

OrganicsLA Parent & Caregiver Toolkit

Helping Kids Build Good Habits
at Home



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Purpose of this Toolkit

Los Angeles is leading the way on climate action, and everyday Angelenos play a critical role in making that progress possible. What happens in kitchens, lunchboxes, and at the dinner table adds up across millions of households.

This toolkit is designed for parents and caregivers who want simple, practical ways to teach kids about the green bin and build habits that fit into real family routines. You don't need to be perfect. Small, consistent actions at home make a real difference.

Together, families across Los Angeles can turn food waste into compost, reduce landfill impacts, and help our community grow.

Good habits start at home. GREEN Bin It, LA.

Use this toolkit to:

- **Explain the green bin in kid-friendly ways** that make sense at different ages
- **Remove guesswork** about what food scraps and paper belong in the green bin
- **Turn everyday moments into learning opportunities**, without extra work
- **Model good habits** that kids can carry into school, activities, and adulthood

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When to Collect Kitchen Scraps for the Green Bin: Everyday Opportunities

Kids learn by watching what we do. When they see food scraps going into the green bin during everyday routines, it becomes second nature. These common moments at home are easy opportunities to build lasting habits.



Mealtime Prep

Cooking is one of the easiest moments to involve kids. As you prep meals, collect your peels, rinds, and stems in a countertop kitchen pail, and talk through what to keep out of the regular trash bin and why.



After Meals

Make clearing plates part of the routine. Ask kids to scrape leftover food into the countertop kitchen pail before dishes go in the sink or dishwasher. This simple habit reinforces responsibility and keeps food waste out of the trash.



Snack Time

Snack leftovers add up quickly. Apple cores, banana peels, and other snack scraps belong in the green bin. This is a great time to reinforce quick decision-making: trash can or countertop kitchen pail? Over time, it becomes automatic.



Making Lunches + Post Lunch Scraps

Lunch prep creates common green bin items like crusts, peels, eggshells, and food-soiled paper. Also talk about what scraps should come back home after school to put in your green bin. Many LA schools also have separate organic waste collection bins, making sorting even easier!

What to Share: Resources for Parents & Caregivers

These ready-to-share resources help bring organics recycling to life, showing how small, everyday actions add up to real impact across Los Angeles. All materials are available at **OrganicsLA.org** or through the links below.

OrganicsLA

A guide for parents and caregivers

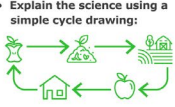
Food waste doesn't belong in the trash. When it goes to the landfill, it creates harmful greenhouse gases that warm the planet. But when food scraps are put in the green bin, they're turned into compost that helps California farmers grow fresh fruits and vegetables for our community.

Kids play a big role—what they do at the table, in the kitchen, and at school adds up to real impact.



Talking to Kids About the Green Bin

Keep It Simple and Make it Matter

Young Kids (ages 3–6)	Elementary (ages 7–11)	Tweens & Teens (ages 12+)
• Use songs, chants, or rhymes: "Scraps in the bin, help the plants win!" • Read picture books: teach them about plants and farms to help them connect with the impact they are making. • Make it playful: let them "feed the green bin" like it's hungry.	• Explain the science using a simple cycle drawing:  • Involve kids in family routines: ask them to empty stems and peels from their lunchbox and scrape their plates into the kitchen pail after meals.	• Connect food waste to bigger issues: landfill space, methane emissions, climate change. • Frame it as leadership: by modeling green bin use, they influence younger siblings and friends. • Link it to civic engagement: composting is part of statewide law and climate action.



Good habits start at home. GREEN Bin It, LA.

Kids learn by example. When they see you using a kitchen pail and the green bin, it becomes part of their daily habit.

Together, we can turn food waste into something that helps our community grow.

OrganicsLA.org
24 Hour Customer Care: 800-773-2489



Funded By
CalRecycle

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A Guide for Parents & Caregivers

A family-friendly guide that helps parents and caregivers talk to kids about food waste and the green bin. Use it to introduce the topic, answer common questions, and explain how everyday habits at home support climate action across Los Angeles.

[Download a print-ready version here.](#)



Full-Cycle Journey of Los Angeles' Organics

This visual shows what happens after food scraps leave the green bin, from collection to compost to California farms. It works well for school projects or conversations with kids who want to know where their scraps actually go.

[Download a print-ready version here.](#)



GREEN Bin It, LA.

- ✓ **Food and green waste:** Peels, rinds, bones, meat, fish, beans, leftovers, dairy, eggshells, coffee grounds, rice, stale bread, stems, flowers, and more.
- ✓ **Food-soiled paper:** Coffee filters, napkins, paper towels, pizza boxes, and more.

Unsure?
Ask **Professor Green**
Text "hello LA1"
To (213) 263-6238

Interact online at
lacitysan.org/professorgreen

Fridge Sign: "What Goes in the Green Bin"

A simple, everyday reference that removes guesswork. Post it on a refrigerator, near kitchen bins, or in shared spaces so everyone can quickly check what belongs in the green bin.

[Download a print-ready version here.](#)



Not sure what to do with your food waste?

I'm **Professor Green**, ask me and I'll tell you

or text hello LA1
to +1 (213) 263 6238

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All messages are anonymous. Standard messaging rates apply.
For more information visit lacitysan.org

Professor Green 24/7 Personal Organics Expert

Your personal organics expert who helps residents get clear answers about organics recycling, food waste what belongs in the green bin.

Available 24/7 by texting "hello LA1" to 213-263-6238 or by visiting www.lacitysan.org/professorgreen.