



CHCECE037

**Provide experiences to
support children's play
and learning**

**LEARNER
GUIDE**



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This Learner Guide

CHCECE037 - Support children to connect with the natural environment (Release 1)

This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to support and encourage children's connection with the natural environment.

This unit applies to educators who contribute to the curriculum planning process under the guidance of others in regulated children's education and care services in Australia.

The skills in this unit must be applied in accordance with Commonwealth and State/Territory legislation, Australian standards and industry codes of practice.

No occupational licensing, certification or specific legislative requirements apply to this unit at the time of publication.

A complete copy of the above unit of competency can be downloaded from the TGA website:

<https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/CHCECE037>

About this Unit of Study Introduction

As a worker, a trainee, or a future worker, you want to enjoy your work and become known as a valuable team member. This unit of competency will help you acquire the knowledge and skills to work effectively as an individual and in groups. It will give you the basis to contribute to the goals of the organisation which employs you.

It is essential that you begin your training by becoming familiar with the industry standards to which organisations must conform.

This Learner Guide Covers

Support children to connect with the natural environment

- I. Support children to develop an understanding of the natural environment.
- II. Develop children's appreciation of the natural environment.
- III. Enhance children's engagement with the natural environment.

Learning Program

As you progress through this unit of study, you will develop skills in locating and understanding an organisation's policies and procedures. You will build up a sound knowledge of the industry standards within which organisations must operate. You will become more aware of the effect that your own skills in dealing with people have on your success or otherwise in the workplace. Knowledge of your skills and capabilities will help you make informed choices about your further study and career options.

Additional Learning Support

To obtain additional support you may:

- Search for other resources. You may find books, journals, videos and other materials which provide additional information about topics in this unit.
- Search for other resources in your local library. Most libraries keep information about government departments and other organisations, services and programs. The librarian should be able to help you locate such resources.
- Contact information services such as Infolink, Equal Opportunity Commission, Commissioner of Workplace Agreements, Union organisations, and public relations and information services provided by various government departments. Many of these services are listed in the telephone directory.
- Contact your facilitator.

Facilitation

Your training organisation will provide you with a facilitator. Your facilitator will play an active role in supporting your learning. Your facilitator will help you at any time during working hours to assist with:

- How and when to make contact
- What you need to do to complete this unit of study
- What support will be provided.

Here are some of the things your facilitator may do to make your study easier:

- Give you a clear visual timetable of events for the semester or term in which you are enrolled, including any deadlines for assessments
- Provide you with online webinar times and availability
- Use 'action sheets' to remind you about tasks you need to complete, and updates on websites
- Make themselves available by telephone for support discussion and provide you with industry updates by email where applicable
- Keep in touch with you during your studies

Flexible Learning

Studying to become a competent worker is an interesting and exciting thing to do. You will learn about current issues in this area. You will establish relationships with other students, fellow workers, and clients. You will learn about your own ideas, attitudes, and values. You will also have fun. (Most of the time!)

At other times, studying can seem overwhelming and impossibly demanding, particularly when you have an assignment to do and you aren't sure how to tackle it, your family and friends want you to spend time with them, or a movie you want to see is on television.

Sometimes being a student can be hard.

Here are some ideas to help you through the hard times. To study effectively, you need space, resources, and time.

Space

Try to set up a place at home or at work where you can:

- Keep your study materials
- Be reasonably quiet and free from interruptions
- Be reasonably comfortable, with good lighting, seating, and a flat surface for writing.

If it is impossible for you to set up a study space, perhaps you could use your local library. You will not be able to store your study materials there, but you will have quiet, a desk and chair, and easy access to the other facilities.

Study Resources

The most basic resources you will need are:

- A chair
- A desk or table
- A computer with Internet access
- A reading lamp or good light
- A folder or file to keep your notes and study materials together
- Materials to record information (pen and paper or notebooks, or a computer and printer)
- Reference materials, including a dictionary

Do not forget that other people can be valuable study resources. Your fellow workers, work supervisor, other students, your facilitator, your local librarian, and workers in this area can also help you.

Time

It is important to plan your study time. Work out a time that suits you and plan around it. Most people find that studying, in short, concentrated blocks of time (an hour or two) at regular intervals (daily, every second day, once a week) is more effective than trying to cram a lot of learning into a whole day. You need time to 'digest' the information in one section before you move on to the next, and everyone needs regular breaks from study to avoid overload. Be realistic in allocating time for study. Look at what is required for the unit and look at your other commitments.

Make up a study timetable and stick to it. Build in 'deadlines' and set yourself goals for completing study tasks. Allow time for reading and completing activities. Remember that it is the quality of the time you spend studying rather than the quantity that is important.

Study Strategies

Different people have different learning 'styles'. Some people learn best by listening or repeating things out loud. Some learn best by 'doing', some by reading and making notes. Assess your own learning style and try to identify any barriers to learning which might affect you. Are you easily distracted? Are you afraid you will fail? Are you taking study too seriously? Not seriously enough? Do you have supportive friends and family? Here are some ideas for effective study strategies:

1. **Make notes.** This often helps you to remember new or unfamiliar information. Do not worry about spelling or neatness, as long as you can read your own notes. Keep your notes with the rest of your study materials and add to them as you go. Use pictures and diagrams if this helps.
2. **Underline keywords** when you are reading the materials in this Learner Guide. (Do not underline things in other people's books.) This also helps you to remember important points.
3. **Talk to other people** (fellow workers, fellow students, friends, family, or your facilitator) about what you are learning. As well as help you to clarify and understand new ideas, talking also gives you a chance to find out extra information and to get fresh ideas and different points of view.



Using this Learner Guide

A Learner Guide is just that, a guide to help you learn. A Learner Guide is not a textbook. Your Learner Guide will:

1. Describe the skills you need to demonstrate to achieve competency for this unit.
2. Provide information and knowledge to help you develop your skills.
3. Provide you with structured learning activities to help you absorb knowledge and information and practice your skills.
4. Direct you to other sources of additional knowledge and information about topics for this unit.

How to Get the Most Out of Your Learner Guide

Some sections are quite long and cover complex ideas and information. If you come across anything you do not understand:

1. Talk to your facilitator.
2. Research the area using the books and materials listed under Resources.
3. Discuss the issue with other people (your workplace supervisor, fellow workers, fellow students).
4. Try to relate the information presented in this Learner Guide to your own experience and to what you already know.
5. Ask yourself questions as you go. For example, 'Have I seen this happening anywhere?' 'Could this apply to me?' 'What if...' This will help you to 'make sense' of new material, and to build on your existing knowledge.
6. Talk to people about your study. Talking is a great way to reinforce what you are learning.
7. Make notes.
8. Work through the activities. Even if you are tempted to skip some activities, do them anyway. They are there for a reason, and even if you already have the knowledge or skills relating to a particular activity, doing them will help to reinforce what you already know. If you do not understand an activity, think carefully about the way the questions or instructions are phrased. Read the section again to see if you can make sense of it. If you are still confused, contact your facilitator or discuss the activity with other students, fellow workers or with your workplace supervisor.

