

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

AIM:

Staff, educators and children of Clarence Family Day Care will make efforts to protect the environment both within the service and also within the broader local environments.

Staff and educators of Clarence Family Day Care will encourage children to value and respect themselves and others, the environment and the diversity of the society in which we live.

Educators and children will work together to learn about and promote the sustainable use of resources and to develop and implement sustainable practices.

Staff and educators will assist children to develop an understanding and respect for the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land.

RATIONALE:

Awareness about the need to adopt environmentally sustainable practices, has grown dramatically in recent years. The growing trend towards adopting 'green principles' in child care and education services is part of a broader sustainability movement, which seeks to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (*World Commission on Environment and Development, in Kinsella, 1987*). 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.

Children deserve to be surrounded by a clean and healthy environment. A green child care and education service is one that takes steps to become environmentally friendly and takes measures to ensure that the environment provided offers the best possibilities for children. Children are also taught to respect the Earth and its precious resources.

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. Similarly, while it is important for child care professionals to respect the differing values and cultures of children and families attending their service, it should be recognised that sustainability is not so much a 'lifestyle choice' as it is a way of living.

POLICY:

Environment Protection, Waste Control and Recycling shall be maintained as a critical motivation in the operating practices of Clarence Family Day Care.

Clarence Family Day Care shall ensure that the service is upholding society's concerns for environmental protection by:

- Guiding staff, educators, children and parents, where necessary, to encourage recognition of appropriate waste disposal methods, recycling and environmental protection practices
- using biodegradable, nontoxic cleaning products and less-toxic disinfecting products where possible
- using rechargeable batteries where practical
- recycling cardboard boxes, bubble wrap and paper
- recycling aluminum, glass and paper/cardboard used by the service
- using low-energy light bulbs where possible and switching lights off when they are not needed
- having computer equipment set to switch to standby when not in use
- purchasing goods that are recycled as a priority product over a non-recycled product, where practical
- Feeding electricity back into the grid from roof-top solar panels
- encouraging and supporting staff and educators in environmental practices so they can be appropriate role models.
- developing a sustainability management plan (see below)

Additionally, educators of Clarence Family Day Care shall:

- ensure that learning opportunities in relation to environmental protection are included in the children's program and in the day-to-day operation of their service.
- educate children about environmental protection and recycling so that they can promote these qualities now and in later life.
- try not to waste food.
- avoid conditions within the care environment that lead to excess moisture, which contributes to growth of mould and mildew.
- not use mercury-containing thermometers. Instead digital thermometers may be used.

- encourage wildlife in the garden (within the constraints of providing a safe environment for the children in care)
- recycle as much as possible. All rubbish will be disposed of in an environmentally friendly way.
- wherever practical, use environmentally friendly products in the service.
- develop a **Sustainability Management Plan** (see below)

Developing a Sustainability Management Plan

The following tasks may be undertaken when developing a sustainability management plan:

- develop a personal service policy
- establish targets for a reduction in energy and water consumption
- re-examine purchasing practices
- implement a recycling program
- re-examine waste management
- implement behavioural change to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- review cleaning practices. For example, minimise the use of toxic chemicals
- develop a garden or vegetable patch / compost bin / worm farm
- communicate achievements with the local community and seek their input
- participate in conservation activities conducted by the local community.

Key Legislation: *National Quality Standard 2011:*

Resources: *Putting Children First, the magazine of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) Issue 29 March 2009 (Pages 12-15); Climbing the Little Green Steps-How to promote sustainability within early childhood services in your local area. Gosford & Wyong Council 2007;*