

Nathalia and District Preschool

Director/Teacher: Andrea Sutton

The service consistently operates with sustainable practices embedded in the everyday program. Children and families are actively involved in the environmentally responsible programs offered in the centre. (National Quality Standard Assessment Report) Nathalia & District Preschool

Our sustainable journey...

In 2012 we had a look at our own sustainable practices within the preschool environment - our waste: paper, food, food wrappers, water and where we purchased our materials from. This was the beginning of our sustainable journey.

Reflection:

Paper: lots of paper in the bins

Food scraps: collected and taken home by an educator for her chooks.

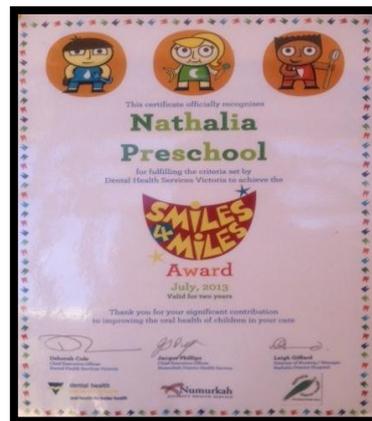
Food wrappers: there were so many wrappers in lunch boxes

Water usage: where does it come from, where does it go?

Purchasing resources: do we need to buy new all the time?

What happened next...

We participated in the Smiles 4 Miles Program. This led to discussions about our food – where it comes from, wrappings verses containers, our left overs and what else could we do with them?



Recycling

What is recycling and why do we do it?

To reuse items – craft (boxes, paper, containers)

To lower our rubbish collection

To feed the worms and rabbits

To make compost for the gardens



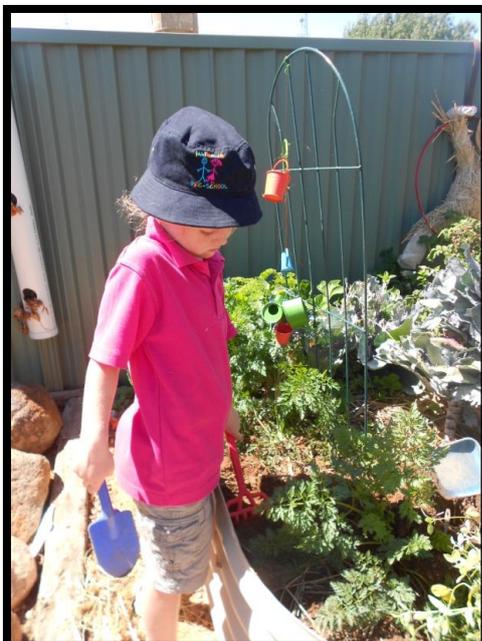
Our resources

We use everyday items in our program: - tyres, rocks, tanbark from outside play area, cardboard boxes from deliveries, dress ups from a visit to the Op Shop, cardboard boxes from the local high school and seaweed from the sea.



Plants grown from seed

A vegetable garden was established in the yard and the children had also been growing plants from seeds. Two pumpkins were displayed in the 'sow and grow' area. (Quality Area 3)



Our fruit and vegetables:

Our vegetables feed the rabbits.

Pumpkin seedlings the children took home are coming back as pumpkins that feed the worms.

New pumpkin plants growing in worm farm are sent home with families to begin the growing process again for more food for the worms.

This allows the children to see how the food cycle works and how they are a large part of it.

Recycle Rescue:

Our resources are purchased from Recycle Rescue.

Our aim is to up cycle where and when possible from all resources at the preschool centre.

We encourage families and local businesses to donate items of use to us.

We ask that they are clean for safety reasons.

Families were encouraged to save recycled materials to bring to the centre to be used in the art and craft area. Recycled dress up items were utilised in the dramatic play area. (Quality Area 3)

Respect for the environment

We have a large fish tank inside set up with a turtle and fish.

We discuss how our natural water system support fish, turtles, yabbies and plants.

Children participate by feeding the animals, although educators do the cleaning.

Where possible, the waste is put in the compost bin.

Discuss water saving techniques and role model by placing our inside plants out in the rain.

Natural investigation table
with up cycled resources...



How we achieve sustainability

The natural investigation area that provides ongoing investigation of the children's environment

Nathalia & District Preschool support the children's awareness and education of nature and sustainability of the environment through daily ongoing experiences. Embedded in the program is our natural and sustainable environment. The children gain practical hands on learning through caring for the preschool pets. They have been learning about creeks and dams with the inclusion of our turtle and fish. The

importance of maintaining a healthy tank supports the children's awareness of a healthy creek that runs through our town. The worm farm is flourishing as the children feed their meal scraps to the worms. This supports their awareness of how worms are an important part of the eco system by breaking down their food scraps to fertilise the soil.

The pet rabbits offer children a quiet experience of brushing their fur and they also provide great cuddles for the children. Inside our playroom we have many natural experiences that are ongoing throughout the year. The investigation table provides the opportunity for open ended play, the children choose the direction of their learning through their investigations of the natural resources.

Bush kinder

We venture out into the Barmah Forest to investigate the bush. The aim of the day is not to take items with us but to explore and respect the bush for what it is.

Most importantly, to leave the bush as we found it but with an appreciation for the natural wonders of our bush.

Before Bush Kinder, we had a reptile incursion. This provided a safe message and a 'hands on' experience for the children before visiting the Barmah Forest.

What we are learning:

- Respect for the environment and the resources we use.
- To think about what we do and why we do it.
- Is there another resource we could use?
- Why the environment is so important.
- Life cycles (plants, animals, the environment) and the needs of the cycle.
- To allow every child the opportunity to investigate, explore, question and learn about where we live and how to support the environment.



Where to from here

- Our large rain water tank is being fitted with a pump and pipe with a tap out to the play yard. This will enable the children to use collected rain water for their play and to water the gardens.
- New vegetable/flower gardens are being developed for more plantings.
- Making paper out of recycled paper; what they can do with their own paper they have made.
- Continue with our Bush Kinder experiences.