bins for distribution, cafeteria poster, and Carton Council's *Carton Recycling in Schools Best Practices Guide* (see below).
6. Provide a family letter and student activity sheets (see below) to each participating school's office manager for distribution to families the week before the contest begins. Include a link to your local recycling center's guidelines. This will encourage more home recycling.
7. Provide PA system announcements (see sample below) to each school's office manager or grade-level coordinators to be read during the contest.
8. If working with a student group, schedule and facilitate 30-60-minute meeting(s) to cover the following:
 - Inform and motivate students by sharing why this campaign matters using the meeting-presentation outline (see sample below).

Extensions:

- Have students write an essay or paragraph describing their experiences when promoting recycling at home, to their friends, or to a scout or other youth group.
- Find more information at Carton Council's website:
<https://www.cartonopportunities.org/schools>



- Explain that the students are critical to promoting the campaign to their school community. Supply them with the prize-drawing checklist, PA system announcements, and sample posters (see below).
 - Create a timeline to accomplish promotional tasks.
9. For a district-wide or school-wide campaign, coordinate with each school's administration to provide a 15-minute training at an upcoming faculty meeting. Show examples of recyclable and non-recyclable drink containers, the new classroom bins, and classroom-sized posters. Explain the prize drawing (see meeting-presentation outline sample below). Teachers may take their classroom bins and posters when exiting the meeting, or the student group members may distribute them later. Emphasize the importance of distributing the containers and posters, sending out the family letter (with activity sheets attached), and reading the announcements to enable the school to qualify for the prize drawing. (A student group can help with these tasks.)
 10. Once each school or grade level has completed the required tasks, have them turn in their checklist as their prize drawing entry. Randomly draw and award the prizes. Announce the winners through school newsletters and social media.
 11. Check in for the first several weeks with the administration, custodial staff, and teachers to make sure the ongoing collection system is working. Offer additional support as needed.

Assessment:

Track the number of participants who are recycling cartons and other drink containers by surveying students in the lunchroom and classrooms. Interview custodial staff about changes they see in student and staff behavior, and if they can provide data for the volume of drink containers now being recycled.

Related Activities:

Waste-Free Lunch 1: Classroom Challenge – Chapter 2
 Waste-Free Lunch 2: School Contest – Chapter 2
 Refillable Water Bottle Project – Chapter 3
 Schoolwide Recycling Collection – Chapter 18

Note: When using the following documents to create your own, **green text refers to the district-wide version** of this project, while **blue text refers to the grade-level version**.



Sample Promotional Flyer for Campaign:



Boost Recycling of Drink Containers for a Chance to Win (Prize) for your School/Grade!

(Sponsor) is partnering with your **district/school** to save natural resources by increasing drink container recycling at home and at school.

The prize drawing is simple, with a 1-in-___ chance to win!!

Register by (insert date here)!

Call or email (insert contact information here) to register today!

Program Requirements:

Once registered, complete these simple steps to qualify for the prize drawing:

- Identify areas in your **school/grade-level** that need additional drink container recycling bins.
- Order and place additional drink container recycling bins in desired locations.
- Send a letter home to families that promotes container recycling (provided).
- Display posters in the cafeteria and classrooms (provided).
- Read three announcements reminding students and staff to recycle containers (provided).
- Schedule a 15-minute recycling refresher presentation **as part of an upcoming faculty meeting/for your class.**

***That's it! When these tasks are completed, your school/class
will be entered into the prize drawing!***

Sample Faculty/Grade-Level or Student Group
Meeting-Presentation Outline:

Drink Container Recycling Prize Drawing

Materials:

- Carton and drink container recycling props
- Collection containers for cafeteria, classroom, etc.
- Posters for cafeteria and classrooms
- Prize drawing checklist

I. Your school/grade-level is participating in our drink container recycling promotion and prize drawing!

- A. I'm here today to talk about the prize drawing and to tell you about important/new materials that can be recycled at your school.
- B. Lunch is the biggest garbage-producing time of day in most schools, so recycling drink containers is very important. Cartons are the most frequently used drink containers in schools nationwide, so recycling milk and juice cartons at school really helps the environment.