Additional Research, Reading, and Note-Taking

If you are using the additional references and resources suggested in the Learner Guide to take your knowledge a step further, there are a few simple things to keep in mind to make this kind of research easier.

Always make a note of the author's name, the title of the book or article, the edition, when it was published, where it was published, and the name of the publisher. This includes online articles. If you are taking notes about specific ideas or information, you will need to put the page number as well. This is called the reference information. You will need this for some assessment tasks, and it will help you to find the book again if you need to.

Keep your notes short and to the point. Relate your notes to the material in your Learner Guide. Put things into your own words. This will give you a better understanding of the material.

Start off with a question you want answered when you are exploring additional resource materials. This will structure your reading and save you time.

Introduction

Nature is a constantly changing learning space that engages children. It also allows for their overall development. Nature, in its simplest term, is the natural or physical world. The natural environment includes all the living and non-living things that naturally occur. It is important for children to connect with the natural environment. It offers benefits that help in building a strong foundation for them. Children need to connect with nature. It allows them to develop the skills needed to manage complex environments. These environments are essential for long-term health and well-being.

These developmental levels include the following:

Intellectual
level

Physical
level

Social level

Emotional
level

Benefits also extend to nature and have positive effects on an environmental level. This means your responsibility as an educator also extends to the natural environment. A child's experience with the natural environment help shape their environmental identity. It guides their actions towards the environment.

You will learn the importance of the natural environment on children's development. It will also explain how you can support the connection. This will provide you with strategies for engaging children with the natural environment.

In this learner guide, you will learn how to:

- Support children to develop an understanding of the natural environment.
- Develop children's appreciation of the natural environment.
- Enhance children's engagement with the natural environment.



I. Support Children to Develop an Understanding of the Natural Environment

Understanding nature is a critical aspect of childhood. It enhances the richness of the human experience. It also teaches how to be good stewards of the natural world. The bond between children and nature is necessary for their development. Enabling children to explore, understand and respect the natural environment is important. Early childhood experiences mould children's view of the world.

As an educator, you have the responsibility to ensure the health and welfare of the children in your care. You must expose them to nature's benefits. Children may choose from a variety of outdoor play activities. These activities engage in many mental processes. These processes use skills needed for social and emotional learning.

In this chapter, you will learn how to:

- Discuss the interdependence between living things and the natural environment.
- Model respect, care and appreciation for both the natural and constructed environments.
- Identify Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People's connection with and use of the natural environment.



1.1 Discuss the Interdependence Between Living Things and the Natural Environment

The early childhood years offer great potential for tremendous growth and development. It is a great opportunity for you to help shape a child's environmental views and actions. Exposure to nature is beneficial to children's health and well-being. It stimulates their senses and helps develop social and motor skills.

The natural environment consists of all the living and non-living things in nature. This includes dynamic spaces with trees, plants, gardens, rocks, water, and much more. These allow for unrestricted interactions that encourage spontaneity and exploration.

Children should learn about the interdependence between living things and the land. They need to understand how living things all depend on each other and on the land as their habitat. They should realise that animals, plants, and people need each other for food and care to live and survive. When children understand how people depend on the land, they develop a sense of empathy. They also develop a sense of belonging and community. They understand that all living things need to protect each other and the land they inhabit.

Identifying the opportunities to discuss the natural environment with children will:

Foster a positive attitude towards nature

Instil a sense of belonging

1.1.1 Identify Opportunities to Discuss the Natural Environment

Identifying opportunities help in supporting children to connect with the natural environment. As an educator, you should find the best learning environments for your students.

In this section, you will learn how you can discuss:

The natural environment

The interdependence of living things

Review Governing Laws and Regulations

The Education and Care Services National Law sets the national standard for education and care services. This law applies to all children's education and care services throughout Australia. Variations may apply based on the needs of the state or territory.

Below are the legislations that apply to different states and territories:

State /Territory	Legislation
Australian Capital Territory	Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010
New South Wales	
North Territory	
Queensland	
South Australia	
Tasmania	
Victoria	
Western Australia	Education and Care Services National Law (WA) 2012

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) assists in overseeing the National Quality Framework (NQF) for Early Childhood Education and Care. The NQF regulates education services by setting up standards and learning frameworks.

The National Quality Standards (NQS) consist of the following:

- Quality Area 1 – Educational program and practice
- Quality Area 2 – Children's health and safety
- Quality Area 3 – Physical environment
- Quality Area 4 – Staffing arrangements
- Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children
- Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Quality Area 7 – Governance and leadership

*Based on content from the New South Wales Legislation website on April 15, 2021. For the latest information on New South Wales Government legislation, go to <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/>.
[Education and Care Services National Regulations \(2011 SI 653\)](#), used under CC BY 4.0*

There are approved learning frameworks for education programs. The national law and regulations require services to base their programs on these frameworks. Below are the nationally approved learning frameworks for early childhood education:

- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF).
 - Applicable for children zero to five years old

Meanwhile, the state of Victoria has a specific learning framework:

- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework



Different states and territories have specific laws that ensure the quality of education. Be sure to review the assessment requirements of your corresponding regulatory authorities.

Assess Your Environment

The National Quality Framework (NQF) of Australia provides guidelines for education services. These guidelines ensure that education services adhere to national quality standards. Quality Area 3 of the NQS outlines the standards for the physical environment. This outlines the following considerations:

- **Design** - The physical environment must be appropriate for everyone who will use it.
 - **Fit for purpose** - The facility should be suitable for the discussion you intend to use it for.
 - **Upkeep** - The facility should be well-maintained for the safety of its users.
- **Use** - The use of the physical environment must be inclusive and promote development.
 - **Inclusive environment** - The learning environments should accommodate the needs of the children.
 - **Resources support play-based learning** - The resources used should be sufficient and engaging.
 - **Environmentally responsible** - The environment should support children to be environmentally responsible.

To assess the environment of your care centre or work site, ask yourself these questions:

- Where is your school or centre located?
- Are you near natural environments such as forests, parks, or mountains?
- Do you have a playground outdoors?
- Do you have available space for outdoor projects such as an edible garden?
- Is there enough indoor space for activities involving animals or plants?

These will help you identify the best activities to discuss the natural environment. It will also help you figure out whether they are practical and realistic.

Assess the Stage of Development of the Children in Your Care

It is important to remember that children belong to different stages of development. Development stages may be based on the age period of a child. At certain age periods, children have varying needs and capabilities. You need to plan your activities and discussions to make them inclusive.



Review Your Organisation's Policies and Procedures

You should know your organisation's policies and procedures for interacting with children. Organisational policies and procedures are set in place to ensure the quality of service.

