



## *Turn recycled materials into green fun and games*

Reduce, reuse, recycle. We hear this a lot when it comes to our households, but creating toys and games from recycled materials is a great way to give discarded items a second life. Craft time also improves a child's motor and cognitive skills, as they tap into their imagination and create with their hands. Here are a few ideas to get started.

**Water wall:** Gather plastic bottles and food containers, and twist ties. Cut off the bottoms of the containers to form tubes and poke holes through the plastic for the ties. Toward the top of a chain link fence, tie on the first container. Continue to attach containers to the fence so when children pour water into the tubes, it will trickle down through the water wall. Place tubs at the bottom to recycle the water.



**Homemade instruments:** Save empty tissue boxes and toilet paper or paper towel rolls. Wrap rubber bands lengthwise around the tissue box, and tape a cardboard roll to the top to create a guitar. Round out the band's instruments with a coffee can or milk gallon drum, or tambourine made from adding dried beans to a jar with a tight-fitting lid.

**At-home grocery store:** Save empty boxes and bottles from food items to set up a grocery store. Ask the child to make your shopping list. Use an old tissue box as a cash box, and cut strips of newspaper to make paper money to pay for the food.

**Paper mache:** Paper mache is an ideal use for old newspaper, and this activity will span four or five days. On day one, tear the newspapers into strips. On day two, set out shoe boxes or aluminum cans, and create a paste solution of flour and water. Help the children dip strips of paper into the paste and cover the boxes or cans. On day three or four, after the boxes are dry, lay out supplies for children to paint their masterpieces. After drying overnight, they'll be ready to take home.

These links also have great craft ideas for recycling household items into toys and games:

- [Rethink Recycling](#)
- [Education.com](#)
- [FaveCrafts.com](#)
- [Parents.com](#)

For more information about how to encourage and support a child's development, or refer a child, visit [helpmegrowmn.org](http://helpmegrowmn.org).