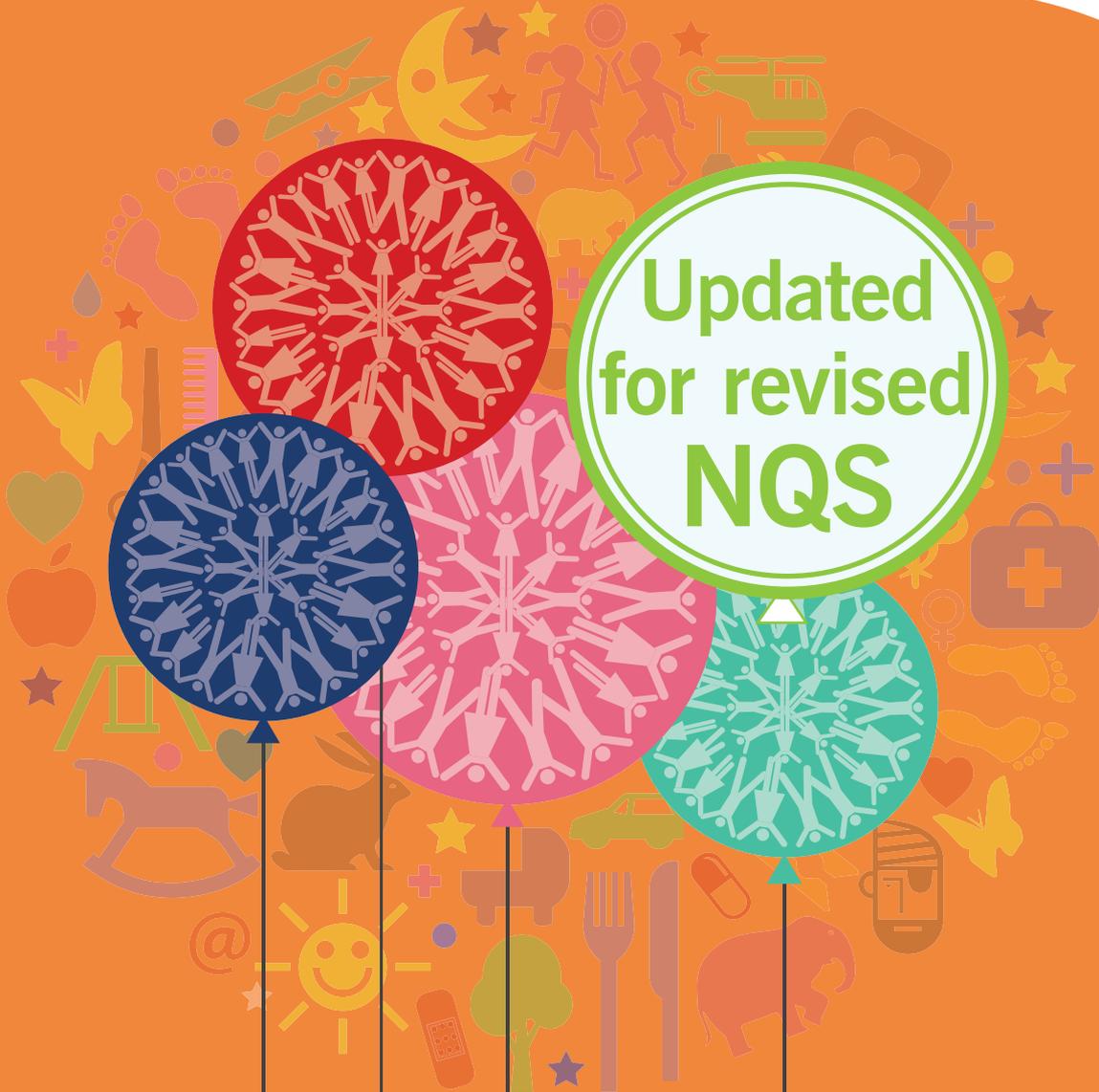


CHCECE012

Support children to connect with their world



Updated
for revised
NQS

Learner guide



aspire
learning resources

CHCECE012

Support children to connect with their world

Release 2

Learner guide

Aspire Version 2.1

NEXECE012



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CHCECE012 Support children to connect with their world, Release 2



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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE012 Support children to connect with their world*, Release 2. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete.

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into practice. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Where QR codes appear, you can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help. 
Summaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There are learning checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

1A Understanding the natural environment

1B Providing natural and recycled materials

1C Creating spaces that develop life skills

Supporting children to understand and respect the natural environment

The natural environment is full of wonders and joys that children can explore with you. The beauty of natural colours and textures can be coupled with a range of reused and recycled items to provide a variety of activities and open-ended experiences.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
✓	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
	Partnerships
✓	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children
✓	Learning through play
✓	Intentional teaching
✓	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
✓	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

1A Understanding the natural environment

Most children have a fascination with the environment and the things they find living in it. They interact with natural materials and can be encouraged to appreciate their value and beauty.

However, caring for and appreciating the natural environment is far more beneficial to children than how it looks and what treasures it can hold. The future of our land, our health, plants and animals all reside in the knowledge children hold and the actions they take to care for the environment and maintain its health. This is known as sustainability.



Ecosystems

At the foundation of environmental education is an understanding of ecosystems. This is about the interdependence of people, plants, animals and the land. Each of these parts needs the others if they are to remain healthy.

Here are a few things to know about ecosystems:

- ▶ Ecosystems are made up of soil, atmosphere, heat, light, water and living things.
- ▶ Everything in the natural world is connected – if one part suffers, this impacts other parts.
- ▶ The healthier an ecosystem, the less easily it can be damaged.

The role of each part

Each part of an ecosystem has a crucial role to play. For example:

- ▶ Soil provides nutrients for plants and holds water for plants and animals.
- ▶ The atmosphere provides air for plants and animals, including people, to breathe; without the atmosphere we would have no life at all.
- ▶ The sun provides warmth and heats up water, causing it to evaporate, which sends it into the atmosphere to make rain.
- ▶ Water makes up a large part of the cells of living things, including people, and is necessary for keeping animals and plants alive.
- ▶ Biodiversity refers to the variety of living things. Living things contribute to the ecosystem as they provide food for other living things; for example, plants are food for animals and people.