There may be various policies and procedures in place for you to follow, including:

- **Physical environment**

Learning centres usually have policies and procedures in place for the following:

How physical environments should be used and for what purpose

How to maintain cleanliness and ensure safety

- **Interaction and relationships with children**

Learning centres will also have policies and procedures for interacting with the children in your care. This may involve the use of appropriate language and disciplinary techniques.

You must understand what your organisation considers dangerous or inappropriate. This will affect your professional career. It can also affect the safety of the children in your care. Remember that you are responsible for their well-being. These children will rely on you to protect and take care of them.



Assess Your Relationship With Children

You should also consider the kinds of relationships that children must have. Quality Area 5 of the NQS outlines the standards for relationships with children. This outlines the following considerations:

- **Relationships between educators and children**

Relationships between educators and children need to be based on respect and trust. Under this standard, you must

Have positive educator to child interactions

Uphold the dignity and rights of every child

- **Relationships between children**

Children's relationships with each other need to be sensitive and responsive. Under this standard, there must be:

Collaborative learning

- Provide children with opportunities to collaborate and interact

Self-regulation

- Support children to act and respond appropriately to others



Sparkling Stars Early Years Learning Centre

Sparkling Stars is the simulated early years learning centre environment referenced in our learning resources. Their policies and procedures are published on their site. You can access them through the link below:

[Sparkling Stars Policies and Procedures](#)

(username: newusername password: new password)



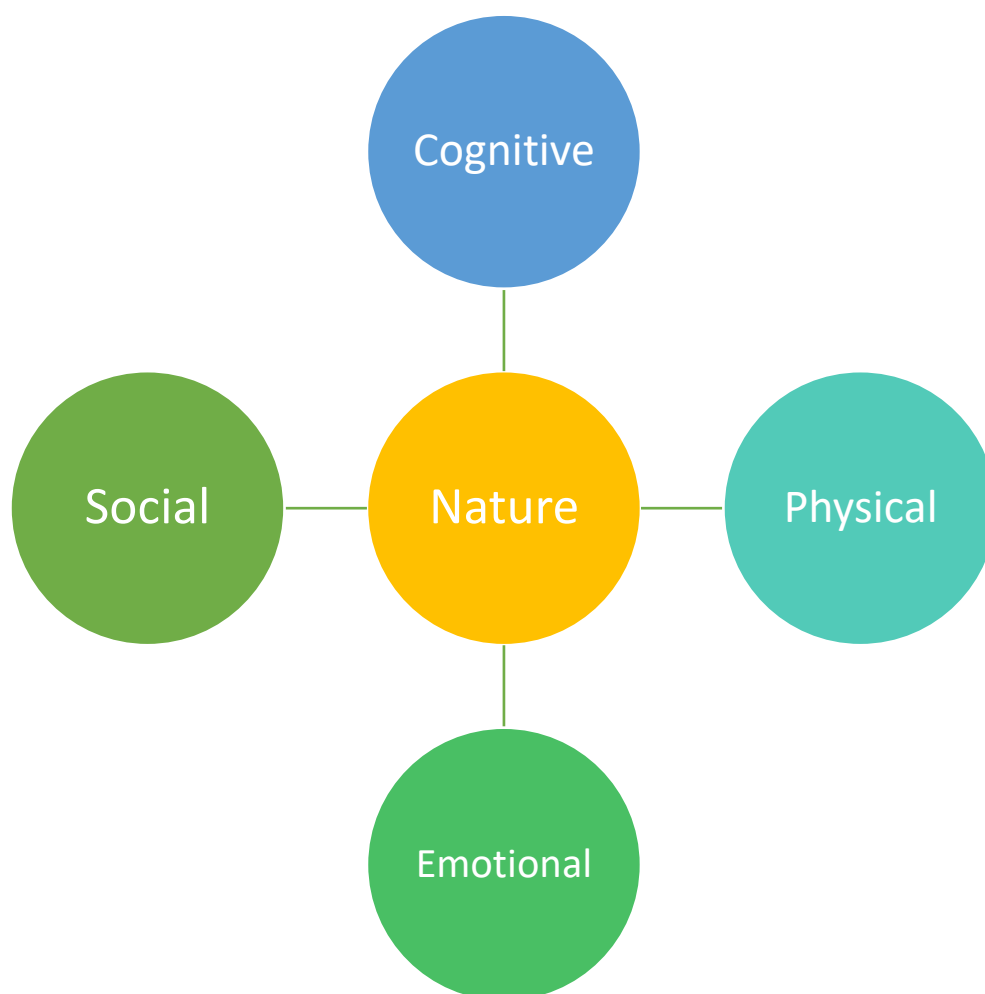
Further Reading

You can read the complete National Quality Standard through the link below:

[National Quality Standard](#)

1.1.2 Use Opportunities to Discuss the Natural Environment

Once you have identified the opportunities for discussion, you will be able to use them. With these opportunities, you can discuss the natural environment. You can also discuss the interdependence between living things and the land. To do that, you should take into consideration child development. *Child development* refers to the different changes that happen in a child's life. One of the best ways to support children's development is by encouraging nature play. *Nature play* is the use of outdoor settings to allow for unstructured play activities. Below are different ways nature play affects development:



Cognitive Level

The natural environment offers limitless possibilities for children. It enables them to create and discover new things. When they are in nature, they can freely think and question their environment. They can experiment with ideas, such as wondering where birds live or how plants grow. Children constantly think when in nature. They boost and improve their mental ability. Moreover, these experiences in nature are authentic and real. Children learn to take risks and try again every time they fail. They learn resilience and gain confidence.

Here are some activities that can boost mental health:



Physical Level

The natural world is refreshing and restorative for everyone. For children, outdoor play can increase their fitness level. They become more active as they run around with other children and explore. Their vitamin D levels and distance vision also increase as they spend time outside.

Here are some activities that can boost physical health:



Social Level

The natural environment presents children with many opportunities to interact with new things. They have the option to either play alone or with other children. They can collaborate and create their own made-up games. They can also make their own rules and solve their own problems without restraint. Often, when children are in a natural environment, they learn to focus and be gentle. They can recognise their peer's feelings and develop empathy, which strengthens social bonds. They also realise individual responsibility. Finally, they develop a concern about the world's people.

Here are some activities that can boost social learning:



Emotional Level

The natural environment makes children feel good. They feel free, and they can move about. They can shout and scream and run around. They can express themselves in ways that a structured environment may restrict. This opportunity relaxes them and reduces their anxiety and restlessness.

Here are some activities that can boost emotional learning:



Explore Biodiversity

Biodiversity refers to the various life forms that exist in nature. Biodiversity is the variety of all living things. Every species contributes to a balanced ecosystem. All species also contribute to conserving the health of the planet. You may research biodiversity to better understand the interdependence of living things.

