

Intentional teaching and EfS with under 2's

Everyone at WCCC is involved in Education for Sustainability (EfS) all children, educators, support staff, families, visitors, and students.

In the wider world the youngest children, who are just beginning to acquire first language and exploring reasoning and problem solving skills are often overlooked in EfS.

We believe there are two key elements to EfS with under 2's; educator practices and the environment. EfS with under 2's requires educators to have a deep awareness, understanding and commitment to education in, for and about the environment.

For children under 2 the childcare day is too easily spent indoors. The routines of bottles, nappy changes and sleeps can take over the day. All of these are essential to a child's wellbeing as well as being important learning opportunities. However, the demand for educators to meet the needs of both mobile and immobile babies and to follow health and safety practices; sun safety, keeping hats on watching for choking hazards can all be a bit overwhelming and make it easier to stay inside. Yet it is educators who have control over where a child spends their day.

An outdoor environment that provides under 2's the opportunity to experience the sights, sounds textures, and smells of nature is essential.

To feel the wind on their face, the sand and grass on their feet; to hear the sound of the leaves rustling in the trees and the calls of birds or insects, to see a bird or feather in flight; to watch leaves fall and flowers bloom; to smell the earth after rain or the sweetness of gum trees in bloom, children need to be outside!

The role modeling of educators with under 2's is essential for this age group. The mirror neurons are hard at work and children learn from everything they see, hear and do.

Through role modeling and the language educator's use with these youngest children educators practice intentional teaching every day. It might be to say... "water is precious just use a little" or "that's paper we can put that in the recycle box".

The Early Years Learning Years defines intentional teaching as "deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful".

Being outdoors and experiencing the wind the sun the rain and all the sounds, sights and smells of nature is the beginning of children connecting to their world. Educators can use 'teachable moments' to build on children's growing knowledge of and engagement with EfS.

The following example demonstrates how intentional teaching scaffolds childrens' learning about water wise practices.

Young children all love water, yet water is a truly precious resource. Children develop an understanding of this as part of daily life at WCCC.

Flow limiting taps prevent water from running too long and educators talk about just using a little water.

A water play experience is always lots of fun with a large container of water (on the grass) to just splash hand around in, or to explore floating some water creatures.



When it is time to pack away educators could just tip water on the grass and this would be acceptable recycling of the water.

However, we have been working hard to develop an outdoor garden that provides a range of plants of different textures and colours, and we encourage children to be gentle and respectful of our natural world.

Rather than just stepping in and tipping out the water the educators gathered some small buckets and used the opportunity to teach a group of 14-20 month olds how to use buckets to water the garden .



Educators demonstrated how to scoop the water into the buckets and then supported the children to have a go.



The buckets were carried to the nearby garden where children needed guidance to tip the water onto the plants. During this the conversation that occurred added further to the child's learning about recycling water, caring for plants, the need for all living things to have water to grow.



When children have opportunities to actively engage in caring for plants they develop respect for their environment.

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