

HOW TO HOST AN EPIC BEACH CLEAN-UP PARTY!

Helping the Planet
& Having Fun Doing It!

andrea koehle jones



Photo: Andrea Koehle Jones

There's no place like the beach, but you might not realize how much fun a beach clean-up party can be—until now. You'll be amazed at all the garbage that can wash up over time and the difference an enthusiastic group of kids can make in just a few hours.

Research shows that kids who spend more time outside are happier, more confident, better at paying attention, and less anxious than kids who spend more time indoors. By hosting a beach clean-up party for kids you are introducing them to the wonders of nature and helping to educate and empower them as well.

Beach Clean-up Take Away!

- » kids feel connected to their community
- » develop a love of the water and compassion for aquatic life
- » become future climate leaders

Use this 5-step beach clean-up party guide to throw the coolest world-changing party your kids will always remember.

1. PARTY PREP

Pick a safe beach for your clean-up by scouting a location ahead of time and make sure there's a need for a clean-up; then set a date. Of course, you can host a river, creek, or lake clean-up party if you don't live by the ocean. Always check local guidelines to make sure you can clean up in your chosen area.

2. YOU'RE INVITED

Invite all the children in your child's class at school by sending them an e-invite or printing an invitation on 100 percent recycled paper for your child to deliver to their friends. Inform parents that they are invited too, and that even though this is not a swimming party, there will be a qualified lifeguard present to watch over the guests. It would also be a great idea to suggest green transportation options to the beach like coordinating a carpool, walking, or cycling to the beach.

Email parents a "Day Hiking Essentials Checklist"

- » boots
- » hat
- » sunblock
- » gloves
- » bucket



Invitation art: Instead of using images of kids on your invitation, feature garbage in/near bodies of water, and the creatures that will be helped by the clean-up. Show big waves, the beach, purple starfish, sea turtles, pop cans, and other garbage washing onto the beach with the waves.

3. ECO-FRIENDLY SUPPLIES & DECORATIONS

Say no to disposable party supplies (e.g., straws, plastic or paper plates) by choosing environmentally friendly options such as reusable or biodegradable tableware. Try to serve locally sourced food as well where possible.

Make upcycled decorations with old bottles, jars, and other items around the house. Fabric banners that you made for the clean-up also make colourful decor for kids' bedrooms or playrooms after the party as a fun reminder of a great day. After the party, don't forget to store your decor so you can reuse it again for future clean-up parties.



Photo: Andrea Koehle Jones

Snack Ideas for the Big Day:

- » purple starfish cakes, cucumber sandwiches, vegetable pizza, fruit kabobs

HOW TO HOST AN EPIC BEACH CLEAN-UP PARTY!

Helping the Planet
& Having Fun Doing It!

andrea koehle jones



Photo: Andrea Koehle Jones

4. EPIC FUN

Create a scavenger hunt geared to the ages of the children at the party. You can include waste items as well as signs of nature on the lists. Have kids add items they find to their bags or buckets and bring them to the parents' sorting table to be checked.

Items to Pick Up

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| » plastic bottle tops | » straws |
| » plastic drink bottles | » drink boxes |
| » pop cans | » yogurt containers |
| » plastic bags | » styrofoam |
| » fishing nets | » food packaging and |
| » fishing line (watch | any other waste that |
| out for hooks!) | doesn't belong in the |
| » plastic cutlery | water or on the beach |

Items to Leave Behind

Rather than pick these items up, photograph, draw, or simply observe them, then check them off the list, leaving them where you found them.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| » pine cones | » bull kelp |
| » shells | » animal footprints |
| » sand dollars | » feathers |
| » starfish | » leaves |
| » crabs | » driftwood |
| » seaweed | » heart-shaped rocks |



© Can Stock Photo Inc. / [Martti157900]

In addition to the sorting table, have a craft station run by parents to help kids make art from some of the garbage they collect. Art may include:

- 1 Ocean/lake plastic and coffee pod sea stars
- 2 Pop bottle and plastic lid wind chimes
- 3 Reclaimed fishing net bracelets



© Can Stock Photo Inc. / 14774544sean1

While this will be loads of fun, it's important to remember safety. Remind the kids to keep their eyes on whatever body of water they are at, and stay safe!

Prizes and Gifts

Party favours: *Epic Beach Clean-up* crew t-shirts made from bamboo or other environmentally sustainable materials, and reusable bags for kids as well as parents can be given out at the start of the day. These keepsakes will help incorporate and inspire more environmentally thoughtful choices at home after the party is a distant memory.

Ocean clean-up books:

- » *What a Waste: Trash, Recycling, and Protecting the Planet* by Jess French
- » *Alba and the Ocean Clean-up* by Lara Hawthorne

5. AFTER THE PARTY

Don't leave any decorations, party supplies, food, or collected garbage behind—that would defeat the purpose. Organize and recycle everything you can and take everything with you to dispose of properly. Don't forget to take a photo of the kids cleaning the beach, as well as an "after" shot of the beach to send parents as keepsakes.

As the host, you can donate—on behalf of all the guests—to an environmental organization that helps clean up oceans and waterways. These may include:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Surfrider Foundation | 5 Ocean Defenders Alliance |
| 2 Oceana | 6 Project AWARE |
| 3 Big Blue Ocean Clean-up | 7 Coral Reef Alliance |
| 4 Greenpeace | |

Hosting a beach clean-up party is an excellent way to help the planet, and teach our children the importance of not absentmindedly tossing garbage onto streets, parks, or waterways.

Trash has its place—let's be mindful. •