Teaching children about ecosystems

By thinking of an ecosystem and its connections, you can understand the importance of each part of the natural world. By teaching children about ecosystems, you can model and discuss the importance of observing nature and interacting with it in a way that ensures it is not damaged.

For example, you might show respect for the way Indigenous Australians have always cared for the ecosystem and respected its balance as part of their day-to-day lives. You can find evidence of this in cultural stories or Dreamtime stories.

Other terms that are used to describe care for all living things and an understanding of an ecosystem include 'Mother Nature' or 'Mother Earth'.

Curriculum foundations

The National Quality Standard (NQS), *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF), *My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia* (MTOF), and the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics all have guidelines about environmental learning.

In an education and care setting, the main focus is on:

- ▶ the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land
- ▶ topics that explore environmental issues appropriate to a young child's level and introduce sustainability as a practical action.

These guidelines expect you to model respect, care and appreciation for the environment, whether it is natural or constructed.

You can show appreciation for the environment by:

- ▶ putting your own rubbish in the bin and picking up others' rubbish
- ▶ not killing or damaging animals and plants; for example, you might remove snails from your veggie garden and place them in another part of the yard
- ▶ watering the garden
- ▶ sweeping paths
- ▶ showing interest in the environment by noticing things and pointing them out to others
- ▶ listening to the sound of trees in the wind
- ▶ watching clouds and talking about their shapes
- ▶ commenting on the weather.

Discussing the environment with children

There are a number of ways to involve children in discussion about the environment and many topics that you can investigate. The best opportunities to discuss the environment come when children ask about or speak about the environment.

You may be:

- ▶ in a group
- ▶ in the natural environment
- ▶ interacting with nature, the environment and animals
- ▶ interacting with man-made or non-sustainable products and situations.

Watch this video about helping children appreciate the natural environment.



Encouraging children to learn about the environment

There are many ways to encourage children to enjoy and learn about the environment.

To provide opportunities for children to engage with the environment, you may:

- ▶ use the outdoor environment often
- ▶ include natural elements in the environment; for example, plants, trees, edible gardens, sand, rocks, mud and water
- ▶ encourage children to touch, feel, look and smell
- ▶ have picnics
- ▶ plant seeds and watch how they grow
- ▶ visit the zoo, museum or aquarium
- ▶ plan incursions with mobile farms and animal visits
- ▶ use reference books, online searches, pictures and posters, and the knowledge of parents, educators and others in the community, such as vets or zoologists
- ▶ use stories, songs, movement and poetry
- ▶ discuss different kinds of animals; for example, pets, farm animals, zoo animals, animals that fly, animals that live in the sea, animals that come from different parts of the world or animals that are extinct.

When a child expresses an interest in a topic, take the opportunity to make it a teachable moment. Some topics are simple and will only be discussed for a few moments, while others may evolve into large-scale projects.

Topics to avoid

It is a good idea to delay discussing topics relating to major environmental destruction until the child has developed a real sense of what the environment is and can understand difficult concepts. For example, if you introduce information about ozone holes and climate change too early, you may confuse the child with abstract concepts and create fear of things that are out of the child's control.

Suitable topics

There are many topics about the environment and how our senses interact with it that are suitable to discuss with children. For example:

- ▶ how we feel, smell, taste, look and hear
- ▶ how we breathe air
- ▶ how we drink water
- ▶ how the sun keeps us warm
- ▶ what things are called using the correct terms; for example, chickens are oviparous (that is, they lay eggs).

As children develop and understand more aspects of the environment, they will begin to ask more complex questions. Their discussions may extend into larger projects that span hours, days or weeks.

The following table includes some examples of discussion topics.

Concept	Discussion topics	Projects
Everyday interactions with the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Where foods come from ▶ Where the toilet flush goes ▶ How to get water from a tap ▶ Where you live ▶ What pets need ▶ What creatures in the environment are called ▶ Why we are all different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Go on an excursion to a farm ▶ Learn about food chains ▶ Find out about different types of houses across the world and what they are made of ▶ Adopt a pet and care for it ▶ Explore the life cycle of a butterfly ▶ Develop a family tree
Exploring natural materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Shape of the materials ▶ Where they came from ▶ What they are naturally used for ▶ What they can be used for now ▶ Why it is important to leave materials in the environment ▶ Which animals might use them and what for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hunt, gather and search for natural materials ▶ Create a log of the things you find ▶ Draw or photograph them ▶ Name them or find out their names ▶ Encourage children to look, find out and inspect using a magnifying glass

Concept	Discussion topics	Projects
Taking care of plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How to care for them ▶ What they need to grow ▶ Where they live (in shade or sun) ▶ What they need from people ▶ How to keep them safe ▶ How you can help them grow strong ▶ How they provide oxygen ▶ Which plants are native to the area and which plants are introduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Grow a garden, veggie or herb patch ▶ Create a life cycle of plants in your garden ▶ Develop a list of plants and their proper names ▶ Take photos of plants and develop an album
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recycling ▶ Reusing ▶ Reducing water use, electricity and waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop a recycling system, worm farm or compost heap ▶ Create a method for deciding what items can be reused ▶ Implement reduction plans and put them into place ▶ Create a water recycling project ▶ Investigate how water is collected, where it goes, and how it is used
Ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How each component has a part to play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Look at how each living thing is linked to another; for example, if there are no bees, they won't pollinate the flowers, and then the flowers won't make fruit and vegetables, and we won't have enough food to eat ▶ Find out how ants live by establishing an ant farm

There are many short videos that explain topics such as ecosystems or the life cycle of water. Some are created for children in a fun and simple manner, and include cartoons and short movies. Use these to discuss or demonstrate a concept, or to gain ideas for future presentations. Many of these resources are simple enough to help you understand the concepts and pass this information on.

Practice task 1

1. Explain how you might model respect, care and appreciation of the environment while working with children. Give **two** examples.

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2. Research the guidelines for environmental learning. Answer these questions:

- a. Which element of the NQS focuses on sustainability?

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- b. Which element of the NQS focuses on the environment?

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- c. Which practice in the EYLF/MTOP mentions that children are responsible for caring for the environment?

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- d. Which outcome in the EYLF/MTOP mentions respect for the environment, and the need for daily routines and practices to embed sustainability?

