casella

ESTABLISHED 1975

RECYCLE BETTER™ EDUCATION KIT

Kindergarten Through Twelfth Grade (K-12)
School Programs and Activities



OVERVIEW

Casella K–12 Recycle Better Education Kit

INTRODUCTION

At Casella, we believe that education is the foundation for a more sustainable future. This K–12 Education Kit is designed to inspire curiosity, foster environmental awareness, and empower students to take action in their communities. Whether you're a teacher, school administrator, or Casella team member visiting a classroom, this kit provides age-appropriate tools to help students understand the powerful role they can play in protecting our planet.

ABOUT CASELLA

Casella is a leader in sustainable resource management, offering services in recycling, waste collection, organics, and more. Our mission is to create value by renewing and sustaining the world's limited resources. Through innovation and education, we aim to build a more circular economy—one where resources are recycled and reused to reduce pressure on the natural world.

KIT OBJECTIVES

This kit is designed to:

- Introduce students to key environmental topics: recycling, food waste, sustainability, waste management, and environmental science.
- Showcase the full breadth of what Casella does—from curbside collection to advanced recycling technologies.
- Encourage students to think critically about their own impact and how they can make a difference.
- Provide teachers with ready-to-use, engaging materials that align with educational standards.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Each grade band (K–2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–12) includes:

- Lesson plans tailored to developmental levels
- Worksheets and printable activities
- Hands-on experiments and classroom games
- Presentation slides and talking points
- Videos and visual storytelling tools
- Teacher guides with learning objectives and background information

WHY IT MATTERS

Advancing circular economy principles in our communities will require creative thinking and energetic leadership. Through these school activities, we hope to inspire students of all ages to bring new recycling skills home to their families and to start dreaming up the next wave of inventions and ideas that will make sustainability a reality for us all.

TEACHER GUIDE

Casella K–12 Education Kit

OVERVIEW

This guide is designed to help educators navigate and implement the Casella K–12 Education Kit with ease. It includes background information, learning objectives, instructions for each activity, and tips for adapting content to different classroom needs.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Across all grade levels, students will:

- Understand the importance of recycling, composting, and waste reduction.
- Explore the environmental and economic impacts of waste.
- Learn how Casella contributes to sustainability and resource management.
- Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills related to environmental science.

INSTRUCTIONS

- **Preparation:** Review the grade-level materials and choose activities that align with your curriculum.
- **Delivery:** Use the provided presentations, worksheets, and videos to guide lessons. Encourage discussion and hands-on participation.
- **Extension:** Consider implementing school-wide projects or inviting Casella representatives for guest talks.
- **Assessment:** Use worksheets, student reflections, and project outcomes to assess understanding.

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Term	Definition
MRF (Material Recovery Facility)	A place where mixed recyclables are sorted by type so they can be shipped to manufacturers to make new things.
Composting	The natural process of recycling organic matter into a dark, crumbly, nutrient-rich material to help build healthy soil.
Circular Economy	An economic system aimed at eliminating waste and keeping resources in use longer, for example through reuse, repair, and recycling.
Landfill	A site that uses modern engineering and technology for safe and secure disposal of waste that cannot be recycled.
Contamination	When non-recyclable items are mixed with recyclables, reducing their quality and recyclability.
Organics	Biodegradable waste such as food scraps and yard trimmings.
Single Stream Recycling	A system where all recyclables are placed in one bin and sorted later at a recycling facility.
Carbon Footprint	The total greenhouse gas emissions generated by an activity which contributes to climate change.

TEACHER GUIDE

Casella K–12 Education Kit

TAKING LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Learning about sustainability doesn't stop when the lesson ends—it's something students can carry into their everyday lives. By applying what they've learned at school to their homes and communities, students become active participants in building a cleaner, greener future. Here are some fun and meaningful ways they can get involved and make a difference.

