

Be a WASTE WARRIOR like Trixie

As Australia's most trusted child care comparison site, Toddle understands families. We know that many parents want to raise children to have a greater awareness of the environment and sustainability.

Besides the family unit, child care centres are an invaluable source of information on this topic for children. Many centres are already committed to practices that support a greener future. As service providers and role models to our children, care centres are a great place to embed best practice environmental habits into our daily lives.



Toddle's partnership with Millennium Kids is seeking to help facilitate this. Millennium Kids is a not-for-profit organisation that helps families, schools and community groups to develop collaborative projects for a better environment.

Sustainability is about a future in which environmental, societal and economic considerations are balanced in the pursuit of an improved quality of life.

Embedding sustainability in child care centres makes good sense and is supported by various local, regional and global education and governing bodies. Toddle has already produced lots of content on this topic, including children's storybooks, stickers and posters that help raise awareness of issues such as waste management, energy conservation, and water use.

We are working to educate and drive behaviour change in children, alongside the educators in Australia's child care centres. This is why we have created this document with Millennium Kids, to give child care centres a practical, hands-on way to approach waste management in their centre - an area that is generally easy for children to understand and help with.

Australian Curriculum Cross Curriculum Priority - Sustainability



This document reflects a key target of the Australian Curriculum, where sustainability is a cross curriculum priority. This means the curriculum places emphasis on sustainability as a priority for study that connects and relates relevant aspects of content across learning areas and subjects.

Sustainability education is future oriented, focusing on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through informed action. Actions that support more sustainable patterns of living require consideration of environmental, social, cultural and economic systems.

Sustainable patterns of living meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. We learn about how our individual and collective endeavours can be shared across local and global communities for a better world. It frames a renewed and balanced approach to the way humans interact with each other and the environment.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by all the United Nations Member States in 2015 to end poverty, reduce inequality and build more peaceful societies by 2030. Also known as the Global Goals, the SDGs are a call to action to create a world where no one is left behind. Using the SDGs as the basis for sustainability practices in your centre is a great starting point to embed sustainable thinking.

National Quality Standards

Element 3.3.1: Sustainable practices are embedded in service operations.

Element 3.3.2: Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment.

The BIG questions

Are sustainability practices embedded in your service operations and are they demonstrated consistently and across all parts of the service? How can it be improved on?

Is critical reflection used to inform your practice, planning and decision making?

Are sustainability practices informed by meaningful engagement with families and or the community with feedback actively sought, considered, valued and adopted?



GREEN WORDS

REFUSE

Can we refuse to accept the packaging that we will put in the bin by choosing better options?

REUSE

Can we reuse the item more than once?

REPAIR

Can the item be repaired?

REPURPOSE

If it can't be repaired, can the item be made into another useful product?

RETHINK

Did we really need to purchase this item or not?

RECYCLE

Can we find any ethical recycle options that aligns with best practice recycling solutions?

REDUCE

Can we reduce the amount of waste that goes into landfill by sorting our waste?



GREEN FACT

Each year a typical child care centre or preschool generates up to 7.25m³ of waste per employee or 0.26m³ of waste for every 1m² of floor space.

Source: NSW EPA Reducing Business waste
– preschool and child care centres

Development Goal number 12. Responsible Consumption and Production

Waste and Consumption are key parts of our sustainability footprint and we all have a role to play in making better choices to reduce our consumption and minimise our waste.

This is the start of your waste and consumption practices audit process. Conduct them at your early childhood centre with your children, staff and the community, and use the results to collaborate to develop a Waste and Consumption Strategy. Your Waste Audit brings the curriculum to life and makes it relevant and real.

Waste and consumption audits are a great place to start.

Conduct the audits at your early childhood centre with your children, staff and the community, and use the results to collaborate to develop a Waste and Consumption Strategy and Action Plan.

Your Waste and Consumption Audit process brings the curriculum to life and makes it relevant and real. Refer to the audit spreadsheets available from the Toddle blog for instructions on how to implement the audit at your centre.