You may discuss the importance of the following in a child's education:

- *Plants* - Learning about plants can help a child understand growth and life. In turn, this supports the development of their empathy and intellect.
- *Animals* - Discussing animals is an essential part of a child's understanding of nature. Being exposed to animals allows them to understand how living things are taken care of.
- *Insects* - Discussing insects allows children to see the diversity of living things. This distinction can help them develop a sense of responsibility. It can also help them care for smaller beings in nature.
- *Physical landscapes and environments* - Learning about these is a natural part of childhood. Children are naturally curious about their surroundings and often talk about them.



Multimedia

You may watch this video below about the importance of diversity:

[Why is Biodiversity So Important?](#)



Non-exposure to Nature

Non-exposure to nature can have adverse effects on a child's development. It also denies the child the vast benefits that nature has to offer. Depriving children of opportunities to be with nature may result in slower development. In some cases, it may even cause stunted development.

Children who are less exposed to nature may develop negative behaviours and lower self-esteem. They also tend to exhibit lower psychological well-being. They may also have a harder time concentrating. This can have harmful effects on their physical health, with long-term consequences. Below are some examples:

Less physically capable than peers who are exposed to nature

Higher risk of obesity

Higher levels of stress and anxiety

Less capacity for staying focused on tasks or lessons

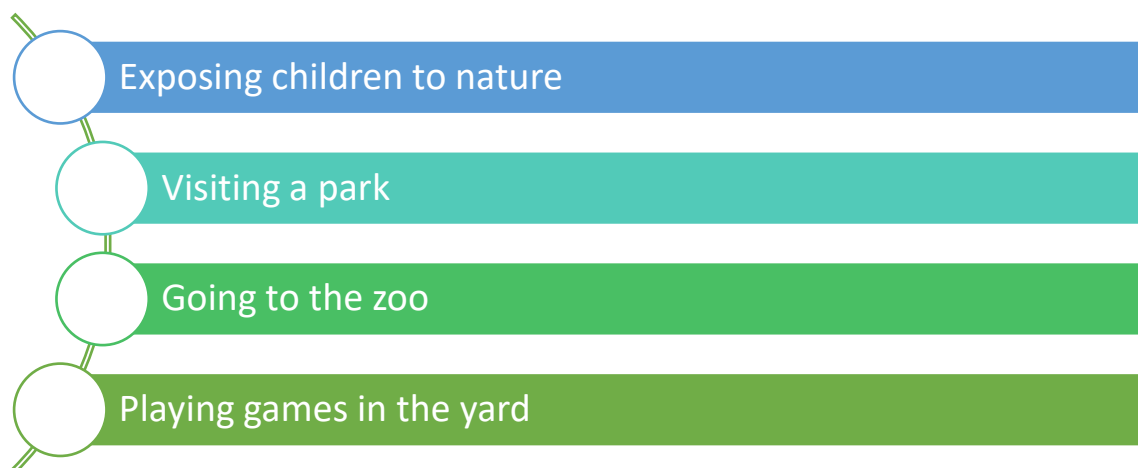
Plan Your Activities and Excursions

Once you have made your assessments, it will be easier for you to identify how to support children. You can help them build a connection with the natural environment. You can map appropriate activities and think about what these will look like. You can also set your goals and objectives for each child. Advance preparation for all your activities will help you maintain safety. This will also help reduce stress, anxiety, and frustration. This way, you and the children can focus on an interactive and engaging discussion.

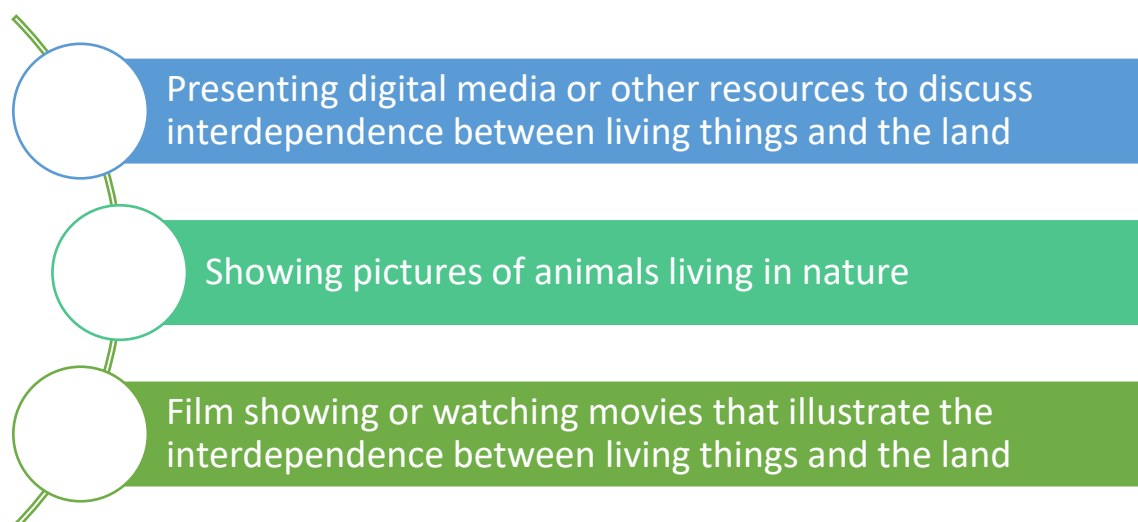
Opportunities to Discuss the Natural Environment With Children

Here are some opportunities where you can discuss the natural environment with children:

- During outdoor activities:



- During indoor activities:



Here are some strategies you can use in discussions:

Provide children with simple explanations.

Make each activity as interactive as possible.

Use Both Verbal and Non-verbal communication.

Make use of friendly body language and gestures.

Initiate conversation using open-ended questions.

Provide Children with Simple Explanations

When children can visualise the discussion, it helps them understand what you mean.

Here are some examples:

- Talk to them about their immediate surroundings.
 - ‘This tree gives us shade from the sun.’
 - ‘We can plant a vegetable here, so we have food.’
 - ‘This rabbit needs to eat this carrot to grow.’
- Use visual aids such as photographs to help them picture what you are talking about.
 - You may use gadgets or digital media to help
 - Use websites that provide child-friendly information

Make Each Activity as Interactive as Possible

Explaining to children how things work is a structured form of learning. Other than that, allow them to explore different ways of learning.

Below are some examples:

- During a walk in the park or playground, let children bring their notebooks to draw and write what they see.
- Allow them to take objects they find and ask them to talk about what they like about the object.
- Let them use digital cameras to take photos.
- Ask them to identify objects that they find.
- Plan a trip outdoors with them using online resources.

Use Both Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

You should use different ways to discuss a topic. This allows children to find a medium they are comfortable in. In turn, this helps them to better express themselves. Verbal communication is when you use words to communicate. Non-verbal is the opposite; it is your gestures, tone of voice, posture, and body language.

