# Litter We Know

**Get Outside!**
*Taking Learning Outdoors*

## Cross-curricular Connections

Spring is an excellent time to involve students in schoolyard cleanup! **Litter We Know** is an activity that helps learners of all ages to gain a better understanding of the types and amount of litter in the schoolyard while considering the impact of litter on local wildlife.

This activity supports *Mathematics: Data Management and Probability* as well as *Social Studies/History and Geography: Citizenship Education*.

These activities have been adapted from *Project Wild* Ottawa, ON: Canadian Wildlife Federation, 1994. ISBN 1-55029-082-7

## Preparation / Resources

- Organize students into groups of three or four.

**Each group needs:**

- Rubber gloves (for each person in the group);
- A garbage bag;
- Bristol board (for graphic representation)
- Glue (if samples of litter are included on the graphic representation).

## *Description of Activity*

**Time Outside:** 20 – 60 min

- After reviewing safety procedures and setting a time limit, send each group out into a different area of the schoolyard to pick up litter (remind students that for they should not be collecting anything out of garbage cans).
- Once bags of litter have been collected, have the students sort the items into piles by "type" of litter (e.g., paper, cans, wrappers, etc.).
- After completing the sort, have students make a graphic representation (bar graph, pie graph, etc.) to highlight what type of litter is most common.
- Have students share their findings and discuss how litter may impact local wildlife (e.g., discarded gum or pop can tabs may be eaten by bids or other small animals causing them to choke, mice or chipmunks may put their heads in the opening of discarded pop cans and not be able to get them out, birds may become tangled in the plastic can holders, etc.).
- Have students brainstorm ways that they may reduce the amount of litter in their schoolyard.

## Follow-up *(plus Adaptations and Extensions)*

- Turn this activity into a class project by having students come up with ways to inform the rest of the school about schoolyard litter and have them track the results to see if their efforts have made an impact.
- Have students research the diversion rates for the garbage they found.
- Have students choose a product and suggest ways to redesign packaging to reduce waste.
- Have students write letters to manufacturers suggesting ecological ways to redesign their products and/or packaging.