This audit process has three parts

- Part 1** Waste and consumption audit 1: bin & rubbish disposal
- Part 2** Waste and consumption audit 2: leadership
- Part 3** Waste and consumption audit 3: community actions





Waste consumption audit 1: Bin & rubbish disposal



Australian Curriculum – Sustainability Key Organising Ideas

OI.5 World views are formed by experiences at personal, local, national and global levels, and are linked to individual and community actions for sustainability.

The simplest place to begin is to conduct an audit of the current waste and consumption practices at your centre, and what better place to start than having a look in the bin.

Conduct a waste and consumption audit with your staff and parent community. This is a great activity to do once or twice a year to review your achievements and set new targets.

Steps to starting your audit:

- 1 Organise your team. Set a date.
- 2 Start with your bins, look at what goes to landfill, what is recycled and reused, and create a audit of waste. Use the template provided.
- 3 Prepare your equipment: tongs, pen and paper, sorting bins, gloves.
- 4 Record the items from your bins on your checklist.
- 5 Discuss a set of possible solutions with your team.
- 6 Do some research to see where your waste goes. Is there a local recycle centre? What recycling is available in your area? What solutions are being trialled by others?
- 7 Decide which waste items you will target. Decide on a strategy to implement. Set up a trial period.
- 8 Invite your community to make suggestions and give feedback.
- 9 Involve all your staff in some training and make it fun!

Download the Waste & Consumption audit sheets from the Toddle blog [here](#).





Waste consumption audit 2 : Leadership

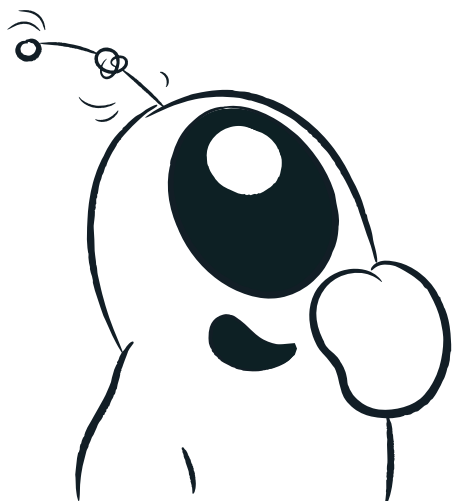


Australian Curriculum – Sustainability Key Organising Ideas

OI.7 Actions for a more sustainable future reflect values of care, respect and responsibility, and require us to explore and understand environments.

OI.8 Designing action for sustainability requires an evaluation of past practices, the assessment of scientific and technological developments, and balanced judgements based on projected future economic, social and environmental impacts.

Conduct a waste and consumption audit with your staff, parent community and stakeholders. Review your procedures and practices.



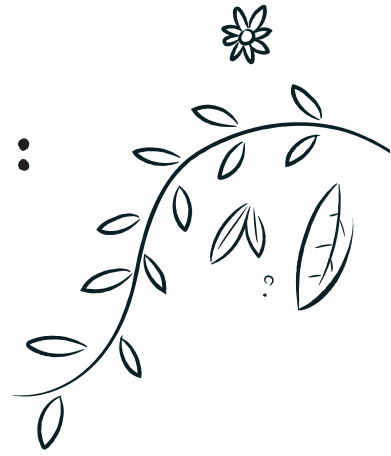
Steps to starting your audit:

- 1 Set up a management team with teachers, parents and stakeholders.
- 2 Do an audit on each room in your centre. Go through the cupboards and create a checklist of all your resources and purchases. Use the template provided.
- 3 Define what you are currently doing, what you discovered and what you could do next.
- 4 Define the challenges and possible solutions.
- 5 Conduct research, talk to others and meet with your stakeholders.
- 6 Define or review your vision and values and set some goals.
- 7 Define your timeline and targets.
- 8 Explore how you can embed what you have discovered into learning and teaching.
- 9 Share your findings with your community.

Download the Waste & Consumption audit sheets from the Toddle blog [here](#).

