Projects for learning - Sustainability

This template has been designed for use during a preschool or early intervention class closure or extended absence. It is a resource that teachers can use to plan for children’s continuity of learning in the home environment while they are unable to access formal early childhood education. It has been designed to help teachers work with families to continue their child’s learning through planned experiences.

Links to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the teaching and learning planning cycle are included throughout this template.

Observations of learning and current interests of children (from home and preschool)

### Planned learning

Intended learning outcomes (identify key components of the five learning outcomes)

Children:

* show awareness of environmental issues and problem solve for solutions to environmental issues
* show understanding of the interdependence between land, people and animals
* confidently explore and engage with physical environments
* engage in positive interactions to explore ideas and concepts
* will interact and cooperate with others to explore key ideas and concepts, clarify and challenge thinking
* will engage in early literacy and numeracy concepts.

Intentional teaching strategies (Consider how the learning outcomes will be promoted through your actions, conversation and questions**.** Draw on strategies from each of the five learning outcomes):

* Introduce a range of environmental and ecological vocabulary, for example impact, natural and built environments, environmental awareness, eco systems, experiment, hypothesis, predict, interdependencies, cyclical and conservation
* Research and explore with children what being environmentally responsible means, including reduce, reuse, recycle and revisit, conserving resources, ecological systems and the interdependencies.
* Think about different ideas and options such as recycling, composting, starting a worm farm, re-using items instead of throwing them out, buying used goods and refusing things like plastic straws and single use plastic.
* Think about the beauty of the natural world and help children to find ways to appreciate it and support it.
* Before embarking on the project, encourage the child/ren to think about what might happen and record their ideas.
* Model a range of communication strategies including writing up the results of the experiences using charts, mind maps, stories, recordings and reports to share with families and encourage child/ren to contribute with their own writing and illustrations, supporting early literacy and promoting their confidence to make meaning .
* Acknowledge children’s ideas and intentionally model writing by recording what children say. Demonstrate reading by reading their words back to them.
* Encourage the child/ren to use reflective thinking and consider why things happen and what can be learned from these experiences.
* Use open ended questions so that children experience the benefits and pleasures of shared learning and exploration.

### Holistic approaches to learning

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| Concepts to be developed(Draw on the outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework and consider how these provoke higher order thinking) | Experiences and resources for various learning environments(Think about learning which may occur in various spaces across the day – indoors, outdoors, small and large group times and during routine times) |
| * Awareness of the impact humans have on earth’s resources
* The process of small steps leading to big change
* Participating and collaborating with others to solve problems
* Exploring, making inferences and predicting what might happen
* Understand how rubbish can be converted to compost and re-used to feed plants
* Express their ideas with others
* What is and isn’t compostable- not everything can be composted. Composting can only occur with natural, biodegradable things.
* Ideas can be recorded and represented in various ways
* Taking note of small things in nature, finding interesting objects and collecting a few special items to describe, name, label, sort and count
* Developing understandings about what plants need to grow
* Applying a wide variety of thinking strategies to engage in situations and solve problems
* Using reflective thinking to consider why things happen and what can be learned from these experiences.
 | **Composting experience**<https://www.cbc.ca/parents/play/view/9-easy-activities-for-earth-day>* Use a small zip lock bag and add items to be composted, chop everything up very small and add about two tablespoons of water
* Zip the top and place a small paper straw in the top to allow for a little air
* Mush it around a little each day and add water if needed
* When it looks like soil, add the compost to the garden and start again
* Research together ways to compost on a larger scale and consider starting a compost heap at home
* Put the mini compost in different spaces and compare results. Ask the child/ren for ideas.

**Plastics*** Discuss the issues of plastics in the environment with the child/en
* Provide a large tub of garden soil and place small amounts of household rubbish in it
* Explain what is and isn’t helpful for plants and discuss reasons why things that don’t bio-degrade can hurt plants or animals?” Keep a record of these ideas
* Put the rubbish into the soil and mix it, cover and place it somewhere sheltered
* Ask the children to predict what might happen and record the hypothesis
* Check on the items every week and record what has broken down into the soil and what hasn’t
* Research the impact of non-biodegradable products in our world with the children.

**Appreciating the natural world*** Go for a walk outside. This could be in the streets of your neighbourhood, to a local park or bush space
* Write and/or draw the interesting things you observe in nature
* Collect some objects to take home and observe them carefully. Note features such as shape, size, colour, textures, and patterns. Use a magnifying glass to look more closely. Record your findings. Display them before returning them back to nature
* Classify the objects into like groups (eg rough, smooth, soft, hard) and record.

**Supporting natural wildlife*** Look closely at the natural world within your backyard or front yard. Note what features of the yard support native creatures (birds, insects, small reptiles, and small mammals) by providing food and shelter?
* Is there somewhere for creatures to access water? Is there enough shelter? Is there a food source?
* What could be added to provide for them?
* [Research](https://www.wires.org.au/wildlife-info/wildlife-factsheets/wildlife-friendly-gardens) what you can do to help (printed fact sheet available)
* Draw a picture of a natural space that will support wildlife. Make sure there is shelter, food and water for creatures
* Create a natural space in your yard to grow new plant/s or trees, provide water and shelter that support wildlife.
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### Evaluating the learning experiences

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| Observations of learning(Reflect on the learning intentions as you consider these prompts)  |
| How did the child respond – what did they do, what did they say?What did the child enjoy? What was a challenge?What other things were of interest? |

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| Reflection on teaching(Reflect on the learning intentions as you consider these prompts. Consider ways you could gather feedback to demonstrate the child’s learning, for example recording children’s words or a conversation with an adult, photos, describe what the child did, work samples) |
| Were the planned teaching strategies appropriate?What strategies worked well?What didn’t?Where to next? |

### Critically reflecting on the learning

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| Discussions between educators, families and children(Reflections of learning – consider how the principles, practices and outcomes of the EYLF have contributed to the child’s learning) | Where to next? (What might you do to follow up or extend on the learning based on this experience?)  |
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