

Physical Environment

PE01 Buildings and Equipment (*includes Safe Environment and Cleaning Procedures*)

PE02 Sustainability (*including the Centre Environment Plan*)



Policy Statement

- Curtin Early Childhood Centre believes that the enjoyment of play and learning through play is enhanced when the environment presents equipment and play spaces that are aesthetically pleasing and well maintained.
- Safety at Curtin Early Childhood Centre is supported by the arrangements with Curtin University which ensures that all buildings and equipment are in good repair.

Policy Considerations

Curtin Early Childhood Centre approved service premises comprise of Building 002 and 003 on the Bentley campus and their surrounding play spaces.

The Centre aims to provide and promote a safe environment (buildings, equipment and play spaces) in which children and staff may play, explore and work safely.

Strategies for Implementation

Centre Responsibilities

Buildings and surrounding Play Spaces

The buildings and surrounding play spaces are maintained by Curtin University.

Staff will undertake daily checks of the building environment and play spaces for obvious damage. Regular audits occur through Curtin University to ensure the Centre environment is safe.

Staff will report signs of wear and tear or maintenance required in the Maintenance Book (for minor maintenance such as a light bulb needed) at the front desk or on a Hazard/Near Risk Management Form (for any maintenance issue that may cause harm if unresolved) that is given to the Director or Coordinator.

The Director or Coordinator will ensure efficient maintenance and repairs are carried out by notifying the appropriate department at Curtin University.

The Centre will be cleaned by professional cleaners each day.

For Equipment

All staff members will ensure that all equipment and toys are kept clean and in good repair as well as being stored in a safe manner.

Children will be carefully introduced to new toys and taught to use equipment appropriately.

Staff members who become aware of faulty or broken equipment will remove this equipment from use and advise the Director or Coordinator of the need for its replacement or repair.

The Centre will ensure that outdoor equipment does not pose a hazard to children because of its design, manufacture, installation or use.

Each room will adhere to their cleaning schedule for children's toys and equipment (See Buildings and Equipment - Cleaning Procedures)

Education

Educators will involve children in discussions and activities about safely using the buildings and equipment.

Educators will role model good cleaning practices for the children and encourage children to be involved in the cleaning of the environment where appropriate.

Educators will also support children to have an active role in caring for their environment and to contribute to a shared environment in a way that respects the needs of other children.

Considerations and Sources

Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012

- Section 167

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012

- Regulations 103 – 105

National Quality Standard including:

- 3.1.1 Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, furniture, equipment, facilities and resources are suitable for their purpose.
- 3.1.2 Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.

The Early Years Learning Framework

Related Policies

Health and Safety (*including Procedure*)

Orientation of Families and Children (*including Procedure*)

Sustainability (*including the Centre Environment Plan*)

Related Forms

Maintenance Forms

Playground Safety Record

Hazard/Near Risk Management Form

Room Specific Cleaning Rosters and Schedules

Related Publications

Staff Handbook

Authority



- **Signed:**

March 2021

- **Date:**



The environment is the responsibility of educators to ensure it is tidied and clean for health issues throughout the day.

Centre Responsibility

- Perimeter checks (daily)
- Playground safety checks
- Centre cleaner to clean Centre during the week
- Pest treatment/control as required
- University grounds staff to maintain gardens and lawns
- Sandpits will be raked daily and where possible covered at night
- Sandpits topped up annually or at need
- All unused power points accessible to children will have protective caps
- All electrical cords, are out of reach of children or are secured and checked regularly (annually)
- Double adapters and power boards are inaccessible to children
- Hot water taps that are accessible to children will be thermostatically controlled at less than 42°C
- The outside play area is checked regularly for poisonous and harmful vegetation is removed such as toadstools.
- Wading pools or paddling pools are emptied and stored while not in use in such a manner that it cannot collect water. The wading or paddling pool must be supervised at all times and able to be emptied by one person (*See Water Safety Policy*)
- When children are engaged in water play one staff member must directly supervise these children. All containers must be emptied on the garden or grass after each play period for safety and hygiene purposes (*See Water Safety Policy*)
- All wet or messy floors are mopped and signed until dry

CLEANING THE CENTRE, TOYS, AND CLOTHING

We clean appropriately to ensure a safe environment.

