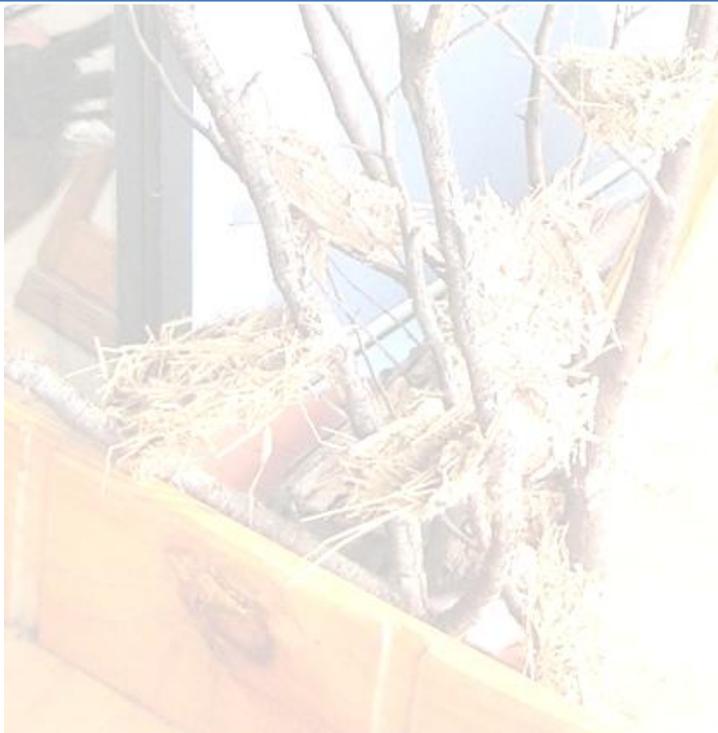




UnitingCare Gippsland

Eco-Resource Kit for Early Childhood Services



Prepared by Melati Conwell & Rachel Bell,
UnitingCare Gippsland, 2012



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Section 1: Introduction

Forward from Environmental Education Early Childhood (EEEC)

Environmental Education in Early Childhood (EEEC) proudly endorses the Uniting Care Gippsland Eco Resource Kit. As learning begins at birth, embedding sustainable education and practice into early education is critical if we are to face the many environmental challenges of the future. This Eco Resource Kit will be beneficial to support the staff and children in their sustainable journey and, in turn, the parents and wider community now and in the future. EEEEC would like to acknowledge and congratulate the leadership that UnitingCare Gippsland displays in Education for Sustainability in the early years.

Stephanie Ralton, Environmental Education in Early Childhood -EEEC Resource Centre Manager, 2012

Terms

The term Early Childhood Services (ECS) or the word Educators in this Eco Resource Kit is inclusive of Family Day Care, Long Day Care, Kindergartens and Playgroups.

Acknowledgements

This resource has been made possible through the Forest Hill Trust Grant from The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies (AGECS).

Information and valuable knowledge has been shared and sourced from the following with thanks to; the Kindergarten Union, Gosford Council (Little Green Steps document), Environmental Education in Early Childhood Vic (EEEC), Gippsland Climate Change Network, Wellington Shire Sustainability Team and UnitingCare Gippsland's Green Ambassadors and Early Years Sustainability Team.

Thanks to the services, families and children that agreed to their photos to be shared. Thanks also to Rosie Broughton Photography for the contribution of photos.

About the Eco Resource Kit

The Eco Resource Kit aims to provide educators, families and the wider community with consolidated information and resources about sustainable practices that can be promoted within families' homes, early childhood settings and the wider community. The Eco Resource Kit aims to assist with linkages to environmental agencies that will promote local knowledge and understanding of sustainability issues and resources in your local area.

The Eco Resource Kit provides a fun, socially responsible and consistent message around the importance of sustainability and the environment. This can enhance a deeper understanding and respect by children of their environment and will foster an understanding around the importance of our world and the impact that we all have on it.

How to use the Eco Resource Kit

The Eco Resource Kit is made up of general information that can be used in all locations. Contacts were correct at the time of publication and may need to be reviewed to ensure they are correct. The Eco Resource Kit can be used as a complete guide or flick through to gain food for thought. Whether you are at the very start of your sustainable journey or already started, this kit has been developed to assist all in their journey towards sustainability. This kit is not the only resource or guide available that supports sustainability in the early years and can be built upon at any time, in any service.

Most importantly, the Eco Resource Kit aims to assist and promote play as vital part of a young child's world and, like any other early childhood practice; a child-centred play approach can be taken in learning about sustainability. This enables children to learn through hands-on, concrete experiences (*Environmental Education in Early Childhood – EEEEC fact sheet: Young children and Climate Change*).



Why do young children need to know about climate change?

*“The evidence regarding climate change and other important environmental issues is overwhelming. Recent reports from the United Nations’ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2007) prove that vast quantities of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, created by human activities, are warming the planet. As former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan has said, “The question is not whether climate change is happening but whether, in the face of this emergency; we ourselves can change fast enough” (Annan, 2006, as reported in *Young Children and Climate Change- Environmental Education in Early Childhood- EEEC fact sheet*, www.eeec.org.au, accessed June 2012).*

Meaning of Sustainability

Sustainability is based on a simple principle: everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. Sustainability creates and maintains the conditions under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic and other requirements of present and future generations.

Sustainability is important to making sure that we have and will continue to have, the water, materials, and resources to protect human health and our environment, <http://www.epa.gov/sustainability/basicinfo.htm>

Sustainability can be defined in a broader and more holistic context of education for the environment. The complexities of social, environmental and economic systems are acknowledged and their implications for sustaining life are considered. The aim of education for sustainability is to promote a sense of responsibility, respect, empowerment, active participation, enquiry and social change (ECA Environmental Sustainability Policy, <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~eeec/policy.pdf>).

International, National and Local Plans to Consider

There are a number of guiding plans, principles and codes that outline the importance of early childhood development. A rounded approach to education includes integrating the environment into early childhood curriculum.