Examples:

- Allow children to tell and listen to stories.
- Let them express themselves through art by allowing them to draw, paint and write poems
- Sing songs and read rhymes about nature (e.g. The Kangaroo, The Emu, The Bush School)

Below are important topics to discuss and the sample tasks that you can use:

Topics to Discuss	Sample Tasks
Natural environment	Ask children to find a special place in their home or at school. Ask them to draw their special place and write down why it is special to them. How do they feel when they are in this place? What can they find in this place?
People	Ask children to draw or create a map of their home. Remember to include what is in the garden or around their home. Write down the plants and animals they can find. How do these plants and animals relate to people? Do they eat them? Feed them?
Plants	During a nature walk or an outdoor activity, ask children to look at plants. What does a plant need to grow? Why do people and animals need plants? List down five plants you like to eat.
Animals	How are animals important? What do animals need to survive? Name five animals that live in plants.

You can keep track of the activities that spark the most interest in children. This lets you figure out which of them would enable the most conversation. Allow children to express their thoughts during the activities above. Understand that every child is on a different level of language development. Make sure to use different strategies in the discussion.

Make Use of Friendly Body Language and Gestures

Children are more likely to take part in discussions if they feel that you are friendly. You should make them feel that you are open to listening to what they have to say. Respond respectfully and positively to questions and comments.

Initiate Conversation Using Open-ended Questions

Open-ended questions require more than just a 'yes' or 'no' answer. They encourage a deeper, more meaningful conversation. Use open-ended questions in your discussions to allow children to freely communicate.

For example, instead of saying 'Do you like animals? Is this a dog?', you can say, 'Today we are going to talk about animals. What are your favourite animals?' You can then ask, 'What do you love most about this animal? What do you think will help it grow?'

Here are some sample features that allow children to explore the natural environment:

Gardens where they can grow plants like vegetables

Sandpits for sensory play

Smaller pits for pebbles or smooth rocks

Plants that they can pick and eat

Trees for shade

Play areas with water for sensory play

Compost pits or recycling areas for environmental learning

Remember to follow safety standards and health care policies. This ensures that your activities and learning processes are safe and secure.

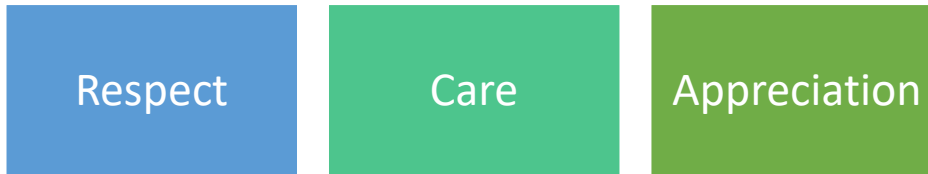


Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. As an educator, you must find and use opportunities to discuss the following:
 - The natural environment
 - The interdependence between living things and the land
2. You must know the standards and regulations related to early childhood care, including:
 - Education and Care Services National Law
 - National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care
 - Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia
 - Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework
3. To identify opportunities for discussion, you must assess your environment. You must also assess the child's stage of development.
4. You should use different opportunities to discuss the natural environment and interdependence.
5. Nature play is an example of a way to discuss the natural environment. It can affect the cognitive, emotional, social and physical development of a child.

1.2 Model Respect, Care and Appreciation for Both the Natural and Constructed Environments

Educators, parents, and adults in general play an enormous role in shaping a child's views of the world. Children tend to mimic behaviour and replicate what they see an adult doing. From a young age, a child's environment should reflect the values and morals that you want to instil in them as they grow up. This is a crucial stage in a child's life. During this stage, you can model the following both natural and constructed environments:



The graphic below explains the difference between a natural and a constructed environment:

Natural Environment	Constructed Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All living and non-living things that occur naturally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environments that are man-made or built by people • Includes buildings, bridges and streets

People can also turn a natural environment into a constructed one if they alter it. For example, they can change it to use it for a specific purpose. These may include nature parks and animal sanctuaries. The previous discussion explained how the natural environment could benefit children's development. It also discussed why it is an important part of learning. However, children should also respect, care for and appreciate their constructed environments. It is their responsibility as part of their communities.

Experiences outside the formal classroom help build a strong foundation for children. They will continue to build on this throughout their schooling. These experiences have a significant impact on the child's whole development.

1.2.1 How to Be a Role Model

You must model positive behaviours towards the natural and constructed environments. To do this, consider the following practices:

Reflect on
your own
behaviour

Be involved

Practice
intentionality

Reflect on Your Own Behaviour

First, you should consider your own personal behaviour and attitude towards nature. The values you model for children reflect your personal beliefs and habits. Your professional judgements are essential to your role in facilitating children's learning.

Be Involved

Involvement means that you believe in your teaching wholeheartedly. You have internal motivation to discuss these with the children under your care. When you are involved, your actions reflect the values that you believe in. This means that you do not merely suggest actions for children to do; you also get involved and do the same. When children see that you are doing the same things as them, it assures them that what they are doing is right.

Practice Intentionality

Intentionality means that your actions are deliberate, thoughtful, and purposeful. You need to be conscious of the opportunities you are providing for children. You must also be aware of their outcomes.

1.2.2 Model Respect for Both Natural and Constructed Environments

Respect is a positive feeling towards something of importance. You show that something deserves due regard and consideration because you value it. You are responsible for modelling respect for both natural and constructed environments.

To foster a sense of respect for the environment, you may teach your students to understand the following:

The importance of natural environments

The importance of constructed environments

How they can preserve both environments

How they can maintain both environments.

You must also provide them with opportunities to show respect for both environments.

To model respect for the natural and constructed environment, you may:

- Discuss how humans other living things depend on the natural environment for survival.
- Discuss how people are part of a community.
- Explain why it is important to protect the natural environment.
- Explain why it is significant to maintain the constructed environment.
- Provide and ask for ideas on how the children can protect their natural environment.
- Provide and ask for ideas on how they can protect their constructed environments.
- Provide examples of how you help protect the natural environment. For example, by not hurting other living things, by recycling, or by not stomping on plants
- Provide examples of how you help maintain the constructed environment. For example, by cleaning up after yourself, not breaking things or not writing on the walls

Remember the strategies for discussion in Section 1.1.2. Incorporate them when discussing how children can follow your respectful behaviour towards environments.

1.2.3 Model Care for Both Natural and Constructed Environments

Care is providing something important with what it needs for its well-being. To help children, you must understand how to show care. You can teach them the essential needs of a living thing, such as water, food, shelter, and protection.

To model care for the natural and constructed environment, you may:

- Discuss the needs of different living things:

Animals need
food and
water

Children need
friends and
toys

- Discuss why you must provide these needs and how they affect those that need them.
- Explain why it is important to prevent damage or risk to the natural environment.
- Explain why it is vital to prevent damage or risk to the constructed environment.
- Provide examples of how you show care for the natural environment or living things:

By watering
plants

By feeding
their pets

By giving
snacks to
others

- Provide examples of how you show care for the constructed environment

By not
destroying
things

By cleaning
the board

By putting
away the toys

You may use the strategies discussed in Section 1.1.2 for these discussions and activities.

