

Health & Environment

Connection



A publication of LocalMotion, a non-profit organization dedicated to "Better Health through Fewer Toxins"

School Supplies Go Green

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From pencils and backpacks to lunchboxes and hand sanitizer, eco-friendly options abound that will keep you and your family healthier and the earth greener.

Pencils and Pens: Look for recycled content, FSC-certified wood, replaceable ink.

- [Eco Writer](#): pencils containing 90% post consumer waste.
- [Forest Choice](#): pencils made from FSC-certified incense cedar wood.
- [O'Bon](#): pens and pencils made from recycled newspapers; fun fruit and wild animal designs.
- [Pilot BeGreen](#): refillable pens made with 72% - 89% recycled plastic.
- [Recycled Old Money Pencils and Recycled Old Blue Jean Pencils](#): just that! Available at [Green Line Paper](#), [Green Earth Office Supply](#).
- [Tree Smart](#): pencils made with 100% recycled newspaper. Pens made from biodegradable plastic, bamboo, recycled paper.
- [Zebra Eco](#): pens, mechanical pencils, and highlighters, over 70% recycled.
- [Red Apple](#): recycled markers, highlighters, pens,...

Scissors, Staplers, Paperclips, etc.

- [Acco](#): paper clips, 50% post consumer (PC) content at [Staples](#).
- [Fiskars Recycled Products](#): scissor handles are made with 100% PC recycled plastic. Pencil sharpeners, ruler, protractor: 30% PC recycled plastic. Available at [Amazon](#), [Office Depot](#).
- [Made by Humans](#): Staple Free Stapler is not made from recycled materials, but it works sans staples. Kitty and puppy designs or plain. Holds up to 5 pieces of paper together. At [ThinkGeek](#).
- [Maped](#): natural rubber erasers.

Notebooks and Paper: Look for the highest content of post consumer waste (PCW) and paper that is processed chlorine-free (PCF).

- [Ampad Envirotech](#): 100% PCW, PCF college-ruled filler paper and spiral bound notebooks. Available at [Staples](#), [Green Light Office](#), [Amazon](#).
- [Red Apple School Supply](#): Notebooks, 80% PCW, 20% banana fibers.
- [Office Max](#): 100% PCW, PCF multipurpose paper
- [Pendaflex EarthWise](#): 30% PCW composition notebooks. Available at [Staples](#).
- [Staples Eco-Friendly](#): composition notebook made from 80% sugar cane waste, using vegetable and water-based inks.
- [Tops Second Nature](#): 40% PCW bound notebooks. Available at [Green Line Paper](#).

Binders and Folders: Avoid vinyl covers. Look for post consumer (PC) recycled or biodegradable content.

- [Aurora](#): 3 Ring binders. Covers made from stylish paper or polypropylene film over paperboard (70% PC recycled). Recyclable. ½, 1, 1½, 2, 3". Available at [Clean Sweep Supply](#).
- [Sustainable Group](#): ReBinders, cardboard binder, minimum 35-40% PC recycled. Metal rings may be removed and reused with new replacement covers. Ready to be decorated. Recyclable. 1, 2, or 3". At [Green Line Paper](#).
- [Terracycle](#): Eco Binder, 100% recycled paper, 90% recycled steel. 1, 1½, 2". [Shop Only Green](#)
- [Terracycle](#): Drink Pouch Homework Folder made from recycled drink pouches.



Backpacks: Opt for natural and recycled materials over vinyl and other plastics. Look for organic cotton, hemp, and recycled plastic on-line. Canvas, cotton, and nylon are common in stores.

- [EcoChoices](#): hemp cinch school backpack.
- [Ecolution](#): hemp backpacks, courier bags, more.
- [Prana](#): backpacks from 100% recycled materials
- [Simple](#): backpacks, messenger bags, etc. made from organic cotton, recycled plastic bottles, and other sustainable materials. Local retailers.
- [Terracycle](#): Tostitos Messenger Bag and Juice Pouch Backpack, made with used wrappers.

Lunch boxes: Avoid lead, phthalates, vinyl (PVC), bisphenol-A (BPA) in plastics. Also avoid boxes protected by Microban®, an antimicrobial chemical (triclosan) infused into the fibers.

- [Bazura Bags](#): made from recycled juice packs by a women's co-op in the Phillippines. Lead-free. At [Reusable Bags](#).

- [Crocodile Creek](#): PVC-free, phthalate-free.
- [Ecobags](#): various innovative lunchboxes made from stainless steel (2 tier canister look), neoprene (insulating rubber), polypropylene (bold zoo animal designs), and acrylic-coated cotton with black nylon lining (fun themes and machine washable!), as well as good 'ole organic cotton.
- [Terracycle](#): Juice Pouch Lunch Box, colorful bag made with juice box wrappers. At [ShopOnlyGreen](#).

Food and Drink Containers: Look for lead-free and BPA-free, as well as stainless steel.

- [Aladdin](#): BPA-free. Insulated bottles and bowls to go. Sustain Collection made with an average of 25% post consumer content. At Target, etc.
- [EcoUsable](#): bottles made of recycled stainless steel. A dozen child inspired designs are available in the 10 oz size. Or, the Ech2o bottle (18, 25, or 33 oz.) filters tap water as you drink. Enticing option even for adults since you can refill your bottle anywhere. Replaceable filter is estimated to last up to 100 gallons or for about a year. EcoUsables

offers a discount program for parents and families, which also donates proceeds to a school of choice.

- [LunchBots](#): great alternative to plastic and glass (which most schools do not allow due to breakage potential). The container and lid are stainless steel and dishwasher safe. Four options to choose from. Company offers a school fundraiser program.
- [Klean Kanteen](#): stainless steel reusable bottles.
- [Thermos](#): Foogo® line and FUNtainers cater to kids. Stainless steel interior and exterior. Plastic parts of Foogo® products are BPA-free. In stores.

Drinkboxes: Some mornings call for a quick grab and go. [TerraCycle](#) offers a second life to empty CapriSun and Honest Kids pouches collected from the lunchroom. Turn them in for a donation to your school or favorite charity. Pouches are recycled into backpacks, lunchbags, folders, and pencil cases. Go to [TerraCycle](#) to start a recycling program at your child's school.

Classroom supplies: Donate sanitizers to your child's class that don't contain triclosan and other harmful anti-bacterials.

- [Clean Well](#): hand sanitizer and hand soap kills 99.99% germs using a formula based on thyme and other plant oils. Alcohol-free.
- [Seaside Naturals](#): all-purpose spray contains vinegar, grain alcohol, and tea tree oil, all 3 ingredients are known to be antimicrobials.
- [Earth-Friendly](#): Orange Plus Waterless Hand Cleaning Towels contain corn-based ethanol, the active ingredient in many waterless hand sanitizers.
- [Seventh Generation](#): papertowels and tissue with 80% PCW recycled paper, no chlorine bleach.

Learn more

- [CHEJ's](#) (Center for Health, Environment & Justice) [Back to School Guide to PVC-Free School Supplies](#). Handy wallet version is available [here](#).
- GreenPeace's [Guide to Greener Electronics](#).

The on-line selection of earth-friendly school supplies is vast. However, items are increasingly available locally in stores. Green supplies without customer support often end up on the clearance shelf, which is great for a one-time deal, but not for a continued selection. Remember to request specific favorites at your local store and support retailers when they have eco-friendly options.