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- e. Which responsibility in the ECA Code of Ethics states that you should work to help children understand the environment?

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3. Write down how these elements, practices, outcomes or responsibilities are represented in service policies and procedures.

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4. Choose one of the discussion topics mentioned in this section. List **three** things you might discuss with a child to develop their knowledge of this topic.

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5. Choose one of the projects mentioned in this section and answer the following.
- a. List **three** things you might do with a child to extend their learning when undertaking this project.

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- b. Identify **two** resources you might provide.

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1B Providing natural and recycled materials

A learning environment that respects the environment should reflect nature as much as possible. It will include items from nature (such as pine cones, leaves, pebbles and logs) and also equipment made from natural materials (such as hessian, timber train sets and cane baskets). The environment should be coloured with the tones of wood, cane, leaves and sand. It should be pleasing and relaxing to the eye, and calming to the mind.



Your service may already provide an environment that is aesthetically pleasing, or that links the indoor and outdoor environment. Alternatively, you might want to introduce more natural elements to the environment. It is unusual for all materials to be natural, but by creating a balance between natural, man-made and recycled resources, you will notice a change in the feel of the space and how the children use and respond to it.

Presenting materials

When you present materials and resources to children, you must think about the message being sent. You want them to feel safe, involved, comfortable and intrigued by the set-up. An uncluttered, simple display without distractions allows children to focus on play and learning.

Natural materials allow you to easily set up a space that sends out this message and reflects positivity and calmness. When you couple these natural elements with recycled objects, the play space becomes a more interesting and enjoyable place. Children are better able to focus and use the environment for exploration and open-ended experimentation.

Moving to natural materials

It may not be possible to immediately change your indoor or outdoor environment from man-made to natural materials. If your environment contains a lot of equipment created from man-made materials, you may need to change slowly.

You could start to adapt your environment from 'processed' to natural by changing just one or two items at a time. You could look for these items in a second-hand shop or ask parents if they have anything suitable they are able to donate.

Some items you could easily introduce include cane baskets, woven placemats or wicker plate holders. You could use these objects to display and store materials (pencils, felt pens or construction blocks) while the children are using them.

You can also create games and experiences using natural materials. For example, barriers and borders can be created using rocks, pebbles, logs or rows of pot plants.

Try to replace damaged man-made items with recycled or natural options. For example, when plastic chairs crack, replace them with wooden chairs. You may also find that parents are willing to purchase your old items. This will give you a start toward purchasing new and long-lasting natural options.

Many books and websites provide ideas for setting up and using natural materials. There are many useful resources available to support early childhood educators to embed sustainable practices, including the Early Childhood Australia website (<http://aspirelr.link/early-childhood-australia>).

Types of materials

Many different types of natural and recycled materials can be used in a variety of open-ended ways, both indoors and outdoors.

Natural materials

You can source natural materials from:	
▶ the garden	▶ a garden centre
▶ treasure hunts	▶ craft stores
▶ an excursion	▶ art supplies.
▶ a child's collection	

Incorporate these materials into your plan of activities. The following table includes some examples.

Experience ideas	Materials for indoors and outdoors
Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Charcoal ▶ Sticks in wet sand ▶ Wool (for weaving) ▶ Leaves (for printing) ▶ Feathers (for painting)
Sensory play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sand ▶ Water ▶ Mud ▶ Pebbles
Sorting activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Seed pods ▶ Leaves ▶ Pebbles ▶ Gumnuts ▶ Shells
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Feathers and leaves (for floating) ▶ Pebbles and shells (for sinking) ▶ Seeds and bulbs (for growing) ▶ Garden creatures, such as slaters, worms and caterpillars (for anatomy) ▶ Plants, seeds and plant parts ▶ Flowers, leaves and eggs (for differences)

Experience ideas	Materials for indoors and outdoors
Maths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Pebbles, garden creatures, stepping stones or steps made from timber (for size and sequence) ▶ Shells, seed pods, vegetables, eggs, petals or clover leaves (for counting)
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Pine cones and coconut shells ▶ Sticks ▶ Stones
Dramatic play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Scenes that include branches, shells, logs, rocks

Recycled materials

Recycled materials can be sourced from:

- ▶ parents
- ▶ the service office
- ▶ a nearby factory or office
- ▶ second-hand stores.

Incorporate recycled materials into your daily plans of experiences. The following table includes some examples.

Materials for indoors and outdoors	Possible uses
Old pots and pans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Home play ▶ Sand play ▶ Growing plants ▶ Watering plants ▶ Storing or displaying materials
Wooden trays, bowls, dishes and cutting boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Home play ▶ Storing or displaying materials ▶ Sorting games
Glass jars and bottles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Storage ▶ Paint, glue or water jars ▶ Growing plants ▶ Watering plants ▶ Decorating
Nuts, bolts, nails and screws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sorting ▶ Matching ▶ Sequencing (from large to small) ▶ Woodwork

Materials for indoors and outdoors	Possible uses
Knick-knacks, such as napkin rings, jewellery, scarves and other unusual items found in second-hand stores or donated by families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Matching ▶ Sorting ▶ Pasting ▶ Building
Tyres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Stepping stones ▶ Edging ▶ Planters ▶ Borders ▶ Sand trays
Miscellaneous items, such as bottle tops, paper towel rolls, egg cartons, used or shredded paper, wood scraps, food packaging, corks, buttons, fabric, wool, old cards, yoghurt containers or pipes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Collage ▶ Dramatic play ▶ Construction ▶ Floating/sinking ▶ Counting ▶ Sorting ▶ Sewing ▶ Weaving ▶ Home-made musical instruments ▶ Sand play ▶ An 'invention centre' or 'creation station'

Practice task 2

1. Write down **five** experiences in the indoor environment and **five** experiences in the outdoor environment. Identify whether they use man-made, natural or recycled materials.

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2. Choose one indoor experience and one outdoor experience that use mainly man-made materials. Describe how you could alter each experience to include more natural and recycled materials.

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1C Creating spaces that develop life skills

Ongoing discussion about the environment is important to the development of children's life skills. Children benefit from knowing about:

- ▶ growing and preparing food
- ▶ waste reduction and recycling.



