

Green Child Care Program

As the Green Child Care Coordinator, I partnered with child care centers throughout Alameda County to help them reduce their waste and improve environmental health at their facilities.

Waste Reduction

A child care center can divert about 70% of their waste away from the landfill.

- **Education:** Educated children and trained teachers and staff on the 4R's (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot). This took the form of classroom lessons, teacher trainings, workshops, and professional development meetings.
- **Waste Audits and Assessments:** Provided recommendations to sites on how they can change their current waste practice to save money on their hauling service and maximize their diversion.
- **Waste Diversion:** Wrote and received a grant for new recycling and compost bins that were distributed to centers to increase their waste diversion capacity.
- **Program Development:** Created new 4R curriculum for school-aged children.
- **Outreach:** Published monthly newsletter featuring information and articles on relevant green topics that reached an audience of 300+.

Environmental Health

Children are amongst the most vulnerable when it comes to environmental health hazards.

- Produced and distributed flyers and FAQ sheets on subjects, such as green cleaning, green purchasing, and integrated pest management, to inform teachers and staff on environmental health risks, preventative measures, and alternatives.



Achievements

Waste Reduction

- Educated 777 children and trained 258 teachers and staff on the 4R curriculum (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Rot).
- Wrote and received a \$3,000 grant for 120 new waste bins to be distributed at child care centers to maximize their diversion efforts.
- Conducted 10+ waste audits, and provided alternative waste hauling services that could potentially save the sites up to \$1000/year.
- Partnered with 32 child care centers in total, 18 of which are sites new to the program.



Lessons Learned

Successful Strategies:

- Adapt and adjust message for multiple demographics and age groups. For example, used graphics and a raccoon outfit to educate children.
- Partner with internal and external stakeholders and groups to achieve a shared goal. For example, collaborated with California Department of Environmental Health to discuss improving environmental health at centers on a more system level.

Program Expansion:

- Develop a means of continued support for centers. For example, create and maintain a social media presence that provides centers a sustained channel of information.



Kathryn Cunningham

Kathryn graduated from Williams College in 2018 with a degree in Environmental Studies. Her previous experience ranges from designing environmentally-focused nature lessons with children at an affordable housing community to designing the layout of the three gardens on her college campus. She hopes to continue creating and advocating for safe, clean, and healthy spaces that are accessible for all.

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