At an international level, the UN Rights of the Child presents a foundation for communities in how they support, protect and promote the wellbeing of children. The following excerpt from the UN summarises the importance of the rights of the child:

“The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights—civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. In 1989, world leaders decided that children needed a special convention just for them because people under 18 years old often need special care and protection that adults do not. The leaders also wanted to make sure that the world recognized that children have human rights too.

The Convention sets out these rights in 54 articles and two Optional Protocols. It spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere have: the right to survival; to develop to the fullest; to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation; and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life. The four core principles of the Convention are non-discrimination; devotion to the best

interests of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child. Every right spelled out in the Convention is inherent to the human dignity and harmonious development of every child. The Convention protects children's rights by setting standards in health care; education; and legal, civil and social services. By agreeing to undertake the obligations of the Convention (by ratifying or acceding to it), national governments have committed themselves to protecting and ensuring children's rights and they have agreed to hold themselves accountable for this commitment before the international community. States parties to the Convention are obliged to develop and undertake all actions and policies in the light of the best interests of the child" (www.unicef.org/crc, accessed August 2012).

At a national level, the National Quality Framework (www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework) and Early Learning Framework, *Belonging, Being & Becoming: the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (www.acecqa.gov.au/early-childhood-in-Australia/learning-framework, accessed August 2012) provide outcomes, standards and examples of best practice in early childhood settings which promotes key areas of learning for children until they reach school in diverse educational settings.

The following excerpt in **Table 1** is taken from *Belonging, Being and Becoming* (2009, page 29) and highlights **Outcome 2** in the Early Learning framework- that children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment- with some examples of what this looks like for children and some examples of teaching approaches that support this outcome area.

OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD: Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment	
<p>This is evident, for example, when children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use play to investigate, project and explore new ideas • participate with others to solve problems and contribute to group outcomes • demonstrate an increasing knowledge of, and respect for natural and constructed environments • explore, infer, predict and hypothesise in order to develop an increased understanding of the interdependence between land, people, plants and animals • show growing appreciation and care for natural and constructed environments • explore relationships with other living and non-living things and observe, notice and respond to change • develop an awareness of the impact of human activity on environments and the interdependence of living things 	<p>Educators promote this learning, for example, when they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide children with access to a range of natural materials in their environment • model respect, care and appreciation for the natural environment • find ways of enabling children to care for and learn from the land • consider the nature of children's connectedness to the land and demonstrate respect for community protocols • share information and provide children with access to resources about the environment and the impact of human activities on environments • embed sustainability in daily routines and practices • look for examples of interdependence in the environment and discuss the ways the life and health of living things are interconnected

Table 1: *Belonging, Being and Becoming*, 2009, produced by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments, p29.

At a State level, there is the Victorian State Framework-The Victorian Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF), which covers birth – 8 years, with Learning and Development Outcomes linked

to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). The Victorian Framework identifies five Outcomes for all children from birth to eight years:

- Children have a strong sense of identity (identity)
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world (community)
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing (wellbeing)
- Children are confident and involved learners (learning)
- Children are effective communicators (communication).

At a local level, local governments are required to have Municipal Early Years Plans which outline Council's role in providing services, infrastructure, planning, advocacy and community development for children and families (www.mav.asn.au/policy-services/social-community/children-families/municipal-early-years-planning/Pages/default.aspx).

It is also important to consider any additional local, regional or organisational plans. For example, UnitingCare Gippsland has developed an Early Years Strategic Plan which is available on the website- www.ucgipps.org.au

Considering international, national, state, regional, local and organisational plans and actions, gives a context of the broader strategies, initiatives and an evidence-base and support for the vital work that educators play in facilitating the learning journey of children.

Sustainability – The Gippsland Context

Gippsland is home to some of Victoria's most diverse natural resources and biodiversity, ranging from flagship areas such as the Gippsland Lakes, Wilsons Promontory, Far East Gippsland and parts of the Victorian Alps, to the numerous river systems, expansive native forests and various coastal ecosystems. As well as the environmental significance of these ecosystems, the importance of these natural resources to the region's economy, along with the region's fossil fuel deposits, water resources and agricultural land, has been identified (Gippsland Regional Plan, 2010, The Gippsland Climate Change Network, www.gippslandregionalplan.com.au).

Recent reporting on these assets has identified that whilst the stewardship programs in place to manage them are in the majority reasonable to good, the condition of these assets, whilst it hasn't declined in recent times, on average is reasonable to poor (Gippsland Integrated Natural Resource Forum- GINRF, 2011 Report Card (www.ginrf.org.au/reportcard/list.asp)). This is also the consensus drawn from the Victorian State of the Environment Report for the majority of Victoria's natural resources.

Gippsland's economy is underpinned by the extraction and use of its natural resources, whilst the region's natural resources and biodiversity attract and support an ageing and growing population. The region faces many challenges related to its natural environment, ranging from the impacts of climate change, a growing population, to the depletion of our natural resources. These impacts will have flow on effects to both the economy and liveability of the region. In this context, the challenge of addressing these issues and transitioning the region to a diversified economic base which supports and enhances our communities and environment should guide our decisions and actions locally. Viewed through the lens of sustainability, we can begin to identify the impacts of our actions and ensure that we can provide a prosperous and liveable region to future generations (Gippsland

Regional Plan, 2010, The Gippsland Climate Change Network, www.gippslandregionalplan.com.au, accessed June 2012).

Sustainable Practices at Uniting Care Gippsland

This Eco Resource Kit highlights the value that UnitingCare Gippsland places on the importance of considering environmental sustainability in a diverse range of settings. By embracing sustainability principles, we are being proactive towards sustaining a green environment and ensuring a cultural change within programs. Where possible, involving the broader community is encouraged to work in partnership towards a positive green future for our children and generations to come. UnitingCare Gippsland is committed to the education of its staff and wider community through programs and resource development.