We ensure our own health and our children's health by following these procedures.

Cleaning Techniques:

Cleaning is an important part of infection control in the centre. Cleaning is in itself a form of disinfection because it removes all surface dirt. Thorough cleaning reduces contamination to such a degree that healthy children are not at risk of contracting disease. Use detergent and warm water for cleaning. Use colour coded sponges in each area (*see Centre Cleaning Cloth Chart*) and keep them separate. Zone fresh will also be available to clean certain areas and/or disinfecting.

We always wear gloves on each hand when using chemicals and cleaning up any body fluids.

Toys

- Individual non-washable toys may be assigned to a child and kept in the child's locker for the use of that child only.
- Wash toys daily/ weekly (depending on the developmental needs of the group) in warm water and detergent, rinse them well and dry them.
- All toys, including cloth toys and books, can be dried by sunlight. This will kill some of the germs not killed by washing.
- It is useful to separate toys into baskets. The toys in each basket can be rotated between washing one day and in use the next.
- Books should be inspected for visible dirt and soiling. Books can be cleaned by wiping them with a moist cloth with detergent on it, and then drying them as above. Leave damp or wet books out of circulation until dry.

Dummies

Dummies must never be shared by children. When not in use, dummies should be stored in individual plastic containers. Each container should have the child's name on it. Store dummies out of reach of children. Dummies will be washed in hot soapy water when required or at the end of each day. Dummies must be dry before returning to sealed container.

Clean the following daily as needed when contaminated.

Bathrooms

Wash tap handles, toilet seats, toilet handles and door knobs with warm soapy water and/or zone fresh. Sweep as required and mop toilet area with warm soapy water and spray with zonefresh if required. Slippery when wet signs need to be placed on the floor until the area is dry.

Check the bathroom regularly during the day, and clean when necessary.

Toys and objects put in the mouth (have a “soiled toys” bucket available so toys can be washed at a quiet time, wash toys in the sink with warm soapy water and sun dry where able).

Surfaces the children have frequent contact with, e.g. bench tops, taps, cots and tables, wash with warm soapy water and/or zone fresh

Mattresses need to be wiped with warm soapy water and/or zone fresh when one child has finished, before another can use it.

Floors clean spills as necessary with warm soapy water during the day and then floors cleaned by professional cleaners when the centre is closed.

Ensure no child comes into contact with damp Zone Fresh or the spray droplets

Clean these weekly with detergent and warm water and/or Zone fresh

- low shelves
- dust pan, brush and brooms
- microwaves and fridge's
- Other surfaces often touched by children

Clean these with zone fresh

- Nappy change tables
- Spills or blood, faeces, vomit and mucus
- Other areas and toys when there is an outbreak of an easily transmitted disease (e.g. Gastro-enteritis or hand, foot and mouth disease).

Nappy Change Area

Clean the nappy change area thoroughly after each nappy change with zone fresh spray bottle and wipe dry with paper towel. Routine times such as after lunch and end of day clean first with warm soapy water then disinfect with zone fresh.

Clothing

The Children's dress up clothes should be washed once a week or more often in hot water and detergent.

Linen

Wash linen in hot water and laundry detergent. Do not use the short cycle. Do not carry used linen against your own clothing. Take washing to the laundry in a basket or a trolley. Treat soiled linen from blood, urine, faeces or vomit as you would a soiled nappy. This soiled linen should be:

- Sluiced
- Soaked in disinfectant (oxy-bleach)
- Washed separately in hot water
- Dried in the sun or in a warm clothes dryer

Sandpits

Sandpits can be a source of infection. They need to be well maintained and kept clean, covered (at end of day) and raked daily

Sand can become contaminated with faeces and urine, usually from cats and sometimes from children.

