



Mawson Lakes Preschool Sustainability Policy



At Mawson Lakes Preschool we are aware of the part we play in supporting children to develop a respect and appreciation for the natural world, and to adopt an attitude towards waste that acknowledges that not everything can just be used and thrown away. Sustainable patterns of living meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Actions to improve sustainability are individual and collective endeavours shared across local and global communities. They necessitate a renewed and balanced approach to the way humans interact with each other and the environment.

Rationale

Early childhood is an important time for establishing lifelong sustainable habits, and developing knowledge, skills, values and world views necessary to contribute to more sustainable patterns of living. Children begin to understand the ways social, economic and environmental systems interact to support and maintain human life, appreciating and respecting the diversity of views and values that influence sustainable development and participate critically and act creatively in determining more sustainable ways of living. Education enables individuals and communities to reflect on ways of interpreting and engaging with the world. Sustainability education is futures-oriented, focusing on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through informed action. Actions that support more sustainable patterns of living require consideration of environmental, social, cultural and economic systems and their interdependence.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples maintain a special connection to and take responsibility for Country. This connection to the environment comes from their belief that the land and people were created by ancestor beings who continue to protect and care for the land. The land refers to everything within the landscape including water, air, trees, rocks, plants, animals, and landforms. These are all intertwined and essential to their well-being, so Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples consider the land to be a part of them. Therefore, they have a responsibility to look after their environment and to use natural resources wisely. We recognise this connection to the land and through our Acknowledgement of Country, we make our own promise to look after the animals and plants. Children are reminded of this throughout their daily experiences and educators use this tool to help teach children how their actions can have an impact on their environment.

Aims

- To promote a sense of responsibility, respect, empowerment, active participation, enquiry, and a desire for social change.
- To show children how their actions can affect the world that we live in. By engaging in experiences with the children that relate to sustainability we can help them understand how the choices they make can have a positive impact on the environment.
- To play our part in protecting our environment. It is our responsibility to maintain and care for the environment as well as contributing to a sustainable future. We do our utmost to reserve and preserve the earth's resources, doing what we can to promote sustainability in all areas.
- To provide relevant, timely and useful information and accordingly, model sustainable behaviours in every aspect of our practice.

As Educators we will

- Role model sustainable practices.
- Incorporate indigenous perspectives into the learning program as a means to teach children about looking after their environment by learning how the traditional custodians did so for thousands of years.
- Set up our environment and learning experiences to promote sustainability.
- Provide children with opportunities to connect meaningfully with nature, through not only our outdoor learning environment, but also through the learning experiences we offer in all areas of our learning environment.
- Incorporate recycling as part of everyday practice by providing recycling containers throughout lunch and at learning experiences.
- Use the concept of "reduce, re-use and recycle" so they become part of everyday practice for both educators and children to build lifelong attitudes towards sustainable practices.
- Involve children in nature walks and educate children about plants and gardening and the processes involved in growing plants from seeds.
- Carefully consider the sustainability properties of the resources that we purchase and use within our program.
- Source resources and materials from *It's not garbage* and second hand shops to use within the preschool.
- Actively recycle our waste and promote responsible use of the earth's resources.
- Involve the children in discussions about sustainability and our waste and the impact it can have on our environment.

- Teach children to dispose of their rubbish in thoughtful and considerate ways, using coloured, labelled bins, for green waste, recycling and general waste.
- Teach children about the environment, ecosystems, and life cycles to show how they are all interconnected.
- Engage with services such as the Adelaide Zoo, Animals Anonymous, Nature Play SA, KESAB and NAWMA and participate in both excursions and incursions within the wider community that help promote an appreciation for nature.

The learning environment

- Reflects our passion for sustainability and promotes our philosophy to ensure children learn best when encouraged to explore their world through play and real-life experiences, consolidating their learning by revisiting experiences in a supportive environment.
- Connects children to nature through art and play and allows children to experience the natural environment.
- Provides opportunities for children to dispose of their rubbish in thoughtful and considerate ways, using coloured, labelled bins, for green waste, recycling and general waste.
- Supports sustainable water usage, collecting rainwater and water wastage, where appropriate, to use it on the plants.
- Our preschool garden supports learning through experiencing gardening, harvesting, and composting.

Involving Children by

- Encouraging and including them in discussions about sustainability.
- Encouraging and supporting children to take responsibility for the environment by:
 - Caring for and weeding the garden beds
 - Watering plants
 - Picking up rubbish
 - Putting resources away
 - Keeping the environment safe
 - Looking after pets
 - Interacting with our worm farm

Involving Families by

- Discussing sustainable practices with the families and the local community as part of the curriculum.
- Inviting families who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to share their beliefs and sustainability practices with us.
- Providing information on sustainable practices that are implemented at preschool through displays, fact sheets and local community resources. Encourage the application of these practices in the home environment.
- Encouraging their participation in decision making and information sharing about environmental sustainability through governing council meetings, kindy updates and curriculum documentation and by ensuring that families have access to the preschool sustainability policy.
- Encouraging the collection of recyclable materials for crafts.
- Encouraging the use of the outdoor environment on the weekends and during holidays.
- Encouraging their participation in learning experiences such as cooking or gardening.

References

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) 2016, Australian Curriculum, Mathematics Foundation year
<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/mathematics>

Early Education for Sustainability SA
<https://eessa.org.au/>

Educators Belonging, Being & Becoming: educators' guide to the early years learning framework for Australia 2009.
https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/acecqa/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/educators_guide_to_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia_2.pdf

Guide to the National Framework Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) 2011
<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide>

National Quality Standard 3.2 (2011)
[Quality Area 3 – Physical environment | ACECQA](#)