UnitingCare Gippsland provides a range of child, family, youth and aged care services across the Gippsland region. UnitingCare Gippsland provides a substantial number of early year's services and can see the value of promoting sustainability within early learning environments. UnitingCare Gippsland acknowledges the importance of considering its impact on the environment and promoting sustainable practices wherever possible. This commitment is outlined in our agency policy, environmental sustainability. As a part of our community, we have a responsibility in minimising our environmental footprint and supporting our customers, staff and the broader community to see the benefits of treading lightly on the earth.

John Lawrence, CEO UnitingCare Gippsland



UnitingCare Gippsland's Principles-

Accountable

Caring

Consultative

Participative

Quality

Sustainable

Transparent

Children and Community- A Holistic Approach

The Eco Resource Kits highlights the link between national and state frameworks and presents ideas for embedding sustainable practices within early childhood settings. It is a tool to support growth around sustainable principles for educators, which will assist with engaging positive relationships with families, the broader community and most importantly, involving children.

Involving families in conversations and actions aim to provoke discussion towards environmental awareness, sensitivity and understanding. This supports families' ability to adopt positive change, and empowerment towards embracing sustainable principles and cultural change within the family home and early childhood services environment. Early childhood services need to be able to invite the wider community into their services and also facilitate children and families to be connected with the wider community. This enables a holistic and informed approach to be part of the decision making process on how to best minimise our global foot print and support increased environmental awareness. Providing children with this foundation and involvement will form our future in years to come.

The article in **Appendix 1** Ripples of Action (Vaealiki, S. & Mackey, G, 2008) based on the metaphor '*ripples*' is used to explore the idea that early years services and environments are a place that parents, children, community and educators undertake environmental actions and practices as this enhances collective and individual environmental competency.

Section 2: Handy Networks & Ideas

Contacts & Resources

Service/Resource	Contact Details
Aussie Resource Smart Gippsland	Lisa Benn avic@dcsi.net.au
Commissioner of Sustainability Office	www.ces.vic.gov.au
DEECD	www.education.vic.gov.au
Environmental Early Years Specialist	Narelle Debenham, www.naturekids.com.au , oaks@bigpond.net.au
Gippsland Regional Waste Management Group	Regional Education Officer, Nola Anderson, phone: 03 5633 2744, admingrwmg@dcsi.net.au www.grwmg.vic.gov.au
Gippsland Woodcraft Group Inc.	Beth 51165167 or Graeme 51745368
Heyfield Community Resource Centre	heyfieldresource@wideband.net.au
Local Governments- Council Environmental Team	www.wellington.vic.gov.au www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au www.cardinia.vic.gov.au www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au www.latrobe.vic.gov.au
Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, Early Learning Centre	http://www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/eldi/elc/
Men's Sheds network	http://mensshed.org/home/.aspx
Sustainability Victoria Gippsland	luke.wilkinson@sustainability.vic.gov.au
Wellington Sustainability Group (WSG)	http://wellingtonsginc.blogspot.com.au/

Videos

- Behaviour Change: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gfNndP-NeLc&feature=related-> and http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/liza_donnelly_drawing_upon_humor_for_change.html
- Enlightening way to look at what we are doing to the environment: <http://www.germanwatch.org/klima/film09e.htm>
- Footprint flicks series: http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Footprint+flicks&aq=f&aql=f
- Story of Stuff: <http://www.storyofstuff.com/>

- Title: An inconvenient truth -Al Gore, can be purchased <http://www.climatecrisis.net/>
- Title: 'Waste Not' , can be purchased: <http://www.tec.org.au/wr-latest-news/928-waste-not-amazing-film-on-recycling>

Books

- Early Childhood Australia Online Book Shop: <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/shop/results.cfm?category=34>
- Earthwise, Environmental Crafts and Activities with Young Children by Carol Petrash, Publisher Floris Books.
- Everyday learning about making the most of your environment by Judy Radich ECA
- Green is good: smart ways to live well and help the planet by Rebecca Blackburn
- Greening Services: Practical Sustainability, Rachael Kinsella ECA
- Just Discover: Connecting young children with the natural world, Tracy Young and Sue Elliot, Tertiary Press
- Lady Gowrie Library list: <http://gowrie.calyx.net.au/cgi-bin/koha/opac-main.pl>
- Making your home sustainable: A guide to refitting by Derek Wrigley
- Small business, Big Opportunity- Sustainable Growth by Jon Dee, free from Sensis
- Songs and Stories Together by Kim Billington
- The Children's Year by Stephanie Cooper, Christine Fynes-Clinton and Marye Rowling
- The Essentials of Rudolf Steiner Education by L Francis Edmunds
- The Outdoors Playspace Naturally for Children Birth to Five Years, edited by Sue Elliot, Publisher Pademelon Press
- The Steiner Store book list: <http://thesteinerstore.enstore.com/browse/1>
- True green kids by Kim McKay and Jenny Bonnin
- Young Children and the Environment, Early Education for Sustainability. Edited by Julie M Davis Publisher Cambridge
- You are your child's first teacher, what parents can do with and for their children birth to age six by Rahima Baldwin Dancy. Publisher CELESTIALARTS

See **Appendix 2** Little Green Steps Program Environmental Book list

Magazines Hard Copy or Online

- Burkes Backyard- <http://www.burkesbackyard.com.au/>
- Gardening Australia- <http://www.abc.net.au/gardening/>
- Green living made easy www.gmagazine.com.au
- Organic Gardener- <http://www.organicgardener.com.au/>

Interest Reading

- Auden Schendler. 2009. Getting Green Done. Public Affairs.
- Mark Whitehead. 2007. Spaces of sustainability: geographical perspectives on the sustainable society. Routledge.
- *In Search of Sustainability*. Ed. Goldie, Douglas, Furnass. 2005. CSIRO PUBLISHING.