Sand that is contaminated by human faeces, blood or other body fluids should be removed.

Animals

In the event of animals or birds being kept or visiting the Centre we will follow the guidelines in Staying Healthy in Childcare and the appropriate regulations.

DEALING WITH BODY FLUIDS

When dealing with blood or body fluid spills

- Wear gloves
- Place paper towel over the spill. Carefully remove the paper towel and contents. Place the paper towel and gloves in a plastic bag, seal the bag and put it in the rubbish bin.
- Put on new gloves and clean the surface with warm water and detergent, spray with zone fresh and allow to dry or towel dry if immediate drying is required.
- Remove and discard gloves in a plastic bag, seal the bag and put it in the rubbish bin.
- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water.

In the case of Adult or Child being exposed to blood:

Take the following precautions:

- Wash the area of contact thoroughly with soap and warm water.
- If contact has been with an open wound, broken skin, mucous membrane (mouth, eyes, genitals) or a penetrating injury.
- If the blood contacted your mouth or your eyes, rinse the area well with water.
- If the blood contacted a wound or broken skin, wash the area thoroughly with soap and water.
- Seek medical advice

Policy Statement

- Curtin University Early Childhood Centre believes that as an education and care service within an environmentally responsible university community, it can encourage and increase awareness of environmental responsibilities and implement practices that contribute to an environmentally sustainable future.
- Educators will encourage children to show respect for the environment.
- The Centre will work toward developing a range of environmentally sustainable practices that will be embedded into the operations of the service.
- The Centre's environmentally sustainable practices will be embedded in the Centre's physical environment through the consideration and planning for the aesthetic value of the environment.

Policy Considerations

The physical environment can contribute to children's wellbeing, happiness, creativity and developing independence. It can contribute to and express the quality of children's learning and experiences. The choices made in an education and care service about resources, materials, spaces, layout, air and light quality and access to a range of experiences in the indoor and outdoor environment, have a direct impact on the quality of learning opportunities available to children. It is thought that the physical environment, both in and outdoors should support children's learning, safety, levels of engagement, access to positive experiences and inclusive relationships.

Strategies for Implementation

Centre Responsibilities

Children's awareness of the environment will be promoted through programming, daily practices, resources and interactions.

Educators will orient children to the daily routines of watering plants, recycling, composting, taking turns to manage the vegetable garden and maintain the worm farm.

Educators will role model and discuss energy efficiency and water conservation.

Educators are supported with in-service education and resources to assist them to understand current environmental practices and consider new environmentally sustainable practices.

Considerations and Sources

Centre Environment Plan

National Quality Standard including:

- 3.3 The service takes an active role in caring for its environment and contributes to a sustainable future.
 - 3.3.1 Sustainable practices are embedded in service operations.
 - 3.3.2 Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment.

Related Policies

Health and Safety (*including Procedure*)
Orientation of Families and Children (*including Procedure*)
Buildings and Equipment (*including Safe Environment and Cleaning Procedures*)
The Curriculum – Developing Programs (*including Procedure*)
Environment – Influence and Use
Research and Best Practice

Related Publications

Staff Handbook

Authority



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Centre Environment Plan

The Early Years Learning Framework outlines practices to support and promote children's learning and guides educators in developing quality programs for children. Expectations for the children's learning are expressed in five Learning Outcomes within the Framework.

The second Learning Outcome states that 'Children are connected with and contribute to their world'. This outcome has encouraged Curtin University Early Childhood Centre to develop programs that 'embed sustainability in daily routines and practices'.

The Framework envisages that early childhood environments and resources will promote children's understanding about their responsibilities to care for the environment. With this in mind, Curtin University Early Childhood Centre has developed a program that provides opportunities and resources for the children that promote children's learning.

