

Early Years Services – QA3.6 Sustainability

TRIM Reference:	D15/35364	Due for Review:	1 February 2026
Responsible Officer:	Coordinator Early Years		

Purpose

This policy outlines Surf Coast Shire Council's commitment to:

- Promoting respect for, and an appreciation of, the natural environment by ensuring the overarching Council policies which have sustainability embedded and all related strategies are upheld throughout all Surf Coast Shire Council Early Years Services.
- Incorporating environmental education and procedures within the play based educational programs that help children to connect with nature and extend on current knowledge.
- Ensuring educator's foster children's understandings of care and appreciation for the natural environment, and the interconnections between people, plants, animals and the land.
- Supporting the development of children's positive attitudes and values to become advocates and activists for sustainability.
- Promoting understandings of intergenerational equity such that the needs of the present generation are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.
- Ensuring that educators/staff engage in and critically reflect on sustainable practices that are integral to promoting sustainability within the Early Years Services.
- Respecting the wisdoms of Indigenous peoples who have lived sustainably on this land for generations
- Creating partnerships that support ongoing sustainability within our services

Background

"One of the most significant responsibilities that (early childhood) professionals have is to support children to retain the sense of awe and wonder that they are born with, to add to that a desire to nurture and protect what is beautiful, and to encourage them to appreciate that there are many possibilities for honouring life and wonders that the world holds" (Stonehouse, A. (2006) NSW Curriculum Framework for Children's Services – refer to Sources).

Policy Principles

Evidence of link to National Quality Standards: 3.2.1, 3.2.3,

Evidence of link to Education & Care Services National Regulations: N/A

Scope

This policy applies to all Surf Coast Shire Early Years Services.

Policy

The promotion of environmental practices within the Early Years Services will include all related Surf Coast Shire Council environmental strategies including:

- Water saving,
- Energy saving,
- Climate crisis,
- Green cleaning practices,
- Recycling and waste minimisation,
- Minimising the use of paper, by utilising electronic systems for the collection and distribution of information
- Ethical procurement of resources and materials,
- Purchase items with minimal packaging where possible.

- Use of natural cleaning products where possible,
- Efficient use of all natural resources within the service venue or residence.
- Re-using and recycling of waste materials (as appropriate and possible) in learning activities.
- Providing relevant information on sustainability, which endeavours to increase the environmental awareness to our children, families, local neighbourhood, and global community.
- Keeping up to date with the latest research and teachings focusing on environmental education, through membership of relevant organisations such as EEEEC and professional development on extending and enhancing sustainability in the early years.

It is in the Early Childhood Years that the foundations are laid for the development of environmentally responsible adults" (Elliott and Davis, 2004)

As part of the education and care program educators will:

- Share information with children about the environment and the impact of human activity on the environment.
- Plan experiences that engage them with the environment and develop an understanding of the natural and constructed environments.
- Collaborate with local environmental groups and specialist services such as Eco-logic and Landcare.
- Incorporate appropriate sustainability practices within the service.

Where possible undertake the following types of activities:

- Growing plants from seeds.
- Planting herb or vegetable gardens.
- Recycling and repurposing activities.
- Resourcing materials.
- Incorporating celebrations of environmental awareness into the program e.g. National Tree Day, National Recycling Week, Clean Up Australia Day and Walk to Work Day
- Use the Sustainability Work Instruction Surf Coast Shire Kindergarten

Informing families about celebrating national, state wide and local community environmental awareness campaigns such as:

- Walk or ride to School/Work Day
- Clean Up Australia Day
- National Recycling Week
- National Tree Planting Day
- World Environment Day

Promote strategies being adopted and implemented within the broader Surf Coast Shire Council.

Definitions

Not applicable.

Related Procedure

Nil.

References

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Policies

Towards Environmental Leadership Program <https://environmentsurfcoast.com.au/>

SCS-008 Plastic Wise Events and Markets on Council owned/managed land

Climate Emergency Corporate Response Plan 2021-2031

SCS – 005 Strategic Asset Management Policy

SCS – 019 Procurement Policy

MPP – 026 Waste Management & Resource Recovery Services

IS – 006 Email/Internet Guidelines

MPR-014	Good Practice Guide to Email Communication
IS- 005	Social Media Policy
D15/35312	Early Years Child Safe Environment Policy
D14/70701	Early Years Educational Programs Policy
D14/70705	Early Years Excursions Policy
D15/35300	Early Years Sun Protection Policy
D15/33004	Early Years Supervision of Children Policy
D15/38683	Early Years Water Safety Policy

Related Surf Coast Shire Council and Early Years Services Work Instructions and Forms

D20/176852 Sustainability Work Instruction Surf Coast Shire Kindergarten

Other References

- Early Childhood (EEEC)
- Sustainability Victoria
- Education and Care Services National Law 2010
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- National Quality Framework Resource Kit November 2011

Document History

Version	Document History	Approved by – Date
1	<i>Amended</i>	Managed Aged and Family 1 June 2016
2	<i>Amended</i>	Managed Aged and Family 13 July 2018
3	<i>Amended</i>	Managed Aged and Family 9 January 2020
4	<i>Amended</i>	Manager Community Strengthening 16 July 2021
5	<i>Amended</i>	Manager Community Strengthening 7 March 2023
6	<i>Amended</i>	Manager Community Strengthening 1 August 2024