

Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens

SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

CONSIDERATIONS:

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS	3.2
NATIONAL LAW ACT & NATIONAL REGULATIONS	

POLICY STATEMENT:

Lady Gowrie Qld / Kindergarten Service is committed to embedding sustainable practices in their Services and continuing to support children, families and staff in understanding ways in which they can contribute to sustainability.

Sustainable actions and products are those that meet current needs without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet theirs (World Commission on Environment & Development, 1987, Our Common Future). Sustainability is a broad often quoted term and refers to the desire to provide the best outcomes for human and natural environments both now and into the indefinite future.

Lady Gowrie Qld acknowledges the support of the Queensland Early Childhood Sustainability Network (QECSN) in the development of this policy.

RELEVANT FORMS/MATERIAL:

- Lady Gowrie Community Kindergartens Cleaning and Sanitisation Policy (Including Pest and Weed Management).

SOURCES:

- Refer to Appendix 1 – Reference, useful websites and further readings.

(Accessed 2019)

REVIEWED: September 2019

Date to Be Reviewed: March 2021

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW	
BACKGROUND	<p>WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES & TEACHERS? The UNESCO report on <i>The Contribution of Early Childhood Education for a Sustainable Society</i> (2008) recognised that early childhood is ‘a natural starting point’ for education for sustainability; for the lifelong learning patterns and dispositions that are developed in the early years and taken with children into adulthood. Furthermore, research has found that early childhood education for sustainability programs have community wide and intergenerational influences (Davis, 2010). This is because young children have an enormous capacity to influence sustainable patterns and practices within families, with a ripple effect into the wider community. As a result, teachers of young children have a key role to play in incorporating education for sustainability in all daily practices (Kinsella, 2007).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR CHILDREN?</p> <p>As well as using the key areas below and detailed suggestions in the appendix for ‘greening’ your service, consider the role of children. Making sustainable guidelines explicit to all in your service and imbedding these practices in your program so they become normal practice for children and families are a start. Begin by involving children in examining aspects of sustainability of the centre – why and how we do things? Why do we avoid certain things?</p> <p>We know that today’s children are already exposed to, impacted on and aware of environmental issues affecting our world (Davis 2010) and may end up living on a depleted Earth unless if action is taken. Timberlake and Thomas (1990) warned us that while today’s decision makers will not be alive to see the future negative consequences on Earth by their decisions, their children will be.</p> <p>Early childhood teachers already support young children to identify problems, discuss and contribute ideas, problem solve collaboratively, show creativity in their thinking and act on solutions in their play and learning across a range of experiences and curricula, so these skills can also be applied to issues or concerns in sustainability.</p> <p>Early Childhood Education for Sustainability (ECEFS) not only looks at the interplay of human-environment interactions in relation to sustainable/environmental concerns, but also plans to address important issues of equity and caring that are applicable not only in early childhood, but on a global basis.</p> <p>Children are capable of co-constructing solutions and acting as agents of social change at the early childhood level, and onwards, with the support of our teachers and services.</p>
WHAT YOU SHOULD DO KEY AREAS TO ADDRESS	
Energy & Water conservation	Services should promote sustainable practices by monitoring and reducing energy and water consumption in daily practices and seeking, where possible, alternative/additional sources, such as water tanks and solar installations. All

