

Surf Soup® TV

The Great Book Swap

Transforming a Junk Food Monster into an Imagination Station

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Letter to Teachers & Educators

**** Subject: Empower Your Students with a Science, Health & Eco-Adventure! ****

Dear Educator,

Welcome to the **** Surf Soup TV Lab ****! As teachers, you face the daily challenge of helping students maintain focus while teaching them to navigate a world full of distractions, single-use waste, and ultra-processed habits.

The Great Book Swap: Transforming a Junk Food Monster into an Imagination Station is designed to be a powerful, engaging tool for your classroom. Written and illustrated by Emmy-Honored Animator Donna Kay Lau—and grounded in her 30+ years of experience as a veteran fitness professional—this story wraps critical life lessons inside an action-packed adventure.

When a school vending machine turns into a literal junk food monster, the students have to step up. This comprehensive **** STEAM Activity Guide **** bridges the narrative seamlessly into your lesson plans:

*** ** Science & Tech: **** Demystifying the "sugar crash" and decoding hidden ingredients on nutrition labels.

* * *Engineering & Math:* * Auditing classroom waste and prototyping a tool to rescue friends from a plastic jungle.
* * *Art & Literacy:* * Exploring emotional vocabulary, mindfulness, and creative character design.

This guide provides everything you need to foster media literacy, environmental stewardship, and health empowerment. Thank you for bringing the world of Surf Soup® into your classroom and inspiring the next generation of eco-engineers and healthy decision-makers!

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🏠 Letter to Parents, Caregivers & Families
* * Subject: Giving Your Child the Tools to Take Charge of Their Health * *

Dear Parents & Caregivers,

We all want our children to grow up vibrant, energetic, and healthy, but it can feel like an uphill battle against bright packaging, sugary snacks, and endless single-use plastics.

The Great Book Swap was created to change the conversation around nutrition and the environment from a chore into a fun, empowering adventure. As a veteran fitness trainer with over 30 years of gym-industry experience, I wrote this book because I believe children shouldn't just be told what to eat—they need to be empowered to choose well for themselves. When adults aren't around, our kids need the confidence to read a label, spot a marketing trap, and understand how food fuels their amazing brains.

In this story, Koa and his friends learn firsthand what happens when instant gratification leads to a massive sugar

crash and a messy plastic jungle. By utilizing this **Home STEAM Guide**, you can bring these critical lessons right to your kitchen table:

- * Track how whole foods versus processed snacks impact your child's mood and stamina.
- * Become "Label Detectives" together in your pantry to hunt down hidden sugars and chemical dyes.
- * Audit your family's weekly plastic footprint and brainstorm fun, sustainable alternatives.

By turning mindfulness, nutrition, and recycling into hands-on family games, we give our kids the power to take absolute charge of their own futures. Thank you for diving into the Surf Soup® universe with your family!



SCIENCE (S): The Sugar Crash Experiment When Koa and his friends ate too many neon cheese puffs, their brains turned into "soggy seaweed."

Let's study how different foods affect our real-world energy levels! **Activity: The Food Fuel Log** **The Mission:** Track how different foods make your body and mind feel. **The Setup:** Draw three columns on a piece of paper: What I Ate, My Energy Level Right After, and My Energy Level 1 Hour Later. **The Test:** Day

1: Log your physical feelings after eating a whole-food snack (like an apple or a crown of Brock Lee).

Day 2: Log your feelings after a high-sugar or ultra-processed snack. **The Discovery:** Use colored markers to draw a green happy face for sustained, focused energy or an orange sleepy face for a sugar crash. Notice a pattern? 

TECHNOLOGY (T): Label Detective Challenge Vendy was stuffed with hidden health traps disguised as bright colors. Let's use our tech-detective eyes to scan real-world packaging and decode what we are putting in our bodies!

Activity: Crack the Ingredient Code
The Mission: Hunt down hidden chemical dyes and sugar traps in your pantry.
The Steps: Collect three packaged snacks from home. Flip them over to inspect the Nutrition Facts panel and the ingredient list.
The Hunt: Search for the "Big Three Monster Clues":
Added Sugars: Is the total higher than 10 grams per serving?
High Fructose Corn Syrup: Is it listed as one of the very first three ingredients?
Artificial Colors: Do you see synthetic names like Red 40, Yellow 5, or Blue 1?
The Fix: Circle any clues you find in bright neon ink. Brainstorm a healthy, single-ingredient alternative to replace them! 🏗️

ENGINEERING (E): The Great Plastic Escape
Bao and Gin Duey were suffocating inside a giant web of crinkly, single-use plastic wrappers. Let's engineer a mechanical tool to rescue them safely from the junk food monster!

Activity: Build a Trash-Gripper Prototype
The Challenge: Design and build a functional tool using only recycled materials to pick up loose plastic wrappers.
Allowed Materials: Cardboard strips, rubber bands, wooden chopsticks, plastic bottle caps, string, and tape.
The Test: Place a crumpled plastic bag or a soft plush toy on the floor. Stand up straight and try to pick it up using only your newly engineered tool.
Design Iteration: If the object slips, modify your tool's grip! Try adding notched cardboard teeth or rubber bands to create more mechanical friction.

🎨 ART (A): Character Design Studio
Vendy started out as a loud, flashy monster but transformed into a sweet, smiling Imagination Station through the power of creativity and compassion!

Activity: The Ultimate Vending Transformation
The Mission: Illustrate the two completely different sides of Vendy's personality.
The Steps: Fold a piece of blank drawing paper completely in half.
On the Left Side: Draw Vendy as the Junk Food Monster. Use jagged lines, flashing neon colors,

grinding sharp metal gears, and plastic wrappers choking his display screen.

On the Right Side: Draw Vendy after Koa's golden compassion heals him. Give him a warm, friendly smile, clean lines, and fill his display window with colorful Surf Soup book covers spinning on bright silver coils!



MATH (M): The Single-Use Plastic Audit Plastic wrappers don't dissolve—they clog up machines, fill landfills, and hurt our beautiful ocean friends. Let's measure our real-world plastic footprint.

Activity: The Weekly Wrapper Tally

Mission: Count how much plastic packaging your classroom or family generates in one single week. **The Graph:** Create a simple tally sheet divided into four clear columns: Chip Bags, Candy Wrappers, Plastic Bottles, and Juice Pouches. **The Tally:** Every time a piece of single-use plastic packaging is thrown away, add a tally mark. **The Calculation:** At the end of the week, add up the numbers. Multiply that total number by 52 to calculate how many pieces of plastic waste your group generates in an entire year! **The Swap:** Brainstorm three specific changes you can make to drop that massive annual number down closer to zero (like swapping to reusable silicone snack pouches).



BONUS: The Surf Soup Vocabulary Swap

Teachers/Parents: Print this out and have students draw a line connecting the words from the story on the left to their correct definition on the right!

Sugar Crash ————— [A] Showing love and care to our friends and our planet.

Compassion ————— [B] The dynamic shift from feeling sluggish to feeling creative.

Vendy ————— [C] When your energy drops super low after eating sweet junk food.

Brain Fog ————— [D] A cool machine character who loves stories more than snacks.

(Answer Key for Teachers: 1-C, 2-A, 3-D, 4-B)