



GO BACK TO SCHOOL GREEN—SUPPLIES

By Leslie Garrett for Hot Moms Club



Start by purchasing wood pencils certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (or FSC for short). FSC wood comes from forests that are managed in a responsible and sustainable manner.

Source paper that is at least 30 percent post-consumer content. You can find it easily. Harder to find but better still is 100 percent post-consumer content.

To hold your paper, Office Depot boasts binders made of 100% recycled materials. Office Max and Staples both stock notebooks made from varying percentages of post-consumer waste.

Kids can cut with recycled stainless-steel scissors with handles made from 30% post-consumer plastic. And 3M's ubiquitous Post-It notes are also available in 100% recycled versions.

Earth Friendly Green Apple School Pack gets you started with everything you need: 3-ring binder made from recycled paper, 3-subject notebook with recycled paper, 100 sheets of recycled, college-ruled filler paper, 1 recycled pocket portfolio, FSC colored pencils, recycled wood pencils, ballpoint pens made from recycled components, and a ruler made from recycled yellow pages and plastic.

And while you're picking up your starter school pack at redapplesupply.com, don't forget to buy a banana paper spiral notebook, some eco-friendly highlighter pencils, and a natural rubber eraser.

LUNCH THAT MAKES SENSE

No longer is it enough to ensure that what's IN our kids' lunch pails is healthy, with all the news of lead-tainted sacks, we have to be vigilant about the lunch bags themselves. Fortunately, a number of companies are rushing to market with non-toxic alternatives that are fun and functional. Mary Brune, a mom, activist and co-founder of Making Our Milk Safe (MOMS), is delighted with the "really interesting and fun-looking" products that are replacing the toxic lunch bags. She points to the futuristic and funky-looking neoprene bag from BuiltNY – it even opens up to offer up something of a placemat. What's more, it can be tossed in the washing machine. The same company tempts tots with its Munchlers line, featuring insulated polypropylene bags in the shapes of dogs, bunnies and more.

Mimi the Sardine makes acrylic-covered cotton lunch bags (among other things) in patterns that run the gamut from cute to sophisticated. Sigg makes an aluminum box that's leak-proof and lightweight and easily replaces (and outlasts!) plastic containers.

Wrap-n-mat is a fabric sandwich wrap (more functional than it sounds) that doubles as a placemat/serviette and can be machine washed and used repeatedly.

Amy Hemmert, creator of Laptop Lunches, offers up a Bento box system that includes plastic containers within a larger plastic container within a fabric lunchbox. It includes stainless-steel cutlery and a reus-



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able drink container and all fits together like a perfect puzzle. Part of the pleasure of her lunchboxes is the myriad menus inspired – visit laptoplunches.com to see what I mean.

Hemmert offers up some tips for a greener lunch:

- Get kids involved with packing the lunch – they're more likely to eat it.
- Think beyond the bread: Try wraps, English muffins, pitas, bagels and rice cakes.
- Pack fresh, organic, locally grown fruits and vegetables when possible.
- Offer a variety of colors, textures, shapes, sizes and food groups.

Leslie Garrett is an award-winning journalist, author, and editor. Her syndicated column “The Virtuous Consumer” runs monthly in *City Parent*, *Big Apple Parent*, *About Families*, and a number of other publications. She also writes “The Virtuous Traveler,” a syndicated column that appears on petergreenberg.com, the online newsletter of NBC travel editor Peter Greenberg. Leslie is the author of a dozen children's books, including a biography of the renowned environmentalist David Suzuki, and *EarthSmart*, a book for early readers on protecting the environment. She resides near Toronto, Canada, and her website is, www.virtuousconsumer.com.