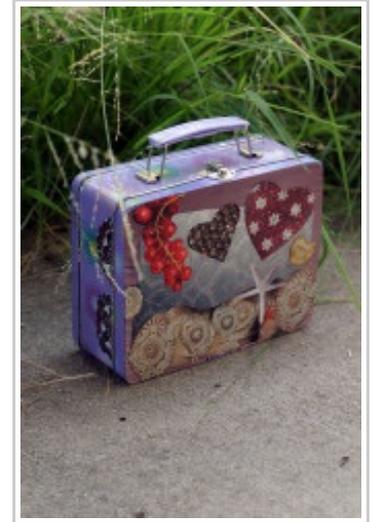


"Green" Up That Lunchbox

With school around the corner, stores are putting out lots of brand new, pricey metal lunchboxes. Used regularly, they're better for the planet than individual, quickly discarded ones made of plastic or paper. But if you really want to be green, try this creative craft alternative instead. You'll save money and energy, and your child can create a one-of-a-kind lunchbox that will never be mistaken for one of her classmates'. Oh, and did we mention: this activity requires measurement—adults, stand by to help—which happens to be an important part of second grade math.



What You Need:

- Plastic or metal lunchbox (easily found at thrift stores or garage sales)
- Clear plastic contact paper
- Colorful kids' magazines or old calendars with pictures your child especially likes
- Scissors
- Rubber cement
- Ruler

What to Do:

1. First, help your child wash the lunchbox thoroughly, and scrub off any remaining labels. When the box is completely dry, measure the flat areas in front and in back, and draw a rectangle to those measurements on each of two plain pieces of white paper (if you want to be especially environmentally friendly, use the back of a discarded sheet of office paper).
2. Invite your child to look through the magazine and calendar pictures and cut out one or more pictures for each side, representing special tastes and interests. Then help your child arrange them in a collage across the entire surface of each rectangle. Use rubber cement to anchor the pictures to their backing.
3. At this point, you may also want to have your child write his name on a piece of plain, colored construction paper, and glue that down on top of the collage, but since the design will be unique and personal anyway, this is an optional step!
4. Now have your child use scissors to cut out the two rectangles. She will glue one to each side of the lunchbox.
5. Now measure the contact paper, $\frac{1}{2}$ " larger around every side than the paper collage. Working carefully, peel off the backing, and cover the collage with the contact paper, taking care to flatten the whole layer evenly.
6. Presto! You and your child have saved one more lunchbox from the landfill, and given the world one more piece of unique craft art in the bargain.