

Athena's Adventures in Health Policy

Reuse, Recycle, Repeat



By Ana Rita Gonzalez

Illustrated by Melina Sugliano & Rodrigo Palacios

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Athena was so excited to go to school on Monday morning that she almost forgot to eat breakfast.

“Slow down!” said her brother Odin. “Don’t you want some pancakes?”

“It’s assembly day,” replied Athena, taking a few berries from the bowl on the counter. “A real-life firefighter is coming to speak to us!”

Odin laughed. “I’m excited, too—but I still want breakfast.”



Athena barely heard him. She was frowning at the floor as she swallowed her berries.

“Are you all right, Athena?” asked Mama Owl.

No, she was not all right. She had a sore throat.

But Athena wouldn't let that stop her from going to school. Not today!

“I feel fantastic,” she said, and she ate a whole pancake to prove it.





Finally, it was time to leave. Athena, Odin, and their sister Rae grabbed their backpacks and filed out the door with Papa Owl.

Athena was only a bit dizzy—no big deal. She was almost in the car when Mama Owl called, “Athena, come here please.”



Oh, no, she thought to herself. Maybe I forgot something.

“You don’t look well, sweetheart,” said Mama Owl. She pressed her wing to Athena’s forehead and sighed. “You have a fever. I’m sorry, but you’ll have to stay in bed today.”

“What about the assembly?” Athena moaned, but Mama Owl was already leading her back to her room.

“There will be other assemblies,” said Mama Owl.



“But I want to go to this one,” Athena argued.
“Why do sick children always have to stay home, even on special days?”



“It’s a health policy,” Mama Owl replied, tucking Athena into bed. “By staying home from school, you’re protecting your classmates from germs. You don’t want them to be sick, too, do you?”

No, Athena didn't want her classmates to be sick... but she did want to know where health policies come from.

"Mama," she said, "what is a policy?"



"A policy is like an instruction from a parent or teacher," Mama Owl replied.
"We don't always like them, but they keep us safe and healthy."

Don't touch the hot stove



Hold hands while crossing
the street

Brush your teeth



Eat your vegetables

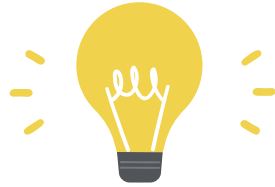
“Ignoring these policies can lead to negative effects,” Mama Owl continued.

“Like spreading germs that could make my friends sick?” said Athena.

Mama Owl nodded. “Exactly. The government creates each policy to help us live well.”



Now that she understood the importance of health policies, Athena wanted to learn about other ways to practice them. If she could help others feel better, she wanted to try!





“Mama,” she asked, “what are some other policies I should know?”
After a moment of thought, Mama Owl replied,
“One of my favorites is recycling. It’s a policy that helps keep us—and our
environment—healthy.”
“But how?”



“Recycling reduces pollution and keeps the earth, air, and water clean and enjoyable for everyone,” said Mama Owl.

“Instead of throwing them away, we can recycle newspapers, cardboard, glass bottles, plastic bottles, and metal cans so they can be turned into something else.”

“Like my water bottle!” Athena exclaimed, taking it out of her backpack.
“It’s made of recycled plastic.”



“And my necklace,” added Mama Owl. “This piece is made of recycled glass.
So many things are reusable, Athena, if we make time to collect them.”

For the rest of the morning, Mama Owl told Athena about all sorts of health policies and why they make a difference.



Get vaccinated to prevent common diseases

Drive slowly in school zones to protect others who may be crossing the street





Use your seatbelt to
stay safe in case of a
car accident



And by Wednesday morning, Athena really did feel fantastic. She was finally
ready to go back to school.

As soon as she was seated at her desk, Athena raised her wing and waited for Mr. Gyan to call on her.

He was both wise and kind, and Athena knew he was going to love the idea she was about to share.

“Mr. Gyan, may we please build a classroom recycling center? I think it will help keep us and the planet healthy.”



Her teacher smiled. “What a wonderful idea, Athena. What inspired you?”
“My mama,” said Athena. “She taught me all about health policies while I was at home.”



“Would you care to share more about what you learned?” Mr. Gyan asked. Health policy was one of his favorite subjects, too!



Athena stood to face her classmates. “Policies are instructions from our leaders in government that help us stay healthy and safe. We might not like them, but they’re important because they protect us.”

Mr. Gyan nodded. “And how does recycling make a difference in the world?”

