

newsletter



Summer 2012-13

Time of Birak and Bunuru in the Noongar calendar

Taking Little Green Steps

Three childcare centres have been assisted in taking steps towards sustainability since the launch of the Little Green Steps pilot in Western Australia earlier this year. They are not-for-profit centres whose managers supported the Australian Association for Environmental Education WA Chapter's efforts to bring the program to WA. Lotterywest has provided grant funding for the 12 month trial of Little Green Steps in WA, to July 2013.



National Recycling Week (November 12-18) provided the perfect opportunity to look at the efforts made to reduce waste, reuse items and recycle at the centres. Clear signs were supplied for the centres' bins to raise awareness of what can be recycled in their council areas. The new Little Green Steps WA **Waste & 3R's Kit** was trialled by one of the centres during the week, and feedback will be incorporated before the Kit becomes available for wider use in early 2013. The Kit includes teacher notes, activity ideas, picture books and laminated picture cards for sorting, matching and sequencing activities with the children.

Motivated staff at **Riverdale Childcare Centre** (Kelmscott) have sourced a Battery Recycling Bin, installed energy-efficient light globes, stuck stickers and reminders to power switches, and planted Spring vegetables and herbs with the children. Little Green Steps arranged a visit from The Worm Shed, and Kevin ran an engaging (and wriggly) activity with the excited 4-5 year olds. Staff also had the opportunity to learn how to care for worms, which will support their installation of a new worm farm for this age group next year.



Coolabaroo Childcare Service (Thornlie) is keen to incorporate new elements into their outdoor spaces, with a focus on using recycled, reclaimed and natural materials. Kidsafe WA provided some great ideas, and a Perth design consultancy, Childscapes, was engaged to assist with planning the space. We are all excited about beginning projects in the 0-2 year olds' outdoor space in January, with help from staff and family members. For some ideas of what you could do, see *Inspirations for Interesting Outdoor Spaces* that is now available on the Little Green Steps WA website.

Treasure Island Childcare Centre (Cannington) are keen to develop vegetable gardens in some existing beds, learn about worms and worm farms, and install a second tank where children can access water for play and maintaining their gardens. These projects will commence in the new year.

Numerous other centres around Western Australia and in the eastern states have also connected with the program and described the activities that they are undertaking. It's fantastic to hear so many positive stories of early learning centre staff and parents engaging young children in sustainability projects.

Little Green Steps WA Resources

The Little Green Steps WA web page has recently been updated to include resources that have been developed for the WA pilot, and may be useful to other early learning centres.

You can access the Resource Folder (which provides information for staff on a range of sustainability topics), as well as notes on gardening and outdoor spaces, and recycle bin labels for some council areas. There are also links to other Little Green Steps programs and organisations that support Education for Sustainability in early childhood. Visit www.aaeewa.org.au/littlegreensteps.html

Sustainability in Summer



Celebrate the Sea

You should find copies of these marine-themed picture books for young children at your local library or bookshop:

- *Ten Scared Fish*, R. Moriarty (2012)
- *Seadragon Sea*, M. Spurling & D. Snell (2005)
- *10 Little Hermit Crabs*, L. Fox & S. McG (2009)
- *The Biggest Thing in the Ocean*, K. Sherry (2007)
- *My Friend Whale*, S. James (1990)
- *Jinormous Jack*, J. Barrymore (2007)



Eat in Season

Check the labels before you buy fruit and vegetables at the supermarket to see where they are grown.

Have you noticed that sugar snap peas from China, asparagus from Peru and oranges from California are sold in our stores? Support Western Australian farmers when you can. Buy asparagus grown in Albany, oranges grown in Gingin and Harvey, and sugar snap peas grown on farms near Yanchep.

Visit your local fruit shop or farmers market for the freshest seasonal produce.

What's in season in Summer?

Fruit: apricots, bananas, blackberries, boysenberries, blueberries, cherries, grapes, lemons, mangoes, nectarines, oranges, paw paws, peaches, plums, rockmelons, watermelons

Vegetables: beans, beetroot, broccoli, capsicum, carrots, cauliflower, chillies, cucumber, Chinese vegetables, eggplants, garlic, lettuce, leeks, mushrooms, peas, potatoes, spring onions, squash, silverbeet, spinach, sweetcorn, tomatoes, zucchinis



What to Grow in Summer

Summer is the time to grow more hardy crops such as cucumbers, beans, peas, beetroot, broccoli, cucumbers, leeks, zucchinis, squash, tomatoes, carrots and lettuce.