1.2.4 Model Appreciation for Both Natural and Constructed Environments

Appreciation is when you are thankful for the existence of something. You may show appreciation by expressing your gratitude for something. To model appreciation for the natural and constructed environments, you may:

- Discuss the benefits of the natural environment to living things.
- Discuss the benefits of the constructed environment to living things.
- Ask the children what they are thankful for in the natural environment.
- Ask the children what they are thankful for in the constructed environment.
- Provide examples of how you show appreciation for the natural environment:

Hugging their dogs

Petting their cats

Saying 'thank you' to people

- Provide examples of how you show appreciation for the constructed environment.

Sharing with others ways to maintain the environment

Telling others what they like about the constructed environment

Being a role model is not a one-time job that stops until the next discussion. Children mimic and copy behaviour whether you tell them to or not. It is constant and means that you must monitor behaviours. You must also use teaching strategies. To do this, you may use the strategies discussed in the rest of this section.

Have a Behaviour Management Plan for Each Child

A behaviour management plan is when you create an action plan to manage the child behaviour. First, you must recognise the behaviour of the children under your care. You can set goals and objectives for them. This ensures that they absorb and retain your modelled behaviour. Take note of pattern behaviour. This way, you can understand:



Which behaviours need reformation

Which behaviours should be acknowledge and praised

Use Positive Reinforcement

When children do something good, you should acknowledge and praise their behaviour. This helps build their self-esteem. It encourages them to continue with the positive behaviour.

Make Sure that You Reinforce Your Goals and Objectives

Continuously reinforce the goals and objectives of the child's behaviour management plan. Your goals are long-term, and your objectives are short-term.

The table below presents some examples:

Child	Behaviour	Goal	Objective
Grace	Grace stomps on the plants when at the playground or at the park.	Appreciation for plants	To stop stomping on plants
Thomas	Thomas does not like to feed the animals when you have them over with the class.	Care for animals	To want to feed animals

In the table above, you can see the long-term goals and the short-term objectives for each child. To reinforce the goal for Grace, you can praise her every time she does not stomp on plants.

For example, you can say: 'Did you enjoy our walk in the park today, Grace? I am so proud of you for not stomping on the plants.'

You can practice the same positive reinforcement for Thomas. For example, you can say: 'I am glad that we fed the animals today. They look full and happy.'

When children are aware of acceptable behaviour, they develop a sense of responsibility.

Model Expressions of Feeling

Children do not fully comprehend the limits and consequences of their actions. Help them understand what they have done by modelling expressions of feeling. Consider this example:

1. Lucas is kicking a puppy, and his friends are crying.
2. You approach gently and let Lucas know how his actions make others feel. You can say, 'The puppy is scared, and your friends do not like it.'
3. If Lucas continues the behaviour, offer him a choice to play with something else.

Use Clear Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication

Make sure that you reinforce the specific behaviour that the child did.

The table below shows examples of situations where you can make positive statements. It also shows what you can say instead to clearly reinforce specific behaviour:

Situation	Instead of saying this:	Say this:
A child waters a plant on their own.	'Good Job!'	'You did a good job watering that plant. That was very nice of you.'
A child shares a shovel with a playmate.	'I am proud of you!'	'I am proud of you for sharing your shovel. That is very kind of you.'
A child draws a picture.	'That is a good girl!'	'Well done on drawing this picture. I can see you worked hard on this.'

Collaborate

Let other workers in your centre know about your goals and objectives for every child. This will result in all of you sharing a comprehensive understanding of your plans. Make sure that everyone follows them through and enforces them.



Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. You must model behaviours that show respect, care and appreciation for the environment. These behaviours must apply to both natural and constructed environments.
2. To be a role model, you must be involved and intentional with your behaviour.
3. To model respect, you must teach children the importance of their environments. To model care, you must show behaviours that protect and maintain the environment. To model appreciation, you must have a behaviour management plan for each child.

1.3 Provide Children With Resources About the Environment and Impact of Activities on It

As an educator, you must provide children with useful information. They should have access to resources that do the following:

Help them know more about the environment.

Understand the impact of their actions on the natural environment.

Children need to learn about the impact of activities on the natural environment. As discussed previously, childhood experiences are the foundation of a child's development. It is during this stage in life that educators can mould the way children view nature and how they respond to it.



1.3.1 Provide Information About the Environment the Impact of Activities

Generally, children rely heavily on adults to provide them with information. This includes information about the world around them. Any information they receive can always leave a lasting impression. They may carry this impression with them throughout their life. This is why children need help and support in getting true and reliable information. You are responsible for making sure that children have access to this information.

This section will discuss some things that you can do to provide information about the following:

The environment

The impact of
activities on
natural
environments.

Ensure That Your Information is Safe and From Credible Sources

It is important that your information is recent and factual. You must ensure the safety of children when providing learning materials. You can do this by looking at the author of the book or website that you are using as a reference for your discussions.

The list below provides you with some of the questions you must check to verify your sources:

Things to Check
Is this material published within the last ten years?
Is this article written by respectable authors?
Is this website registered by a government or educational institution?
Is this from an academic database?
Is there a proper reference or citation used for this?
Is this child-friendly information?

Use Open-Ended Materials

Your resources need to be from a range of materials that can be used for different purposes. These enable various ways for children to explore, create, and learn. You may use open-ended materials to create opportunities for children to learn. You can incorporate these materials in experiments and activities. You can also teach them about their impact on the environment through activities that show cause and effect.

Here is an example of how to use open-ended materials:

Nature Walk

Amelia is an educator at Sparkling Stars Education and Care Centre. To discuss the impact of activities on the environment, she takes her students on a nature walk. They go around the neighbourhood and to the park. She brings a digital camera with her and allows the children to take photos of what people are doing. She creates a presentation of these photos. Then, she asks the children whether these activities are harmful or not.

The following are materials that you can use in various ways, such as arts and crafts materials. They make use of a child's imagination and does not limit their creativity:

Colouring books

Stencils

Clay

Costumes

Paint

Objects found in nature, such as twigs and leaves

Computers or tablets

Digital cameras

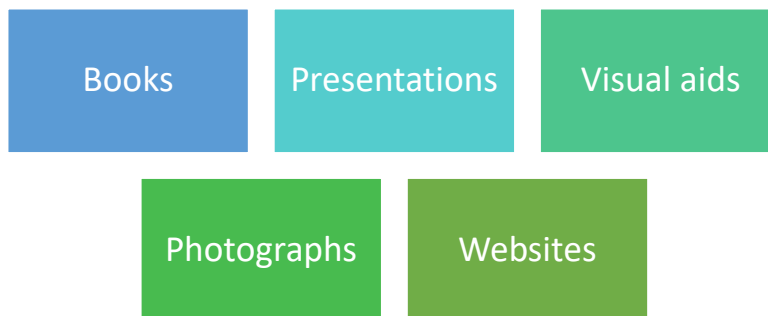
1.3.2 Provide Access to Resources About the Environment and the Impact of Activities

Providing children access to resources is crucial to their learning development. Children need to understand how activities affect the natural environment. This section will discuss the things that you can do when providing access to resources.

