



Challenges and prizes:

Links to the Early Years Learning Framework	Eco-Focus	Challenge
EYLF: 2.4, 4.1 Principle: 5 Practice: 3	Waste Reduction	Waste Warrior Art Competition: Find common litter items found around the Centre, discuss why those litter items exist, the effects on the environment and how to stop them coming into the Centre. Make an artwork out of these litter items! Containers for Change: set up a container recycling station.
EYLF: 2.4,4.2,3.2 Principle: 3 Practice: 1	Gardens Galore	Germination Station: Take children to see plants growing in your Centre or nearby park, discuss the importance of plants for our environments and wildlife. Create a germination station by sowing seeds in pots, watching them grow and then keeping a photo journal of the stages of growth.
EYLF: 2.2,5.1,1.1 Principle: 4 Practice: 6	Culture and Country	Connections to Nature – Bracelet Making: create jewelry out of items found in nature and host a Yarning Circle to discuss traditional ownership of the land and how traditional owners have cared for the environment for thousands of years.
EYLF: 5.3,2.1,4.4 Principle: 2 Practice: 8	Spread the Word	Go green for EcoMarines – fundraise for EcoMarines and spread the word. Involve children in experiences leading up to the fundraising day such as creating a poster for the Centre foyer, creating a video and creating recycled decorations. Centre Sustainability Awards – nominate your Centre for the sustainability award.
EYLF: 2.1, 4.1, 5.1 Principle: 5 Practice: 2	Water Wizards	3 p's challenge and water pledges: learn about the 3 things that can be flushed down the toilet and create a short song or music video about the 3 p's!

Linking to the Early Years Learning Framework:

(Reference guide when documenting a detailed analysis of learning)

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Waste reduction

Principle:

5. Ongoing learning and reflective practice – this principle ties it well with the Waste Warriors challenge. The act of finding the most common rubbish items around a centre, discussing where this rubbish comes from and how it ends up in the trash and then creating an awareness artwork out of these items is critical reflection in action. Educators ask these questions directly to children to ensure children themselves think of novel solutions to waste issues.

Practice:

3. Learning through play: creating art promotes children's abilities to 'discover, create, improvise and imagine' especially when educators advise children on the creative process but ultimately allow the children to take charge. Attributing the notion of waste awareness to the artwork streamlines the children's critical thinking in terms of what to create.

Learning outcomes:

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world: children begin to express their opinions on the state of our local environments and connect their individual behaviour with consequences to animals and plants and show concern for environments. Through the process of creating the awareness artwork, children will think critically about what the artwork means for local areas and are more likely to spread the information learned outside their centres.

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners: the waste warrior competition allows children to become interested in the state of environments how this is connected to the actions of humans. They begin to question such actions and explore ideas on how to mitigate the harmful effects of these actions, for example, disposing of rubbish incorrectly or creating unnecessary waste. Creating an artwork with a message allows the use of reflective thinking as well as critical thinking to ensure not only children, but the community learn from the art.

Gardens Galore

Principle:

3. High expectations and equity- in the germination station challenge, children are given equal chances of hands-on learning. The activity of growing plants is set up in a way that does not discriminate to any child's learning ability. It is an open activity for all ages and cultures.

Practice:

1. Holistic approaches- children connect deeply with nature and the natural world through the hands-on practice of gardening which fosters cognitive learning. The discussion component also allows a spiritual and cultural connection to nature through understanding how environments work, the importance of plants in ecosystems and our role in the cycle of nature.

Learning outcomes:

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world- the germination station activity ultimately broadens children's understanding of local environments and ecosystems, particularly the plant world. The discussion component allows children to express their own

opinions, identify issues in nature, and therefore allows them to create their own sense of connectedness with nature. Through watching seeds germinate and plants grow, children are given an opportunity to 'infer, predict and hypothesize' stages of growth and then are able to check their predictions throughout the activity.

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing – the germination station activity is a hands-on activity that stimulates and facilitates motor-sensory skills. Additionally, the act of gardening in itself promotes physical wellbeing, promotes calmness, and improves mood for children. If growing produce, children understand the concept of healthy eating, organic produce and gain respect.

