



Environment and Sustainability Policy

The Rumpus Room Children's Centre is a Child Safe Organisation.

Explanation:

The Rumpus Room is committed to providing its children and their families with a learning environment, which fosters an appreciation of sustainable use of resources and the delicate balance between people and nature. With a Christian perspective we believe God created the world and asked man kind to look after it.

We believe that learning by doing and leading by example are key to achieving environmentally responsible behaviours in individuals and in wider society. We will strive to make environmentally sound decisions with regard to our everyday operations as an Early Childhood Education and Care Centre and through our learning program.

Implementation:

The Rumpus Room will continue to lessen the environmental footprint associated with its day to day operations and, through delivery of the teaching program, encourage children to recognise ways in which they can also lessen their environmental footprint in their daily lives. We will achieve these environmentally sustainable actions in the following ways:

- **Education**

- Information about waste and its effect on our environment locally and globally will be embedded in our daily practice in the form of carefully selected resources and taught explicitly through discussion, language used by staff (Reduce, Re-use, Recycle messages) and resource kits.
- Educators will stay informed about current planting and harvesting of foods.
- Mobilising children as peer models and tutors to enact the key messages of sustainability:
 1. Reduce, reuse, recycle
 2. Be safe when using and caring for the environment
 3. Conserve water and power
 4. Protect the plants.

These roles could be recognised by a vest system that the children wear (1. Yellow, 2. Red, 3. Blue, 4. Green)

- **Minimising resource consumption**

- Water – push taps, water bottles, and inclusion of environmental measures for new buildings as directed by council. Water from the water play trough and rainfall will be used where possible for the gardens.
- Energy – in all new buildings ensure energy passive design including and not limited to;
 - Rainwater harvesting for gardens and children's water play – Water tank
 - Energy efficient lights
 - Dual flush toilets
 - Fully insulated roof & ceilings
 - Natural ventilation to reduce reliance on air conditioning
 - Maximise north facing glazing where possible



- Consideration of energy efficiency in procurement/replacement of technologies such as computers.
- Use clothes line instead of dryer where possible
- Switch off power points at the wall when not in use.
- Fill dishwasher before turning on
- Turn off lights and air conditioners when not needed, maximise windows for air flow. (Keep air conditioners running at 23 degrees throughout year and maximise fan use, lift blinds for light and heat and pull-down blinds for shade)
- **NOTE:** While we understand the value of washing in cold water we **DO NOT** wash in cold water so that we comply with recommended hygiene practises from Staying Healthy, and therefore provide the safest and hygienic environment possible for the children.
- o Printing – we minimise printing by having all communications for families done on line, except for those requesting otherwise. Statements, waiting list, enrolment forms and general communications are done via email. We have an effective website which provides much of the information families need. We use OWNA, an online tool, for children’s records and portfolios. We have many of the Professional Development magazines, files for University student placements and communications from ECECD etc delivered electronically. On occasions selected documents are printed which need to be readily available but these are then located into a centralised place so all stakeholders can access easily.

When printing we

 - Choose recycled printing paper.
 - Operate only one printer in each centre with wifi connection to minimise toner use and waste etc.
 - Use coloured inks sparingly.
 - Set computers to default print on both sides of paper.
- o Choose sustainably sourced furniture and resources when possible.
- o Food – encouraging children to eat fresh and healthy food and to participate in activities that reduce the boredom/hunger factor. Communicate with families how much children eat so waste is minimised. Encourage children to self-serve morning and afternoon tea and to select small amounts to start then add more as needed. We monitor food wastage in the fridge, freezer and pantry and create menus around reducing wastage. Our Chatham street centre writes the menu on a Friday based on preventing food wastage and spoilage.
- o Use of the worm farm, animals and compost to recycle food scraps in. Use the coffee and water waste from the coffee machine in the gardens.
- o **Minimising waste generation**

Recycling of food wastes through worm farms, compost, animals/pets (chickens or guinea pigs), recycling of paper, re-use of useful materials such as cloth scraps, wrapping paper, old cards etc for craft and art activities. Recycle/reuse containers, boxes, pots and pans (other useful/safe resources) in play spaces (e.g. cooking in the sandpit). Encouraging lunchboxes to be ‘wrapper free’/ nude food. Use of email as the primary communication medium to families. Shredding confidential waste



paper and using it for pet bedding. Re-using single sided unwanted copy paper for either further copying or for children's use. Repair equipment/toys if possible rather than replacing them. Sealed containers or beeswax wraps will be used to store foods rather than foil and plastic wraps and other non-recyclable materials. If we have to use plastic wrap we purchase the

- o **Minimising the use of plastic bags**

The centre's groceries are ordered online and delivered. The Delivery is done in crates. If we use bags as part of the delivery, we choose paper.

- o **Minimising Release of chemicals into air and waterways**

Biodegradable cleaning products are used

Warm soapy water is the primary cleaning agent

Chemicals are diluted to correct ratio for purpose when used

Anti-bacterial gels are used when warm water is not available (e.g. excursions)

- o **Increasing awareness of sustainable food production** – veggie patch, special guests to talk about how food is grown in subsistence cultures or carbon footprint (eg food miles), ethical food practices, organics etc. Relate to third world countries where we sponsor children and communities. Aim that children help grow 10% of the food we consume through morning and afternoon tea.

- o **Increasing awareness of the natural world** – visits and talks from relevant people - chickens, reptile man, Blackbutt, natural museum etc. Learning elements – water cycle, plant growth, soil, insects etc. Provide multiple areas for children, increasing natural shade areas where possible.

- o **Increasing awareness of the role of technology in achieving environmental sustainability** – understanding how things work – wind power, tidal power, hydro-power, etc, small scale science experiments which help children to understand how the natural and 'engineered' world works.

This policy links to the following NQS:

National Quality Standards: 3.2.3

See Appendix 1-National Law (section) and National Regulations (regulation)