	members of the kindergarten community can be involved in strategies to promote energy and water conservation.
Rethink, Reduce, Reuse & Recycle	Services should aim to assess and minimise landfill waste produced by the service by rethinking and reducing rubbish output, correctly recycling and reusing where possible.
Gardening & Outdoor Environment	Services can create vegetable and herb gardens with the children, incorporate cooking experiences from these gardens. Indigenous plantings should be encouraged and suitable bush tucker plantings investigated. Worm farms and compost should be utilized rather than using chemical fertilisers.
Equipment purchase & program and office supplies	<p>Where ever possible services should aim to purchase less disposable products and more recyclable/ethically sourced products. Natural or reclaimed materials should be used as an alternative to purchasing collage materials. Donations from families and businesses should be utilised. Recycled products for office supplies should be sourced and & usage practices monitored - reusing paper, refilling or recycling printer cartridges and restricting unnecessary printing.</p> <p>Services are encouraged to also consider the environmental cost of transporting resources selecting local distributors where possible. Consideration of the longevity of resources and packaging may also be considered in deciding which products to purchase.</p> <p>If purchasing natural or reclaimed materials from catalogues services are encouraged to ensure that these have been sourced from sustainable reserves.</p>
Program	Programs could include investigations of biodegradability, promote usage of natural /recyclable/ reclaimed art resources and collect and use of 'loose parts' especially in outside play.
Litterless Lunches	Services may further encourage sustainable practices in relation to children's lunchboxes – minimise wastage, aim to decrease use of plastic bags and clingwrap and individual packaged small portions of food and drink. The service could support families to further understand the nutritional value and packaging wastage of such products.
Staff	All Staff at services need to support and model these practices. Staff meetings should include reflecting on and planning for sustainability issues. Appropriate Professional Development and membership of relevant organisations should be considered.
Families	<p>Staff and families can include sustainability items in newsletters and encourage email rather than hard copies where possible; create swap/recycle service for parents; rethink alternatives to disposable items at centre events and encourage parent /community support or expertise for sustainability projects</p> <p>Services are encouraged to consider sustainability in fundraising or service events. Discussions about using community resources such as libraries, toy libraries, parks and opportunity shops may also be incorporated into the program. Families may</p>

	<p>also discuss sustainable wrapping in regards to gifts and considering experiences or creating gifts rather than purchase of new items. Having a reading or puzzle library at the service is another consideration in supporting sustainability.</p> <p>Where possible walk, cycle or use public transport to attend the service.</p> <p>Where possible encourage participation in events such as Clean up Australia day, tree planting, coast care or other relevant community events.</p>
Use of Chemicals	<p>Services should investigate using more environmentally friendly alternatives to cleaning products and decreasing the use of potentially harmful chemicals in the service.</p>
Wildlife	<p>Services are encouraged to plan to create appropriate wildlife friendly habitats in their outdoor environments; increase identification skills and knowledge of wildlife and learn correct procedures in relation to injured wildlife.</p>

Further information and suggestions relevant to these Key Areas are able to be found in Appendix 2: Checklist of Strategies and suggestions for our Early Childhood Services Energy conservation. We thank Acknowledge QECSN for the development of this Appendix and policy foundation.

Appendix 1 References, useful Websites and further readings

- Davis, J., (Ed.) (2010). ed, *Young Children and the Environment: Early Education for Sustainability*. Cambridge University Press
- Davis, J. and Elliott,S. (2003). *Early Childhood Environmental Education: Making It Mainstream*, Early Childhood Australia, Canberra.
- Elliott, S. (Ed.) (2008). Ed. *The Outdoor Playspace Naturally: For Children Birth To Five Years*. Sydney: Pademelon Press
- Environmental Education in Early Childhood Vic Inc. (EEEC) www.vicnet.net.au/~eeec/
- Hughes, M. (2007). *Climbing the little green steps : how to promote sustainability within early childhood services in your local area*. Gosford and Wyong: Gosford and Wyong Council. www.wyong.nsw.gov.au
Retrieved 14 February 2012
- Illawarra Children's Services. (2009). *ECO friendly – Ways to get early childhood services started'*
<http://www.ics.org.au/files/downloads/isa/>- Retrieved 14 Feb 2012
- Immig, J. (2000). *The Toxic Playground: A Guide to Reducing the Chemical Load in Schools and Childcare Centres*, Total Environment Centre, Sydney.
- Kinsella, R. (2007). *Greening Services: Practical Sustainability*. Watson, ACT: Early Childhood Australia
- NSW Early Childhood Environmental Education Network www.eceen.org.au
- Napoli ,E., Downey, S. and Mcpherson, L. (2010). *Sustainability in early childhood settings*. Early Childhood Education Conference, Kindergarten Parents Victoria www.togetherwegrow.com.au/2010Speaker-notes/F2-NapoliDowneyMcPherson.pdf
Retrieved 14 February 2012
- NSW EPA. (2003). *Patches of Green: A Review of Early Childhood Environmental Education*, Sydney.
- Pratt, R. (2010). Practical Possibilities and pedagogical approaches for early childhood education for sustainability. In Davis, J.,(2010). ed, *Young Children and the Environment: Early Education for Sustainability*. Cambridge University Press
- Queensland Early Childhood Sustainability Network (QECSN) www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- Statham, B. (2008). *The Chemical Maze: Shopping Companion*. (4th edn), Loch, Victoria
- Timberlake, L. & Thomas, L. (1990). *When the bough breaks ...Our children, Our environment*. London: Earthscan
- United Nations Educational, scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). (2008) *The Contribution of Early Childhood Education for a Sustainable Society*
- United Nations World Commission on Environment & Development.(1987). *Our Common Future* (also known as the Bruntland Report)

