



Sustainability

Play Kit



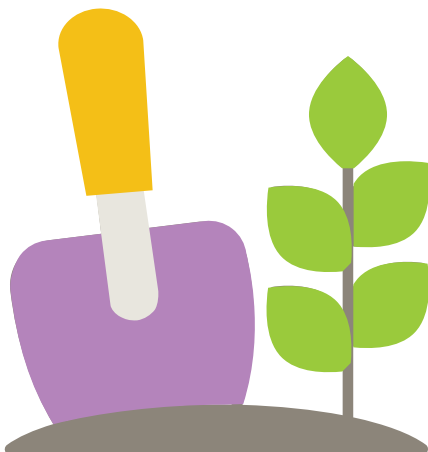


How to use this resource

This resource is for you and your playgroups to use during a playgroup session or at home. Please remember, it's important to be flexible and respond to the needs and interests of the families. This may mean not all children want to participate in planned learning experiences. Give children the option of choosing to participate, as they all learn in different ways.

Plan activities according to the children's developmental levels and interests. It is important to be aware that people from different cultural backgrounds may be uncomfortable with some activities. Be sensitive to each family's feelings and respect their views. Encourage all families to contribute their thoughts, experiences and ideas to the playgroup session.

Support parents to encourage their child's involvement in sustainable practices in a way that will inspire them to develop a commitment for a sustainable future.



Sustainability in everyday life

Look for opportunities that involve the promotion of important life skills such as planting and growing flowers and vegetables, cooking with the grown produce from the garden, recycling items from the home or local community environment. Through these everyday activities children will build their understanding and recognition of the importance of sustainable practice in the world.

Identify some simple projects that can be done at playgroup or by families at home that will support children in learning to cooperate and work with others to develop environmentally responsible practices. These could be caring for pets, gardening, simple recycling of materials, having a compost bin or a worm farm.



By participating in socially responsible practices children develop skills such as:



Critical reasoning.



Innovative thinking.



A sense of belonging.



Understanding the importance of reuse, recycle and repurpose.



Being responsible citizens.

Incorporating sustainability into children's everyday life helps them learn about respecting and caring for their environment.

Ideas for engaging families in sustainable practices:

- Encourage children and families to appreciate and care for their home and community environments.
- Increase children's and family's awareness of the impact of our actions.
- Promote children's and family's understanding about conserving energy.
- Consider sustainable concepts such as paddock to plate.

Playgroup is a place where families and children can undertake simple actions to develop positive attitudes and responsibility towards achieving a sustainable environment both at playgroup and at home.

Some examples include:

- walking to the shops or park instead of driving (if possible)
- modelling and encouraging children to turn lights off when not needed
- involving children in squashing the cardboard boxes ready for recycling
- placing pictures on different bins at playgroup to help children sort the paper, rubbish, food scraps.
- Finding out which playgroup families have chickens and bring different containers to the session that the children can sort the morning tea food scraps into.

Having opportunities for children to connect to their environment by making sustainable decisions will form habits they will hopefully keep going well into the future.

Other benefits of sustainability include:

- Developing empathy skills.
- Working collaboratively.
- Positive attitudes to sustainable practices.
- Being innovative.

As playgroups and families use the following learning experiences they will be supporting their child/ren to develop a positive approach to keeping our environment healthy and sustainable.



Sources:

Belonging, Being & Becoming: docs.education.gov.au/documents/belonging-being-becoming-early-years-learning-framework-australia, Educators – My Time
Our Place: docs.education.gov.au/documents/educators-my-time-our-place, Nature’s Path: naturespath.com/en-us/blog/20-activities-kids-learn-sustainability
Recycle Nation: recyclenation.com/2015/04/fun-activities-to-teach-kids-sustainable-practices
The Empowered Educator: theempowerededucatoronline.com/2014/05/introducing-sustainability-to.html
Walker, L. Miller, S and Tansey, S., 2014, Early Childhood Educator for Diploma, McGraw-Hill Education, North Ryde, NSW

Sustainability Reading Checklist:

Where the Forest Meets the Sea

by Jeannie Baker

10 Things I Can Do To Help My World

by Melanie Walsh

Belonging

by Jeannie Baker

The Curious Garden

by Peter Brown

The Last Dance

by Sally Morgan

Recycling Is Fun

by Charles Ghigna

The Tiny Seed

by Eric Carle



A large purple cartoon animal, possibly a bear or dog, is shown from the chest up. It has large white eyes with black pupils and a black nose. Its mouth is open, holding a stylized globe of the Earth. The globe has green continents, blue oceans, and a red heart in the center. The background is orange with several small green leaves scattered around. There are also two magnifying glasses with green handles and lenses, one in the top right and one in the bottom center, both focusing on a small green leaf.

This months activities:

1. Bush Sculpture
2. The Nature Capsule
3. We Built This City
4. Grow a Cress Head
5. Reduce, Reuse and Recycle Collage
6. Sensory Board Baby Play



Activity #1

Bush Sculpture

Why?

Go into the bush and collect as many objects as possible. Feathers, rocks, leaves, sticks and flowers will work well with this activity. Bring home your stash and get to work. Make a sculpture out of your collection. You can create a bushman, a fairy house or something crazy – let your imagination go crazy! This learning experience is an ideal opportunity for all children to develop their learning and understanding of sorting, matching, classifying and sequence.

What you need?

- Outdoor space to collect materials
- Leaves
- Sticks
- Rocks
- Feathers
- Bark
- Vines

Tip!

Make a list of the objects they collected. This will help children to get to know the different names of plants, leaves and flowers in their local environment.

Instructions

1. Encourage children to head outside.
2. Tell them to collect natural materials to use in building a sculpture.
3. Ask open-ended questions to stimulate their ideas. What could you make? A bushman, fairy house, lizard home?
4. Give children time to make their creations.
5. Have a viewing and allow children to take the group on a tour of their creation.



Extension of the activity

- Take photos of the sculptures and display them.
- Challenge the children to find a way to connect all the sculptures together – could they build roads or bridges or a creek even?
- Use a stick from their collection of objects and make a leaf threading with different leaves they find in the playgroup yard, park or at home.
- Contact paper nature collage, children can select different objects from their collection and stick on to contact to create their own nature collage.



Activity #2

The Nature Capsule

Why?

Collect your favourite things from nature and make a nature capsule. Beautiful leaves, feathers and photographs of your area are a wonderful addition. Seal them up in a capsule; you could use an empty ice cream container or a jar. Bury the capsule in the yard, but don't forget to make a map! This activity is a fun way to explore outside and take time to find special small things.

What you need?

- Ice cream containers or jars
- Shovel
- Camera/photos
- Paper
- Markers

Extension of the activity

Wait for a month then dig up the capsule. Ask questions like, "do you remember what you put inside? Can you still find the same leaves and feathers in nature that you did a month ago?"

Instructions

1. Explain what a time capsule is to the children.
2. Encourage them to go outside and collect special things to go into the nature 'time' capsule.
3. Discuss their treasures and seal them into the container.
4. Choose a spot as a group to bury the capsule.
5. Mark the spot.
6. Children can use paper and markers to draw their own map to find the capsule.



Tip!

When packing the nature capsule think about:

- Avoiding folding or bending items to make them fit into the capsule.
- To avoid damage when removed, try not to overcrowd the capsule.
- If possible, label items using a card and permanent ink.
- Attach labels using nylon cord such as fishing line.
- Include a contents list to identify each item in the nature capsule.



Activity #3

We Built This City

Why?

Reuse cardboard boxes to make your own cardboard house or city. You could draw or paint on the boxes, rip them apart and stick them back together to make your dream house! Watch the children working out unique ways to use the boxes. This activity encourages problem solving, creativity and innovative thinking.

What you need?

- Collect a variety of cardboard boxes from the local shops
- Marker pens
- Masking tape

Tip!

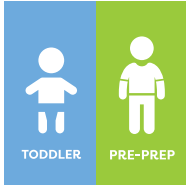
Ensure an adult is present when doing this activity with children.

Instructions

1. Give the children the cardboard boxes.
2. Show them how to rip them up into different sized pieces of cardboard.
3. Encourage the children to use the boxes to make their own houses or city.
4. Use the masking tape to assemble and markers to decorate.
5. Have a city viewing and ask children to give a tour of their creations.

Extension of the activity

- Children could find ways to connect their buildings and make a bigger city.
- Using sticks and leaves, create families and animals to live in the buildings.



Activity #4

Grow a Cress Head

Why?

Children are naturally curious about the world around them. This activity supports children to experience a sense of responsibility, caring and nurturing for their natural environment. It also gives parents and children an opportunity to discuss ways to implement sustainable practices in daily routines.

What you need?

- Recycled clear plastic cups are best, so you can see the roots growing as well as the shoots
- Googly eyes
- PVA glue
- Cotton wool
- Cress seeds
- Watering can or small jug

Instructions

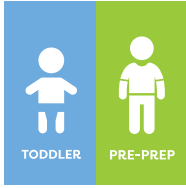
1. Glue googly eyes on to the cup.
2. Fill the cup with cotton wool leaving some room for the seeds at the top.
3. Pour enough water over the cotton wool so that it is damp.
4. Sprinkle the seeds on the cotton wool.
5. Take home and place the cup by the window. Add a little water if need be.

Tip!

Cress heads enjoy a sunny place to grow.

Extension of the activity

Make a cress head family using different sized recycled cups and containers.



Activity #5

Reduce, Reuse and Recycle Collage

Why?

Creating a recycling collage is an activity that can be enjoyed by many, and it invites children to use their senses to explore the sensation of the different textures, shapes and colours. Teaching children about sustainable practices helps them to develop an awareness about the importance of caring for the earth. This activity provides an opportunity for children to express their ideas creatively while also learning about the environment.

What you need?

- Cardboard (shoe box lid)
- Glue
- Paint brush
- Recycled items/ materials (e.g., plastic bottle tops, pieces of fabric, leather off cuts, corrugated cardboard, foam, mesh)

Instructions

1. Place the cardboard or shoe box lid on the table.
2. Place the glue on your cardboard, where needed.
3. Use the materials to create your recycled art, by gluing the materials on to the cardboard.
4. Invite children to use their senses, touching the materials and describing the textures.

Tip!

Check that any small items used in this activity do not pose a choking hazard.



Extension of the activity

- Children will be developing their fine motor, problem solving, creativity and sensory skills while producing their collage. Extension activities could include exploring children's books such as; *Why should I recycle?* by Jen Green or *What does it mean to be Green* by Rana DiOrio.
- You can also investigate 'sustainability' with children; ask them how we can all be good stewards of the earth's resources (e.g., talk about ways to conserve water and how items can be recycled and made into other items)?



Activity #6

Sensory Board Baby Play

Why?

When babies play with a sensory board they discover different textured items using their senses of sight, touch, movement and balance. Parents/carers can engage with their baby by asking open-ended questions like, “what does that feel like?” For children who are not yet able to talk, parents/carers will need to use other cues to understand what their child is communicating. Children may like the feel of an item and respond with a giggle, or they may use a facial expression or eye contact to indicate that it is an unusual feeling.

What you need?

- Cardboard
- Glue gun
- Recycled materials such as large plastic bottle tops, large pieces of fabric, cloths with different textures, large pom poms, large feathers, large pieces of carpet

Instructions

1. Place the cardboard on a stable surface.
2. Place the glue on your cardboard, where needed.
3. Use the materials to create your sensory board, by gluing the materials to the cardboard.
4. Invite children to use the sensory board or bring the board to the babies and toddlers and show by example how it works.

Tip!

Ensure the items you are using are safe for children to play with.



Extension of the activity

This activity provides an opportunity for children to develop their sensory, fine and gross motor skills. Sensory play helps to develop language, cognitive and social skills. Make a sensory hula hoop with different textured materials tied around the hoop. Explore children's books such as *That's Not My Plane* by Fiona Watt (a series of sensory books). Create some sensory bags using shaving cream and paint – spray the shaving cream into a plastic bag and use strong tape to close the bag.