II. Prize Drawing

- A. This project is designed to increase awareness about drink container recycling by providing collection bins (if needed), and by sharing reminders and guidelines about what containers are or are not recyclable.
- B. The prize drawing is open to all schools in our district/grade-levels in our school. Any school/grade-level that completes a set of promotional activities for drink container recycling will be able to enter. The prizes are (prizes). The winners will be randomly drawn from all entries submitted.
- C. The following are the promotional activities required of each participating school/grade-level (a check list of these activities is provided). In the next few days, new collection bins will be put in place, letters about container recycling will be going home to families, announcements will be read to promote the recycling of cartons and other drink containers, and posters will be displayed in the cafeteria/classrooms.
- D. Let's go over how to recycle drink containers properly. (Show and discuss all drink containers that are recyclable in your community, including plastic bottles, steel cans, aluminum cans, and milk/juice cartons. Also, show the project posters and new collection bins that will be placed around the building. Explain that juice pouches and straws are not recyclable. Emphasize that all liquids must be emptied from any drink container before recycling it. In some communities, plastic bottle lids can be put back on the bottle for recycling.)
- E. After completing the promotions, your school/grade-level will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a prize (\$300 for one school in the district-wide prize drawing/\$50 for two grade-levels in school-wide prize drawing). Prize winners will be announced by: (date).

Sample Prize-Drawing Checklist (create a container-order form to go with this checklist):



Drink Container Recycling Prize Drawing

- Complete these steps to qualify for the **\$300(school)**/**\$50(grade-level)** prize drawing.
- Once all the steps are completed, email this document to (contact).
- Winners will be announced on (date).
- Prize-drawing requirements and checklist should be completed and submitted to (contact) by (date).

For school-wide campaigns:

- ___ Ordered and placed drink container recycling bins in staff lounge, cafeteria, and all classrooms. (Contact (contact) for a form with bin size choices, descriptions, and suggested uses.)
- ___ Large posters were displayed in the cafeteria.
- ___ Family letter was sent home to all families (including activity sheets).
- ___ Three announcements were read to the entire school.
- ___ Mini-posters for the classroom were distributed to all staff.

For grade-level campaigns:

- ___ Ordered and placed drink container recycling bins in staff lounge, cafeteria, and all classrooms. (Contact (contact) for a form with bin size choices, descriptions, and suggested uses.)
- ___ Mini-posters were displayed in the classrooms.
- ___ Family letter was sent home to all families (including activity sheets).
- ___ Three announcements were read to each class.

That's it!

Your **school/grade level** is now qualified for the prize drawing!

Sample PA System Announcements:



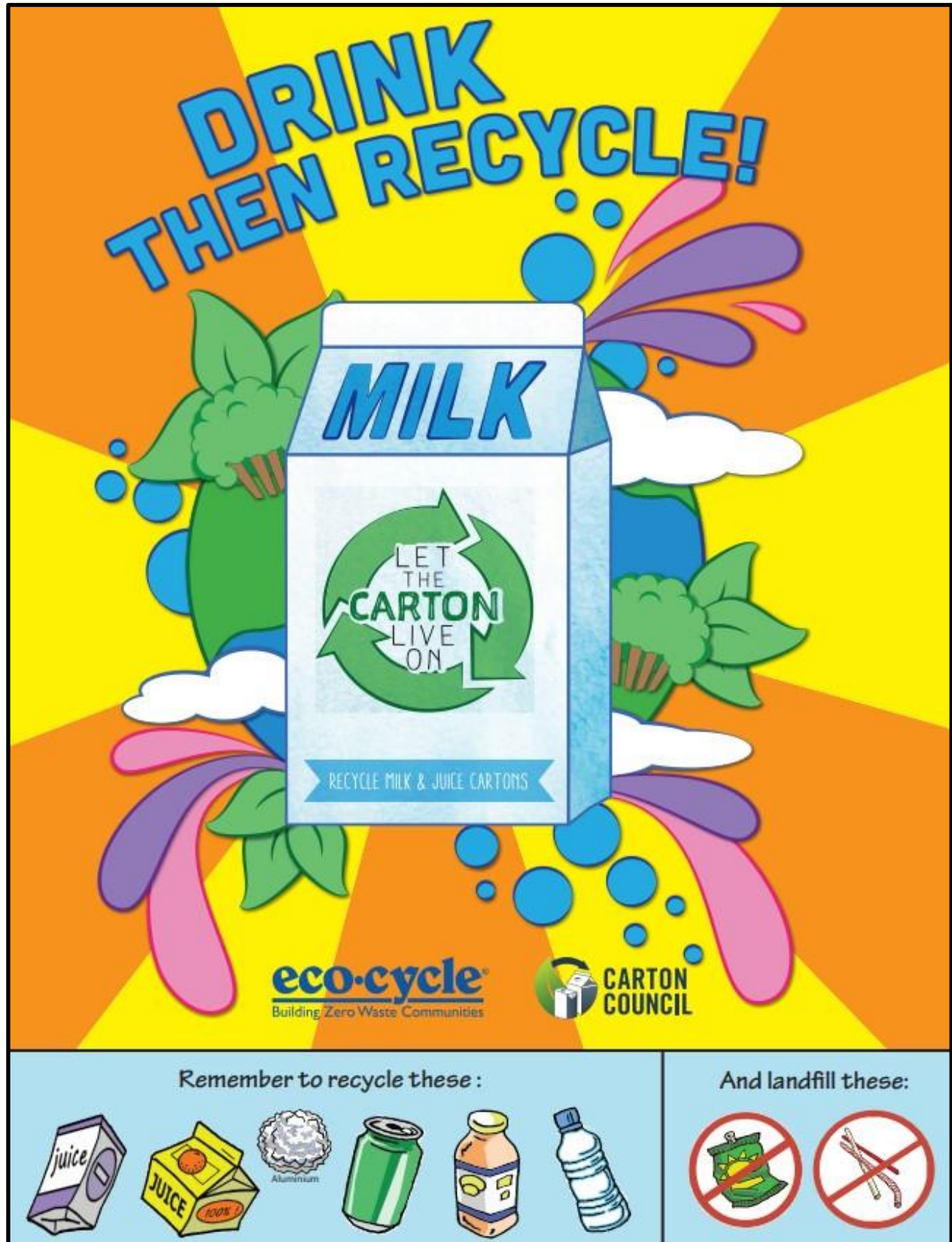
Drink Container Recycling Prize Drawing

These announcements promote drink container recycling at home and at school. Please read one per day to the entire school/grade level during the contest week.

This is one of the steps that must be completed to qualify for the prize drawing!

1. Did you know that all types of cartons and juice boxes can be recycled? Put them in the recycling bins at school or at home, along with aluminum cans, steel cans, plastic bottles, glass bottles, and aluminum foil. The paper inside the cartons and juice boxes will be recycled into new tissues, office paper, and even ceiling tiles!
2. Did you know that the average U.S. elementary school uses 53,200 cartons every year? Any cartons or juice boxes that we have at school can be recycled! Lots of foods that you consume at home also come in cartons, including milk, juice, soup, and broth. These cartons can also be recycled, but please make sure that all cartons are empty first! Also, please put any straws in the trash. Straws and juice pouches can't be recycled. Teach your family about recycling cartons and other drink containers at home tonight!
3. Making new paper from the used paper in milk cartons, instead of making paper from trees, makes 74% less air pollution and 35% less water pollution. Of course, recycling cartons and juice boxes also reduces trash. If you like breathing clean air, drinking clean water, and making less trash, put empty cartons and juice boxes in the recycling bin. And, for the sake of the Earth, remember to recycle plastic bottles, glass bottles, steel cans, aluminum foil, and aluminum cans too!

Printable High School Poster:



Printable Elementary Poster:

**DRINK,
THEN RECYCLE!**



**HELP THE EARTH!
RECYCLE YOUR DRINK CONTAINERS!**

Remember to recycle these containers:



And landfill these:



eco-cycle
Building Zero Waste Communities

**CARTON
COUNCIL**

Sample Family Letter:



Dear Families,

Did you know that cartons for milk, juice, soup, soy milk, cream and more are recyclable at home *and* at school? Your school is partnering with (sponsor) to raise awareness about *recycling all drink containers- from milk cartons and juice boxes to plastic bottles and aluminum cans*. Your school/grade-level is participating with other schools/grade-levels by displaying posters, making informative announcements, and promoting drink container recycling throughout the school building to qualify to enter a prize drawing for (prize) !

Cool Carton Recycling Facts:

- Recycling the paper fiber in cartons results in 74% less air pollution and 35% less water pollution than producing new paper from trees.
- The company ReWall recycles cartons into ceiling tiles, wall panels, and other materials without using glue, chemicals, or water. Each truckload of ReWall building products represents about 300,000 recycled cartons.
- Cartons that contain a layer of aluminum are shelf stable, meaning the food or drink inside doesn't need to be refrigerated, saving energy during transportation and storage.

