

Quality Area 3: Physical Environment

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 – What are we going to do?

Kootingal and District Preschool 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 – To achieve our goals

- 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.
- Endeavour to equip the service with and implement water-saving strategies, green cleaning and recycling. Where applicable, grants will be applied for to aid in the implementation of these effective environmental strategies
- Educators will make sustainable practices are part of the daily routine. These include:
 - Recycling
 - Gardening
 - Energy conservation
 - Water conservation
 - Sustainable equipment purchases

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Authority/Responsibility For
Early Childhood Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ 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.➤ Keep up to date with the latest research on environmental education through journals, resource agencies and professional development. This information will be shared with families and children

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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. ➤ 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 on to 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.
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Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

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 annually.

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

In accordance with Regulation 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.

The education and care 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.

Links to other policies:

Cleaning and Maintaining the Environment

Excursion/Preschool Events

Interactions with Children

Programming & Planning

Related Legislation:

NQS

Quality Area 3	Physical environment
Quality Area 6	Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Sources:

- Education and Care Services National Regulations
- Guide to the National Quality Standard, ACECQA
- Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
- Energy Efficiency Opportunities Act 2006
- NSW Department of Environment and Heritage – www.environment.nsw.gov.au
- Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
- Early Childhood Environmental Education Network – www.eceen.org.au
- Early Childhood Australia – www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- Early Childhood Environmental Education Network – www.eceen.org.au
- Gosford and Wyong Council (2007), climbing the little green steps: How to promote sustainability in early childhood services in your local area. Gosford, Australia.

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