



At the MCPK, we acknowledge, honor and support our own and our children's "Naturalist" intelligence in many ways; just one of those is by bringing nature into the classrooms whenever possible. Starting as young as three years old, our students study many topics about our world including trees and photosynthesis, bees and pollination, seed germination, plant propagation and more.

One of the first things our students learn is how to compost and recycle, including how to sort recycling and why we compost at our school. Children learn where our waste and packaging will go if we don't recycle it, and we have collectively agreed that burning them in an incinerator is not a good choice. One of our most important jobs as citizens of Planet Earth is to send fewer things out to be burned or put into a landfill. In fact, in Montclair, we pay for our trash to get picked up, and get PAID for our recyclables. Recycling makes financial sense for our community as well.

We encourage everyone in Montclair to commit to recycling at home. And why not have your child do the sorting for you? Try at home what we do in school. Every classroom has a can for commingled recycling, and a can for paper recycling. Each one has a corresponding picture that shows what belongs in each can. Students learn to match what they are putting into the can to its picture—guaranteed success for pre-readers. [Click here](#) for more information about what can and cannot be recycled in Montclair.

Composting is another important way we teach our children about reducing waste and practicing good gardening. Our students learn that saving fruit and vegetable peels is not 'yucky', but is, in fact, a wonderful way to reuse remainders of growing plants to provide extra growing power to our gardens at school. Healthy soil that contains compost grows better plants. At-home composting can be as simple or ambitious as you like: [click here](#) to get started. If you are considering composting but don't yet have a bin at home, consider getting one (low-cost compost bins are available through the [Montclair Township, Department of Environmental Affairs](#)) or even sharing with a like-minded neighbor. .

I am always thrilled when our preschool students so readily understand the need for us to compost and recycle. My hope for our future and the future of our environment is renewed. If we can begin strong and then continue to support this kind of learning, the planet will be in good hands. Don't you agree?

Best,

Miss Laura

Laura Marchese

MCPK Related Arts Garden/Environmental Science teacher