

## Sustainability Policy

### Policy Statement

Our Early Learning Program aims to help children learn about and implement sustainable practices and foster respect and care for the living and non-living environment.

We encourage awareness of environmental responsibilities and implement practices that contribute to a sustainable future. Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment.

Meerilinga's strategy for sustainability is based on taking an active role in caring for our environment and contributing to a sustainable future. This means that all locations will promote sustainable practices in the immediate centre environment and beyond, and foster respect and care for the environment so that Children develop positive attitudes and values by engaging in learning experiences, joining in discussions that explore solutions to the issues that we face, and watching adults around them model sustainable practices.

We will base our decisions and our practice on the principles for sustainability, including:

- protecting biological diversity and ecological systems
- taking a precautionary and anticipatory approach to decisions and actions
- striving for social and inter-generational equity
- encouraging and providing for community participation
- encouraging wise use of resources
- promoting participation as an active and informed citizen through lifelong learning for a sustainable world
- embracing creative and innovative approaches to environmental problems.

Our organisations approach to sustainability is through:

- governance that supports sustainability policies, procedures and programs
- curriculum that is developed and delivered on the principles of environmental education for sustainability
- responsive resource management and innovation, including utilities, facilities and environments
- partnerships, alliances and networks with government, communities and business
- implementation and evaluation of strategies and actions to reduce our ecological footprint

Our goal is to empower children to think and act in ways that meet their immediate needs without jeopardising the potential of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable practice in early childhood settings requires a holistic approach that integrates all aspects of sustainability into service operations. We will contribute to a sustainable society by working together, respecting culture and country, customs, social and environmental values. Living sustainably and making environmentally responsible decisions will leave a positive legacy for future generations.

Meerilinga implements education programs for water conservation, energy efficiency and waste reduction and celebrating children's' environmental knowledge and sustainable activities.

Educators promote a holistic, open ended curriculum which explores ideas and practices for environmental sustainability and helps children understand the interdependence between people and the environment by connecting children to nature. Our learning through play program provides opportunities for children to engage with the natural environment through the use of wood, stone, sand and recycled materials, plants including native vegetation, insect hotels, vegetable/herb gardens, worm farms, small animals care such as chickens or rabbits and nature walks. Our educators model sustainable practices by embedding sustainability into all aspects of the daily running of our service operations.

### **Policy Purpose**

We aim to ensure the environment is safe, clean and sustainable. We believe in educating children about being environmentally responsible which is promoted through daily practices, resource and interactions. Sustainable practice will be encouraged within the Service assisting children and families to become advocates for a sustainable future.