



# O'Connor Cooperative School

35A MacPherson Street, O'Connor ACT 2602

Phone: 6142 0345

Email: [info\\_coop@ed.act.edu.au](mailto:info_coop@ed.act.edu.au)



**ACT**  
Government  
Education

## Environment and Sustainability at O'Connor Cooperative Preschool

### The goal of sustainability

- to promote a transition from an unsustainable society to a sustainable one through making education for sustainable development a part of everyday practice.
- to be an integral part of the O'Connor Cooperative Preschool program that underpins daily practice.
- for O'Connor Cooperative Preschool to continue to develop and expand sustainable practices into the teaching and learning program.

### The Sustainable Practices Program

The sustainable education program covers seven key learning areas:

1. Creating natural indoor/outdoor learning environments
2. Gardening and composting
3. Sustainable food practices
4. Water conservation
5. Waste minimisation: reduce, reuse, recycle
6. Energy saving
7. Community walks

### Creating natural indoor/outdoor learning environments

- Minimise the use of plastic products and replace them with resources made from natural materials such as wood and cane baskets.
- Reflecting the natural world in the indoor environment: images of nature, use of natural resources including seeds, plants and flowers, stones, wood, cane baskets, glass and sand.
- Ready access to nature outdoors: wooden play props, large rocks, water, sand, natural grass, tanbark.
- Create spaces for individual play, small/large group experiences and active/quiet spaces.
- Model wonder and curiosity about the natural world found in our own outdoor learning environment; birdlife, insects, snails, worms, weather and seasonal change. Use discoveries and interests as a base for further investigation.
- Make or place objects in the environment to enable children to experience the natural world using their senses: to see the wind at work (kites, wind chimes, sculpture), to feed the birds, to interact with indigenous perspectives, including caring for the land.

### Gardening and composting

- Provide ongoing gardening experiences through digging, planting, propagating, watering, fertilising, weeding and mulching.
- Children, families and staff share responsibility for the care of the preschool garden beds, including vegetables, herbs and flowers. Children will learn through authentic experiences where food originates.
- Experience from garden to table practice by picking produce from the garden beds to taste, cook and decorate.
- Establish and maintain composting practices.

### Sustainable food practices

- Grow our own vegetables, fruit and herbs.
- Encourage healthy eating.
- Encourage children to take home unwanted food items or store to eat later rather than throw away.
- Drink water only.
- Cook using produce from the preschool garden. Share recipes and produce with families.
- Sort waste from lunch and snacks into organic waste, recyclable waste and non-recyclable waste. Organic waste will be composted at preschool or fed to the chickens where appropriate. Children are encouraged to

- take all other waste/packaging home, and families are encouraged to pack their child's food in reusable packaging where possible.
- Encourage reuse of zip lock plastic bags.

#### **Water conservation**

- Promote water as a precious resource.
- Enforce water restrictions when applicable.
- Use water wisely when hand washing, cleaning, engaging in water and sandpit play and gardening.

#### **Waste minimisation: reduce, reuse, recycle**

- Place all paper into the paper recycling bin.
- Children play and create with reusable materials, boxes, egg cartons, material scraps, wool, plastic lids, and coloured paper offcuts.
- Use discarded office paper and computer paper for drawing.
- Reuse safe jars and plastic containers for storage.
- Reuse wood offcuts and plastic pipes in play.
- Use pieces of fabric/cane for cubbies, tents and teepees
- Source resources from op shops, where appropriate.
- Attempt to repair broken resources where appropriate.
- Photocopy double sided and on recycled paper.
- Consider the environment before printing.

#### **Energy saving**

- When using electrical appliances, turn off at the wall.
- Encourage the use of public transport, walking or riding a bike.
- Use public transport for excursions where appropriate.
- Use recycled items such as containers, plastic lids, cardboard boxes for box construction and collage.
- Use hand operated tools such as torches, whisks
- Close doors and windows to keep heat in during winter, use windows and doors for cross-ventilation during summer.

#### **Community walks**

- Encourage wonder and curiosity for the natural environment.
- Work on the premise that we *only leave footprints*: do not pick natural materials unless they have fallen to the ground, and do not leave rubbish behind.
- Explicitly teach how to care for the natural environment.

**At O'Connor Cooperative Preschool we strongly believe if children observe staff caring for their indoor and outdoor environment and involve children in the above learning, sustainable practices will become a part of their everyday life and of great benefit to the future of the world in which they live.**