Recyclable Cartons Include:



Make sure cartons are
empty and rinsed.

Please don't flatten!

No straws in recycling, please!

Help your family recycle as much as possible by following the current guidelines for recycling in your area. If packing a lunch from home, consider including a reusable or recyclable drink container in lunches. (Include a link to local recycling guidelines.)

In addition, check out the just-for-fun carton recycling activities for kids following this letter!

Sponsored by:

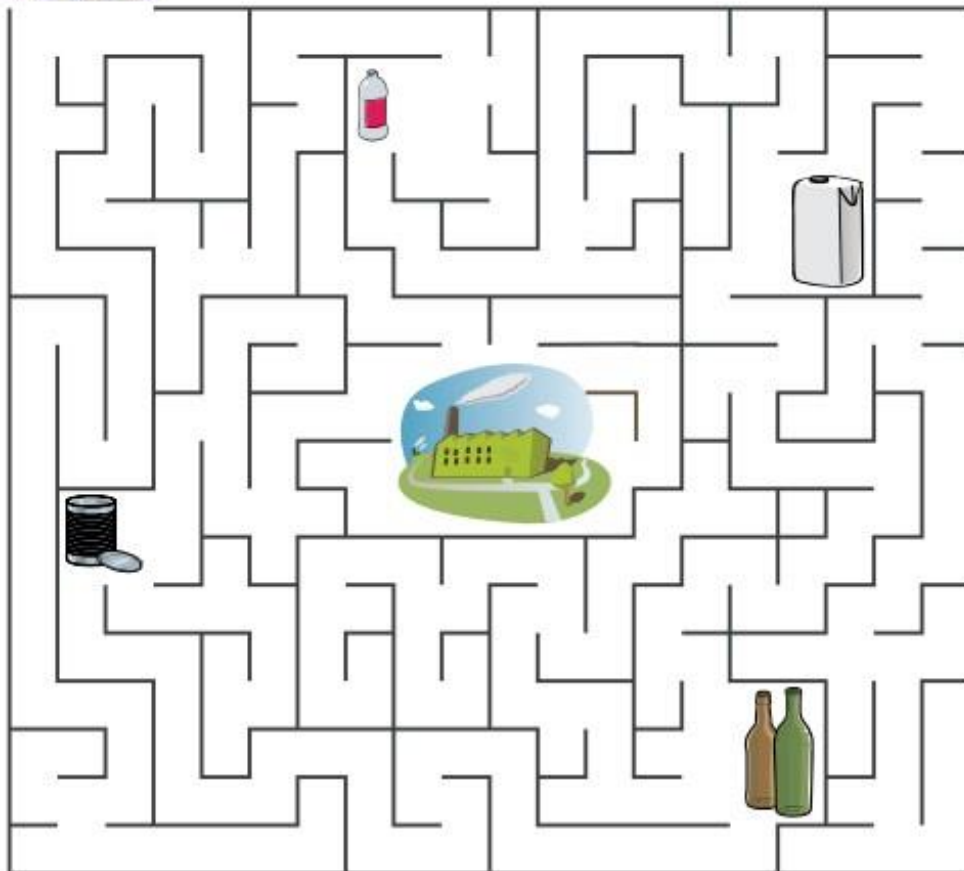
Printable Upper Elementary Activity (see more Carton Council activities at <https://www.cartonopportunities.org/schools>):



