



## Educational Leader

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

**Looking at the element in detail** - A service reviewed what the NQF Guide said about element 3.2.3 and it includes:

- teaching children about their responsibility to respect and care for the natural environment in a sustainable way and
- implementing sustainable practices at the Service.

**Teaching principles** to support learning about sustainability include:

- values learning – citizenship, stewardship and showing empathy for the world
- inquiry learning - problem solving/solutions-seeking approach eg hypothesising, testing multiple solutions
- real-life learning – relates to children’s everyday experiences and contexts
- democratic learning – child-initiated learning, opportunities for children to share and enact their thinking.

Outcomes are also more effective when educators take a whole-service and systems approach, and include for example families, teachers, community members, local businesses. This provides greater opportunities for embedding sustainable change.

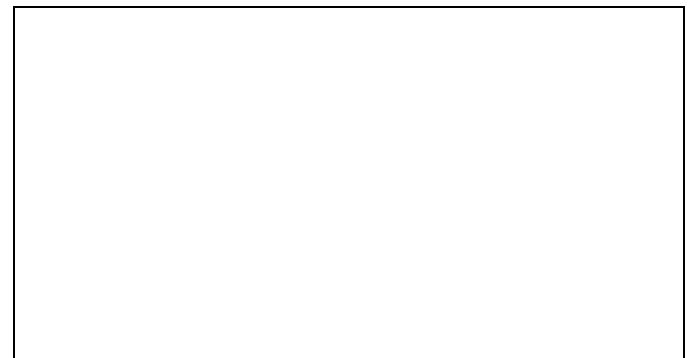
*In a Brisbane kindergarten, for example, “children’s initial observations about the amount of water being wasted at morning recess led to a whole-service approach to water reduction and water conservation. During a group meeting to address the water wastage, the teachers were surprised to discover that the children had considerable existing knowledge about water, and many good ideas for water conservation. With guidance from their teachers, the children implemented a water audit, while one child independently made signs reminding everyone to turn off taps and use the half-flush button on the toilets, which became a centre-wide education strategy. The children also took responsibility for water reduction in the playground eg limiting water*

*usage in the sandpit. Later, their interest and learning extended to observations of weather patterns, understanding the water cycle, and conducting experiments about the different forms of water eg liquid, ice and steam. Over time, whole-service initiatives included encouraging all children to dispose of left over drinking water in the gardens, planting drought-resistant native plant species in the grounds, buying water efficient products, and installing water tanks. The **pedagogic strategies** that supported this learning included projects, modelling, direct teaching, open-ended experiences, use of concrete resources, learning extension, supporting children’s critical thinking, and collaborations with outside professionals.”*

A study of the effectiveness of a water conservation program in three Australian preschools showed that learning about caring for one aspect of the environment can open up opportunities for learning and actions in other areas eg “My mummy told me a bit about looking after the world. She told me to turn off the lights. We talked about balloons at preschool and if we let them go outside they would go right and end up in the sea and fish would eat them.” It also found children’s learning influenced improved environmental outcomes at home.

Source “Learning and taking action for the environment: Experiences of children and teachers who participated in a preschool water education program” Miller, Davis, Boyd & Danby

Do your educators believe young children can understand environmental issues, and contribute to improved environmental outcomes? How many of the ‘teaching principles’ and ‘pedagogic strategies’ are educators using to teach children about sustainability – and how effectively are they using them?



### Week 32, 17 October – 21 October 2022 – 3.2.3 Environmentally responsible

## Environmental Sustainability Policy

Educators will involve children in activities which help them appreciate, care for and increase their understanding of sustainability and natural and constructed environments. Some of the ways they may do this include:

- involving children in environmental activities like gardening, nature walks, composting, caring for worm farms
- providing natural materials like wood, stone, sand, plants and recycled materials
- monitoring usage of electricity, gas, water and amount of rubbish going to landfill
- promoting life skills like growing, harvesting, and cooking food
- using environmentally targeted resource kits and information to tailor relevant activities
- collaborating with families and community groups with expertise in environmental issues eg bush care groups
- acknowledging and celebrating environmental awareness events like Clean Up Australia Day.

## Chemical Spills Policy

- Chemicals are cleaned up immediately and safely
- Remove children, contain spill, and follow instructions on Material Safety Data Sheet.
- Decontaminate or dispose of clothing/equipment
- Reflect on incident and minimise or eliminate risk spill may happen again

Do you have any feedback or comments about this policy? Please include below.

Educator's Name	Educator's Signature

Note we are now listing any Procedures which relate to the Policy reviewed. We have a comprehensive Procedure Pack (in addition to the procedures already included in the policies) which is currently part of our HR Toolkit. Please contact us on [admin@centresupport.com.au](mailto:admin@centresupport.com.au) if you would like a quote for the Kit.

Procedure – Chemical Spill

Procedure – Emergency Evacuation

Procedure - Child Safe

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