If you are reading this document on a computer, you can visit the following websites by accessing the links (hold down ctrl and left click)

www.abc.net.au/gardening/features/organic_gardener.htm
www.annettemcfarlane.com.au
www.backyardbuddies.net.au
<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net>
http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/documents/doc_19_guidelines_schools.pdf
<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/feature/top-40-bird-songs.cfm>
www.bogi.org.au (Brisbane Organic Growers Inc)
<http://www.brisbaneinsects.com>
<http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/>
<http://www.olgr.qld.gov.au/grants/index.shtml> <http://www.olgr.qld.gov.au/grants/gcbf/solarSportAndCommunityGrants/index.shtml>
<http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/community/grants-and-awards/environment-and-sustainability/index.htm>
<http://cartridges.planetark.org/>
www.cityfoodgrowers.com.au
www.EdibleSchoolGardens.com.au
<http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/ecologicalfootprint/calculators/personal/page1.asp>
<http://www.fairhill.com.au/>
<http://www.4myearth.com.au>
www.freshgreenclean.com.au
<http://frogsaustralia.net.au/frogs/millsap.cfm>
<http://hollowloghomes.com/>
<http://www.indigiscapes.com.au>
<http://www.livebettergreener.com.au/>
<http://www.naturallysustainable.com.au>
<http://www.plant99.com>
<http://www.reversegarbage.com.au/>
www.sasiclean.com
<http://www.wildcare.org.au/>
<http://www.witjutigrub.com.au>
www.wormsdownunder.com.au
<http://www.olgr.qld.gov.au/grants/index.shtml> <http://www.olgr.qld.gov.au/grants/gcbf/solarSportAndCommunityGrants/index.shtml>

APPENDIX 2

Checklist of Strategies and suggestions for our early childhood services

Energy conservation

- Aim to decrease the amount of energy that the service uses through greater efficiency and better practices.
- Turn off lights when not needed, consider 'Do I really need this light on or is it just a habit?'
- Utilise natural lighting, open the curtains, use skylights
- Depending on your humidity levels, you may be able to close curtains to avoid direct sunlight, if this is a problem
- Turn off power points at the end of the day where possible (to reduce standby power), turn off hot water over weekends
- Air dry wet clothing where possible
- Investigate more energy saving spotlights and outside night lighting
- Have sensors and timers where appropriate
- Are staff and children wearing clothing appropriate to the temperature?
- If you have to use air conditioning, encourage staff and children to keep doors closed, also applicable in cooler weather to keep warm air in
- Turn off air conditioner a short while before you leave for the day – long enough that you still will be experiencing residual cool. The reverse applies with heaters.
- Make sure cleaners / last staff member to leave remembers to turn them off!
- Set thermostats to monitor cooling – make sure staff all agree with this level!
- Investigate and install or apply for funding to install solar panels to reduce electricity bills
- Does your service have a need for solar hot water system?
- Look at alternatives to air conditioning if possible
- Use ceiling fans in summer, encourage air flow through windows and doors if no air conditioner
- Provide spray water bottles on hot days and encourage children to cool themselves with them if they feel hot.
- Use rechargeable batteries
- Install thermometer at child's eye level and read temperature with children