Waste consumption audit 3 :

Community actions



Australian Curriculum – Sustainability Key Organising Ideas

01.6 The sustainability of ecological, social and economic systems is achieved through informed individual and community action that values local and global equity and fairness across generations into the future.

Community partnerships are invaluable in your child care setting. Review how you work with your community (teachers, children, parents and stakeholders) and build on plans to strengthen your partnerships.

Steps to starting your audit:

- 1 Set up a management team with teachers, parents and stakeholders. Set a date.
- 2 Complete an audit of your community partnerships. Use the template provided.
- 3 Define where you are at, as well as what your vision and values are.
- 4 Define the challenges and possible solutions.
- 5 Do some research, talk to others and meet with your stakeholders.
- 6 Set some goals.
- 7 Define your timeline and targets.
- 8 Explore how you can embed what you have discovered into learning and teaching.
- 9 Share your findings with your community.



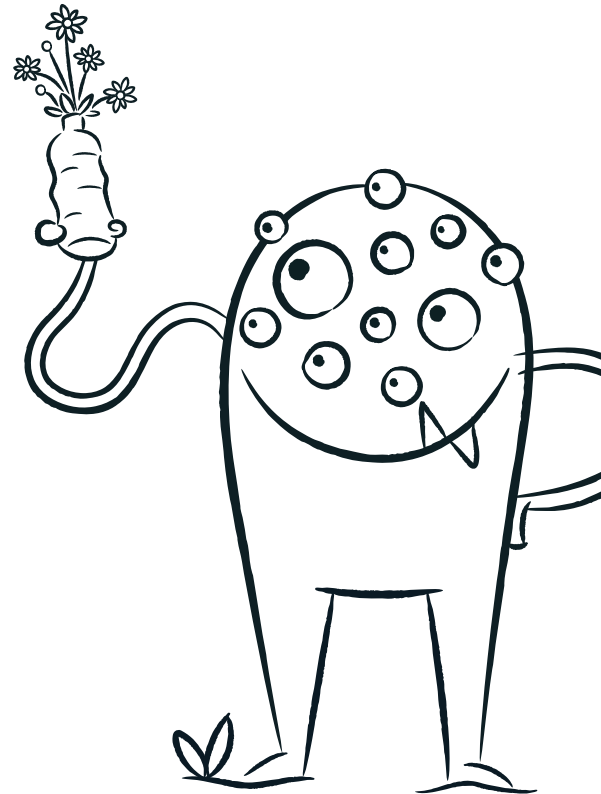
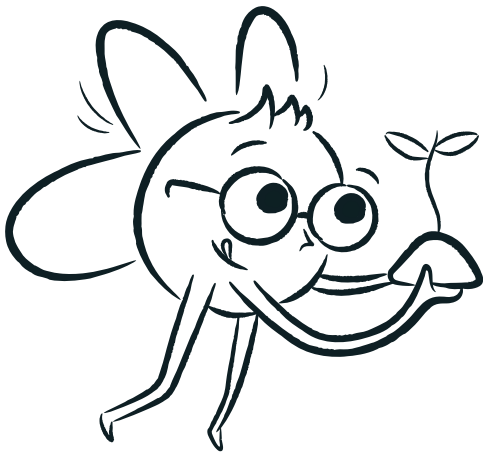
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Toddle

GREEN AWARDS

CASE STUDIES



Our five Toddle Green Award winners are doing great things in the area of sustainability in child care.

Use these case studies as inspiration and reference of what you can do to take steps towards sustainability at your child care centre.

CASE STUDY

Western Sydney University Early Learning Penrith



We have an established vegetable garden to plate program, which the children participate in. We have raised chickens which give us eggs. When we have too much harvest to use in the centre kitchen, we give the surplus away to our families. We have a water tank, water saving taps in the bathrooms and energy efficient lighting.

