



It's never too early to start recycling.

*Written by, Jasmine Walker*

Recycling: a process that is said to be a responsibility of each and every individual, but at what age does the importance of recycling strike a person? One would not particularly think of an age, however, that same person would not think a five year old to see the importance and responsibility of recycling. Back in April, Michelle Sheldon, President of Eco Promotional Products, inc.

spoke at the Vernon Hills, IL School House Program for Earth day. What she didn't expect was for five year old, Eric Hernandez to know so much about recycling. That day Eric rushed to his mother to show her his daily Kindergarten progress report. "Look Mom!! Jack's mom came and talked to us." Dawn was really shocked that he was ecstatic about it. Eric was really proud he could answer questions and participate in Michelle's Earth Day presentation, he knew everything she was talking about. What stuck out the most in Eric's mind was the recycling symbol. "He could point out that it's important to look for the triangle, it solidified what the symbol meant to Eric," said the proud parent.

Eric's mother, Dawn, commented that the family has been recycling long before her kids were born. "Our kids would see us putting things in the recycling bin so they'd ask my husband and I what we were doing. Now, it's been incorporated into their lives." Through observation and the book Michael Recycle, Eric began to grasp the concept of recycling around the age of 3. "Eric thought Michael Recycle was cool, now he understands the importance of cleaning up after himself," said Dawn.

So how does Eric, who just turned 5 a few weeks ago learn to care about recycling? Eric's mother laughs as she replies that she never realized he was processing the concept of recycling. But the Hernandez family has always followed the principle to teach by example: having a visible recycling bin in the kitchen and in the garage, has been very prominent for their kids. Educating their children about the basic recycling symbol has made Eric and his sister feel like they are a part of something and they have their own responsibilities. The ultimate message sent to Eric is, "Not to waste things! It's not just recycling, its reusing and reducing, treat the earth like a person. The kids understand the more time you spend in the shower the more water you waste. We can all do simple things: turn the lights off, donate things we do not use, and not take anything for granted." At the end of the day, it seems as though there isn't an age to young, to teach children about important concepts like recycling. Dawn closes by saying, "Absolutely, it's a great idea. We should do what we can, and when it comes to your kids, they're little policemen. It makes an impression at an early age, they're in their learning stages, where you can really let it soak in to their minds and become a part of their lives."