Water conservation

- Where possible (depending on age of building and roofing materials used) Install water tank/s (access funding)
- Utilise tank water for flushing toilets and irrigation systems
- Install dual flush toilets
- Use containers to hold the day's supply of water for sandpit/mudpatch play – set limits
- Use plastic sheets to line holes in sandpit sometimes to prevent water draining away too quickly
- Does your garden have drought tolerant plants in it?
- Remember to use mulch to minimize water loss in the garden
- When it's time to empty your water trough, ask children to use watering cans to water garden
- Always tip clean but unwanted water onto pot plants/garden, from cups, jugs etc – encourage children to always do this too
- Encourage the children to turn taps off in the bathroom and not leave running. Also remind them to use only one squirt of liquid soap and one paper towel – shake their wet hands above the basin first to remove excess water
- Put up a rain gauge, measure it with the children and record

Track your energy and water use

- Set up a spreadsheet to record and monitor your energy and water costs and use.
- See the effects of your sustainable behaviour changes on your bills.
- Remember to take into account seasonal fluctuations.

- Participate in an energy audit to see where you are utilising the most energy. <http://www.livebettergreener.com.au/> for ecological auditing.
- Maintain air conditioner (do you check and clean your filter once a term?) and solar panels (are they cleaned with warm water and soft broom once a term? – in cooler morning, not in blazing sun)
- Grants for water tanks/solar power system <http://www.olqr.qld.gov.au/grants/index.shtml>
<http://www.olqr.qld.gov.au/grants/gcbf/solarSportAndCommunityGrants/index.shtml>
<http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/community/grants-and-awards/environment-and-sustainability/index.htm>

RETHINK, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle

- Aim to minimise landfill waste produced by your service. Make sure you have general waste and recycling wheelie bins and encourage all staff to use them correctly. Brisbane City Council has very comprehensive information re recycling on their website <http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/>
- Label bins clearly in each room so that children are automatically recycling from the start of the year
- It may be possible to reuse items from kerb side collection/ hard rubbish collection at your centre e.g. old timber tables could have the legs cut shorter and perhaps painted/restored. The Tip Shop in Brisbane is open weekends and is located at 46 Colebard Street West, Acacia Ridge or utilise Reverse Garbage <http://www.reversegarbage.com.au/>
- For a free children's recycling & worm farm visit from Brisbane City Council, contact your local Education Officer via 3403 8888 or email direct to cb-educationofficer@brisbane.qld.gov.au
- Revisit concepts with children during year. Sometimes habits become so automatic, that children may forget why they are doing it!
- Paper towel usage – feed some to worm farm, (the alarming waste of paper through the use of disposable paper towels is an issue to be addressed this year by QECSN)
- Reuse glass jars for art supplies. Services which have glass resources as part of their program will need to undertake a risk / benefit assessment of this and outline the strategies in managing this resource and when the risk / benefit will be reviewed.
- Minimise use of plastic bags for throwing away small rubbish, try wrapping in a sheet of old newspaper etc.
- Cut up unwanted cardboard boxes into squares for clay work

Gardening

- Create vegetable & herb gardens in raised garden beds, tank gardens, pots, planters, tubs or pots with the children. For more information read 'Eat your Garden' Leonie Shanahan or visit her website www.EdibleSchoolGardens.com.au or others www.annettemcfarlane.com.au
www.cityfoodgrowers.com.au www.abc.net.au/gardening/features/organic_gardener.htm www.bogi.org.au
(Brisbane Organic Growers Inc)
- Include suitable bush tucker in your garden - Witjudi Grub Bush Food Nursery (<http://www.witjutigrub.com.au>) is a bush tucker nursery, based in Kenilworth and can supply tailor made starter kits.
- Provide high quality gardening tools and gloves for children to use.
- Use your produce in cooking with the children.
- Use pots of herbs on table at mealtimes as well as flowers.
- Look at establishing a scented garden to use all the senses
- Increase the biodiversity of your centre by planting indigenous species where possible <http://www.indigiscapes.com.au> in Brisbane or <http://www.fairhill.com.au/> on the Sunshine Coast.

