



41 View street
Port Augusta
5700
Phone:86422761

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 community has contributed to our nature play development, and we welcome your input into embedding sustainable practices in our Centre and homes.

OUR PRACTICE

***NATURE KINDY & Nature Play**

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 when our new Nature areas at Kindy are fully established.

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, plants and trees. We use natural loose parts such as sticks, pebbles, leaves, mud 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** In our new re-development we will have indigenous plants to support native Hills butterflies and caterpillars.

***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 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.

Children are taught about the recycle symbol and we sort rubbish into appropriate bins.

CULTURE We endeavour 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.

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!

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Chairperson

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