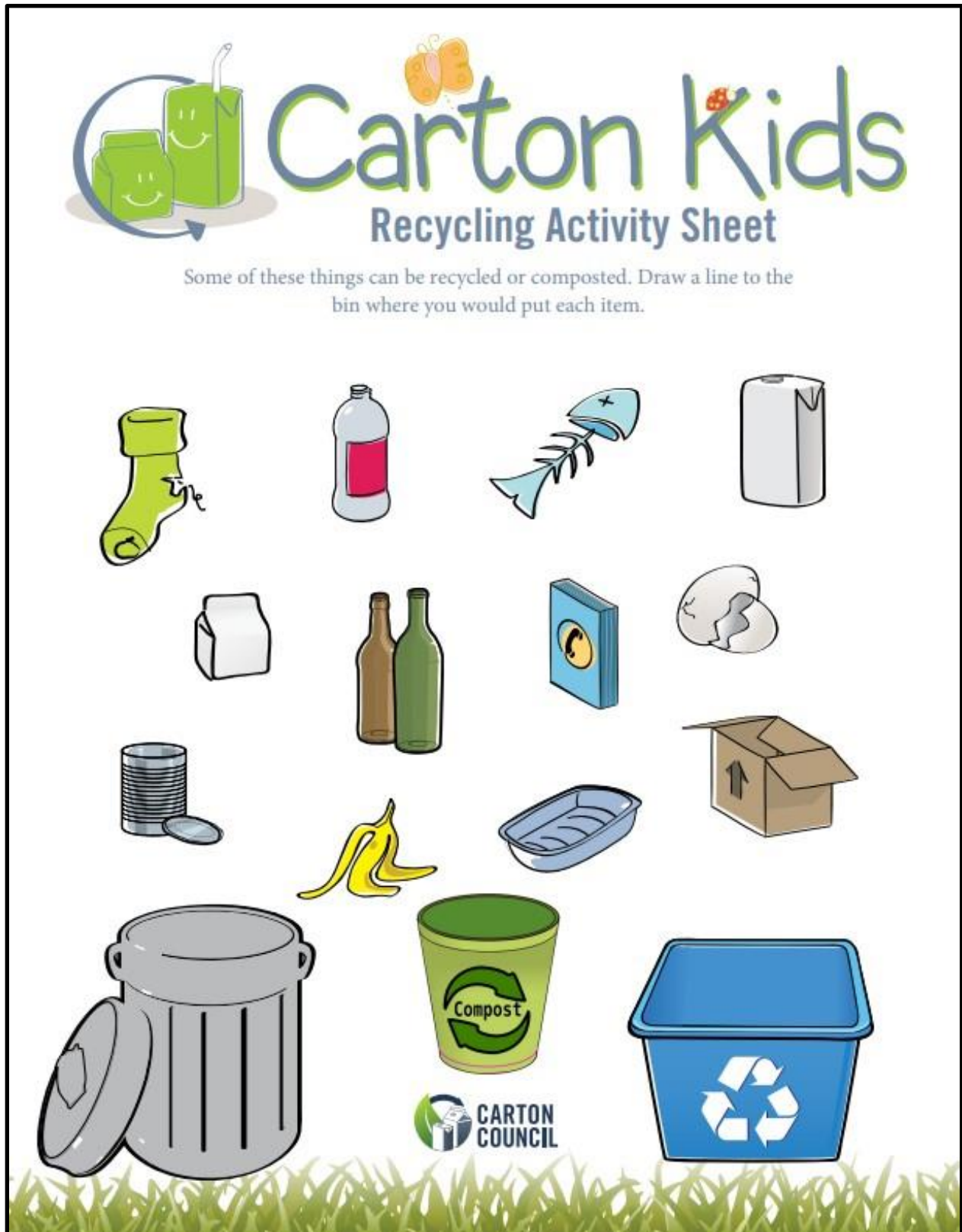
Carton Kids

Recycling Activity Sheet

Help our truck pick up all the recyclables and get them to the recycle factory.



Printable Primary Activity (see more Carton Council activities at <https://www.cartonopportunities.org/schools>):



Sample Pages from *Carton Recycling in Schools Best Practices Guide* by Carton Council (see full guide and other resources at

<https://www.cartonopportunities.org/schools>):



CARTON RECYCLING IN SCHOOLS

Best Practices Guide



GETTING STARTED

Equipment to help with your program



BUCKETS



STRAINERS/
SCREENS



RECYCLING
CONTAINERS



SIGNAGE



PLASTIC OR MESH
BAGS



LITTER STICKS

***PLEASE REFER TO OUR PROGRAM GUIDE FOR
DETAILED HELP IN DEVELOPING YOUR PROGRAM.***



PROGRAM TIPS

1. Don't forget an "empty" station



DRAINING RESIDUAL MILK AND JUICE IS CRITICAL TO A SUCCESSFUL RECYCLING PROGRAM. USE A SCREEN (RIGHT) TO CAPTURE ANY WRAPPERS, STRAWS OR FOOD THAT GET TOSSED WITH THE MILK.



PROGRAM TIPS

6. Find your champion



***DON'T FORGET
TO THANK YOUR
CHAMPIONS!
CHAMPIONS CAN
BE TEACHERS,
STUDENTS,
PARENTS,
FOOD SERVICE
DIRECTORS, AND
PRINCIPALS.***

