

Our Centre encourages the awareness of environmental responsibility and implements practices that contribute to a sustainable future. Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment. We practice and promote sustainability through reducing waste, minimising consumption, and protecting and conserving wildlife and natural habitats.

Purpose

We believe in educating children about being environmentally responsible which is promoted and supported through daily practices, resource and interactions. Sustainable practice is encouraged within the Centre and community, assisting children and families to become advocates for a sustainable future.

Implementation

Teaching and learning about being environmentally responsible starts with everyday practice. We believe being environmentally responsible should be embedded into the operations of the Centre, rather than being a tokenistic 'theme' that is investigated every now and then. Our Centre is committed to protecting our environment to ensure a sustainable future for our children. This involves educators, children and families working together to protect our environment as we educate children about the importance of being environmentally responsible within our everyday practice.

Management will:

- Network with the local community to keep up to date with current practices and ideas for being environmentally responsible. This may include installing water tanks, grey water system, converting toilet cisterns to dual flush, and converting to water saving taps.
- Encourage educators, families and children to engage in sustainable practices and appreciate the natural environment.
- Provide professional development opportunities for educators to learn about integrating environmentally sustainable education into all areas of their program
- Review the development of a sustainable Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) development using environmentally principles
- Review policies and procedures within the Centre to achieve more sustainable outcomes (e.g. using individual hand towels instead of paper towel to dry hands)
- Use electronic communication where possible to reduce paper use within the office and in each room for newsletters, and other communication needs
- Conduct environmentally responsible audits to ensure consistency and continuous improvement
- Source resources and materials from *Reverse Garbage* or second-hand stores to use within the Centre
- Ensure sustainable practices are incorporated into the daily routine
- Provide colour coded bins for Organic waste, Paper recycling, mixed recyclables.

Educators will:

- Role model environmentally responsible practices
- Discuss environmentally responsible practices with the children and families as part of the curriculum
- Provide information to families on environmentally responsible practices that are implemented at the Centre and encourage the application of these practices in the home environment
- Share ideas between educators, children, and families about environmentally responsible ideas, implementation, and resources. This will be supported through our communication strategies, including parent meetings, emails, newsletters, and informal conversations.
- Use a worm farm/composting bin/ to reduce food waste in the Centre. Children will be encouraged to place food scraps into separate containers for use in the worm farm or composting bin. Educators will provide visual guides and discuss with the children and families which scraps worms can eat, which foods can be composted,



and which food scraps must go in the bin. The children will be involved in maintaining the worm farm and compost bin.

- Role model energy and water conservation practices: For example, turning off lights and air-conditioning when a room is not in use, emptying water play containers onto garden areas.
- Seek to purchase equipment that is environmentally friendly where possible. Educators will reduce the amount of plastic and disposable equipment they purchase and select materials that are made of natural materials.
- Use the concept of ‘*reduce, re-use and recycle*’, which will become part of everyday practice for both children and educators to build lifelong attitudes towards environmentally responsible practices.

Sustainable Practices

This may include:

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE	IDEAS
RECYCLING	Provide bins and signage for waste and recycled materials Recycle paper and all other recyclable rubbish Use recycled water (e.g. for watering gardens)
GARDENING	Plant vegetables, herbs, and fruit trees Establish a worm farm Give food scraps to worms or Centre pets, or to a staff member to take home for their pet/s Provide education to children about activities such as ‘garden to plate’ activities. Provide opportunities for children to participate in experiences such as seed sprouting, vegetable gardening, cooking with what is grown, and provide education about weeds
ENERGY CONSERVATION	Install LED lighting where possible Turn off non-LED lights when not in use Turn off electrical appliances at the outlet when not in use Use natural ventilation and insulated blinds/drapes rather than air conditioning when temperatures are not extreme
WATER CONSERVATION	Using half flush on the toilet Turn off the taps and ensure leaking taps are fixed immediately Collect rainwater and use in the garden and for water/sand play Use water play water on the garden rather than tipping out at the end of the day
NATURE AND WILDLIFE	Use natural materials – trees, blocks, boxes etc. in arts and crafts and play Educate children about the natural decomposition cycle through exposure and participation in worm farms and composting food scraps Educate children in how to care for pets, letting them actively participate in caring for the Centre pets. Plant ‘bird attracting’ plants and install a birdbath Plant ‘butterfly attracting’ plants Collaborate with wildlife educators to assist in educating children



COMMUNICATE	Provide families with hints and tips in newsletters about how they can become sustainable at home Use scrap paper for art and craft Use both sides of paper for drawing
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Source: Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE): www.aaee.org.au Department of Environment and Energy: www.environment.gov.au Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2011). Kearns, K. (2017). *The Business of Childcare* (4th Ed.). NSW Early Childhood Environmental Education Network (ECEEN): www.eceen.org.au Queensland Early Childhood Sustainability Network (QECSN): www.qecsn.org.au Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

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National Quality Standard – NQS		
Quality Area 3: Physical Environment		
3.2	Use	The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.
3.2.1	Inclusive Environment	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
3.2.2	Resource' support play-based learning	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning
3.2.3	Environmentally responsible	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.
Early Years Learning Framework		
Learning Outcome 2 - Children are connected with and contribute to their world		
2.4	Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment	

