



# Greening Our Preschools

## Alameda County Child Care Planning Council

### Greening

#### The Challenge

In July of 2012 the Mandatory Recycling Ordinance went into effect. This ordinance requires recycling services for all businesses producing a minimum amount of weekly waste. School districts are exempt from this Ordinance but preschools are not. Many Alameda County preschools require assistance in implementing compost/recycling programs due to limited funds, time, and misinformation on waste service options.

#### The Solution – Green Our Preschools

The Alameda County Child Care Planning Council recognizes the challenges that preschools face in implementing new compost/recycling programs. The Council, guided by 38 publically appointed members, plans program and policy for 2,400 publically and privately funded child care programs, and makes recommendations to policy makers for improvements to quality, affordability, and access. In order to assist preschools in reducing waste and meeting the requirements for the Mandatory Recycling Ordinance, the Council hired a Climate Corps member as their Greening Preschools Associate. This Member was responsible for providing outreach and education to teachers, staff, and students to galvanize support for waste diversion and other green child care programs. The Member provided assistance to preschool programs by conducting waste audits, contacting waste haulers and building managers, and providing training to teachers and staff on waste reduction and the RRRR curriculum. In addition to her work on waste reduction, the Climate Corps Member also encouraged comprehensive greening through Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and green cleaning alternatives for preschools.

#### Project Goals

- Implement compost/recycle programs at 10 new preschool sites
- Educate 250 teachers and staff on RRRR curriculum
- Divert 100 tons of waste from the landfill



### Measuring Success

We reduced over 100,000 lbs of CO2 this year with our greening preschools initiative. This is the carbon equivalent of planting a 10-acre pine forest.



#### Goals achieved and surpassed

- 15 new preschool sites begin composting and recycling and improved their Go Green rating
- Over 1,200 staff/teachers/students educated on RRRR and waste reduction
- Over 171 tons of waste diverted from the landfill
- Helped schools leverage over \$3,000 in Stop Waste mini grants for new green bins and a zero-waste recycling party for kids

### Overcoming Program Barriers

#### Barriers

**Limited resources:** prevent some preschools from investing in new bins for a compost/recycle program.

**Pest concern:** many preschool staff are concerned that compost will attract bugs/rodents.

**Perceived authority:** difficult to encourage Ordinance compliance without perceived authority.

#### Solutions

**Incentives:** offer free bins to preschools to begin recycling. Help schools obtain grants to meet recycling goals.

**Pest control:** assure individuals that compost service does not attract pests. Suggest IPM for preexisting pest problems.

**Authority:** Use CCPC communications platform to encourage compliance.



Jessica Jetter

B.A. Environmental Studies and Political Science from the University of Washington  
Transitioning to the Sierra Club SF office in July to assist in litigation against existing coal-fired power plants

#### Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Ellen Dektar, Angie Garling, Andrea Clementino, Kif Scheuer, and Kristin Brubaker for their wisdom, assistance, and support on this project.



2013 Climate Symposium: Sharing Success