Growing and preparing food

An edible garden is a fantastic learning experience.

Concepts that children can learn about when involved in growing a garden include:

- ▶ life cycles of plants, bugs and other animals in the garden
- ▶ where foods come from, what they look like before we see them on our plates, and how to prepare them
- ▶ how to care for plants
- ▶ what role bees play
- ▶ how the garden ecosystems work
- ▶ roles and responsibilities; for example, who is in charge of watering and who needs to weed
- ▶ counting, measuring and comparing seeds and garden beds
- ▶ sequencing; what comes first, second, third, etc.
- ▶ time; for example, how long it takes for each plant to grow fruit, or which days of the week the garden should be fertilised
- ▶ horticulture; for example, the names of plant species, companion planting, landscaping, propagation or cultivation.

Garden experiences

Gardens are pleasant to look at, smell, observe over time and care for. A garden area can be as small as a pot plant or window box. They can be built with raised garden beds or made from recycled materials.

Children love to get involved in the process of developing a garden. They can help you:

- ▶ plan the space
- ▶ collect items they need on an excursion
- ▶ help write a letter to a supplier
- ▶ place the items



- ▶ shovel, dig, rake and hoe
- ▶ set out the plants, seedlings or seeds
- ▶ add mulch to the garden
- ▶ water the seeds and plants
- ▶ stake
- ▶ remove bugs and weeds
- ▶ harvest
- ▶ prepare or cook any produce the plants grow.

Garden safety

Gardening has some safety issues you need to be aware of. When children are in the garden, make sure that they:

- ▶ follow sunsmart procedures
- ▶ wear closed shoes to protect their feet when digging and shovelling
- ▶ use tools that match their size and capabilities
- ▶ are supervised if using fertilisers or potting mix
- ▶ are safe near water
- ▶ pack up equipment when not in use – hoses and tools are hazards when left lying around
- ▶ only eat plants and crops when adults agree it is safe
- ▶ are aware that some bugs and creatures are dangerous when handled (for example, bees).

Creating a garden

You need to do some research and preparation before creating a garden. Follow the steps in the following table to make your garden successful.

Step	Considerations	Useful information
Decide on a space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What spaces are available? ▶ What space can you afford to use? ▶ What are the characteristics of the space (for example, does it have sunlight, will it be rained on)? ▶ What kind of garden will it be (for example, raised, potted, small, large, indoor, outdoor or within a glass house)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ A vegetable garden will need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – full sun most of the day – plenty of water – good soil. ▶ A vegetable bed may need soil brought in from a garden centre.
Decide what to grow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What will children eat or enjoy looking at? ▶ What will grow in your climate? ▶ What will grow in the space you have identified? ▶ Which plants are dangerous? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Be aware of allergies to plants as well as foods. ▶ Some plants are dangerous to eat, and others are dangerous to touch.

Step	Considerations	Useful information
Set up your garden bed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Do plant beds need edging? ▶ What type of soil needs to be brought in? ▶ Who can help? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Pots and small beds may use potting mix. ▶ Larger beds may need a truck of composted soil. ▶ Vegetables will be fussier about soil than native plants.
Plant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Which plants will go where? ▶ Which plants need more sun? ▶ Which plants will grow taller than others? ▶ How far apart will plants need to be? ▶ Which plants need stakes to hold them up and support their growth? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Taller plants should be placed where they do not shade smaller plants. ▶ Some plants need ground space to grow along (for example, pumpkin and watermelon). ▶ Some plants need space to grow up (for example, corn and peas).
Mulch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What type of mulch works best? ▶ Where do you put the mulch? ▶ How close to plants do you put mulch? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Choose mulch that will stay in the garden. Some mulch types blow out on a windy day. ▶ Some mulch materials burn plants if they are too close to their stems.
Care for and feed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How much water do the plants need? ▶ How often do you need to water them? ▶ Which plants are weeds and which are plants? ▶ Which bugs are healthy for the plant and which are damaging? ▶ What are the safest ways to remove bugs that are damaging? ▶ What will you fertilise vegetables with? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Raised beds and pots dry out faster than garden beds. ▶ When watering, make the soil wet to about 2 cm deep. ▶ Rain is preferred over watering. ▶ Teach children to garden without pesticides. Remove the damaging bugs to a new home, or investigate natural bug repellents. ▶ Children can help use worm farm waste or compost to feed the vegetables.
Harvest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ When are vegetables ripe? ▶ How do you harvest them without damaging them? ▶ Will the plant continue to grow after harvest, or do you need to start the process again? ▶ Can you plant the same variety in the same place? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Some plants grow, develop, are harvested and then die. You will need to start again and plant new seeds, seedlings or plants. ▶ Most vegetable gardens produce better outcomes if you rotate the crop. For example, if peas are grown in one side of the garden one season, move them to the other side next season.

There are many books, online articles and experienced gardeners that can help you get started with a garden project. Parents with knowledge and skills are one of your most valuable resources, and getting them involved serves many purposes.

Garden projects

A garden project can be started, completed and recommenced again and again. Each child is able to participate at different levels of interest and in different periods of time. A child who may not be excited by digging and sowing may love watering, weeding, harvesting or preparing. The passion that a child develops for one aspect may evolve into an interest in another.

You may encourage children to:

- ▶ create their own learning story about the garden
- ▶ draw plants and make posters to tell others about the garden
- ▶ develop a 'how to grow' guide
- ▶ create a garden safety poster.

Waste reduction and recycling

Most local governments have recycling programs in place. Your service will have a waste bin and hopefully a recycle bin. Green bins are also common and useful.

The key to waste reduction and recycling are the three Rs:

- ▶ Reduce
- ▶ Reuse
- ▶ Recycle



The following table shows how to involve children in applying the three Rs.

Strategy	What to do	What you can do with children
<p>Reduce – Choose items that have less packaging.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ As you walk through a supermarket or department store, notice how things are wrapped and packed. Most of this packaging is of no use when you open the product. ▶ By choosing products that have less packaging, you can help reduce waste. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Discuss packaging. ▶ Decide which types of packaging can be reused. ▶ Identify which purchases have the least packaging or rubbish.

