













# Three Ways You Can Keep ‘Tons’ of Waste From Entering the Landfill

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In 2018, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimated 3.4 million tons of municipal solid waste (MSW) was generated from carpets and rugs. The report further stated that 73% of the 3.4 million tons were landfilled. To put into perspective, that is the equivalent weight of 141,828 average size school buses. The numbers are shocking; however, what is more concerning is the majority of carpet manufacturers offer a reclamation program - providing a solution to divert these materials from the landfill. The total solution is two-fold, we must select responsibly manufactured carpet and require the materials be reclaimed at the end of their useful life on the floor to ensure a positive impact on our environment.

Here are three ways your flooring choices can reduce landfill waste, participate in a circular economy, and influence environmental change within our industry.

## Appropriate Attributes

The innovation in manufacturing, technology and textile design has provided a new platform for education design to reimagine how we incorporate soft surface flooring into a learning environment. The industry offers a variety of color, pattern, shape, and size options to best meet your design aesthetic. The Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) states, "carpeted floors cushion the impact of slips and falls, dampen unwanted noise, and make it easier to learn and concentrate." Understanding how to balance design and functionality is key when selecting the best solution for your space - considerations include: expected foot traffic, activity within the space, maintenance routine, and turn cycle. By considering functionality with design, you ensure the best solution is selected which ultimately will lead to a longer lifespan - reducing material waste.



Collaboration (Carpet Tile 5T497) in Progress (97515) + True Progress (97496) + Meaningful Progress (97865) + Efficient Progress (97375) + Rapid Progress (97405) and Huddle (Carpet Tile 5T498) in Progress (97515) and Kickoff (Carpet Tile 5T499) in Progress (97515) + Steady Progress (97518) and Follow up (Carpet Tile 5T500) in Progress (97515) + Steady Progress (97518)



Follow Up (Carpet Tile 5T500) in Steady Progress (97518) | Installed Ashlar

## Material Health

Material Health is often described as avoiding toxic chemicals harmful to factory workers, installers, and building occupants, creating products that support the health & wellbeing of humans and the environment. Cradle to Cradle Certified® Program is a reliable third-party certification that assesses the chemicals and materials used in a product to ensure they are safe to human health and the environment, and are safe to be recycled for future use in products. As the global standard for designing products that are safe, circular and responsibly made, a Cradle to Cradle Certification helps in making a responsible carpet selection as it signals that all ingredients have been inventoried, assessed to identify hazards, and optimized to remove any risks associated with the product.

## Product Circularity

School districts are incorporating the principle of zero waste into their curriculum by focusing on three ways to dispose of trash: recycle, reuse, and landfill. We can use this same concept to understand product circularity and avoid landfills. For a product



Collaboration (Carpet Tile 5T497) in Strategic Impact (97396) + Rapid Progress (97405) and Kickoff (Carpet Tile 5T499) in Steady Progress (97518) | Installed Stagger

to be circular, the manufacturer must use recycled content and design a product to be recycled. Recycled content could include pre-consumer and/or post-consumer recycled content. The manufacturer must use materials and ingredients in its manufacturing process that allow the final product to be recycled at its end of life. The ability to source sustainable and beautiful carpets is a reality today and is needed to ensure a beautiful planet tomorrow. When specifying flooring, ensure that reclamation at product end of life is included to participate in a circular economy.

Images: Teamwork, a new flooring collection by Shaw Contract.  
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