More recently we have been involved in an extensive research project which is child-led, about climate change and bushfire recovery - many of our families were adversely affected by the 2019/2020 bushfires in the Blue Mountains and surroundings. Children were traumatised by this event. We have developed a pedagogy of hope and resilience with children through an emergent arts-based approach. Children have engaged in regeneration, planting native trees



to provide shelter and food for native animals and learning about how they can influence the process of climate change and advocacy.

We adopted an injured koala through the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital, constructed a possum box and have learned about the impact of climate change on the rainforests, animals and the Australian bush.

Children have also learned about Indigenous land management practices such as low-burning and the importance of this to help seeds to regenerate. This research has become a book chapter for an international book written by multiple authors, to be published later this year.





CASE STUDY

McGraths Hill Learning Centre



As the centre has recently undergone renovations we were able to update many of our fixtures. Lights in high traffic areas were placed on sensors, ensuring that lights are not left on when they are not in use. Taps in the children's bathrooms are on a timer to ensure that water is not left running. Water tanks have been installed so that the centre is able to capture rainwater for use.

As we are in a semi rural location with farms around us, the centre has a water consumption program in place with the children. When the children are involved in water play or watering the garden, a bucket is used instead of leaving taps running. The children are aware that the



garden will be watered with watering cans that are dipped into the bucket to reduce water wastage.

As the centre is set on five acres we have a large natural environment with many trees around us for shade. The rooms are set with natural materials and baskets, eliminating plastic containers.

This year the centre moved to a paperless system to reduce our paper consumption. Parents and staff sign in and out on an electronic file, and children's documentation is on an electronic system and app. Parents are sent photos of the children via the app to eliminate the need for printing.





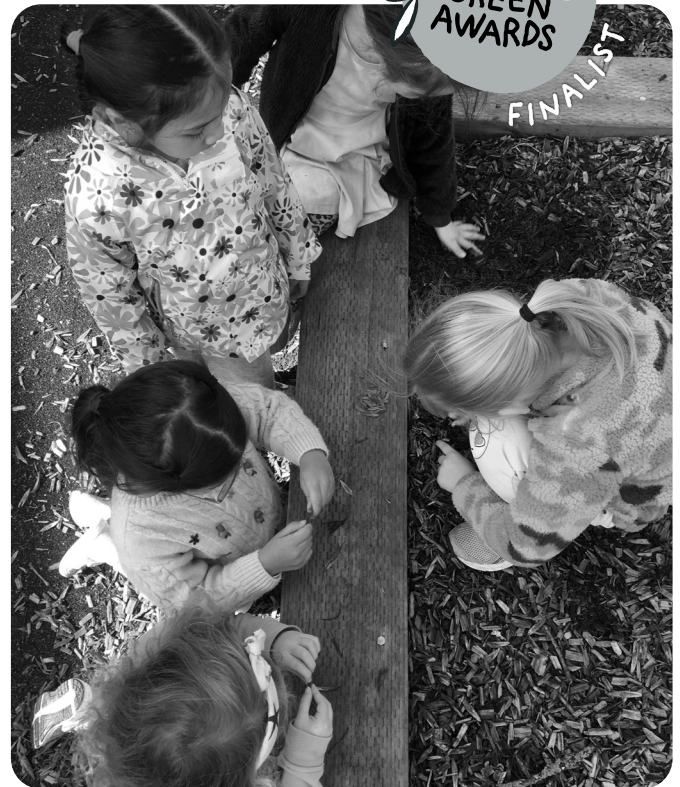
CASE STUDY

Leap Ahead Learning Montmorency

We teach sustainability through our local First Nations' People, the Wurundjeri. We look at everything they did in each of the seven seasons and aim to look after the planet in the same way. We talk a lot about Indigenous culture and sustainability, instilling in the children the philosophy to take only what we need and to always give back.

Every purchase we make needs to meet a sustainability criteria. The less criteria they meet, the lower the rating and they do not get purchased. Some of the changes we have made through this rating are purchasing organic cotton wool balls, purchasing copy paper (and as many products as possible) that are made in Australia, to reduce our energy footprint. We compost or recycle all packaging from purchased items. We teach the children how their direct actions can impact the planet and explore what the best actions are.