Strategy	What to do	What you can do with children
<p>Reuse – Reuse the things you have.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Only buy what you need. ▶ Take your reusable bags shopping and refuse plastic bags. ▶ Avoid disposable items such as tissues, foam cups and plastic cutlery, or reuse them as many times as possible. ▶ Repair broken items if possible, or reuse them for a different purpose. ▶ Send items that you no longer use to a second-hand shop so someone else can enjoy them. ▶ Access items you need from second-hand shops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop shopping lists with children and talk about what you really need to buy. ▶ Decorate reusable shopping bags. ▶ Calculate how many reusable shopping bags are used compared to plastic bags. ▶ Wash up and discuss how many items you are reusing. ▶ Help repair items. ▶ Choose items to donate to a second-hand shop. ▶ Make a list of things to buy at the second-hand shop. Visit a shop to look for them. ▶ Come up with ideas for reusing items that cannot be recycled.
<p>Recycle – Recycle all waste that you can, and choose items with recyclable packaging.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ If packaging cannot be reused, recycle everything that you can. ▶ Some packaging is made of recycled materials. ▶ You can use cardboard in a worm farm, compost heap or as mulch on the garden. ▶ Recycling bins are usually provided by local government to homes and businesses, and in public areas. ▶ Recycling is challenging for children as it relies on their ability to sort materials. This makes it a wonderful learning activity. ▶ Introduce the waste reduction cycle linked to composting and worm farms. ▶ Composting and worm farms help your garden and use up food scraps and garden waste. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Help sort packaging material into recyclable and non-recyclable items. ▶ Work out the best place for each material to go (for example, rubbish bin, compost bin, worm farm or recycle bin). ▶ Create a recycling station. ▶ Learn about the different recycling symbols and what they mean. ▶ Research how composting and worm farms work. ▶ Help care for the compost bin or worm farm. ▶ Learn how worms live and how to look after them.

Practice task 3

1. How could a service implement practices that relate to recycling and reducing waste?

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2. Identify one thing that could be changed to further reduce waste and encourage recycling.

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3. Write down how you would explain to children the benefits of recycling or reducing waste.

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Summary

- ▶ Sustainability can relate to people or the environment, and refers to the actions you take to enable long-term maintenance or endurance of any system or product.
- ▶ The foundation of environmental education is understanding ecosystems, which is about the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land.
- ▶ It is important to talk about the environment with children, and encourage an appreciation of its value and beauty.
- ▶ By creating a balance between natural, man-made and recycled resources in the play area, you will notice a change in the feel of the environment and how the children use and respond to it.
- ▶ It is essential to model respect, care and appreciation for both natural and constructed environments.
- ▶ When presenting any materials and resources, ensure children feel safe, involved, comfortable and intrigued by the set-up.
- ▶ Important subjects that develop ongoing life skills for the child are growing and preparing food, and waste reduction and recycling.

Learning checkpoint 1

Supporting children to understand and respect the natural environment

Part A

Prepare a four-stage experience for a group of preschool children that includes the following parts:

- ▶ Sorting game
- ▶ Discussion
- ▶ Brainstorming
- ▶ Poster or book

Prepare this experience so it can be delivered in single stages or as one complete activity.

When collecting items for the sorting game, you should choose **four** items from nature or made from natural materials and **four** items created from man-made materials.

1. Choose one item from your collection to use as the basis for a discussion about recycling. List **five** questions that you could ask the children to engage them in this discussion.

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2. Create a list of **five** questions that you can use to brainstorm with the children about the environment.

The questions should be created in a way that you can contribute to the session by modelling your own sustainable behaviour. For example, 'In what way do you care for the environment? I care for the environment by making sure that I put my glass jars in the recycle bin, so they can be turned into other glass objects.'

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3. Access a poster, story or resource book that links with one of the questions you created in the brainstorming session. Briefly describe the resource, the question it relates to and how it can be used to encourage further discussions about sustainability.

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Part B

Carry out or role-play each stage of the group experience as suggested in the following table. Remember, it can be delivered as a single session with one group or you can break it up into smaller segments.

Write down what you think went well and what you think you could improve. You can ask your colleagues or the other participants in the activity for feedback.

Stage	Tasks
Stage 1: Sorting game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ask the children to help you sort the materials into their categories (which ones are natural or from nature and which are made from man-made materials). ▶ While the items are being sorted, ask the children what they think the items are made of (for example, wood, plastic or metal). Help them if required. ▶ Talk about where each material comes from.
Stage 2: Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Show the children your recycled item. Ask if they know what it is. ▶ Explain what recycling means. ▶ Ask the children to think of things they could do with this recycled item. Encourage them to try to think of at least five things. ▶ Record the outcome of this discussion (for example, the children may draw their ideas on butcher's paper).
Stage 3: Brainstorming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Brainstorm answers to the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What do they know about the environment? – How do they care for the environment? – What ideas do they have for reducing the amount of rubbish in the service? – What do they think would happen if there were no plants? – What plants do they think they could grow at the service that could provide food? – What would the plants need to help them grow strong and healthy? ▶ Add your comments to the discussion to support the children's knowledge. ▶ Record this brainstorming session.

Stage	Tasks
Stage 4: Poster, story or resource book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Show the children your poster, story or resource book and tell them what it is about. Answer any questions. ▶ Add your poster, story or resource book to the play space so that the children can look at it.

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Part C

1. Refer to the following resources and explain how they were reflected in your group experiences.

a. NQS 3.2.3: The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible

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b. EYLF and MTOP Outcome 2: Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

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c. A service environment and sustainability policy

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d. Identify at least one point from the principles and standards you identified that was achieved during the delivery of your group experiences. Document the element, principle, practice, outcome or policy name.

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Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

2A Identifying sustainable practice

2B Developing strategies for improvement

Identifying areas for change

Sustainability can be included in everything you do. Services should demonstrate their commitment to sustainability by reviewing their practices and developing policies that will ensure a future for children and the earth.

Watch this video for more about identifying areas for sustainable changes.



The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
✓	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
✓	Intentional teaching
✓	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
✓	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

2A Identifying sustainable practice

Sustainable practices are the actions you take to enable the long-term survival of any system or product. It is about using things that you need now without damaging their availability in the future.



Sustainability concepts

To practise sustainability, you need to consider the cost of everything you do. This includes the cost of your actions on people, the planet and profit. These three terms are commonly linked to sustainability and are called the triple bottom line.