Gippsland Local Government Library Sustainability Book Lists

See your local government library website for a list of books that focus on sustainability

Grants

- Baw Baw Shire Community Grants: <https://grants.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au/>
- Bendigo Bank: www.bendigobank.com.au/public
- Caring for Our Country: www.nrm.gov.au
- Department of Conservation and Environment: www.dec.wa.gov.au
- Department of Regional Australia Local Governments Arts and Sports: <http://grants.myregion.gov.au/>
- Department of Sustainability: www.sustainability.vic.gov.au
- East Gippsland Shire Community Grants: http://www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au/About_Us/Your_Council/Council_Grants_2012-2013
- Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal: www.frrr.org.au
- Grant Guru Community: <http://community.grantready.com.au/>
- Junior Landcare: www.juniorlandcare.com.au
- Latrobe Shire Community Grants: <http://www.latrobe.vic.gov.au/Services/Grants/>
- Optus Regional Growth Fund: <http://www.rdv.vic.gov.au/regional-growth-fund>
- www.optus.com.au
- Our Community: www.ourcommunity.com.au
- South Gippsland Shire Community Grants: http://www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au/Page/Page.asp?Page_Id=682
- The Association of Graduates in Early Years Childhood Studies (AGECS): www.agecs.org.au
- The RACV Community Grants, grants of up to \$10,000 are available for projects that fall under the category of environmental sustainability: <http://www.racv.com.au/wps/wcm/connect/Internet/Primary/about+RACV/community+engagement/RACV+community+foundation>
- The Victorian Woman's Trust: www.vwt.org.au
- Wellington Shire Community Grants, March/August rounds open: http://www.wellington.vic.gov.au/Page/Page.asp?Page_Id=1913

Useful Internet Links

Animals:

- Australian Fauna Care: www.fauna.org.au
- Melbourne Zoo: www.zoo.org.au/MelbourneZoo
- Werribee Open Plain Zoo: www.zoo.org.au/WerribeeOpenRangeZoo

Australian and Worldwide Green Movements:

- Clean up Australia: www.cleanup.com.au
- Friends of the Earth: www.foe.org.au
- Greenpeace: www.greenpeace.com.au

- Planet Ark: www.planetark.com
- Total Environment Centre: www.tec.org.au
- The Wilderness Society: www.wilderness.org.au
- World Resources Institute: www.wri.org
- World Wildlife Fund: www.worldwildlife.org
- United Nations Environment Programme: www.unep.org

Children Links:

- Australian Association of Environmental Education Inc: www.aeee.org.au
- Early Childhood Australia: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
- www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/pdf/rips/rip0703.pdf
- www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/pdf/everyday_learning/lah0802.pdf
- Enviroschools NZ: www.enviroschools.org.nz
- Lady Gowrie Resources: www.gowrievictoria.org.au
- Melbourne Royal botanic Gardens: www.rbg.vic.gov.au/education/early-childhood
- NSW Early Childhood Education Network: www.eceen.org.au
- QLD Early Childhood Environmental Educators Network:
http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/state_territory_branches/queensland_branch/queensland_early_childhood_sustainability_network.html
- Melbourne Royal botanic Gardens: www.rbg.vic.gov.au/education/early-childhood

Chemical/Cleaning/Eco Products Links:

- Chemicals in the Home: www.saferolutions.org.au
- Environmentally Friendly Products: www.ecoshop.com.au
- Fresh Green Clean, Bridget Gardner: www.freshgreenclean.com.au
- Pesticide Action Network : www.pesticideinfo.org
- Safer Solutions: www.tec.org.au/saferolutions/your-stories/48/286-bridget-gardner--professional-green-and-safe-cleaner
- Seeded paper: merryground.com.au

Community Information:

- Australian Bureau of Statistics:

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/1370.0?opendocument#from-banner=LN>

<http://www.abs.gov.au>

- Community Indicators Victoria: www.communityindicators.net.au
- Sustainable Measures: <http://www.sustainablemeasures.com/indicators>
- World Health Organisation: <http://www.who.int/en>

Eco Furniture and Play Items:

- DEECD: <http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/licensed/pn5a-natenvironments.pdf>

- Earthtribe: www.earthtribe.com.au
- Friendship Tree: www.thefriendshiptree.com.au
- Man Made Creations: www.manmadecreations.com.au
- Play to Learn: www.playtolearn.com.au
- Winterwood Steiner Inspired Toys: www.winterwoodtoys.com.au

Federal/State/Local Government Sites:

- Australian Centre of Excellence for Local Government:
 - <http://www.acelg.org.au/news-detail.php?id=197>
- Australian Government Department of the Environment and Heritage: www.deh.gov.au
- Building Commission: <http://www.buildingcommission.com.au/www/html/2294-how-can-i-make-my-home-green.asp>
- Department of Environment and Conservation: www.dec.wa.gov.au
- EPA Vic: www.epa.vic.gov.au
- Environment Victoria: www.environmentvictoria.org.au
- Environment Victoria: www.environmentvictoria.org.au/translations
- Federal Governments Technical Advice: www.yourhome.gov.au
- Gosford City council: www.gosford.nsw.gov.au/environment
- Information of energy Use: www.climatechange.gov.au/default.aspx
- Knox City Council: www.knox.vic.gov.au/Files/Natural_Play_Spaces_brochure.pdf
- National Parks Vic: www.parkweb.vic.gov.au
- North East Catchment Management Authority: www.necma.vic.gov.au
- State Government: www.resourcesmart.vic.gov.au
- Sustainable Schools: www.sustainableschools.nsw.edu.au
- The Victorian Green Renters Guide: <http://environmentvictoria.org.au/rentersguide>
- Victorian local Government Association:
 - http://www.vlga.org.au/Resources/Liveable_Just_Toolkit.aspx

Gardening:

- Diggers Club Heritage Seeds: www.diggers.com.au
- Diggers Rest online email network: Diggers_Rest@no-dig-vegetablegarden.com
- Eden Seeds: www.edenseeds.com.au
- Gardening Australia: www.abc.net.au/gardening
- Our environment: www.livingthing.net.au
- Stephanie's kitchen garden foundation: www.kitchengardenfoundation.org.au
- Sustainable Gardening Australia: www.sgaonline.org.au

