Compost game

**Grade Level:** Preschool

**Season:** Spring

**Larger IGS Unit:**
Soil, In the School Garden

**Essential Questions**
What are decomposers?
What do they do?
What are the ingredients in compost?

**Objective**
Students roll dice to collect cards with different ingredients for compost. This game is an introduction to the term “decompose”, “compost”, and “decomposer”.

**Materials**
Compost game cards (with cards for Brown/Carbon, Decomposers, Green/Nitrogen and Plastic)
Die

**Intro**
Ask if anyone knows what compost is. What is it made of? How do we use it in the garden? Explain that we will play a game to build our own compost pile.

Lay cards out with numbers facing up. Demonstrate how to roll a die, count the number of dots and find a card with corresponding number. Show students what is on the card. Explain that students will take turns rolling the dice and collecting cards with different ingredients of compost.

**Activity**
Students play the game. As they collect cards ask them questions about what is on them and if it is an ingredient of compost. When they get a decomposer card be sure to use the word and ask them what a decomposer is. Explain that decomposers break things down. Discuss examples of decomposers in the garden (roly polys, centipedes, worms, spiders, ants, and so on). When they pull a plastic card ask them: can we compost plastic?

After all of the cards have been collected it’s time to make a compost pile! Each card is color coded by type (Black=decomposers, brown=carbon, green=food, red=plastic). Have students sort their cards by color/type. “Recycle” the plastic in the middle of the table.
Give them the recipe for compost. With older kids you can explain that it’s two parts brown/carbon to one part green/nitrogen and lots of decomposers. With younger kids explain that the recipe is a lot of brown, a little bit of green/worm food and some decomposers. Have them check that they have the ingredients they need, and if they don’t they can trade.

_Wrap up/ Assessment_
Review what can be composted.

_Extension_
Build a classroom worm bin (http://compost.css.cornell.edu/worms/steps.html)