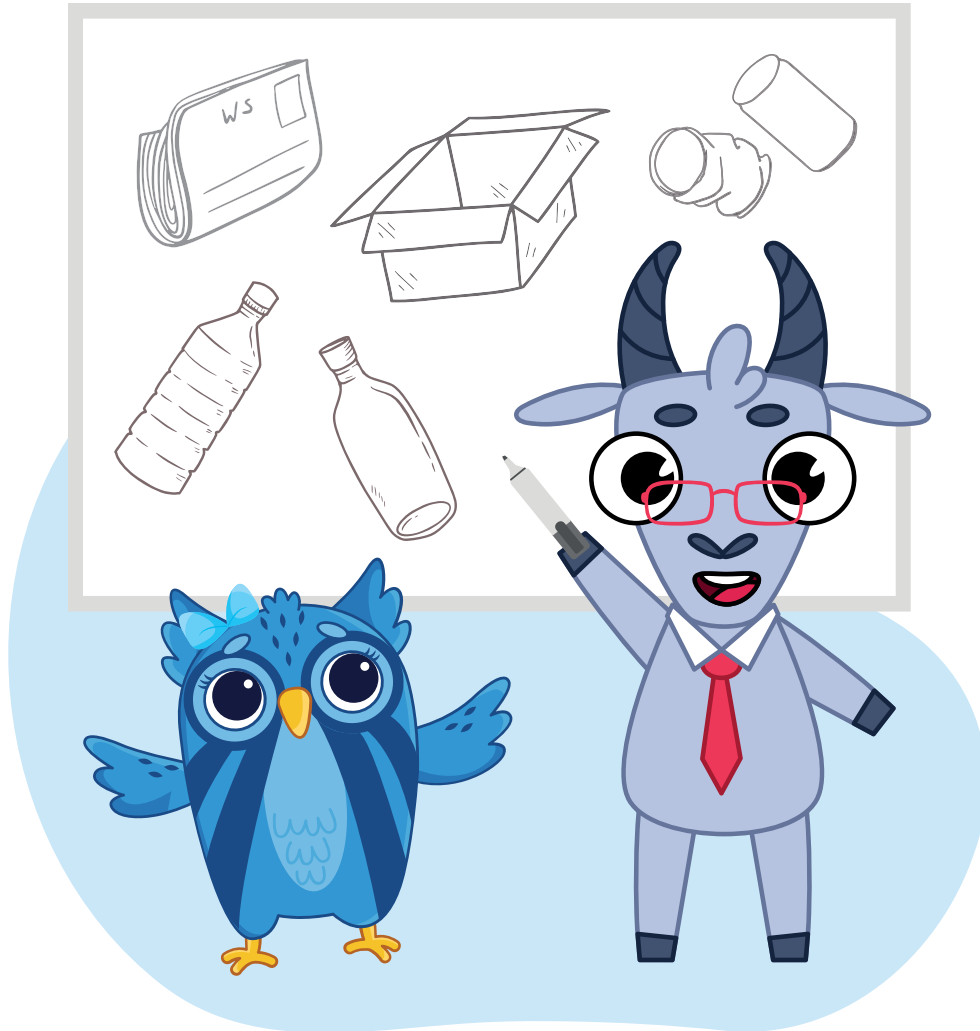


“Recycling means we can reuse things instead of throwing them away,” Athena told her class.

She held up her water bottle for everyone to see.

“This is made of recycled plastic that could’ve polluted the ocean.”

“What else can be recycled?” asked Athena’s friend Hui.
“Lots of things!” said Athena, and as she listed them, Mr. Gyan made notes on the whiteboard.



The next day, Mr. Gyan brought three recycling bins to class. Together, Athena and her classmates labelled them and set them up next to the trashcan. In their classroom, they would recycle paper, plastic bottles, and metal cans.





“Just imagine all the new things that will be created!” exclaimed Hui. Athena was thrilled. Helping her friends sort their recyclables was fun.

“Is this what you were hoping for, Athena?” asked Mr. Gyan.
“Definitely,” she replied. “It might be even better than an assembly.”



Mr. Gyan chuckled. “I think other classes will want to set up recycling centers, too. Would you like to help them get started? You can share what you’ve learned about health policy.”

Athena couldn’t wait.

You can practice health policy just like Athena!

Set up recycling bins around your home to separate recyclables from trash.
And remember, the longer we care for the health of our planet, the longer our planet will take care of us!



THE END

Can you find the following recycled objects in this book?



Writing this series of storybooks is a dream come true and is more rewarding than I ever could have imagined. I want kids of all ages to know that working in health policy is as viable as becoming a doctor, an architect, a teacher, or a farmer.

Thank you so much to my teammates for helping me conceptualize and write each book; to our amazing editor, Aquinnah Bree; and to our talented illustrators, Melina Sugliano and Rodrigo Palacios. In creating this series, we have also created a lifelong bond.

- Ana Rita Gonzalez, President & CEO, Policy Wisdom LLC

We truly hope you enjoyed reading this edition in the Athena's
Adventures in Health Policy series!

We invite you to encourage the young people in your life
who are interested in public health to learn more about us
and our networks.

Please follow us on social media and join the conversation!



Scan the QR code to know
the others books of the series





Today is assembly day, and a firefighter is coming to speak to Athena's school. Sadly, Athena has a cold... and her mom is making her stay home!

Together, they explore the policies that keep us safe and healthy. By the end of the day, Athena knows all about recycling and why it's so important.

Through Athena's Adventures in Health Policy, Policy Wisdom aims to inspire the next generation of public health professionals and show them the importance and impact of health policies.

Learn more about our mission at policywisdom.com.