Health/Slow Food Movement:

- Microwave safe Australia: www.microwavesafe.net
- Raeshaws At Fulham: www.raeshawsatfulham.com.au
- Slow Food movement: <http://slowfood.com>
- World Health organisation: www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/en

Media/Publicity:

- Young Media Australia Information on Media around Young Children: www.youngmedia.org.au

Sustainable Packaging/Products:

- Environmental packaging Products: www.bsbpackaging.com.au
- Environmental Products: www.biopak.com.au
- Recycled Paper Products: www.papergoround.com.au
- Sustainable Products: www.ecobuy.org.au

Sustainable Printing:

- Black Rainbow Printing: www.blackrainbow.com.au

Waste/Recycling:

- Battery Recycling: www.transpacific.com.au
- Freecycling: www.freecycle.org (swapping items website)
- www.benefits-of-recycling.com/recyclingstatistics.html

Water Links:

- East Gippsland Water: www.egwater.vic.gov.au
- Gippsland Water: www.gippswater.com.au
- South Gippsland Water: www.sgwater.com.au
- Water Saving Products: www.savewater.com.au

Section 3: What can you do?

Green Cleaning

Green cleaning can be utilised within early years environments. Why is it important to think green cleaning? There is a growing understanding that toxic chemicals can do harm to the environment and humans, and that the ongoing use of these makes it increasingly harder for the environment to recover. As media plays a large role in what we believe we should be using in our households and for those we love and look after, it can shape our habits of those everyday household cleaners we use and purchase. By thinking green you will be challenging those large media advertising campaigns and changing the habits of those around you and the younger generation to think green cleaning power (Gardner 2003). Early childhood services require a high standard of cleaning and hygienic places for our children and community. However, the link between chemical based cleaning and sanitising products and health rates of asthma, allergies, chemical sensitivities and learning and behavioural disorders is growing throughout the world (www.freshgreenclean.com.au).

Green cleaning can also be seen as a cost benefit with it often costing less to purchase these natural products. Bridget Gardner, cleaning guru of Fresh Green Clean promotes that using friction with the cloth on a surface is the hidden key to cleaning success! So having the correct cleaning cloth that allows for good contact with the bench/surface will help reduce bacteria with the correct cleaning produce and dilution rate.

Microfiber cloths have got the green tick; they are washable and can be reused many times. However chux cloths are not as beneficial due to the holes in them which reduces friction on the bench, this can lead to smelly cloths and unhygienic surfaces. The best way to clean is with a flat cloth to maximise contact and efficiency.

When thinking about using green cleaning ideas or recipes, please ensure you know your children and families. Check for allergies and sensitivities with smells and scents. Ensure that oils and natural products in their raw states are still kept out of children's reach. Safety and labelling on items is required at all times. Ensure bottles are labelled correctly.

Ideas for Green Cleaning Around Your Environment

- **Benches:** Warm soapy water can remove bacteria on most surfaces; use biodegradable and pH neutral soaps.
- **Floors:** Mop with hot/warm water, shoe marks can be removed by using a rubber, ink spots on vinyl squeeze lemon juice over stain, leave to dry and wipe clean. Sealed timber floors can be cleaned with cold black tea with a mop, great for picking up dust however only use damp not wet mop! Squeeze well...
- **Carpet:** Quick spot cleaner apply shaving cream wash off with warm water.

Muddy feet marks sprinkle salt or Bi carb soda over marks leave to dry then vacuum, repeat in needed.

Brick or tiled floors: one (1) cup of white vinegar to half (1/2) bucket of warm water (will not leave film on the floor).

N.B: Try to remove all floor stain before they set and always work from the outside in to reduce stain spreading.

- **Sink:** Rub with bi-carb soda on a damp cloth.
- **Basin:** As above to add shine to area, can rub over with white vinegar on a cloth.
- **Septic Toilets:** White vinegar is a mild disinfectant and does not harm microbes which ensure the breakdown of sewerage in the tank.
- **Toilets:** Clean with vinegar you can add sprig of rosemary or lavender to this (or natural oils).
- **Windows and Mirrors:** Clean the window vinegar and crumpled newspaper (one school of thought is that newspaper now does not contain lamp black ink, which today's newspapers do not, so it is suggested to use paper towel instead), give it a try and see what works for you.
- **Tables, Walls, Ledges and Chairs:** For those tough stains such as paint or crayons use eucalyptus oil mixed with water. Add a few drops of eucalyptus oil on a cloth and rub on the stain directly. Marks on walls from crayons can also be sometime removed with a new rubber and also some toothpaste can remove crayons (trial and error).
- **Microwave and Fridge:** Clean interior and exterior with bi-carb soda on damp cloth.
- **Fridge Interior:** Use a few drops of vanilla essence in water, to new sponge helps to freshen up fridge. You can also place small container on Bi-carb into fridge to draw out any unwanted odours. Leave for a few days with no lid.
- **Alternative Disinfectants:**

500ml white vinegar with 1 litre of water

15ml tea tree oil

5 ml spirit orange

Mixed and used for cleaning instead of disinfectant, do not dilute any further. Effective for vomit etc smells.

- **Toys:** Hot soapy water (70C) rubber gloves and scrubbing brush. Air-dry in sunshine. Best way to clean toys.
- **Nappies:** Soak in a heavy mixture of soap mix and add 1 cup white vinegar or 1 cup eucalyptus oil this is a disinfect and freshness up the nappy. Keeping nappies white you can add 1 cup washing soda to a bucket of hot water. Hot water above 65c will kill bacteria; try to dry nappies in the sunshine.
- **Tea towel:** Soak in mix of two (2) tablespoons of cream of tartar and 1 litre of water before washing.
- **Urine:** Soak clothes in white vinegar or lemon juice with water, after rinse dry in sunshine.

Green and Natural Repellents

- **Ants:** Boiling water can be poured down into the nests.

Sprinkle crushed cloves or pepper around, rub lemon juice around sink area.