Organise Resources

Make sure that children can easily access your resources and that they are safe to use. Take into consideration the height and age of the children involved. Prepare all resources for any activity in advance. This is so that you can anticipate the safety protocols you need to follow. This will prevent and reduce stress and frustration. As a result, children will be more willing to participate.

These resources may include:



You may organise resources into activities that can help children understand your topics. Some activities you may use include:



Plan Adequately

Preparing ahead is important to ensure safety and equity. You will need to make sure that your resources are accessible to everyone involved. You need to assess your environment and anticipate problems that may arise. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Are there enough resources for everyone?
- Are the objects safe? (e.g. are they sharp, are they toxic, are these choking hazards?)
- Are these resources efficient? (e.g. will these be understandable for children?)
- Will these resources suffice? (e.g. is this enough to teach a specific topic?)



Sparkling Stars Early Years Learning Centre

Access and review Sparkling Stars' safety policies through the link below:

[Sparkling Stars Workplace Health and Safety Policies](#)

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Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. To provide accurate information, check the publishing date of your resource. Also, check if the publisher is reliable.
2. You should use open-ended materials to allow children to learn in different ways.
3. You should plan and organise your resources so that they are accessible to the children in your care.

1.4 Identify Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People's Connection With and Use of the Natural Environment

Aboriginal people are believed to have been in Australia for at least 80,000 years. Aboriginal Australians are:



For a long while, people had identified Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders interchangeably. The main distinction is that Torres Strait Islanders are those original people of the Torres Strait. These are the 274 islands in the north of Australia.

Aboriginal people believe that the land owns them. They also believe that every aspect of their lives connects with the land. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders view all things in nature as interconnected. They respect the cycle of growth and reproduction of plants and animals. They do this by hunting and gathering sustainably. This means only taking what they need for their sustenance. This allows time for the environment to repopulate. They view themselves as a part of nature as well. As part of nature, they have established a reciprocal relationship with their environment. They only take what they need for their survival and preserve biodiversity.

You must identify Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders' connection with and use of the natural environment. Ensure that the children are aware of the diverse cultures across Australia. Awareness and access to unbiased information will help children form their views. These are views that are respectful and understanding of all cultures from a young age. This helps in the development of people who will become active Australian citizens.

As an educator, you must embody the same lessons that you teach the children under your care. It is important to understand that Aboriginal culture is very diverse. You should reflect on factors that may hinder your teachings, such as:

Stereotypes

Myths

Unconscious
biases

One common stereotype is that they all live in the outback with painted dark skin. This is, of course, not true as their skin colour is just as diverse as their own culture. Skin colour does not determine a person's culture. It is their ancestry and their personal decision on who they identify with.

Use of Appropriate Language

Language is very important when you teach about Aboriginal people. Remember that when you discuss historical events and communities, you are talking about real people. It is a sign of respect to acknowledge preferred terminologies.



Further Reading

Australians Together has a comprehensive language and terminology guide. You can access this through the link below:

[Language and Terminology Guide](#)

Research

You should research Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to identify the following:

- Their connection with the natural environment
- Their use of the natural environment

Be well-read and aware of their historical significance and role in current society.

The following are things that you can do for research:

Watch videos about Aboriginal peoples.

Read research papers about them.

Take online courses to learn more.

Participate in online discussions.

Ask questions from people in their communities.

Involving the Community

To get a perspective about Aboriginal culture, you may also involve your community. You can ask the families in your centre to see who identifies as Aboriginal. Invite them over to chat about their culture. Know which topics they feel are important and should be shared.

You may also introduce cultural information to children using simple and engaging language. You can explain how they use things such as plants for food, weaving, building, tools and medicine. You may also tell a story that reflects their beliefs about the land (e.g. The Lost Boy).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples also have a rich cultural background. You can reference these in your activities. These help children understand how they connected and used their lands. You may include discussions on:

Dreamtime
stories

Dot paintings

Cross
hatchings

Rock art

Respect for Diversity

This is one of the core principles emphasised in the Framework for School Age Care in Australia. Understand that every child is born to a culture influenced by various factors, like:

Traditional
practices

Values

Family
beliefs

Be aware of these factors by understanding the context behind different family practices. Being respectful will allow you to recognise opportunities and issues surrounding diversity. This will help you take action and ensure that you provide fair and equal opportunity for all.



Further Reading

The Australian Museum has a very informative article about biodiversity. You can access this through the link below:

[What is biodiversity?](#)



Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders are indigenous to Australia. It is important to teach about their culture and connection to the land.
2. To teach children about them, you should do proper research. You should also involve the community and respect diversity.



Learning Activity for Chapter 1

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

II. Develop Children's Appreciation for the Natural Environment



Children should develop an appreciation for the environment to connect to it. Educators need to involve themselves in the lessons that they teach to children. *Involvement* means that you believe in what you are teaching. It means you have the internal motivation to discuss lessons with children. Understand that development comes from ongoing learning and reflective practice. You will need to constantly seek knowledge and information about nature. This ensures that you are well-informed and able to foster your own connection to it.

In this chapter, you will learn about how to show appreciation for the environment. You do this by promoting the use of natural and recycled materials in teaching. You can also provide children with opportunities to explore different environments. This will include samples and strategies to incorporate these in your activities.

In this chapter, you will learn how to:

- Promote the use of natural and recycled materials in learning environments.
- Provide opportunities to explore the natural and constructed environments in the community.

2.1 Promote the Use of Natural and Recycled Materials in Learning Environments

The use of natural and recycled materials is a way to show appreciation for the environment. This can also nurture and develop children's appreciation for nature.

Natural materials are those products that come from nature, such as:

Vegetable
peels

Fruits

Eggshells

Recycled materials are those that come from used materials transformed into new ones. These may include:

Recycled
paper

Recycled
cups

Pencils

Incorporating the use of natural and recycled materials in your class will allow you to do the following:

- Engage children in a holistic process that encourages curiosity and enquiry
- Address sustainability
- Support critical and creative thinking

In turn, this will allow children to do the following:

Develop their creativity.

Express their thoughts about their environment.

Develop critical thinking skills.