This philosophy comes from the staff and our personal ethos, we knew we could do more. We wanted to educate the children and families that while recycling is a great start, reducing our consumption and questioning why we make purchases is also powerful. For instance when a new staff member comes onboard, they're given a keep cup for hot drinks. We tend to hire educators with the same philosophy, and we speak to prospective families about it too so that they are aligned with our goals.



In terms of future goals, we would love to eventually move our centre to be on a couple of acres with lots of room to run and play outside. We would do more bush kinder, have a mud kitchen, canoes, and plenty of messy outdoor play. At the moment we do our bush kinder once a month in a local reserve and go for half a day at a time. The children love it. We get them to draw, talk or write about what they saw and use that as the basis for our investigations back at the centre (for instance they ask about why certain moths build a web on the ground, or why there are what look like letterboxes in the trees for the sugar gliders), so that they have the answer before our next trip.



CASE STUDY

Leading Edge Childcare Morayfield



At Leading Edge Childcare Morayfield, we believe it is extremely important to conserve the world in which we live, learn and play, and educate the future generation on the importance of sustainability.

When we opened our doors in October 2020, we knew we wanted to implement as many sustainable practices as quickly as possible. We believe that education must start from nursery age and flow all the way through our little people, to ourselves as educators. We are eager to learn, adapt and introduce new practices and are always looking for new ways to be sustainable every day. We begin our education by recognising the Gubbi Gubbi land on which our centre is located. We ensure we discuss with the children how Indigenous Australians show respect to the land, and how we must also show the same respect by caring for the land so animals, trees, beaches, rain forests and bushes can continue living for our children's children to enjoy in the future.

In March 2021, our educators completed a critical reflection and gap analysis on our sustainable practices as we noticed we weren't doing enough every day.



This reflection included asking - what is sustainability?, what do we already do well?, what don't we do well?, do we require more training?, and how can we make a change? Since then, we have embedded a lot of different daily practices that involve our families and children. During March, all of our rooms created a monthly program that focused specifically on sustainability so we could evolve and improve across the entire service, not just in one room.

In the coming months, we will begin our yard renovations which will include installing vegetable and herb gardens and introducing stingless bees. We even have one of our parents wanting to come in every week and complete gardening lessons with the children.



CASE STUDY

Explore & Develop Annandale

Our sustainability policy started with the design of our centre. For instance we considered which way the rooms would face the sun and shade in the playground, and used lots of glass to minimise the need for lights.

Our Centre philosophy is built around six word values: belonging, play, trust, inclusion, wonder and knowledge. We look at our values through the lens of: relationships, sustainability, Indigenous perspectives and remaining unbiased. Sustainability is front and centre. One area of sustainability we focussed on was to refine food and waste processes. We worked with our caterer to reduce packaging for our lunches. They now deliver the food in reusable glass dishes which are all reusable, so there's no plastic, foil or bags.

We did a food waste audit. We became more mindful around the food we were offering in terms of the eco impact, and increased the vegetarian meals on offer. Our caterer was really flexible. Now we are doing our own afternoon tea, with children cooking it. We use lunch leftovers in the afternoon tea ideas. We use produce from our gardens too. We are working on all our supply chains, finding suppliers that are ethical. Sustainability is holistic. We are mindful when sourcing resources or furniture, asking where does it come from? Where is it made? Is it local? What materials have been sourced to



make it? Is it recycled? Could we instead use something from Gumtree, Facebook Marketplace or eBay?

We do our own repairs. We don't throw things away. We think about equity and fair trade. For example, with our art supplies, we have no textas because of the waste from them when they stop working. We now use pencils, crayons and charcoal instead. Our weekly newsletter has tips and shares information about what we are working on. For instance we might say guess what, you can recycle your toothbrush at the dentist. We talk at child care and sustainability conferences, and we have a partnership with Boomerang Bags.