

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



POLICY STATEMENT

Our service is committed to creating a sustainable and inclusive environment that promotes children's connections to their surroundings and community. Our service is dedicated to integrating sustainability practices into our daily operations and educational programs.

We recognise the importance of environmental awareness and responsibility in early childhood education. This policy outlines our pledge to sustainability and our strategies for promoting sustainable practices within our preschool community.

We believe that by involving children, families, staff and the wider community, we can collectively work towards minimising waste and fostering a deep connection to the environment and community.

GOALS

Our purpose is to provide a holistic and sustainable learning environment that supports children's development, encourages respect for the environment and encourages responsible resource use. Our service will ensure the environment is safe, clean and well maintained. Children's awareness of the environment will be promoted through daily practices, resources and interactions.

Our service aims to foster a child's connection to the environment and community, nurturing their sense of belonging and responsibility, by;

- Fostering children's understanding, love and respect for our preschool environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land.
- Waste reduction and recycling
- Energy and water conservation
- Using sustainable resources and materials
- Outdoor learning and nature-based experiences
- Professional development and collaboration
- Respect for the environment

Our service intends to achieve these connections by;

- Providing opportunities for children to explore and engage with the natural world through regular nature walks, gardening activities, and outdoor play.
- Encouraging children to develop an appreciation for local ecosystems, cultural heritage and the knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people regarding sustainable practices.
- Fostering relationships with local community members, including Aboriginal elders, to share knowledge and stories that deepen children's understanding of the land and its significance.
- Being guided by the 17 UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals in our practices, to broaden our learning and awareness beyond our local community, and to support children to understand how our decision and actions impact the wider world.

STRATEGIES

Foster children's understanding, love and respect for our preschool environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land.

- I. Include and embed sustainable practices into our daily program / routines that integrate sustainability concepts and encourages active exploration of the natural environment.
- II. Role model sustainable practices
- III. Incorporate sustainability principles across various learning areas, including science, mathematics, art and STEAM.

Waste reduction and recycling

- I. Implement waste reduction strategies, such as waste segregation and recycling programs, to minimise the environmental impact.
We use colour-coded waste sorting bins at meal times, have coloured recycling and craft use bins which children are educated in using.
- II. Educate children about the importance of waste reduction and the 7R's of Sustainability (Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle and Respect) through hands-on activities and discussions.
We take part in recycling schemes and initiatives such as 'Lids of Kids', Mobile musters, soft plastic recycling, Return and Earn of plastic bottles, Nappy drive, book and clothing drives / stalls. Our classes partake in recycling games, group times, inclusions, excursions and participating in the local annual 'Waste2Art' initiative.
- III. Encourage the reduction of single-use plastics and rubbish by introducing 'Nudie lunchboxes'. *This will minimise yoghurt pouches and single-use plastics. Support reusable containers as a substitute for food wrapping.*

Energy and water conservation

- I. Promote energy-saving practices, such as turning off lights, fans and heaters when not in use and utilising natural lighting whenever possible.
- II. Utilise the solar panels connected to our service during sunny days, ensure maintenance and servicing is carried out regularly to maximise benefits of solar availability.
- III. Ventilation through open windows, doors and use of air filtering system.
- IV. Encourage responsible water use through the installation of our water tank, promotion of half / full flush in the toilets, limiting supply of water in sandpit play from our tank supply along with watering plants in the cooler parts of the day. Planning activities that raise awareness of water conservation and sustainable practices.

Sustainable resources and materials

- I. Prioritise the use of sustainable, non-toxic and environmentally friendly materials in all aspects of the preschool environment. *Toner and printer cartridges, batteries, hand soap cartons and non-confidential paper waste is recycled.*
- II. A range of recycled materials and resources are collected and used on a daily basis. Eg: boxes for construction, pipes and plastic bowls for sandpit and outdoor kitchen, loose parts for STEAM such as old phones, cameras, computer parts.