The following is an example of how these sustainability concepts may apply in your service.

Sustainability concept	Ways to incorporate into your service
<p>People Workforce and social sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Taking care of yourself and others to avoid burnout, stress and negative feelings ▶ Adapting to change as positively as you can ▶ Upholding the rights of everyone in your service
<p>Planet Environmental sustainability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Reducing waste and the consumption of materials ▶ Understanding the chemicals that are used for cleaning and how they are used (all chemicals in the service must have a safety data sheet (SDS) that tells you about their dangers) ▶ Being willing to reduce, reuse and recycle ▶ Maintaining equipment and resources to ensure their long-term viability ▶ Reducing how much energy and water you use
<p>Profit Economic sustainability In this context, the word 'profit' does not just relate to making money. It means the basics of affordability – can you afford to keep up this practice or system in the long term?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Knowing the costs involved and budget available for running the program ▶ Identifying the health and safety needs that the budget must cover ▶ Analysing whether the service can maintain best practices over the long term with regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – additional staff – higher ratios of children to educators – nutritional diets for children

Policies and systems

Each service should have a sustainability or environmental policy that reflects the work that has been done to investigate and identify areas of need.

A sustainability policy can be used to:

- ▶ develop systems, practices and procedures within the service
- ▶ identify areas of need
- ▶ implement actions to improve.

Before reviewing or changing any policy, you must consult and collaborate with other people. There is a variety of community services that can support and advise you on sustainability. There are also print and online resources available. All provide great ideas for sustainability. You will find examples such as:

- ▶ local government departments
- ▶ Planet Ark
- ▶ Sustainability Victoria
- ▶ Environment and Heritage – NSW Government
- ▶ Ollie's World
- ▶ Small Green Steps.

There are also a number of simple, clear videos available that explain sustainability at an adult or child level. Two useful websites are:

- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/ollies-world>
- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/sustainability-hub-videos>

Environmental audits

One way to maintain a focus on sustainability in your service is to carry out an environmental audit.

An environmental audit is a practical way to look at the current practices and systems within your service and analyse them to identify areas for improvement. It often occurs before the development or review of a policy so that those making the changes understand which aspects need to be altered or added.

There are a number of options for an environmental audit. For instance, you may:

- ▶ develop your own environmental audit to suit the service
- ▶ access an audit from the internet
- ▶ develop an audit based on your own research.



The following table presents some essential items to include.

Audit area	Item to consider
Water	<p>Do you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ water the garden using water left over from troughs, water play activities or running taps? ▶ have a water tank? ▶ sweep paths rather than hose them? ▶ water gardens early in the morning or late at night to minimise evaporation? ▶ provide containers of water for play rather than a running hose? ▶ teach children about the half flush on the toilet? ▶ avoid using drains to dispose of unwanted materials? ▶ use unbleached toilet paper?
Energy	<p>Do you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ use natural light as much as possible? ▶ dry clothes on the washing line? ▶ use the washing machine and dishwasher only when you have a full load? ▶ look for 5-star energy-rated appliances? ▶ have solar power installed?
Air	<p>Do you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ avoid sprays or chemicals that leave toxic fumes or smells? ▶ open windows to allow fresh air to circulate?
Waste	<p>Do you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ provide handkerchiefs rather than tissues? ▶ use cloth towels to dry rather than disposable towels? ▶ use only recycled materials for art activities like threading and collage? ▶ use food only for eating and play dough? ▶ make double-sided photocopies or communicate electronically? ▶ use material bags rather than plastic? ▶ provide bins for recycling? ▶ have a worm farm and/or a compost heap? ▶ repair broken toys and equipment?
Animals and plants	<p>Do you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ replace things borrowed from the garden after use – natural materials, bugs, leaves, etc.? ▶ plant native trees and shrubs that require less water? ▶ encourage birds and wildlife into the garden with plants? ▶ use non-toxic pest control, such as planting mint or onions to discourage ants? ▶ grow your own food? ▶ buy locally grown food?

Audit area	Item to consider
Chemicals	Do you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ use non-toxic biodegradable soaps and detergents? ▶ make up your own non-toxic, environmentally sound cleaning products?

Practice task 4

1. Locate a service policy on sustainability. Using your own words, write down what it says about using environmentally safe cleaning products.

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2. Analyse the cleaning products used in your service using the table below. Find the relevant information on their labels or SDSs.

Product name	Product content	Toxic or non-toxic	Used for

3. Do you think all services would follow the practices as described in their sustainability policy? Why or why not?

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4. Complete an environmental audit. Audit either an education and care service, your current study environment or your home. Use an audit checklist similar to the following.

Sustainable practice	Do you do it? If no, write one thing you could do to introduce or improve the practice
Water the garden using water left over from troughs, other water play activities or running taps	
Have a water tank	
Sweep paths rather than hose them	
Provide containers of water for play rather than a running hose	
Teach children about the half flush on the toilet	
Dry clothes on the washing line	
Use the washing machine and dishwasher only when you have a full load	

Sustainable practice	Do you do it? If no, write one thing you could do to introduce or improve the practice
Have solar power installed	
Avoid sprays or chemicals that leave toxic fumes or smells	
Use only recycled materials for art activities like threading and collage	
Use food only for eating and play dough	
Communicate electronically as much as possible	
Have a worm farm and/or compost heap	
Use material bags rather than plastic	
Provide bins for recycling and have a recycling program	

Sustainable practice	Do you do it? If no, write one thing you could do to introduce or improve the practice
Replace things borrowed from the garden after use (natural materials, bugs, leaves)	
Buy locally grown food	
Produce own non-toxic, environmentally sound cleaning products	
Other:	

2B Developing strategies for improvement

An environmental audit identifies where your service may improve its sustainability practices. This knowledge allows you to raise new ideas with your supervisor and discuss how to make simple changes. These may occur immediately, within the scope of the normal service practices or following a discussion that involves all staff.

Some examples of sustainable changes could include the following:

- ▶ If you noticed that the service used rice and pasta in children's art and sensory experiences, you may suggest that they alter their sustainability or art policies to eliminate this.
- ▶ If you noticed that children did not know about the half flush on the toilet, you could immediately start teaching them. You would also let other staff know why you were doing this.
- ▶ If you noticed staff were hosing the paths rather than sweeping them, you could bring this up at a meeting. You may also mention it to your supervisor and explain your concerns.

