

Environmental Sustainability

Introduction

As an education and care community, we can encourage and increase awareness of environmental responsibilities and implement practices that contribute to a sustainable future. Children can be supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment. Environmentally sustainable practices should be embedded into the operations of the education and care service and involve educators, children and families in order to be successful.

Goals

Quirindi Preschool Kindergarten 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. Sustainable practices will be encouraged within the education and care service. Educators, children and families will be encouraged to become advocates for a sustainable future.

Strategies

The Approved Provider and/or the Nominated Supervisor will:

- Consider current research and strategies, participate in an environmental education network.
- Encourage educators, families and children to engage in innovative practices and appreciate the wonder of the natural world while protecting the planet for future generations.

Educators will:

- Educators will make sustainable practices a part of the daily routine.
These include:
 - Recycling
 - Gardening
 - Energy conservation
 - Water conservation
 - Sustainable equipment purchases
- Include recycling as part of everyday practice at the education and care service. Recycling containers will be provided throughout the service.
- Role model sustainable practices.
- Discuss sustainable practices with the children and families as part of the services education and care curriculum.
- Provide information to families on sustainable practices that are implemented at the education and care service and encourage the application of these practices in the home environment.
- Share ideas between educators, children and families about sustainable ideas, implementation and resources. This can be done at parent meetings, through emails, newsletters and conversations.
- Use a worm farm or composting bin to reduce food waste in the education and care service. Children will be encouraged to place food scraps into separate containers for use

in the worm farm or the composting bin. Educators will discuss with the children and families which scraps, worms can eat and which foods can be composted. The children will be involved in maintaining the worm farm and compost.

- 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.
- Aim to purchase equipment that is eco-friendly where possible. Educators will reduce the amount of plastic and disposable equipment they purchase and select materials that are made of natural materials and fibres.
- Seek to embed sustainable practice in the education and care service. The concepts of “reduce, re-use and recycle” will become part of everyday practice for both children and educators to build lifelong attitudes towards sustainable practices.
- Use local Council and Government departments as sources of information on sustainable practices used in the local community. They will liaise with the Council and Government departments for possible grants available to put in place water and energy conservation practices in the education and care service. These may include water tanks, grey water systems, converting toilet cisterns to dual flush and converting to water saving taps.

Evaluation

Quirindi Preschool Kindergarten environment reflects sustainable practices, ‘Green Cleaning’ and eco-friendly choices. Educators, children, families and the wider community will learn together and embrace environmentally friendly practices.

Statutory Legislation and Considerations

- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- ACECQA’s Guide to the National Quality Framework
- Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

Sources

- Australian Association for Environmental Education – www.aaee.org.au
- NSW Government Office of Environment and Heritage – www.environment.nsw.gov.au
- Department of the Environment and Energy – www.environment.gov.au
- Early Childhood Environmental Education Network – www.eceen.org.au
- ACECQA - Guide to the NQF - www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide

Links To:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations: 113, Schedule National Quality Standard
- National Quality Standards/ Elements: 3.2.3, 6.1.1

Links to other Policies

- Cleaning and Maintaining the Environment
- Interactions with Children