- **Cockroaches:** Epsom salt can be sprinkled into the back of cupboards

- **Silverfish:** Cloves, garlic, Epsom salts can be placed in the back of cupboards, moths do the same omit garlic.

Wipe shelves with lavender or eucalyptus oil.

- **Flies and mozzies:** Flywire screens are the best keep them closed! Fly swatter great for hand eye co-ordination.

Herbs in pots or on window edges hanging baskets such as mint, pennyroyal, tansy, rosemary, wild marjoram, basil, garlic, all help with reducing flyer and mozzie numbers. Crushed mint or crushed bay leave on window ledges also help reduce these pests. Lavender oil placed around the area if you do not want an oil burner on due to safety reasons place a few drops on a sponge in a small container/lid and add a few drops of boiling water. The heat will activate the perfume. Lavender scent is also a natural calming smell (Green Cleaner by Barbara Lords 2005, Spotless by Shannon Lush and Jennifer Fleming 2007, www.freshgreenclean.com.au, accessed July 2012).

Sustainability Plan

How do develop a plan for your environment

A sustainability plan will help to bring together strategies and key players working towards a common goal. Key players may involve the community, parents, staff, children and local groups. Having a sustainability plan helps to work towards these goals, formalise targets and practices, thus providing a factual and concrete ground to educate and develop sustainable practices directly for your environment.

Plans need to be clear and concise, providing direction around change and development of a sustainable environment. Strategies and goals are clearly set out and are in bite size amounts that are achievable over time and commitment. A sustainability plan is a holistic plan that will evolve over time and change as staff, families and community change and grow.

How get a Sustainability Plan going! What to ask yourself

Consult. Consult. Consult.

Talk with your children, what do they think should be in your plan, what is important to them in the environment, ask them what they feel is sustainable practices. Amazing answers and wisdom can be shared here. Involve families and their views, what is important to them in the early years setting and at home or in the community, if possible try to link these in the plan. Talk and involve with grandparents or elders, they have resources and knowledge and can often offer their personal time and resources.

Utilise early years associations and services such as Environmental Education in Year Childhood Victoria, Early Childhood Australia, Kindergarten Parents Victoria, Local and State Governments, partnerships and stakeholders.

Look and review your vision statement or philosophy, does it include statements about sustainable practices or the environment? Review philosophy and sustainability plan yearly when new staff start.

It is important to keep UnitingCare Gippsland key principles in mind when developing both of these. Do you have a policy that relates to sustainability and the environment? Have you incorporated UnitingCare Gippsland agency environmental focused policies and guidelines into your early years service? Your early years service may consider doing a sustainability audit (see below) pre and post sustainability plan or policy development. This provides a sound benchmark to start off with.

Open communication with staff, team meetings, parent meetings, inviting community members that can provide information on relevant sustainable topics to help educate and inform. Contact and link in with your Shire/Council Environmental Officers, Department of Primary Industry or Community sustainability groups. Utilise families and their experiences, talents and strengths. What they offer... You may like to develop a survey for families, on their knowledge, skills or passion they can offer.

Review your space and environment. Do all the areas get used? Have you links to your community; are you using local or native flora and fauna? Do you have animals come and visit or live at your early years service?

What Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander links does your service have? Can you involve the local Aboriginal organisation; ask for direction on local plant life and native local animals. Do you have local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural incorporated in your philosophy/program?

What is the foot print you as an individual are leaving on the planet and your early years service? What consumables are being or not being recycled? Are you water and energy wise? Do you clean green products? What aesthetics and resources do you purchase? Do you buy local, Australian products? What do children want to see as their environmental foot print?

Once you have asked yourself and others these questions

You can collate and group ideas by similar actions or goals. Brainstorm and develop a mind map or action template on who will look or work on that action in an assigned time frame. This can be facilitated by a dedicated team this can comprise of families, children, staff and the community. It is a good idea to identify someone that may have time to follow up actions and offer support to others. This person also needs to be passionate about environmental sustainability. It is also important to document and have collaborative practices, so when someone leaves they do not take all the knowledge with them.

As you work through these actions it can be satisfying to tick them off as you go along sense of achievement. It is always satisfying to tick off on a list, this is why it is good to start off with some easier short term goals and work towards the longer more involved actions. This builds confidence and commitment.

It is always important to check on how people are travelling to seek open and honest feedback regularly is vital. This can be a review box or comments, regular meetings, check lists, emails or a conversation. A sustainability plan template follows to provide an example of layout and what could be included.

Template for a Sustainability Plan: (adapted from Kinsella, R. 2007, *Greening Services Practical Sustainability*)