Your ability to implement a change, as well as the ease and speed at which it can occur, depends on the change you want to make. In most situations you will have to do some research.

Alternatives

If you are going to suggest a more sustainable option, you need to know what alternatives are available. The following table provides some information about alternative cleaning products. You should also do your own research to see if there are any other options appropriate to your service.

Type of cleaner	Area for use	Recipe/direction
Spray cleaner	Benches and tables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Mix 300 ml pure liquid soap with 50 ml spirits of orange. ▶ Top up with vinegar to make 1 litre.
Cream paste cleaner	Sinks and stubborn stains on benches and tables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Equal parts spirits of orange and bicarb soda. ▶ Add enough pure liquid soap to make a paste and store in a sealed glass jar. ▶ May need stirring before each use.
Disinfectant wipe	Nappy-change benches, vinyl mattresses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Neat vinegar. ▶ Add an essential oil fragrance such as spearmint if desired.

Type of cleaner	Area for use	Recipe/direction
Antiseptic cleaner	Toilets	▶ Mix 5 ml of tea tree oil with 300 ml pure liquid soap. Top up with vinegar to make 1 litre.
Vinegar and water	Bathroom, kitchen and laundry	▶ Scent vinegar with some lemon, orange or essential oil if you wish to reduce the smell.
Lemon juice	Areas that need bleaching	▶ Rub the lemon over the surface that needs to be sanitised, then rinse with water.
Lemon juice and bicarb soda	Bathroom, toilet	▶ Create a paste of lemon juice and bicarb soda. Apply to any stain. Allow to sit for several hours, then rinse with water. ▶ Sprinkle bicarb soda over a lemon that is cut in half and rub the surface with the lemon.
Bicarb soda	Bench tops, bathroom, toilet	▶ Sprinkle bicarb soda on a clean, damp sponge and scrub the surface. Rinse clean.

Implications

In some cases, you may need to research the implications of a change. For example:

- ▶ What is the best and most sustainable alternative?
- ▶ What are the benefits of the change?
- ▶ How much will it cost to make the change, and are there any financial benefits?
- ▶ Is there someone or somewhere else where this change has been made? You may be able to visit or ask questions to see how they manage the change.
- ▶ Will this require a policy change or a practice change?

It is sensible to present this information in a way that is easy to read and understand. This is the best way to persuade another person that your suggestions are worth listening to. You could represent the information in a table like the one below.

Suggested change: Use a non-toxic cleaning product on the nappy-change table.	
Most sustainable alternatives: Vinegar, oxygen bleach	
Implications	Example
What is the best and most sustainable alternative?	Vinegar with a few drops of spearmint essence. Spray on the bench after each use. Leave for two minutes, then wipe off.
What are the benefits of the change?	Vinegar is non-toxic and safer for the children and environment. It costs less.

Implications	Example
How much will it cost to make the change, and are there any financial benefits?	No cost to make the change. \$2.50 per litre compared to \$4.30 per bottle of spray disinfectant. This is nearly half the price.
Will this require a policy change or a practice change?	For best outcomes, both policy and practice should be changed.

Positives and negatives

It is a good idea to make a list of positives and negatives before you suggest a change in policy or practice. This allows you to identify which strategy is the most suitable and whether change is appropriate. By taking this approach, you show that you are considering all of the options and are open to learning and change. It can also lead you to the ultimate best practice, which is very rewarding.

The table below provides an example of considering the positives and negatives of a suggested change.

Suggested change: Changing to non-toxic cleaning products for the nappy-change bench.			
Most sustainable alternatives: Oxygen bleach, vinegar			
Origin	Strategy	Positives	Negatives
Original strategy (non-sustainable)	Chlorine bleach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Easy ▶ Can be purchased in bulk ▶ Doesn't require mixing ▶ Cheap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Smells ▶ Can damage clothing ▶ Harsh on skin ▶ Can become dangerous if mixed with other chemicals ▶ Corrosive to metal
New strategies	Oxygen bleach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Stored as a powder ▶ Non-toxic ▶ No fumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Needs to be mixed with water ▶ Expensive
	Vinegar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Natural ▶ Can be sprayed ▶ Cheap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Needs to be mixed with other items, such as water, bicarb soda or lemon

Involving your supervisor

Once you have completed the research and compiled all of the information about your suggestion, you should talk to your supervisor if you haven't already done so. Communicate your ideas and ask what they think about your proposal. You may find that your supervisor:

- ▶ has dealt with this suggestion before
- ▶ knows more about the situation
- ▶ has other ideas to add to yours
- ▶ knows limitations within the service that you are unaware of
- ▶ encourages you to consult with others.

Add any relevant information from the discussion with your supervisor to your report. It will help you identify possible strategies for implementation.

Practice task 5

1. Think of one aspect of a service environment that might require a change to make it more sustainable. This could be something you discovered in the audit from the previous section.

Write down your chosen environmental aspect here.

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- a. Research to find suitable alternatives, and write down the best option.
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- b. Research the implications of your suggested change and write them down.
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c. Record this information using the table below.

Suggested change:			
Most sustainable alternatives:			
Origin	Strategy	Positives	Negatives
Original strategy (non-sustainable)			
New strategies			

2. Discuss your proposed environmental change with your supervisor or trainer/assessor.

a. Evaluate the options with your supervisor or trainer/assessor. Identify which option a service would most likely choose to implement.

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b. Write down details of this discussion, including any new ideas your supervisor or trainer/assessor contributed.

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Summary

- ▶ Sustainability links to the need to consider the cost of everything you do. This includes costs relating to people, the planet and profit.
- ▶ It is important to have policies and procedures to maximise sustainable practices within the service, and to review and improve these periodically.
- ▶ Consultation and collaboration are required to develop or review any policy. When sustainability is the focus, there is a variety of community services that can support and advise.
- ▶ An environmental audit is a practical way to look at the current practices and systems within your service and analyse them to identify areas for improvement.
- ▶ When researching, you may wish to involve your supervisor. An evaluation of positives and negatives can lead you to best-practice results, which can be very rewarding.