Be water-wise

Use our precious water wisely, especially in the summer months. Observe watering restrictions, water plants in the cool of the day, mulch your garden to retain moisture in the soil and shade your plants where necessary. Have a bucket/ tub handy to collect fresh water from your shower and sink when you are running the tap, and use this on your garden.

For more water saving tips:

Water Corporation www.watercorporation.com.au

Networks



National Conference, Melbourne, October 2012

The conference provided a great opportunity to network with others in the field of Education for Sustainability. Early years educators Tracey Young and Stephanie Ralton delivered an engaging session, *Nurturing Early Sustainable Thinking*.

Find out about their organisations:

→Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC), Victoria: www.eeec.org.au

→CERES Community Environment Park, Victoria: www.ceres.org.au

Helen Tyas Tynggal's presentation *Learnsapes 25 Years On!* provided plenty of inspiration for involving children in designing and maintaining interesting garden spaces in their school yards.

→Find out more: www.learnsapes.org



National Conference Perth, October 2012

Little Green Steps presented a poster about the WA pilot to a group of conference delegates.

Sue Elliott, coordinator of the AAEE's Early Childhood Education Special Interest Group (SIG), delivered the session, *A Bush Kinder Journey*. It was great to hear how children (and staff, parents and local residents) benefited from the weekly 'Bush Kinder' sessions held in a local parkland.

→Find out more: www.wgkg.vic.edu.au/bush-kinder

Little Green Steps NSW

[Climbing the Little Green Steps: How to promote sustainability within early childhood services in your local area](#) (Hughes, 2007).



Read the Case Study and access the Energy, Nature, Waste and Water resource kits that have been developed by a cluster of Sydney councils: <http://www.canterbury.nsw.gov.au/www/html/2558-little-green-steps-sustainability-education-for-childrens-centres.asp>

Keep Australia Beautiful WA

Teachers, administrators, principals and parents are invited to attend free Clean Schools Workshops in March 2013: <http://www.kabc.wa.gov.au/schools.html>



Other useful KAB resources are available online at: <http://www.kabc.wa.gov.au/schools/resources.html>

Help Reduce Resource Use in Your Early Learning Centre

Become more conscious about how you choose, use and dispose of resources as you go about your day. By changing just a few habits you can make a big difference, particularly if all staff (including the cooks, gardeners and cleaners) and children are engaged in these behaviours at your centre.

Recognise the great things that you do already, and commit to some new resource-wise actions to incorporate in to your days.

Re-think

Do you really need to use/ buy it...?

- Can you avoid purchasing highly processed materials for craft? Replace glitter, foam shapes and coloured feathers with 'confetti' from hole punches, bright fabric scraps, postage stamps, leaves from the garden... Involve children in salvaging interesting craft items.
- Buy toys and equipment that are built to last and can be easily repaired if necessary.
- Instead of using foil or clingwrap, store leftovers or transport food in reusable containers.
- Could you share, hire or borrow what you need? Visit your neighbours, library, toy library or hire company, or ask the staff and parent community at your centre when you need something.
- Rethink your use of items that will become waste after just one use. Take your own shopping bags, fill up a reusable water bottle, take your own reusable cup for takeaway coffees, decline straws, avoid extra bags/ packaging, etc.

Reduce

Could you use less?

- Teach children to use only what they need: disposable hand towels, paint, glue, water....
- Where possible, reduce paper use by emailing newsletters and updates to parents, and pinning notices on display boards for staff instead of printing individual copies.
- Do you really need a printed copy? Rethink before you hit 'print' (and when you do, chose double-sided copy!).
- Use powders rather than liquids where possible, eg paints, laundry detergents.
- Pour only what you *need* when using dish detergent, glue, paints, laundry detergent, etc.
- Buy products in bulk and from local suppliers where possible. Avoid using single packaged portions, eg juice boxes, yoghurt tubs, sultanas.
- Use environmentally friendly cleaning products- they often use more conscientious or less packaging.
- Invest in rechargeable batteries for equipment that is used regularly.

Re-use

Could it be used again?

