

Information sheet

MY TIME, OUR PLACE

Principles – Sustainability

Sustainability spans three dimensions including environmental, social, and economic dimensions which are intertwined.

- Environmental sustainability focuses on caring for our natural world and protecting, preserving and improving the environment.
- Social sustainability is about inclusion and living peacefully, fairly and respectfully together in resilient local and global communities.
- Economic sustainability refers to practices that support economic development without negatively impacting the other dimensions.



This information sheet provides a summary of what the *My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia V2.0, 2022* (MTOP V2.0) Principle, [Sustainability](#) might look like in practice. These examples are a starting point for educators and service teams to critically reflect on what this quality practice looks like at their service.

Links to the [National Quality Standard \(NQS\)](#)

The NQS recognises the potential of the educational program and practices to enhance each child's learning and development. The MTOP V2.0 Principle, Sustainability is reflected in several quality areas of the NQS, with a particular focus in:

QA3: Physical environment

Element 3.2.3: Environmentally responsible – The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

Exceeding theme 1: Practice is embedded in service operations.

QA7: Governance and Leadership

Element 7.1.1: Service philosophy and purpose – A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.

What is the change?

The MTOP V2.0 principles have been expanded to include three new principles. Sustainability has been included as a new principle.

Humanity and the planet we share with all living things face some big challenges. Educators, children and young people have important and active roles to play in creating and promoting sustainable communities

Rationale for the change

- children and young people care about the natural environment and are keen to take care of it. It is important for educators to support children and young people's knowledge of and aspirations about sustainability
- this new principle draws on contemporary research and recognises United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) definition that describes three dimensions of sustainability – environmental, social and economic sustainability – and the connections between these dimensions
- it recognises children and young people's interest in supporting a fair and sustainable world and their role as potential leaders and active and informed citizens. The expanded approach aligns with the [Australian Curriculum V9.0](#).

What will the change look like in practice?

Sustainability is embedded in practice, when educators:

- recognise children and young people's avid interest in their world, their ability to engage with concepts of sustainability and their capacity to advocate and act for positive change.
- support children and young people's agency and their right to be active participants in all matters affecting their lives
- actively support children's understanding of their [citizenship](#), and rights and responsibilities as members of local and global communities is built through meaningful and relevant educational experiences.
- encourage children to develop appreciation of the natural world, understand our impact on the natural world, and the interdependence between people, animals, plants, lands and waters.
- provide opportunities for children to learn about all the interconnected dimensions of sustainability, understanding that sustainability goes beyond learning in nature and being involved in nature conservation.
- support children and young people to appreciate that sustainability embraces social and economic sustainability as well as environmental sustainability, and to engage with concepts of social justice, fairness, sharing, democracy and citizenship.
- are encouraged and supported to research social, economic and environmental sustainability practices.
- collaborate with children and educators develop and implement a service sustainability plan and /or sustainability goals.

Practice is evident for school age children when:

- children and young people are provided with opportunities to explore and critically reflect on all three dimensions of sustainability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives on sustainability are valued and incorporated into the daily life of the service
- children and young people are supported to be active citizens in developing and implementing sustainable practices.

Reflective questions and provocations

- Thinking about sustainability means thinking about the future and acting to create a just and vibrant future for all. How has your service philosophy guided your sustainability practices? How are the children and young people engaged in creating a just and vibrant future for all?
 - » United Nations – [What Is Sustainable Development? \(YouTube\)](#)
- Davis (2015) captures a young child's voice defining sustainability as 'enough for all, forever'. This statement reflects the three sustainability dimensions and demonstrates children's interests in, and capabilities to contribute to, a fair and sustainable future as active citizens. What opportunities are provided for children and young people to explore the three dimensions of sustainability?
 - » ACECQA – [ACECQA Newsletter Issue 3 2023](#)
- How are children and young people empowered and enabled to be powerful agents for change in the context of their families, cultures and communities?
 - » Early Childhood Australia – [The Spoke blog – Education for sustainability](#)
- What practices and research have informed your understanding of social, economic and environmental sustainability principles?
 - » [Ecological Footprint Calculator - WWF - WWF-Australia](#)
- How is economic sustainability considered in service operations?

ACECQA references and resources

- Australian Government Department of Education – [My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia V2.0, 2022](#)
- ACECQA – [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)
- ACECQA – [ACECQA Newsletter Issue 3 2023](#)
- ACECQA – [We hear you blog – Demystifying sustainability](#)

Other references and resources

- Common Ground – [What is Country?](#)
- IPA World – [Children’s Right to Play and the Environment](#)
- United Nations – [What Is Sustainable Development? \(YouTube\)](#)
- Early Childhood Australia – [The Spoke blog – Education for sustainability](#)
The Spoke Blog is © Copyright Early Childhood Australia, All Right Reserved.
- Children’s Ground – [Walk With Us \(Vimeo\)](#)
- Common Ground – [Mindful Moments on Country](#)
- Department of Energy, Environment & Climate Action – [Technology reveals ancient wisdom at Budj Bim \(YouTube\)](#)
- ABC Kids Listen – [Gardening- A Superpower for your kids!](#)
- SDG Tracker – [Measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals](#)

