ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE POLICY

Our Service 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.

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

Animal and Pet Policy Educational Program Policy	Physical Environment Policy

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 Service and community, assisting children and families to become advocates for a sustainable future.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, educators, staff, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, students, volunteers and visitors of the Service.

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 Service, rather than being a tokenistic 'theme' that is investigated every now and then. 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 'creating, promoting and maintaining sustainable communities.' (EYLF, V2.0)

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR 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
- engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander elders, where possible, to explore and share their own history, culture and rich sustainable practices
- encourage educators, families and children to engage in sustainable practices and appreciate the natural environment.
- reflect on environmental, economic and social impacts on the world in all aspects of Service operation and include in the review and development of a sustainable Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
- where relevant, review policies and procedures within the Service to achieve more sustainable outcomes and practices
- use electronic communication where possible to reduce paper use within the office and in each room for newsletters, billing, and other communication needs
- source resources and materials second-hand to use within the Service
- ensure sustainable practices are incorporated into the daily routine
- provide colour coded bins for landfill only, organic waste, paper recycling, mixed recyclables.

EDUCATORS WILL:

- encourage children to take an active role in caring for the environment and think of ways they can contribute to a sustainable future
- incorporate recycling as part of everyday practice at the Service
- support children's commitment to social justice through curriculum decision making
- role model environmental sustainability practices during play
- discuss environmentally responsible practices with the children and families as part of the curriculum
- provide information to families on environmental 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 supported through our communication strategies, including parent meetings, emails, newsletters, and informal conversations
- 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
- use 'green cleaning' products to replace chemicals where possible.

SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES 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 Service 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 • Teach children to turn off tap when brushing teeth • 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 • Plant 'bird attracting' plants and install a birdbath • Plant 'butterfly attracting' plants • Collaborate with wildlife educators to assist in educating children
COMMUNICATE	• Use scrap paper for art and craft • Use both sides of paper for drawing

SOURCES

Australian Association for Environmental Education (AAEE) www.aaee.org.au

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2026). *Guide to the National Quality Framework*

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2023). *Information sheet. Belonging, Being & Becoming. Sustainability.*

Australian Government Department of Education. *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.V2.0, 2022*

Department of Environment and Energy: www.environment.gov.au

Education and Care Services National Regulations. (Amended 2025)

Queensland Early Childhood Sustainability Network (QECSN) www.qecsn.org.au

UNESCO. Sustainable Development Goals- Resources for educators

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	FEBRUARY 2026	NEXT REVIEW DATE	FEBRUARY 2027
VERSION NUMBER	V12.02.26		
MODIFICATIONS	• annual policy review • sources checked for currency and updated as required		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS		NEXT REVIEW DATE
FEBRUARY 2025	• annual policy review • added Childcare Centre Desktop Related resources section • sources checked for currency and additional resources added		FEBRUARY 2026