Worm farms & compost

- Encourage children to sort and place food scraps into separate containers (labeled with photo or picture) for use in the worm farm.
- Discuss with the children and families what worms can eat and what foods can be composted.
- Involve them in maintaining the worm farm, using the worm 'tea/wee'. Visit www.wormsdownunder.com.au
- Be aware of safety restrictions in handling compost for adults and children.

Equipment Purchases & Program supplies

- Aim to purchase less disposable products
- Use toilet paper made from recycled paper
- Are your paper towels made from recycled paper?
- Try to buy equipment and resources that are timber or made of natural materials and fibres rather than plastic.
- Encourage donations of materials as above from families or businesses rather than purchasing, if possible. Purchase low cost recycled materials from Reverse Garbage
- Accept donated paper and cardboard gladly
- Sunshine Coast centres as a group have established links with businesses for donation of materials. Perhaps your region could look into this.
- Timber furniture should be certified FSC (Forest Stewardship Council)
- Some places still supply timber offcuts suitable for woodwork, if you're lucky enough to find them
- Reuse left over and unclaimed / unidentified children's paintings for wrapping paper, or cut up for paper chains
- Try to be creative with collage materials instead of buying them. Use natural or reclaimed materials as much as possible
- Reuse used paper for paper making with children

Office / Admin

- Purchase 100% recycled paper for printers and photocopiers.
- Set printers to double sided print as default.
- Limit the amount of advertising materials sent home to students.
- Recycle printer cartridges <http://cartridges.planetark.org/> or even fundraise with them <http://www.plant99.com>. One centre makes approx \$200 pa with the latter.
- Reuse shredded paper from shredder into bird/animal cages, worm farm, compost, collage
- If using a pouch laminator, make sure pouch is full, don't waste it laminating one small bit. Have a box nearby of small items waiting to be laminated for when there's a bit of room in the laminating pouch.
- Print with grayscale if you don't need colour in text or photos
- Use correct sized photo paper for printing your photos
- Reuse padded postbags and bubble wrap
- Put a "no junk mail" sign on letterbox
- Don't print out unimportant emails
- Source recycled products for stationery orders
- Have box in office for paper used on one side already, it may not go through photocopier again – but is great for writing notes on, drawing on, signs, even used as weed layer in vegetable garden!
- Reuse used paper for paper making with children

Program

- Biodegradability experiments – bury various objects and dig up later in term/year; hang a plastic bag on fence above child accessible height and watch what happens to it over time
- Encourage use of 'loose parts' – open ended low cost /free materials to be used in children's play outdoors. They could include - cardboard rolls, fabric/ hessian/ tarps, stones, pine cones, shells, timber off cuts, tree bikkies, poly pipe pieces whole/halved/curves, tin cans, cardboard boxes, ropes, pavers, second hand cooking implements, electrical reels, hardwood planking, containers for holding water and water use, pot plants, moveable plants, alternative pots, carpet squares etc The list is endless...
- Teach children to be aware of not wasting paper & art resources in art
- Ephemeral art – investigate creating temporary art from natural materials, give children a calico drawstring collection bag to bring in shells, seedpods & seeds, plants materials, pinecones and other unusual natural materials.
- Encourage art with Recycled /Reclaimed materials - also an incredible range!

- Drill holes sideways through plastic milk caps, thread with fishing line, hang multiple strands and you have a recycled curtain!

Strike a sensible balance with recycling and accepting second hand objects – avoid hoarding/creating storage hazards or problems, unsightliness, deterioration of resources -accept gracefully what is offered, but be realistic if it's going to cause your service a problem then dispose of /recycle it afterwards appropriately.

Litterless Lunches

- Encourage lunchboxes with partitions or with small plastic reusable containers to avoid wasteful packaging and expense (let alone unhealthy snack food).
- Ask children to bring water bottle only to access throughout the day
- Include photos of healthy lunches in orientation night slideshows, displays and newsletters
- One service is organising photographic display of individual portioned snack food and a dietician's breakdown of the fat/salt/sugar content of that food.