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- III. Use of recycled photocopy paper, donated paper from local community businesses used for drawing and craft.
- IV. Engage children in activities that promote the reuse, repurposing and recycling of materials to foster a culture of sustainability.

Outdoor learning and nature-based experiences

- I. Provide regular opportunities for outdoor play and nature-based learning experiences, allowing children to connect with and appreciate the natural world.
- II. Gardening, watering, exploring nature through scavenger hunts, bird watching / counting, drawing in nature, building using natural resources.
- III. Develop and maintain outdoor spaces that support biodiversity, providing opportunities for exploration, gardening and observing local flora and fauna.
- IV. Children engage in gardening, watering, feeding our worms and collecting worm juice to use on our gardens, use of compost bins and food scraps also given to families that have chickens at home.

Professional development and collaboration

- I. Environmental / sustainability leader appointed within staff.
- II. Provide ongoing professional development opportunities for educators to enhance their understanding of sustainability practices and methodologies.
- III. Foster collaborative partnerships with families, the wider community, and relevant organisations to share knowledge, resources, and sustainable practices.
- IV. Use of local Council and Government departments as sources of information on sustainable practices used in the local community.

Respect for the environment

- I. Implement the 7 R's of sustainability (Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle and Respect) within our curriculum and daily practices.
- II. Teach children about the impact of waste on the environment and promote mindful consumption habits.
- III. Engage children in waste reduction initiatives, such as composting, worm farm, recycling programs and minimising single-use items.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Approved Provider responsibilities

- I. Ensure the service operates in line with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations 2011.

Nominated Supervisor responsibilities

- I. Ensure sustainability and environmental information will be promoted to all staff, families and visitors.
- II. Provide support and advice to all staff with regard to the implementation of the Sustainability policy.

Educator responsibilities

- I. Adhere to the strategies and practices of the Sustainability Policy.
- II. Educators and staff will act as role models and demonstrate responsible and sustainable behaviour at all times.
- III. Using and promoting the use of recycling and composting bins, water and energy conservation
- IV. Discussing sustainability with children and demonstrating a positive and proactive approach to the management of sustainability and caring for our environment in the service.

Family's responsibilities

- I. Considering waste and recycling practices with their children at home, extending the purpose of this policy within the entire community beyond our service parameters.
- II. Implementing sustainable practices when at the service.

RELATED GUIDELINES, STANDARDS, FRAMEWORKS, LEGISLATION

National Quality Standards

Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice – Standards 1.1.3

Quality Area 3: Physical Environment – Standards 3.3.1, 3.2.3

Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements – Standards 4.2

Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities – Standards 6.1.1

Australian Early Years Learning Framework 2.0 2022:

Embedding sustainable practices in our curriculum to promote children's active exploration, investigation and understanding of the natural world.

Fostering children's connection with nature, their appreciation of diversity, and their role in caring for the environment.

Implementing sustainable practices that minimise waste, conserve resources and promote environmental sustainability.

Engaging children in meaningful experiences that develop their understanding and appreciation of the natural environment.

UNESCO and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Goal 2: Zero hunger

Goal 3: Good health and well-being

Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation

Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy

Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure

Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities

Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production

Goal 13: Climate action

Goal 14: Life below water

Goal 15: Life on land

Goal 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal

Office of the Childrens Guardian: Child Safe Standards

Standard 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Standard 3: Families and communities are informed and involved.

RESOURCES / USEFUL LINKS

NSW Government Office of Environment and Heritage;

www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Department of Environment and Energy

www.environment.gov.au

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MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be monitored to ensure compliance with legislative requirements and unless deemed necessary through the identification of practice gaps, the service will review this Policy as required.

Families and staff are essential stakeholders in the policy review process and will be given opportunity and encouragement to be actively involved.

In accordance with R. 172 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the service will ensure that families of children enrolled at the service are notified at least 14 days before making any change to a policy or procedure that may have significant impact on the provision of education and care to any child enrolled at the service; a family's ability to utilise the service; the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected.