

## Environmental Sustainability Policy

### Policy Statement

Sustainability has many meanings and can refer to personal and social sustainability as well as environmental sustainability. This policy focuses on environmental sustainability of the physical, natural and man-made environment and programs which support such sustainability.

Environmental sustainability is a central issue that refers to our ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Environmental Sustainability defines a pattern of interaction with the earth that improves the total quality of life, both now and in the future, in a way that maintains ecological processes on which life depends.

Our education and care services will support children in learning about their environment by providing a learning environment where they are actively encouraged to engage in sustainability practices.

Where practicable, our services will model environmentally sustainable practices in its operations for children and for the local community.

Services are to lessen the impact they have on the environment in area such as:

- energy consumption
- water consumption
- paper consumption
- waste generation

### Education and Care Services National Regulations

- Chapter 4: Operational Requirements  
Part 4.1: Educational Program and Practice
- Regulation 73: Educational program

### National Quality Standard

- Quality Area 3: Physical Environment  
Standard 3.3: The service takes an active role in caring for its environment and contributes to a sustainable future
- Element 3.3.1: Sustainable practices are embedded in service operations
  - Element 3.3.2: Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment

### Strategies and Practices

Reduce, reuse, recycle, repair, rethink and refuse are the keys to promoting and providing a sustainable environment in our child care services

## **Reduce**

- Energy and water consumption
- Wasting of resources including food

## **Reuse**

- Reuse materials and products where possible; sometimes an object can be reused for a different purpose Eg; Newspaper can be used for garden mulch, some packaging may be used in play

## **Recycle**

- Recycle glass, plastics and paper products through local recycling services
- Recycling also involves passing on things that you no longer need or use

## **Repair**

- Where possible, repair rather than throwing things away
- Children can be involved in some basic repair activities and gain valuable practical and problem solving skills while learning that things do not automatically become rubbish if they break or are damaged

## **Rethink**

- Practices that use excessive energy or are wasteful in terms of resources need rethinking Eg; is there a more environmentally friendly way of doing things? Do we really need to do this? What value does it contribute?

## **Refuse**

- Refuse unnecessary packaging and single use products when reusable products are available
- Resist pressures from commercial advertising to continually purchase new things

Children are creative thinkers who enjoy being actively involved in environmental issues as well as contributing their own ideas about the natural world and environmental sustainability

Educators are to practice and model environmentally sustainable practices where practicable in their day to day work which includes things such as:

- Use of energy efficient lighting
- Use of biodegradable “green” cleaners
- Use recycled materials where practicable Eg; toilet paper, tissues etc.
- Minimise the use of plastics including plastic bags and wraps

- Reduce food waste by offering smaller portions and offering “seconds” if the initial serve has been eaten
- Establish a compost system for food scraps and garden materials
- Dress appropriately for the weather Eg; wearing of warm clothing on cold days rather than relying automatically on heating or cooling

## **Sources and further reading**

- Woodleigh School; Woodleigh Sustainability Initiatives (2014)
- Early Childhood Connections; Childcare and children’s health an information sheet for parents, June 2008
- Mornington Peninsula Shire Sustainability Program 2014
- Early Childhood Connections; [www.ecconnections.com.au](http://www.ecconnections.com.au)