

Little Green Thumbs – Glencoe Kindergarten Sustainability Plan

Glencoe Kindergarten is ready to take up the challenge of education for sustainability. We know that children develop positive attitudes and values by engaging in open ended learning experiences, by joining in discussions that explore solutions to the issues that we face, and by watching the adults around them model sustainable practices. Our aim is for Glencoe Kindy to be a place where environmental education and wonder is embedded in the kindergarten program.

Developing children's understanding of their impact on the environment is the first step towards providing them with the necessary skills to be part of the climate change solution. Teaching children about caring for the natural environment provides them with a range of opportunities for rich, hands on learning experiences about nature and the environment, and provokes curiosity, creativity and critical thinking skills.

We believe sustainability is not so much a lifestyle choice as it is a way of living. By adopting sustainable practices we encourage the children to question and investigate their environment and surroundings, not merely dictate to them a particular set of values.

We feel that environmental education needs to be incorporated into our centre's program and that it will become part of our daily practice and routines; not just seen as an 'add on'. With this, sustainability needs to become a 'whole site' approach. We would like to see all persons with an interest in the site; kindergarten educators, children, parents, the school and wider community have a voice and a sense of ownership of the sustainability plan.

Involving the children in implementing sustainable practices:

In order to change attitudes and behaviours in lasting and meaningful ways environmental education must capture the 'hearts and minds' of children. In essence, this means prompting children to question why things are done in certain ways, and encouraging them to develop their own innovative solutions to problems.

Children's involvement in developing and implementing sustainable practices will be done by stimulating conversations / discussions.

Children's questions and investigations will be the foundation of our sustainability journey.

Seeking Family Involvement:

The key to encouraging environmental awareness and sustainable practice in children's services is consistent environmental programs that promote positive learning experiences for children and enables them to observe adults engaging in environmentally sustainable practice. Seeking family involvement in reaching our environmental goals is important for providing a consistent message for children across the home and kindergarten environment.

- families encouraged to donate materials that can be reused by the kindergarten – materials for the mud kitchen, loose parts, wood off cuts, items for tinkering, natural resources collected

- inviting families to join the children in the veggie patch, planting trees or on our nature walks
- 'litter-less lunch boxes' – reducing the amount of packaging used in children's lunchboxes.