



# Environmental Sustainability Policy

## (PE 3)

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### Policy Rationale

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 Cooks Hill Preschool and involve educators, children and families in order to be successful.

### Strategies, Practices and Procedures

#### Objectives

In recognising that early childhood is an important time for learning about the environment, the environmental education efforts at the Preschool aim to:

1. provide the children and their families with an appreciation of the natural environment and an understanding of how to reduce our impacts on that environment
2. minimise the environmental impacts of the Preschool itself (including both the site and our practices)
3. provide environmental education experiences for student teachers and staff from other preschools/childcare centers.

#### Achievements

Hands on activities are used to highlight broader issues of sustainability. To date, children at the Preschool have experienced age-appropriate education relating to:

- organic gardening
- waste minimisation, reuse and recycling
- saving water
- frog life cycle (and effects and causes of pollution)
- beach habitats.

## Funding sources

The Preschool uses a variety of means to fund its environmental education activities:

- use of parent volunteer time and labour
- use of donated items
- applying environmental knowledge to creatively use existing resources
- seeking external funding.

The Preschool aims to further explore sources of external funding by contacting:

- Newcastle City Council
- NSW Department of Environment and Conservation
- Hunter Water Corporation
- local members of parliament, both state and federal.

*The policy has been adapted from recommendations by Community Child Care Co-operative (NSW).*

- 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 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 Preschool by providing recycling containers throughout the service.
- Role model sustainable practices.
- Discuss sustainable practices with the children and families as part of Preschool curriculum.
- Provide information to families on sustainable practices that are implemented at the Preschool, 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 committee meetings, through emails, newsletters and conversations.
- Use a composting bin to reduce food waste in the Preschool. Children will be encouraged to place food scraps into containers for use in the composting bin. Educators will discuss with the children and families which scraps and food can be composted.
- 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 Preschool. 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 Preschool. These may include water tanks, grey water systems, converting toilet cisterns to dual flush and converting to water saving taps.

#### Links to Legislation, National Quality Standards & Sources

- Guide to the National Quality Standard. ACECQA (2011): 3.3.1, 3.3.2. 6.1.2
- The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia: Belonging, Being & Becoming. (2009). DEEWR
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Schedule 1.
- NSW Department of Environment and Heritage – [www.environment.nsw.gov.au](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au)
- Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities – [www.environment.gov.au](http://www.environment.gov.au)
- Early Childhood Environmental Education Network – [www.eceen.org.au](http://www.eceen.org.au)

#### Links to other Policies

- Infection Control Policy (CHS 6)
- Interactions with Children (RC 1)
- Creating Curriculum Policy (EPP 1)

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