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners - As children oversee their own seed to germinate, they take responsibility and understand the process of plant care and patience. Therefore, children are learning attributes such as persistence, commitment, curiosity, and exploration of their environments. At the end of the activity, children can reflect on the process, learn from what has happened and consider solutions.

Culture and Country

Principle:

4. Respect for diversity – this eco-focus has an underlying theme of belonging to culture whether that be of indigenous/cultural heritage or being a part of a community. Educators are able to share knowledge of traditional custodians in a way that is relevant, respectful, and informative with the overall goal to establish a deeper connection to nature in children.

Practices:

6. Culture Competency – Through the connections to nature experience educators will assist children in developing their cultural competence by gaining knowledge of different cultural practices and developing a positive attitude towards different cultures through conversations had during the yarning circle times and embedding this into their everyday practice.

Learning outcomes:

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity – the ability to share thoughts and feelings in a yarning circle allows children to maintain and develop respectful and trusting relationships with other children and with educators. Children learn the importance of communication, listening, conversing and develop a sense of belonging to cultural communities. Children develop their sense of identities through sharing aspects of culture, language, and storytelling. This experience also provides an opportunity for engagement with elders and community members.

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world – this experience allows the exploration of culture and heritage and how this connects with protecting and caring for our local environments. Children learn about differences in indigenous communities but also recognise similarities in common ideas such as being stewards of the earth. By understanding how natural items can be used in a sustainable way to create tools, jewellery etc., children grow an appreciation for environments.

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators- the yarning circle component allows children to communicate, share personal experiences, manage emotions, and understand the feelings of others – therefore supporting their own and others wellbeing. The hands-on experience of creating bracelets allows children to use their sensory and motor skills.

Spread the Word

Principle:

2. Partnerships – this spread the word eco-focus is primarily about connecting centres with families. The components of Go Green for EcoMarines celebrations ensures collaboration between children's

families and the work that centres do to be more sustainable and foster environmental education elements.

Practice:

8. Assessment for learning – Go Green for EcoMarines involves educations gathering and analysing information of their centre’s sustainability projects and commitments over the year as evidence to children’s capacity to understand environmental issues and create solutions to these issues. As well as using this information to put forward their centre as a “Super Sustainable Centre”, this information can be used to partner with families and other community members to strengthen and uphold environmental education into the future.

Learning outcomes:

Outcome 2: children are connected with and contribute to their world – as this eco-focus brings families and communities together for the purpose of the environment, children can develop a sense of belonging to the community. They particularly begin to understand that caring for the environment is a community-wide effort and that small differences together make big impacts. Through the activities, children increase their understanding of the environment and the connectedness between our actions and effects on our animals and plants.

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators – a big component of spread the word is to communicate what they have learnt about making positive choices for our environments and sharing this with their wider community. They achieve this through a variety of mediums whether that be art, dressing up in green, or sharing stories.

Water Wizards

Principle:

5. Ongoing learning and reflective practice –the water wizard’s challenge has multiple components. Children are educated on the issue first, then asked to share their thoughts and ideas and then are able to synthesise these ideas into an artistic format. Children have the opportunity to reflect on water conservation through each component and can then pass on these ideas in their homes.

Practice:

2. Responsiveness to children – the components of the water wizards’ activities ensure all children’s strengths and abilities are taken into consideration. Each experience is challenging yet focused and is able to be completed by most children with the help of educators. This ensures engagement is maintained and children become motivated to help save water.

Learning outcomes:

Outcome 2: children are connected with and contribute to their world – children are able to understand that they have a responsibility to conserve water in this eco-focus. They are taught the connection between using the toilet or the sink (human activity) and how that effects our local environments. This awareness is then shared with each other, educators, and their families.

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners – the water wizard activity allows children to express interest in their environments, particularly in terms of water as a finite resource. Children then use play-based experiences to explore these ideas further such as the “to flush or not to flush” game. The discussion component and water pledge experiences allow children to think of ways to conserve water and make predictions about how this can help our environments.

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators – children share the message of water conservation through verbal (discussions) and non-verbal (visual game cards) means. They are also able to use a variety of media from online sources to artworks, to verbal communication to share these ideas and new information (creating a song).