

Environmentally Responsible Policy

We encourage awareness of environmental responsibilities and implement practices that contribute to a sustainable future. Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment. Sustainability is often thought about in terms of environmental sustainability—reducing waste, minimising consumption and protecting and conserving wildlife and natural habitats.

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.

Related Policies

Physical Environment
Programming Policy

PURPOSE

We aim to ensure the environment is safe, clean and sustainable. We believe in educating children about being environmentally responsible which is promoted through daily practices, resource and interactions. Sustainable practice will be encouraged within the Service assisting children and families to become advocates for a sustainable future.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Learning about being environmentally responsible starts with everyday practice. We believe being environmentally responsible should be embedded into the operations of the Service. Our Service 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:

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- Network with the local community to keep up to date with current practices and ideas for being environmentally responsible. This may include water tanks, grey water system, converting toilet cisterns to dual flush and converting water saving taps.
- Encourage educators, families and children to engage in innovative practices and appreciate the natural environment.
- Ensure the Service joins a preferred provider e.g. the NSW Early Childhood Environmental Education Network (or State equivalent) to liaise with other education and care services and keep up to date on practices and ideas for being environmentally responsible.
- Where relevant, review policies and procedures within the Service to find more sustainable outcomes. (E.g. Using hand dryers or washers instead of paper towel to dry hands)
- Where possible electronic communication will be used to reduce paper use within the office and in each room for newsletters, billing 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 Service.
- Ensure sustainable practices are incorporated into the daily routine. These will include:

Sustainable Practice	Ideas
Recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recycling paper and rubbish - Using recycled water
Gardening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planting vegetables, herbs and fruits - Establishing a Worm Farm - Give food scraps to worms or the animals - Educating children and have them participate in 'garden to plate' activities. Educating children about seed sprouting, weeding, vegetable gardens, cooking etc. - Collaborate with the local community
Energy Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Turn off lights and switches when not in use
Water Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Using half flush on the toilet - Turning off the water when not in use - Encouraging shorter showers - Turning off tap when brushing teeth - Collect rain water and use in the garden, for water/sand play
Natural Resources & Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caring for pets - Reusing natural materials – trees, blocks, boxes etc - Educating children in the natural decomposition cycle through exposure and participation in worm farms and composting food scraps - Educating children in how to care for pets, letting them actively participate in caring for the Service pets. - Plant 'bird attracting' plants and install a birdbath - Create a lizard lounge - Collaborate with wildlife educators to assist in educating children

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Communicate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Display in the foyer area information for families and visitors outlining the Service's sustainability journey- Provide families with hints and tips in newsletters about how they can become sustainable at home
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Educators will:

- Incorporate recycling as part of everyday practice at the Service. Recycling containers will be provided throughout meal times and experiences.
- Role model environmentally responsible practices.
- Discuss environmentally responsible practices with the children and families & local community as part of the curriculum.
- Provide information to families on environmentally responsible practices that are implemented at the Service 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 followed through our communication strategies, including parent meetings, emails, newsletters and conversations.
- Use a worm farm/composting bin/ to reduce food waste in the Service. Children will be encouraged to place food scraps into separate containers for use in the worm farm or composting bin. Educators will discuss with the children and families, which scraps worms can eat, which foods can be composted. The children will be involved in maintaining the worm farm and compost bin.
- Role model energy and water conservation practices of 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.

Source

- The Business of Childcare, Karen Kearns. 2004
- Education and Care Services National Regulation. 2015
- National Quality Standards
- NSW Department of Environment and Heritage – www.environment.nsw.gov.au
- Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities – www.environment.gov.au
- Early Childhood Environmental Education Network www.eceen.org.au
- Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE) www.aeee.org.au NSW:
- Early Childhood Environmental Education Network (ECEEN) www.eceen.org.au
- Queensland Early Childhood Sustainability Network (QECSN) www.qecsn.org.au
- Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC) www.eeec.org.au
- Revised National Quality Standards

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Review

Policy Reviewed	Modifications	Next Review Date
February 2017	Minor adjustments made with further suggestions on how to embed sustainability into everyday practice	February 2018
October 2017	Updated the references to comply with the revised National Quality Standard	February 2018
February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Added 'related policies' list- Changed title from: Environmental Sustainability Policy to Environmentally Responsible Policy- Integrated new terminology through the document – environmentally responsible	February 2019