Education for Sustainability

Education for sustainability is a long-term and big-picture approach to learning. It is about supporting the development of children’s knowledge, skills, and values so that they can contribute to a just, democratic and environmentally sustainable world. Our preschool has started this approach and we are seeking your impressions of where we are currently positioned with education for sustainability.

Both the Early Years Learning Framework and the Australian Quality Standards, which outline the requirements for learning and management of preschools, have a strong focus on sustainability.

Preschools are in a unique position to be leading models and influencing change for sustainability with families and the whole community. They provide an ideal environment where people can learn together and practice real ways of being more sustainable. Social, environmental and economic benefits are achieved for the preschool, families and the community through an ongoing focus on education for sustainability.

Education for Sustainability as quality education

Education for sustainability is globally recognised as ‘quality education’ because it:
- develops the child’s understanding of the world and the complexity of it
- emphasises the link between children’s values and their perception of the world (including their culture and language) with the decisions they make
- encourages critical thinking and problem solving
- uses multiple ways of learning (e.g. visual, verbal, oral, written, art, experience)
- facilitates self-initiated learning, participation and decision-making.

AuSSI-SA

In South Australia many schools and preschools are members of the Australian Sustainable School Initiative (AuSSI-SA), which aims to develop sustainable schools and preschools within sustainable communities.

The book *Education for Sustainability: a guide to becoming a sustainable school* was published in 2007 and it includes the AuSSI-SA model which has five areas for development and four levels of progress. Indicators provide signposts for celebration of a preschool’s current position and indications of the part of the journey still to be undertaken.

Using this document

As parents and caregivers, you are a valued part of the journey our preschool is making to become more sustainable, so we are collecting your impressions of where we are currently placed in education for sustainability.

1. Please tick the indicators you believe the preschool has addressed. If you are unsure, leave the square empty.
2. Draw a star next to the indicators you think should be worked on next.
3. Return the survey pages to the preschool.

The responses will be collated to provide us with an overall impression of where we are now and where we can plan to go next. Thank you for your time.
Name: (optional)

✔ = Agree     ☆ = Wish it would happen

Starting
The preschool has:
☐ asked parents about including education for sustainability in the preschool’s vision and values.
☐ invited parents and community members to contribute to education for sustainability.
☐ provided learning sessions about sustainability for parents.
☐ mentioned the need for social, environmental and economic sustainability at Governing Council meetings.
☐ celebrated environmental events and days (e.g. World Environment Day, Earth Hour).
☐ included environmental learning for children during sessions.
☐ provided learning for children in the grounds and community (e.g. excursions to recycling places).
☐ encouraged children to be leaders in projects and activities.
☐ provided information about groups they work with in the community (e.g. NRM Education, KESAB).
☐ used the website and newsletters to inform, discuss and seek support for sustainability.

Comments:

Challenging
The preschool has:
☐ told us education for sustainability is part of the Quality Improvement Plan.
☐ involved parents in developing a Site Environment Management Plan (SEMP).
☐ mentioned social, environmental and economic sustainability in parent meetings.
☐ invited parents to support the preschool in education for sustainability.
☐ participated in local and global initiatives (e.g. fundraising and donations for people in other countries).
☐ taken children to many places to learn (e.g. excursions).
☐ developed the preschool grounds for sustainability learning (e.g. vegetable and butterfly gardens).
☐ encouraged children to be responsible for the preschool environment (e.g. caring for the worm farm).
☐ used children’s interests to plan learning experiences
☐ made links with Aboriginal people and other cultures.
☐ made environmental improvements (e.g. installed solar panels, gardens, rainwater tanks).

Comments:
**Committing**
The preschool has:
- included sustainability thinking and actions in children’s reports.
- provided learning experiences about social sustainability (e.g. peace, justice and human rights).
- asked parents what changes towards sustainability they have noticed in the preschool.
- shared educational and sustainability outcomes with parents.
- made global links and connections to education for sustainability.
- included Aboriginal people in planning and learning for sustainability.
- involved children with sustainability practices that support their learning and achieve outcomes.
- committed to sustainability learning and is more sustainable.
- encouraged parents to lead sustainability initiatives.
- influenced the behaviours of families and community through their sustainability initiatives.
- managed preschool events in sustainable ways (e.g. end-of-year celebrations).
- told new parents about education for sustainability and encouraged their participation.

**Comments:**

**Transforming** (visionary)
The preschool with the community is:
- continuously reducing its use of resources.
- investigating what being part of a sustainable community means.
- taking local actions that help to address global concerns.
- using the curriculum as lived experience of sustainability.
- thinking and acting locally and globally.
- influencing families, the preschool and community through sustainability actions.
- exploring and developing creative sustainability options (e.g. local food, Fair Trade/Transition Towns).
- learning and living more sustainably.
- linking and partnering with other communities.
- moving towards sustainability with multiple leaders in the community.

**Comments:**

**Suggestions for including families more in our sustainability initiatives:**