

Intereach Children's Services

Environmental Sustainability Procedure



Applies to	Intereach Family Day Care (FDC) and Intereach Out Of School Hours (OOSH)				
Policy	NQS Three: Children's Services Physical Environment Policy				
Version	2.0	Date approved	12/07/2023	Next review date	12/07/2026

1. Objective

Intereach is committed to environmental sustainability. Our approach to environmental sustainability is informed by the understanding that children benefit from a connection to nature and can help lay the foundations for a happy, healthy, sustainable future for all.

Intereach is committed to the following aims and objectives:

- to promote environmentally sustainable practices;
- to implement strategies for environmental sustainability;
- to value and respect the role of the natural environment in children's learning and development;
- to target reductions in our use of energy and water along with reducing landfill waste; and,
- to connect with and work with local communities including Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander peoples and cultures to improve environmental sustainability.

Current research confirms that experiences in the early years help establish lifelong behaviour and values, and this reinforces the need for sustainability education to be included in early childhood programs.

2. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Nominated Supervisor to:

- provide up to date current research, resources and best practice through professional development, newsletters, journals and support agencies such as Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC);
- collaborate with the staff, educators, parents/guardians, children and others at the service to develop and implement environmental sustainability strategies;
- ensure there are necessary resources to implement the identified environmental sustainability strategies at the service;
- seek and applying for grants, where appropriate, to support the implementation of strategies within this procedure;
- support the development of positive attitudes and values in line with sustainable practices; and,
- support educators and staff engage in sustainable practices during operation of the service.

It is the responsibility of educators and staff to:

- promote respect for, and an appreciation of, the natural environment among children attending the service;
- foster children's capacity to understand and respect the natural environment, and the interdependence between people, plants, animals, and the land; and,
- support the implementation of the identified environmental sustainability strategies at the service.

It is the responsibility of Parents/guardians to:

- working collaboratively with the educators, staff, children, and others at the service to identify environmental sustainability strategies for implementation at the service; and,
- encouraging their children to adopt environmentally sustainable practices at both the service and at home.

3. Procedure

Environmental sustainability strategies are identified and implemented at the service in collaboration with the staff, educators, parents/guardians, children and others at the service.

Educators and staff will:

- consult and consider our First nations perspectives as part of broader sustainable plans, policies and practises;
- promote activities and experiences that support the service to become more environmentally sustainable, these may include:
 - using recyclable materials where possible; and,
 - encouraging children to use half flush on the toilets.
- encourage children to turn the water off when they have washed their hands;
- encourage children to recycle paper and rubbish while at care, at home and when in the wider community;
- talk with the children about electricity and encouraging them to turn off lights;
- educate children in the natural decomposition cycle through exposure and participation in worm farms and composting food scraps;
- educate children and have them participate in 'garden to plate' activities i.e. seed sprouting, weeding, vegetable gardens, cooking amongst other activities;
- educate children on how to care for pets and letting them actively participate in caring for pets;
- educate children on caring for plants and our waterways, such as, recycling water;
- role model sustainable practices for children and families;
- ensure environmental education and sustainable practices are incorporated within the curriculum including:
 - reduce, reuse and recycle;
 - gardening;
 - water conservation;
 - energy conservation;
 - waste management; and,
 - sustainable equipment purchases
- plan opportunities for children to connect with nature and the natural world at the service, including on excursions and at other service events;
- incorporate celebrations of environmental awareness into the program, e.g. National Tree Day, National Recycling Week, Clean Up Australia Day and Walk to Work Day;
- maintain up-to-date information on current research, resources and best practice through professional development, newsletters, journals and support agencies such as Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC);

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- undertake ongoing reflection about everyday practices and their impact on the environment; and,
- provide information to families about environmentally sustainable practices, e.g. through displays, fact sheets and local community resources, and by ensuring that families have access to the Environmental Sustainability Procedure.

4. Monitoring, evaluation and review

This procedure will be reviewed every three years and incorporate feedback and suggestions from children, families, educators, coordinators, volunteers, and students.

5. National Quality Framework

Elements	Concept	Descriptor
3.1	Design	The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service.
3.1.1	Fit for purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
3.2	Use	The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.
3.2.1	Inclusive environment	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
3.2.3	Environmentally responsible	The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

6. Context

6.1. Standards or other external requirements	Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2017). <i>National Quality Standards</i> . Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (2017). <i>Guide to the National Quality Framework</i> .
6.2. Legislation or other requirements	Education and Care Services National Regulations consolidated 2017 Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
6.3. Internal documentation	Physical Environment Policy Providing a Child Safe Environment Policy WHS Environmental Strategy Guidance FDC Sustainability Checklist OOSH Sustainability Checklist

7. Document control

Version	Date approved	Approved by	Next review date
1.0	06/07/2020	R. Phillips - Acting Senior Manager, Children and Family Services	06/07/2023
2.0	12/07/2023	M. Piffero - General Manager, Operations	12/07/2026