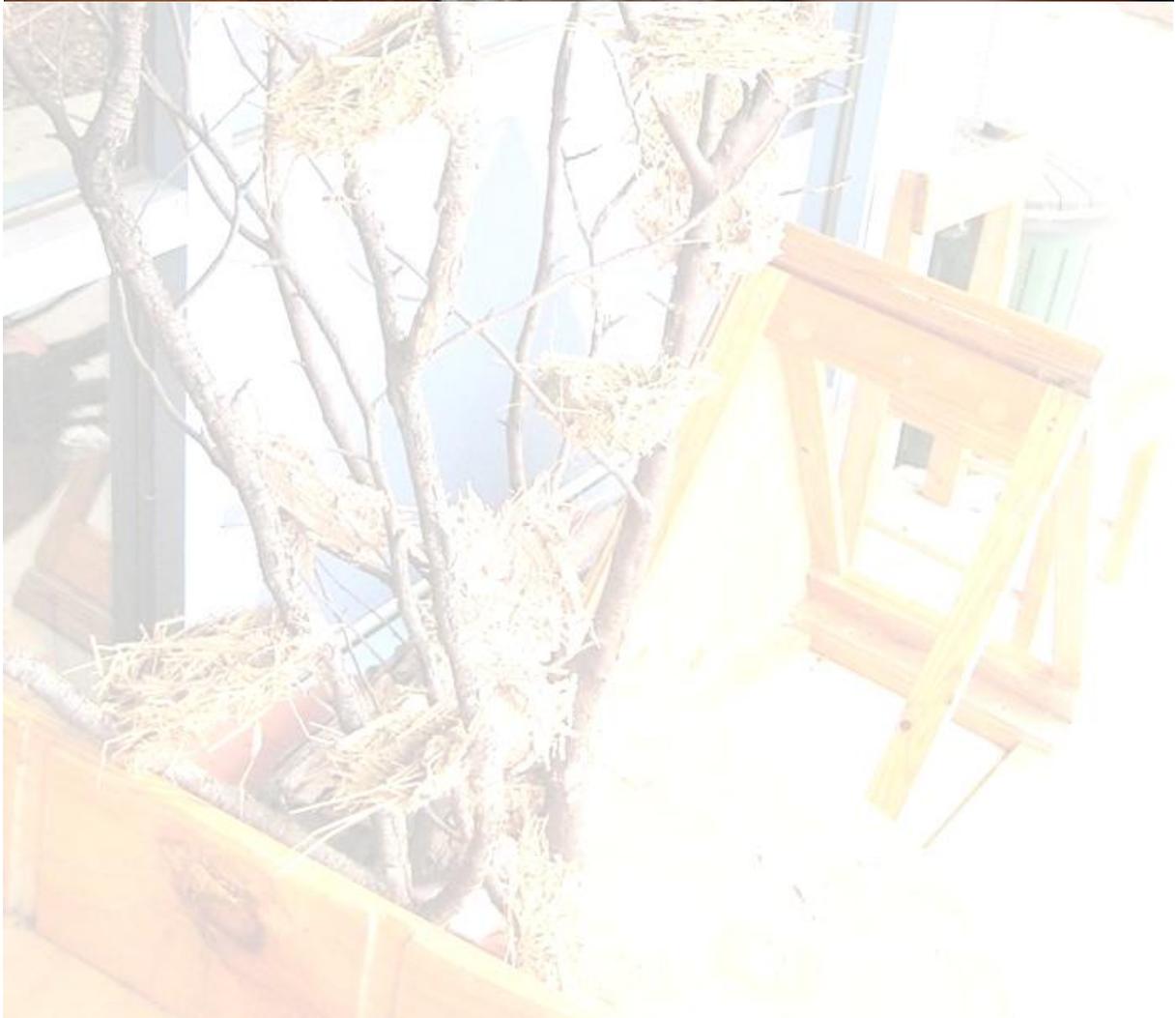
Goal	Action	Responsibility-Who	Completion Date	Green Tick	Review Date
Example: Develop a philosophy which embraces sustainability	Research other philosophies	Director	December 2012		June 2013
Establish Sustainability Targets					
Purchasing Practices					
Recycling Program					
Reuse and Waste Management					
Reducing Greenhouse Gasses					
Water Conservation					
Cleaning Products					
Gardening					

A copy of this template is also available on www.ucgipps.org.au under Eco-Resource Kit

Early Years Environment Matrix/Checklist

Sustainability Matrix template, provides you with a tick sheet format you can use to go through your service and see what you may or may not have in place. It is designed so you can use it as a reflective tool in your service to help grow what you are currently achieving or as a starting point on your sustainability journey.

A copy of this template is also available on www.ucgipps.org.au under Eco-Resource Kit



Section 4: Useful Information

Green Dates

Dates may change each year, it would be advisable to check the dates each year or link in with your local Environmental Officer at your Shire or Sustainability Victoria to confirm

January	5 th National Bird Day 26 th Australia Day		
February	2 nd World Wetlands Day 28 th Business Clean Up Day		
March	2 nd Schools Clean Up Day 4 th Clean Up Australia Day 11-17 th Ground Water Awareness Week 21 st World Forestry Day 22 nd World Water Day 23-25 th Earthfest-Wellington Shire 23 rd World Meteorological Day 28 th Ride to School Day 31 st Earth Hour		
April	18 th World Heritage Day 22 nd Earth Day 25 th Anzac Day		
May	7-12 th International composting Awareness Week 13-13 th World Migratory Bird Day 8-10 th OZ Water 2012 14-20 th National Volunteers Week		