Developed with the assistance of Curtin University's Office of Environmental Sustainability, the program provides information, experiences and resources for children to learn about their environment and the impact of human activities on the environment.

Curtin University Early Childhood Centre is providing opportunities for the children to:

- help care for their personal environment
- develop respect for the Centre's environment through participating in sustainable practices—such as recycling and the use of recycled resources
- become aware of the local environment and the need for water conservation
- learn about the needs of the environment through working in the garden planting, nurturing and growing vegetables
- participate in supporting the environment through making compost, supporting the worm farm and tending the vegetable garden with their peers.

Educators ensure the environmental strategy is being consistently implemented by role modelling the basic areas that may help with the greening of our world. (National Quality Standard Elements 3.3.1 and 3.3.2).

Educators make the learning sustainable, seeking to answer questions about why we choose to do what we do for the environment and looking at how this program can be continued over time.

To support this goal, educators develop routines with the children including the measures outlined above.

Educators review *the routine* sustainable practices with children on a regular basis to ensure they are actually sustainable.



*Discussion of the strategies in place to implement this Plan:***Learning**

The strategies to support the environment are underpinned by learning activities appropriate to the children's level and interest. This includes discussion with the children, learning how to seek out information on the environment, contributing ideas and planning actions. The learning is described through participation, art activities, discussion, sharing stories and songs. The learning is evaluated through learning stories and assessment against planned outcomes for the children.

Vegetable Garden

The Centre has had a number of raised garden beds built in a very sunny area of the children's outdoor space. The focus is for the children to learn about healthy eating with fresh salads and vegetables that they can grow. They will also have discussions with the Centre chef to decide what they will plant as they learn about seasonal planting and how to water, feed and harvest their crops. For some children this also has an important learning focus in understand that food does not originate from shops.

Worm Farm

Nathan Sadler, Project Officer from the Office of Environmental Sustainability, sourced and purchased a worm farm from a supplier of specialty built worm farms usually ordered by schools. The Centre now has a very large insulated container that currently houses the 4 kg of worms. The children are participating in the feeding and selection of food for the worms and the tendering to the farms moisture and chemical needs. They also help to bottle the liquid leachate (worm product) and use it in the Centre's gardens as too are some of the parents who are requesting some for their own gardens.

Compost Bin

To reinforce the recycling of rubbish as well as the need to 'build' good soil to grow healthy plants we decided there was a requirement for a compost bin. This too was purchased through the Office of Sustainability along with a number of small containers to collect both the worm scraps and food for the compost bin. These bins are placed in each of the children's playrooms which helps them learn about the foods that can go into this bin as they actively separating their scraps and rubbish during the day.

Recycle Bins

Two larger recycle bins are now placed on each of the children's verandas to make it very easy for the children to place their rubbish into these separate bins once they have decided where their rubbish belongs. This year they have developed a good understanding of the paper and cardboard yellow top bin and the other rubbish that goes into the green bin. This is reinforcing the same practices used at home in the bins supplied by their local governments.

Water Tank

As water is such a valuable and scarce resource in Australia it was decided that the children needed to not only understand the need to conserve water but also to constantly practice this conservation. The children are learning to empty water containers onto the gardens or onto the grass, not to run water in the bathroom unnecessarily and to watch the amount they pour, only taking what they need. The water tank helps the understanding of collecting water and watching the level of water as they fill containers. Conversations around the topic as these activities occur helps to reinforce this need.

Solatube Lights

The Centre is keen to have all fluorescent lighting minimized from daily use. A softer and more natural light has a more calming effect on children and enhances the aesthetics of the environment. At this stage we have been fortunate to have support from the University to trial the Solatube lighting in one of our children's play rooms. We think that this natural light is fantastic and hope that eventually we will be able to have the Solatubes installed in all of the children's play rooms. We are also aware that in-terms of energy consumption this would be a very proactive move to show the Centre is serious about sustainability as in the long term this would drastically reduce the cost of electricity to the Centre.

