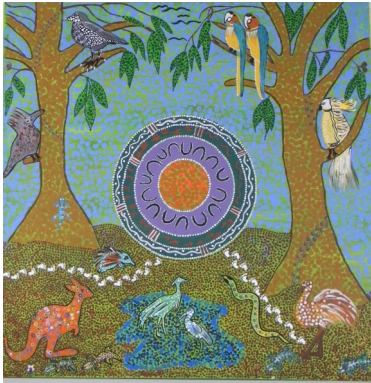


Supporting Sustainable Practices at Blackwood Kindergarten



OUR VISION:

We love our natural environment and understand the responsibility that we all share by living within it. We will observe what it does and learn from it, we will care for it and give back to it when we can. We will play with it and we will take only what we truly need from it.



Education for Sustainability

Being - Children experience the awe and wonder of nature. Children gain an understanding of their local environment and how ecosystems function. Being responsible for our actions (positive and negative) and developing behaviours that are sustainable is part of everyone's learning.

Belonging – Humans are a part of the environment and belong in our environment. Relationships are the foundation to our community shifting towards more sustainable lifestyles. Children are a part of a learning community that values our environment, natural resources and being sustainable.

Becoming – Children are increasingly becoming role models within their community for sustainable practices and behaviours. Children bring a sustainability mind set when facing future challenges and opportunities. Children identify as responsible global citizens.

Education for Sustainability has strong links to the National Quality Standards

An Education for Sustainability approach has strong links to the National Quality Standards (NQS). The NQS talks about sustainability in a physical environment (QA3) but Education for Sustainability really covers all quality areas. For example, sustainability requires leadership (QA7); relationships with and engaging families and children (QA 1, 5 and 6); educators developing knowledge and skills around sustainability (QA4) and promoting a healthy world (QA2).

Our kindergarten works closely with NRM (Natural Resources Management) Adelaide/Mt Lofty region, consulting with Sam Ryan NRM Education Officer, based at Marion Council.

Sam supports our Site Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) & supports our Mitcham Hills Partnership Kindy Directors PLC. We also work with the support of Nature Play SA, OPAL and Health services

Our community has contributed

to our vision statement and nature play development, and we welcome your input into embedding sustainable practices in our kindergarten and homes.



OUR PRACTICE

*NATURE KINDY & Nature Play

In Terms 2 and 3, our Kindergarten sessions are held in the Belair National Park fortnightly on Wednesdays. Children know these sessions as "Nature Kindy". When children spend time exploring nature, whether in a local park, creek, backyard or within the kindy outdoor area, they gain a multitude of physical, cognitive and social benefits:

As children observe, reflect, record, and share nature's patterns and rhythms, they are participating in a process that promotes scientific and ecological awareness, problem solving and creativity. (Deb Matthews Hensley, 1999, Early childhood consultant) Nature Kindy supports the new DECD focus on "Results Plus" supporting learning dispositions and the development of Executive Functions and thinking skills.

Time spent in nature can be categorised into two components: structured and unstructured.

Structured time is characterised by a set way to do things, such as monitoring, projects and field trips.

Unstructured time, often referred to as nature play, is self-guided and fosters imaginative and creative interactions. Both elements are important for a child's development and as a means of understanding and appreciating nature.

An understanding and appreciation of nature is critical in helping us develop a meaningful connection and desire to protect it. There is also research evidence about the positive benefits being in Nature has on wellbeing and mental health.

We welcome Parents as Volunteers at Nature Kindy.

*ENGAGING WITH NATURE

We support authentic learning in a real world context, sparking curiosity, enquiry and engagement. We notice, observe, identify & learn about our local mini-beasts / insects/snails, birds, lizards, koalas, plants and trees. We use natural loose parts such as sticks, pebbles, leaves, mud and clay for sensory, imaginative and symbolic play. We play in all weathers with appropriate clothing. We observe the weather and document changes through tools such as rain gauges, through art, and science experiments. We support literacy and numeracy development by interacting with nature. Ask us how!

***BIODIVERSITY** Over time we have planted a butterfly garden, with indigenous plants to support native Hills butterflies and caterpillars. We have planted gum trees to support future koala generations. We encourage birds with water, planting bird attracting shrubs such as *Correas*, *Erimophyllas* and *Grevillea*. One of our families built a bird feeder for us.