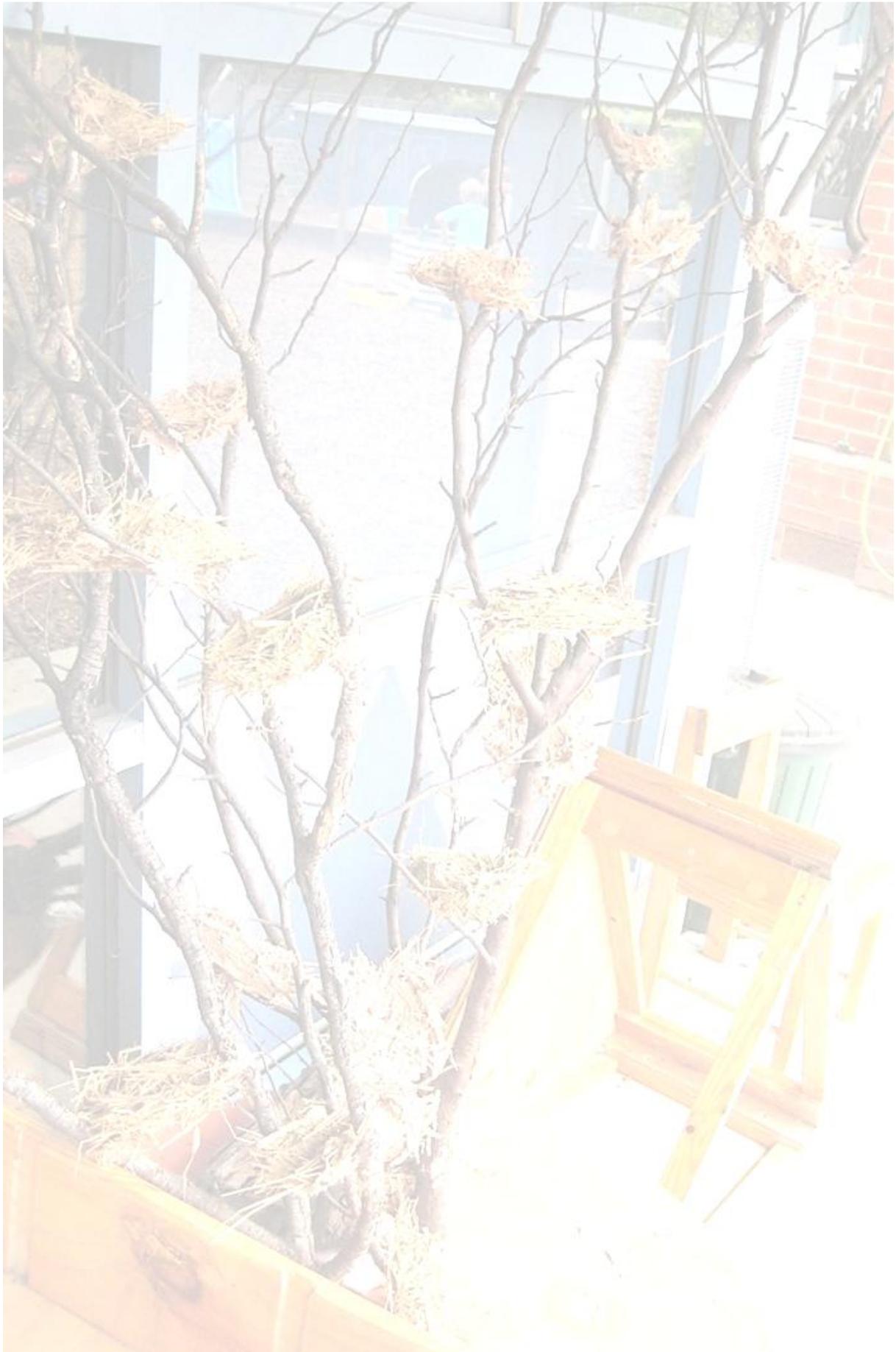
	<p>18th Walk Safely to School Day</p> <p>22nd International Day of Biological Diversity</p> <p>23rd World Turtle Day</p> <p>26th Sorry Day</p> <p>27-3rd National Reconciliation Week</p>		
June	<p>3rd Mabo Day</p> <p>5th World Environment Day</p> <p>8th World Ocean Day</p> <p>15th Global Wind Day</p>		
July	<p>1-8th Nadioc Week</p> <p>11th World Population Day</p> <p>27th Schools Tree Day</p> <p>29th National Tree Day</p>		
August	<p>20-26th Keep Australia Beautiful Week</p>		
September	<p>1-30th National Biodiversity Month</p> <p>1st National Wattle Day</p> <p>9th Sustainability House Day</p> <p>9th National Bilby Day</p> <p>16th International Day for the Ozone Layer</p> <p>21st Walk to Work Day</p> <p>15-16th Clean Up the World Weekend</p> <p>22nd World Car Free Day</p>		
October	<p>1-31st International walk to school month</p> <p>1st World Habitat Day</p> <p>4th World Animal Day</p>		

	16 th World Food Day 17 th International Day for the Eradication of Poverty		
November	6 th International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Conflict 12-18 th National Recycling Week 21 st World fisheries Day		
December	5 th International Volunteer Day 11 th International Mountain Day		

Fact Sheets and Resources

Information	Reference
Environmental Benefits of Composting	Centre for Organic and Resource Enterprises- http://www.corebusinessnet.com/
Biodiversity in Early Childhood Services	Early Childhood Australia- www.earlychildhoodvictoria.org.au/.../BIODIVERSITY_FACT_SHEET
Environmental Printing	www.blackrainbow.com.au
Gardening with Children	ncac.acecqa.gov.au/.../Learning_naturally_gardening_w_chn_Sept10.pdf www.organicgardening.com/learn-and-grow/gardening-kids www.organicsschools.com.au/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket...tabid=155
Gippsland Low Carbon Growth Plan	Climate Works Australia- www.climateworksaustralia.org
Little Green Steps- educator manual	Gosford City Council- http://www.gosford.nsw.gov.au/environment
New Zealand Early	www.elp.co.nz/EducationalLeadershipProject_Resources_Articles_ecAR

Childhood Art emagazine	
Sustainability Vic- Posters	Sustainability Victoria- http://www.sustainability.vic.gov.au/www/html/1519-search.asp?search=1&intLocationID=1519&keywords=posters&image.x=19&image.y=8
Water wise information	http://www.water.vic.gov.au/
Worm farm guide	Can of worms- http://www.abundantearth.com/store/canoworms.html
Worm supplier list	www.wormsdownunder.com.au www.mitre10.com.au/Suppliers/
Water poster/facts	Early Childhood Australia; http://www.earlychildhoodvictoria.org.au/edit/Special_Interest_Groups/WATER%20POSTER.PDF
Playgroup resources and activities	UnitingCare Gippsland - www.ucgipps.org.au
Worm poster	UnitingCare Gippsland- www.ucgipps.org.au
Worm farm information booklet	UnitingCare Gippsland- www.ucgipps.org.au
Set of 5 Sustainable posters	UnitingCare Gippsland- www.ucgipps.org.au
Poster template	UnitingCare Gippsland- www.ucgipps.org.au
PowerPoint of photos which runs for 5-7 minutes- it has a variety of photos and ideas. Enjoy and feel inspired.	UnitingCare Gippsland- www.ucgipps.org.au



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- Belonging, Being and Becoming, 2009, produced by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments, p29.
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- Stephanie Ralton, 2012, Environmental Education in Early Childhood
- Shannon Lush and Jennifer Fleming, 2007, Spotless
- <http://acecqa.gov.au/early-childhood-in-australia/learning-frameworks/>
- www.epa.gov/sustainability/basicinfo.htm
- <http://www.freshgreenclean.com.au/fresh/home.aspx?docId=775>