- Whenever possible, brainstorm with children ways to reuse items before they become waste.
- Most food scraps are a resource that can be used in a compost bin or worm farm, or fed to pets. If you can't use them at the centre, give the food scraps to someone who can use them at home.
- Rescue unwanted items from the kitchen and office to use in craft. Plastic lids, containers, stamps, cardboard, shredded paper...
- Use empty jars to store craft items, paint, glue, seeds, dried herbs from the garden, items in the gardening shed... If you can't use them, give them away or donate them to someone who can.
- Use empty egg cartons for craft projects, propagating seeds, or give them to families/ staff who have chooks.
- See if you can refill containers you already have, eg printer cartridges, soaps and laundry items.

Recycle

If you can't avoid it, make sure it's recycled correctly

- Involve children in sorting items for recycling, and help them understand what happens to household waste and recyclables.
- Be clear on what can be recycled in your area and use your council bins effectively.
- Find out where to recycle batteries, paint, e-waste, mobile phones, printer cartridges etc and avoid these items going to landfill.
- Organise a clothes or toy swap at your centre. This could be incorporated during a Parent's Night or form a social event for families.
- Collect or purchase recycled items for craft. Find out if there is a supplier near you, like REmedia in Perth.
- Arrange an excursion to a Materials Recovery Centre and see what happens to the contents of your recycle bin. Most have Education Officers who run tours for groups.
- Coles supermarkets provide collection bins for used shopping bags.

Things to do in Summer



Local events

Free or low cost children's/ family activities in the cities of Canning, Gosnells and Armadale.

Click on the bold black text for more information.

City of Canning

***Blessing of the River Sustainability & Arts Eco Fair**
8 December, Kent St. Weir Park, 12-5pm, free

***New Year's Day Community Concert & Fireworks**
1 January, Shelly Beach Foreshore, 2pm, free

***Act Belong Commit Friday Night Movies**
11 January (*Red Dog*), 8 February (*Happy Feet 2*), 22 February (*Toy Story 2*), various locations, 7pm start

City of Armadale

***Summer Allsorts Kids Holiday Activities**
3-31 January, various locations and times, free

***Summer Cinema**
13 January (*The Lorax*) & 24 February (*Happy Feet 2*), Rushton Park Kelmscott, pre-show entertainment at 6.30pm, movie at 7.30pm

City of Gosnells

***Homestead Outdoor Cinema (PDF)**
21 December, *The Polar Express* and *Elf*, Wilkinson Homestead, 7.30pm start, free family event

***Australian Wildlife in Your Library**
Hands-on educational experience, 16 December, The Knowledge Centre at The Agonis, 1.30-2.30pm, free. Bookings recommended, ph 9391 6000

→ Find out what's screening at other outdoor cinemas and enjoy the summer evenings!

→ Check your local paper for festive family events in your area.

School holiday activities

The Department of Environment & Conservation offers a range of 'Nearer to Nature' activities at the Canning River Eco Education Centre (Kent St, Wilson) and Perth Hills Centre (Mundaring).

PDF program: www.dec.wa.gov.au

Note: These are paid activities.

Green dates

Follow the links to find out how to get involved!

Coastcare Week 3-9 December 2012

<http://www.coastcare.com.au>

International Volunteer Day 5 December 2012

www.volunteeringaustralia.org/News-and-Events/-International-Volunteer-Day.asp

Australia Day/ Survival Day 26 January 2013

Information and resources:

www.australiaday.com.au/studentresources/indigenous.aspx

World Wetlands Day 2 February 2013

Information and resources:

www.environment.gov.au/water/topics/wetlands/world-wetlands-day/index.html

Sustainability projects in your home

Will Summer give you time to do some projects at home? Residents in Gosnells, Armadale and Serpentine Jarrahdale Shire (and some other councils) are encouraged to look at the reduced-cost environmental products offered through [Switch your thinking! Rebates for Residents.](#)

The Festive Season

- Planet Ark offers some suggestions to reduce and recycle in [The 12 Do's of Christmas](#) (PDF).

- Act Belong Commit shares some [Guidelines to a Mentally Healthy Christmas!](#)

A New Year

Make some sustainable resolutions for 2013!

Find previous Newsletters on our website

More about Little Green Steps WA

W: www.aaeewa.org.au/littlegreensteps.html

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Australian Association for Environmental Education, WA Chapter

The WA Chapter is unique, involving a broad cross-section of environmental educators from diverse areas such as schools, government agencies, industry, universities, technical and further education centres, zoos, museums, parks and reserves, environmental education centres and community and conservation groups.