Learning checkpoint 2

Identifying areas for change

Part A

1. List the equipment and cleaning products used in a service or other environment, and state whether they are sustainable or non-sustainable.

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2. Develop a short report that includes:
 - ▶ one practice that is not sustainable
 - ▶ an explanation of why you think it is not sustainable
 - ▶ the name of any related policy or procedure
 - ▶ at least one idea that could be implemented to improve sustainability in this situation.

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Part B

1. Present your report from Part A to your supervisor or trainer/assessor. Ask them for feedback and record their responses, including the following:
 - ▶ At least one reason why they think your suggestion would work
 - ▶ At least one reason why they think your suggestion may be difficult to implement
 - ▶ At least one idea that you both agree would be a successful option for increasing the sustainability of this practice

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- 2. Document the discussion you had about the idea you both agreed would work. Summarise the outcomes and any actions that will now be taken.

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Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A Involving children and communities

Supporting others to implement sustainable practices

As your service becomes more sustainable, the children will show more initiative. They will notice the difference between your practices and the practices in their home and elsewhere. As you model sustainable behaviour and provide information, the children will become advocates in their own right, enthusiastically sharing what they have learnt about sustainability with their families and other community members.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
✓	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children
✓	Learning through play
✓	Intentional teaching
✓	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
✓	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

3A Involving children and communities

Children can become involved in environmental activities.

They can learn how to care for the ecosystem as well as their own spaces. Children may share what they learn with their families and those around them. You can make an effort to include families and experts from the community in new sustainability practices and decisions made in the service.

Watch this video about including children and communities in sustainability practices.



Involving children in sustainable practices

There are many types of environmental activities that children can be involved in. The following table provides you with some ideas.

Activity	How to involve children
Being involved in policy or philosophy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ask children what they want their environment to look like. ▶ Have children draw the things they like about the environment.
Helping to solve problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ List simple options and get children to identify the positives and negatives of each. ▶ When children notice issues, ask them for strategy ideas.
Researching for improvements and learning new ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use books, websites and newspapers. ▶ Use online videos and cartoons aimed at children. ▶ Play related games and puzzles.
Taking ideas home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Support this by emailing or displaying information for families about what the children are learning. ▶ Use learning stories to describe and share information. ▶ Create learning stories that demonstrate how the environment has changed or been improved. ▶ Work together to develop an environmental audit to take home. ▶ Involve children in writing a letter to a local hardware store asking if they would discount sustainability resources if a number of families made a purchase (for instance, water tanks, compost or worm farms).

Encouraging others to get involved

As the children share information with their families and other people around them, it will hopefully prompt others to become involved. You can also include other people from the community in your sustainability practices, especially people who have specialist knowledge.

Some ideas are outlined in the following table.

Activity	How to involve families and the community
Being involved in policy or philosophy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide surveys to gather feedback. ▶ Ask them to contribute to a mural that represents what they want the service to look like.
Helping to solve problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ask for ideas as part of problem-solving. ▶ Contact parents and community members who have specialty knowledge or who implement sustainable procedures at home.
Researching for improvements and learning new ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Contact specialists. ▶ Develop a resource library. ▶ Organise gatherings and celebrations where you share information and support each other to become more sustainable. ▶ Organise meetings or shared professional development sessions. ▶ Provide online materials or activities. ▶ Request donated materials.
Taking ideas home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ask for reflections on what you are implementing. ▶ Get involved in recognised events such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – National Tree Day – Clean Up Australia Day – World Oceans Day. ▶ Create and share an environmental audit for homes or workplaces. ▶ Provide take-home resources such as books to read to children and games or puzzles that families can play together.

Providing information

If parents, families and other community members are involved, you need to be organised. Everyone likes to be informed and to understand what will be happening and why. There are a number of points to cover if you want them to support your ideas. They will want to know:

- ▶ what the strategy is
- ▶ why it is beneficial
- ▶ what preparation is required
- ▶ what resources and materials are needed
- ▶ how it will be implemented.

More importantly, they will also want to know how you plan to involve the children.

Putting all this information into a simple document will help you organise your thoughts. It will also lead to a much more positive response from both families and community members.

The following table is an example of how you might do this.

Starting a compost heap	
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recycling and reducing waste ▶ Creating mulch and fertiliser for the garden ▶ Involving parents and children ▶ Learning about ecosystems and biodiversity
Preparation	<p>Educators will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ read Garden Greenies compost page online at: http://aspirelr.link/how-to-make-compost ▶ identify the best position ▶ help children create a poster about the things that can go into the compost ▶ build or buy a compost container.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Compost container ▶ Child-sized shovels and rakes
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Scraps to go into the compost ▶ Children or educators to turn over the compost every few days
How to involve children	<p>Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Discuss biodiversity and ecosystems ▶ Discuss what happens in the compost heap
	<p>Learning experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Empty the scraps into the compost ▶ Bring scraps from home for the compost

Practice task 6

1. Find **three** resources that encourage children to participate in discussion and learning experiences about sustainable practices. For each one, include:

- ▶ the type of resource
- ▶ what the children will learn from the discussion topic.

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2. Ask your supervisor or colleague how they already involve families and the community in discussions and learning experiences about sustainability. Find out if any other ideas are planned. Write down their responses here.

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3. Ask your supervisor or colleague what processes the service usually uses when they want children and adults to participate in implementing new sustainable practices. Write down their response here.

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Summary

- ▶ When you model, support and share information, you can assist children to become advocates for sustainability, providing ideas for their family and those in their community.
- ▶ By sharing information, you will prime others to become involved and start questioning their practices. Because of this, they can then think about how they can participate in and supporting the implementation of sustainable practices.
- ▶ You need to provide clear details and reasoning if you expect others to become involved and support changes to sustainability practices.

Part B

Create a document that can be emailed to parents or other members of the community. The document should outline a sustainable practice or strategy that could be used in a service and at home.

Include the following information:

- ▶ The practice or strategy
- ▶ The benefits
- ▶ Any preparation required
- ▶ Resources or materials needed
- ▶ Actions for implementation
- ▶ Ideas on how to involve children in the practice or strategy; include clear details of:
 - a discussion that might encourage their participation
 - a learning experience that would help them understand the strategy or involve them in carrying out the strategy.