We see many Magpies, Rosellas, Rainbow Lorikeets, and sometimes ducks from Wittunga Park. Apart from koalas, we have visits from possums, and various lizards. At Nature kindy we see kangaroos, emus, kookaburras and water birds. We plant flowering plants such as lavender and beans to attract our native bees.

Children are maintaining a native bee hotel so our solitary native bees such as Blue Banded Bees have a place to lay their eggs. Hollow tree branches are disappearing from many suburban homes. If there were no bees for pollination, every 3rd mouthful of food we eat would not exist. Whilst we have focused on native plants indigenous to the area, we have also planted species that are water wise, or that provide interesting flowers, scents, tastes, leaves etc. for sensory play. *Agapanthus* supports our snail population which excites our children when appearing after rain. We also have visiting spiny leaf insects, silkworms, frogs and so on to extend children's engagement with fauna and insects. We may excursion to Cleland, Wittunga, or Warriparinga and have visits from Animals Anonymous etc. depending on children's interests. Does your family have an unusual pet that could visit kindy?

***ENERGY** At kindy we consciously try to save energy by not using lights on sunny days, turning off appliances, & using minimum heating and cooling settings for comfort. We encourage appropriate clothing and active play in cold weather. We use rechargeable batteries. We encourage positive attitudes to walking.

FOOD GARDEN We plant vegetables and herbs seasonally so that children can learn where healthy everyday food comes from, (not packaged in a supermarket). Children learn to care for the crops organically, experience food using all their senses, and eventually harvest, cook and eat their produce. We save and plant from seeds as well as seedlings. Hand watering with rainwater, weeding, and waiting for crop maturity develops Executive Function of delayed gratification as well as patience. Food not only sustains us but is an important part of culture and social sharing. We cook recipes from different cultures. Numeracy and literacy skills are developed in the garden too. Would you like to share your gardening or cooking skills with us?

WASTE is something we try not to do. We reduce landfill by composting our food scraps and vegetation. We reuse paper for faxes, drawing, composting, and recycle paper towels. We wash yoghurt cartons and milk cartons for art materials, and reuse boxes and all sorts of interesting bits for our making table and woodwork bench. We welcome most containers but NO cigarette packets, match boxes, medicine bottles or toilet rolls please. Clean splinter free softwoods, bottle tops, wool, ribbon, etc. are always welcome for woodwork and craft if you would like to collect for us.

We are encouraging families to utilise re-usable sandwich wraps in an effort to reduce packaging rubbish for landfill (i.e. Gladwrap, yoghurt tubes etc. are not recyclable) and to encourage the packing of whole foods over processed foods for children's lunches. These wraps are included in our Transition fees.

We participate in Clean Up Australia Day each year to clean up litter in the local environment. Children are taught about the recycle symbol and we sort rubbish into appropriate bins.



CLIMATE CHANGE We try to reduce our carbon footprint by reducing our energy use. We are careful with water and restrict its use, teaching children not to waste it. At times we do water audits with the children. We buy secondhand resources from Blackwood Lions and Op shops, and have utilized the DECD "Roses" recycling depot. We educate children about finite resources.

AIR QUALITY Our centre is by a busy road. We nurture our trees and shrubs, and teach children about how plants filter our air. We have a picking garden to preserve our food plants. We use organic and eco friendly products where we can.

CULTURE We endeavor to develop a centre culture of caring for our world both locally and globally. As staff we model sustainable practices and connect children's interests to critical thinking and ethical decisions about behaviours which affect our environment and relationships. We support children to construct knowledge, skills, concepts and understandings about sustainability.

COMMUNITY We hope to spread the message of sustainable practices into the wider community. We hope to inspire our families to think about sustainable lifestyles and to commit to small steps towards sustainable practices. We use our community as a resource. We support our community with annual enterprise projects such as raising money for local CFS and also support local business. We support other sites in the Mitcham Hills Partnership as a learning community, and share practice such as Nature Kindy with other sites.



RELATIONSHIPS with families and community members are key to sustaining our centre as a vibrant and ongoing concern into the future. Relationships support the Management and Governance as well as the values and philosophy sustaining our service.

**We value parent involvement at many levels.
Please be involved!**