1. **Recycle Better™**
   Learn what can and can't be recycled in your community—and teach your family and friends!
2. **Reduce Food Waste**
   Track how much food is thrown away at home and school. Brainstorm ways to reduce waste, like saving leftovers or composting.
3. **Start a Green Team**
   Work with classmates and teachers to create a sustainability club. Plan projects like recycling drives, garden builds, or energy-saving campaigns.
4. **Explore Careers in Sustainability**
   Discover exciting jobs in environmental science, engineering, and resource management. Interview a Casella team member or research green careers online.
5. **Bring it Home: Do-at-Home Challenges**
   Apply what you've learned in the classroom to your everyday life! Try fun challenges like:
   - Creating a home recycling station.
   - Doing a "trash audit" of your kitchen.
   - Making posters to teach your family about composting.
   - Tracking your household's waste for a week and setting goals to reduce it.

FROM SCHOOL TO HOME

Sustainability starts at school—but it grows at home. When students bring their learning into their households, they spark meaningful conversations and inspire lasting change. This section helps families get involved through simple, fun challenges that reinforce classroom lessons and build better recycling habits together. By working as a team, families can become powerful partners in protecting our planet.

Included in this section:

1. A Family Recycling Challenge worksheet to track recycling efforts at home.
2. A flyer that explains Casella's mission and offers practical tips for recycling better.
3. Suggestions for how families can reduce food waste and support sustainability together.
4. Ideas for starting conversations about environmental responsibility at home.

Family involvement doesn't just reinforce what students learn—it helps build a culture of sustainability that reaches beyond school walls and into the heart of the community.

RECYCLE BETTER™

Family Challenge

TAKING LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Hey Families!
Your child just learned about recycling and how we can all work together to help our environment. Now it's your turn to join the fun! Complete the challenge below, brought to you by your school and Casella and become. Once complete, print the Casella Recycling Champion poster included here.

YOUR FAMILY CHALLENGE: 5 DAYS TO RECYCLE BETTER!

Each day, complete one activity and check it off when you're done!

- ☐ **1. Recycling Hunt**
  Walk through your home and find 5 items that can be recycled. Talk about which bin each item goes in and why.
- ☐ **2. Trash Talk**
  As a family, look at your trash for one day. What could have been recycled or reused instead?
- ☐ **3. Bag Swap**
  Make a plan to use reusable bags for your next shopping trip. Can you find 3 other ways to reduce single-use plastics?
- ☐ **4. Sort It Out**
  Practice sorting recyclables together. Use real items or draw pictures of paper, plastic, metal, and glass.
- ☐ **5. Recycling Better Pledge**
  Create a family pledge to recycle more and waste less. Hang it on your fridge as a reminder!

CARDBOARD/PAPER



Cardboard & Boxboard
(Clean & dry)



Junk Mail, Periodicals, Office Paper & Paper Cups
(Paper bags & cups, envelopes, & catalogs)

PLASTIC



Plastic Bottles, Jugs, Tubs, & Lids
(Empty kitchen, laundry & bath containers & clamshell packaging)

METAL



Aluminum & Steel Cans
(Clean foil & empty food or beverage cans)

GLASS



Glass Bottles & Jars
(Empty food & drink containers only)

TIPS:

1. Empty and clean:

Recyclables must be empty and clean, so... Take that last sip! Enjoy that last bite!

2. Keep it loose

Remember to Keep it loose! Bags are a drag! Bagged recyclables cannot be sorted, so if you collect your recyclables in a bag, be sure to dump them out when you get to your cart.

3. Shape matters

Shape matters when recycling. Small, narrow items slip through sorting equipment and should go in the trash. Caps are OK if twisted back on.

4. When in doubt, throw it out!

Non-recyclable items often make their way into recycling bins, hurting programs over time. Knowing what's accepted locally helps—and when in doubt, throw it out.

5. Don't forget to reduce and reuse!

Recycling is great but waste reduction and reuse can be even better. Don't forget to reduce and reuse whenever you can.

Bonus Challenge: Share Your Impact!

Take a photo of your family completing a challenge, post it online, and tag ***@CasellaWaste*** to inspire others!



Recycling Champion

Presented to:

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