Staff

- Do you model, support and implement these practices?
- If you arrive carrying objects in the morning, are you using alternatives to plastic bags? There are many environmentally friendly bags on the market, boxes and baskets instead
- If you get a collect a takeaway coffee on the way to work, do you use an insulated travel mug or similar instead of wasting a disposable coffee cup?
- Do you use reusable containers/lunchboxes instead of wasting Gladwrap or other plastic film for your own morning tea/lunch? There are also great washable reusable sandwich wraps and other excellent products around now <http://www.4myearth.com.au> <http://www.naturallysustainable.com.au>
- Do you fill the kettle just to the level required?
- Use staff meetings to gauge attitudes, concerns and desires
- Try using a footprint calculator, it is thought provoking on the big picture – how can we start making little changes? <http://www.epa.vic.gov.au/ecologicalfootprint/calculators/personal/page1.asp>
- Make sustainability an item on staff meeting agendas – How well are we doing? What needs to change? How will we do it? and keep the cycle going....
- Encourage professional development in this area – there is a lot around
- Visit early childhood services already implementing sustainable practices
- At teachers' meetings – have a giveaway/swap table for items no longer wanted at your service. Do you have half of a construction set that you may be considering getting rid of – another service may be in the same position!
- Individual staff or the service as a whole may wish to join relevant organisations. Queensland Early Childhood Sustainability Network (QECSN) is part of ECA Queensland

QECSN aims to:

- *provide a network of support throughout the state for the many individuals, groups and organisations working with young children*
- *provide professional development opportunities*
- *encourage sustainable practices in home and work environments*
- *advocate and influence policy development and legislation at all levels*
- *inform and promote sustainability in the design and content of tertiary education programs*
- *develop a recognition or acknowledgement of children as active citizens who are responsible for the present and future sustainability of the world*

Please contact <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au> for further information about benefits of membership, meetings, workshop days, newsletters etc.

Parents

- Make sustainability items, tips, links etc a regular feature of your newsletter
- Send newsletter by email (but still have a hardcopy on display)
- Make it obvious that you are a 'green' centre and are proud of it!

- Organising a swap or used items notice board for families to trade or sell unwanted items – someone's trash is another person's treasure
- Don't use polystyrene cups or other disposable cutlery/crockery etc at functions. Make this clear beforehand and why – and ask for volunteers washing up
- Encourage parent and community participation in environmental projects –invite those with expertise to help - you will often be surprised at who/what emerges...
- Have an area for parents to leave prams, car seats and bikes if they are carpooling or using alternative transport.

Cleaning & Chemicals

- Review your cleaning products with a view to purchasing more environmentally sensitive and child friendly options (less chemicals), which are still effective. Visit www.sasiclean.com and www.freshgreenclean.com.au
- You may also want to look at problems such as food additives and chemicals in playground equipment - RESOURCE books 'The Chemical Maze' by Bill Statham and 'The Toxic Playground- A guide to reducing the chemical load in schools and child care centres' by Jo Immig.

Wildlife

- Look at increasing the habitat area for local wildlife in your playground/area and making it wildlife friendly www.backyardbuddies.net.au <http://www.birdsinbackyards.net>
- Install birdbaths for birds and water supply for lizards (even a small dish) but remember to change water regularly to avoid mosquitoes breeding.
- Look at ways to encourage small birds in your garden (as opposed to noisy miners etc that are driving small birds from our urban gardens), http://www.birdsinbackyards.net/documents/doc_19_guidelines_schools.pdf
- Provide nesting boxes for urban wildlife and birds who are dependent on hollows for their nesting sites <http://hollowloghomes.com/>
- If you find injured wildlife, please contact Wildcare 24 Emergency Hotline 07 5527 2444 website <http://www.wildcare.org.au>
- Sponsor an endangered species
- For help with identification of birds, listen to <http://birdsinbackyards.net/feature/top-40-bird-songs.cfm>
for insects, read <http://www.brisbaneinsects.com>
Or frogs, listen to <http://frogsaustralia.net.au/frogs/millsap.cfm>