

## ▲ SUSTAINABILITY

### ▲ NQS

**Element 3.2.3** The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

**Education and Care Services National Regulations: 73 – 76**

### ▲ PURPOSE

*'Educators typically focus on sustainable practices and activities for children in the outdoor environment. However, it is important to embed sustainability more broadly in all aspects of service operations. A holistic approach to sustainability is essential, acknowledge the natural, social, political and economic dimensions as defined by UNESCO (2010)*

- Livingstone (2016)

The service will take an active role in caring for its environment and support children to become environmentally responsible (Standard 3.2.3) as well as implement practices that support sustainability across environmental, social, and economic domains<sup>1</sup>. Educators at FROEBEL will support children in developing awareness, and appreciation about the interconnectedness of these domains, including concepts of social justice, fairness, sharing, democracy, and citizenship. Teaching and learning will include recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and sustainable practices of the past, in the present and for the future.<sup>2</sup>

We will ensure that the environment at the service is safe, clean, and well-maintained. Children's awareness of the environment will be promoted through daily practices, resources and role modelling and interactions. Sustainable practices will be encouraged within the education and care service.

Sustainability means balancing the needs of humanity with the needs of the living earth. It can also be considered as being able to meet our current needs without infringing on the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Today's young children represent the first of those future generations and this makes it important for educators to help them realise the significance of caring for and protecting their environment. This becomes even more important in a world facing a changing climate, increasing levels of air, land and water pollution, and depleted natural resources.

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<sup>1</sup>Early Years Learning Framework V.2 <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-01/EYLF-2022-V2.0.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Early Years Learning Framework, sustainability, p.18

## ▲ MEASURES

One of the key ideas is that developing sustainable practice is about taking small steps. There is no single thing that will make the service 'sustainable' overnight. It might be through big picture items such as water tanks and solar panels, but it can also be about developing smaller, day-to-day habits such as remembering to turn off the lights, using energy saving light bulbs, being mindful when using water, composting scraps or stopping to think before you turn on the air conditioning.

In general, the service will work towards embedding sustainable practices in daily routines and practices.

'...early childhood educators have the responsibility to make education for sustainable development a part of everyday practice – not merely a separate subject or theme to be considered for a given time, but an integral part of the curriculum, underpinning daily practice.' Kinsella (2007)

Some examples of ways our FROEBEL services will embed practice include.

### WASTE

- Minimise and recycle waste as much as practicable on a daily basis.
- Use of non-toxic, biodegradable and non-polluting housekeeping products where possible.
- Reuse garden waste as mulch and for the growth of the vegetable garden.
- Set up consistent recycling and reuse systems throughout the service.
- Using wastepaper recycling services – sorting of rubbish.
- Use both sides of the paper where possible.
- Put rubbish in the bin.
- Minimising waste and effectively using service resources.
- Involve children and educators in practices that reduce waste.

### WATER

- Minimise the consumption of water and utilise other sources such as tank and stormwater.
- When changing water systems replace with low water consumption fixes.
- Half-flush conversion on children's toilets integrated into educational opportunities with the children.
- Adult toilets with half-flush.
- Short showers.
- Label bed sheets so they can be reused for the same child on consecutive days. Wash Sheets in batches twice a week instead of every day.

- Consider how else to consolidate washing.
- Choose effective means of conserving water.
- Incorporating water wise strategies such as drip irrigation and ensuring taps are turned off and leaks fixed.
- Consider installation of rain-water tank. Water play and gardening water could then be used from the tank and not from drinking water.
- Increase mulching of gardens to reduce watering needs.
- Involve children and educators in the planning of water conservation and in efficient water use. Water play activities should be planned in consideration of water as a limited resource.
- Water bottles to reduce water wasted in cups.

## ENERGY

- Incorporate teaching and learning opportunities for children in implementation of energy saving opportunities.
- Reduce the use of energy.
- Use resources and equipment as efficiently as possible.
- Choose the most energy saving methods available.
- Switch to compact, efficient light globes.
- Turning off equipment and lights when not in use.
- Don't use standby mode.
- Continue and improve efficient use of air conditioner, e.g. 21° in winter, 25° in summer; only on when natural ventilation is inadequate; closing doors and windows when on.
- Use heater only when necessary.
- Ensure all computers, printers, photocopier, air cons, and lights are off at the end of every day.
- Using washing line rather than clothes dryer in all but wet weather. Use small, fold-up laundry racks so children can hang out smaller items while educators hang out bigger items.
- Bed sheets labelled so they can be reused for the same child on consecutive days..
- Walk or use a bicycle to commute to the service where possible.
- Use public transport.

## PURCHASING

- Aim to purchase equipment that is eco-friendly where possible. Educators will reduce the amount of plastic and disposable equipment they purchase and select materials that are made of natural materials and fibres.
- Preference for purchasing reusable equipment and resources where possible.
- Buy recycled products.
- Purchase only recycled paper towels and recycled toilet paper.
- Recycling materials for curriculum and learning activities.

- Buy in bulk.
- Use green/blue bags when shopping.

## **NATURE/BIODIVERSITY**

- Extra potted plants for indoors and out. Chosen to be hardy and safe. Inform educators of watering, light and feeding needs for each plant.
- Maintaining a no dig vegetable/herb garden.
- Vegetable gardens that showcase healthy eating.
- Consider biodiversity in future developments of the service.
- Continuously create interesting natural play environments for the children.
- Plant indigenous plants and shrubs to encourage biodiversity and particularly plants where children observe the life cycle.
- Involve children, educators and parents in playground development.

## **WHAT CAN CHILDREN DO?**

Environmental education can be defined as learning about the environment and how natural systems function. It promotes the growth of attitudes, knowledge, skills and values about the environment. In an early childhood setting, environmental education is integrated into everyday life practices informing curriculum decisions, in the environment and about the environment. Educators, children and community members can co-construct knowledge and learn with and from each other.

- Connect children to nature through art and play and allow children to experience the natural environment through natural materials like wood, stones, sand and recycled materials, plants including native vegetation, nesting boxes, a vegetable garden with gardening tools and watering cans.
- Developing education programs for water conservation, energy efficiency and waste reduction.
- Involving children in nature walks, education about plants and gardening and growing plants and flowers from seed.
- Engaging children in learning about the food cycle by growing, harvesting, and cooking food for our service kitchen.
- Children to act as Energy Experts, noting lights left on, proper use of heating and cooling, appliances left on, etc. Support the children to become the driver of sustainable behaviour change.

## **▲ SOURCES AND FURTHER READING**

- [National Quality Standard](#)
- [The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#)

## **▲ POLICY REVIEW**

- The Centre (together with educators) will review this policy every 12 months.
  - The Approved Provider and Centre Director ensure that at all times all educators maintain and implement this policy and its procedures.
  - Families are encouraged to collaborate with the Centre to review the policy and procedures.
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- **Last review:** 11.09.2023
  - **Next review:** 11.09.2024