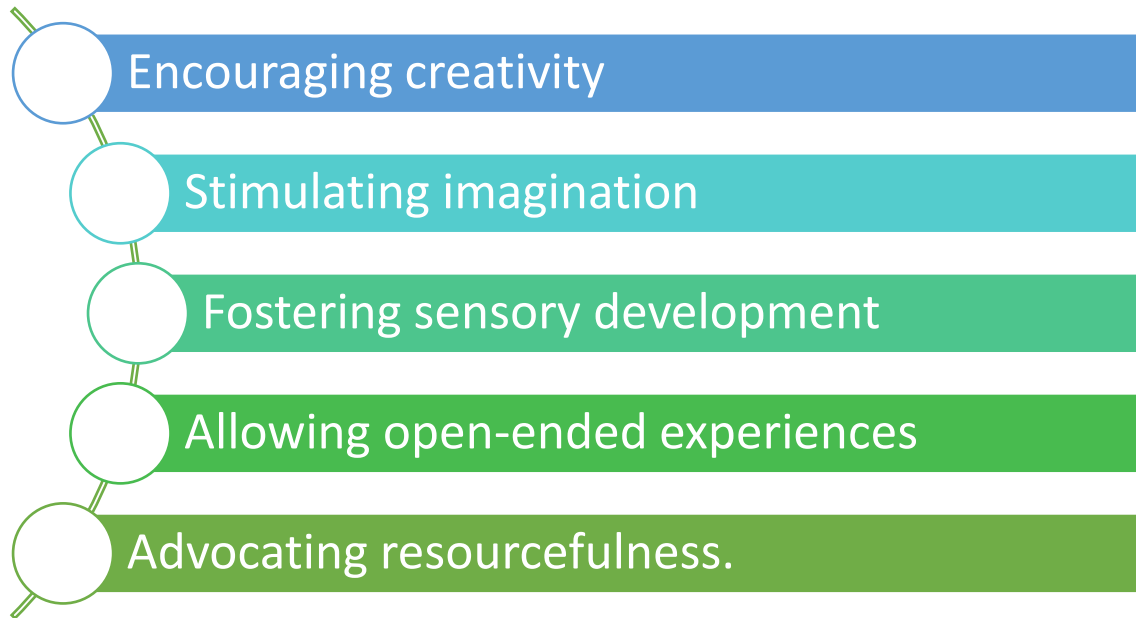
Learn about environmental sustainability.

Develop an understanding of environmental issues.

Cultivate a positive moral view of the environment.

2.1.1 Promote the Use of Natural Materials in Learning Environments

The use of natural materials is integral to a child's development. Natural materials are the products of the natural environment. Examples of natural materials are rocks, leaves, sticks and shells. You can use these materials in a multitude of ways. They have a variety of benefits for children. These benefits include the following:



Promoting the use of natural materials is your responsibility as an educator. By using natural materials in their routines, you expose them to important benefits. These benefits are vital to their growth and development. This section will discuss some techniques for promoting the use of natural materials.

Collaborate With Children

Be responsive to children's interests and abilities. You need to value the different strengths and skills that each child possesses. This allows you to secure their motivation and engagement. When you collaborate with children, it strengthens your relationship with them. It enables you to share decisions, learn together, and trust each other.

Involve Families

Involving families is a great way to encourage the use of natural materials. Families become aware of the resources that are being used. They can also bring in their own materials from their homes. Encouraging adults to get involved can inspire children to participate actively.

Organise Resources

Natural objects tend to be more durable and sustainable. However, some may also need regular replacing. It is important to keep your natural materials fresh to stimulate children's senses. When your materials are unchanging, it may result in children losing interest. Then, they may get distracted by other activities.

It is also crucial to keep your materials organised. Leaving rocks and leaves lying around can be a hazard for children. They may end up being a mess rather than an educational tool. You can use baskets and jars to display your natural materials in a way that is neat and engaging.

Here are some ways for you to use natural materials in learning environments:

Initiate play exercises.

- For example, counting with twigs

Create a space for collected materials.

- For example, shelves with jars and baskets

Give homework that includes the use of natural materials.

- For example, finding different shapes of leaves

Incorporate natural materials in lesson.

- For example, sorting rocks by size or weight

2.1.2 Promote the Use of Recycled Materials in Learning Environments

Promoting the use of recycled materials is important in the development of children. Using recycled materials is an effective way to introduce environmental awareness. It can also help children understand conservation and how they can contribute. Recycled materials refer to old or used things that you can use for a different purpose. These may be from your activities, such as:

Paper bag
puppets

Plastic
bottle pots

Curtain
forts

Paper
maché
animals

Recycled materials are open-ended toys and have endless possibilities and varieties of benefits. These benefits include the following:

Understanding sustainability

- The need to recycle to help the environment

Developing a sense of responsibility

Encouraging a sense of belonging

Nurturing empathy

This section will discuss techniques to promote the use of recycled materials.

Incorporate in Daily Routines

You can promote the use of recycled materials by encouraging children to recycle. You can incorporate this into their daily routines. This helps them develop a positive habit of conserving materials and recycling. For example, you can have the children recycle old drawings to create new toys, such as paper boats. You can also prepare a recycle basket for children to put used items in. This can encourage creativity to recycle the materials available.

Collaborate with Children

Collaboration is an effective way to engage children in learning activities. You can allow children to come up with ways to recycle. You can ask them what things they may want to recycle. You can come up with activities that enable them to freely explore their creativity as well.





Multimedia

The video below shows examples of craft activities that use recycled materials:

10 Things You Can Make from Recycled Materials



2.1.3 Service Policies and Procedures and the Needs of Particular Experiences

Service guidelines ensure that education services meet the standards of quality. It is best to comply with the guidelines about the use of natural and recycled materials. The national quality standard has guidelines on the following:

How to ensure children's health and safety

How to best facilitate educational program practice

How to use physical environments

Plan Effectively

Every child is different and has a unique personality. You must assess the best materials to use for different activities. Make sure that they meet safety standards and follow health and safety policies. Your resources need to adapt to the ages, interests, and capabilities of all the children. They need to be accessible so that children can make their own decisions. You can also incorporate digital technologies to provide access to global resources. This encourages different ways of thinking and viewing the world.

Remember to access your organisational policies and procedures. This helps you know the best way to incorporate natural materials into daily routines.

You should also consider the needs of particular experiences. This means you should take into account people's experiences. This applies when you use natural and recycled materials in daily routines. To do this, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the lesson I want to teach in need of natural materials?
- Is the lesson I want to teach in need of recycled materials?
- Will these materials help me explain my lessons better?
- Are these materials efficient for use?
- Are these materials practical?
- Will the children appreciate and understand these materials?
- Are these safe and necessary?
- Are these materials accessible to all children involved?
- Are these materials suited for the children's stage of development?
- Do these materials adhere to organisational policies and procedures?
- Do these materials comply with quality standards and regulations?

These questions help identify if your use of natural and recycled materials meet the needs of particular experiences.





Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Promote the use of natural and recycled materials in your learning environment. This means using things that are sustainable. Doing so encourages creativity and respect for the environment.
2. Be familiar with the policies and procedures involved in planning learning activities. This includes any policies about using natural and recycled materials.
3. When planning activities, consider the personal experiences of each child.

2.2 Provide Opportunities to Explore the Natural and Constructed Environments in the Community

As an educator, you should provide children with opportunities to explore. You should engage them in activities that will allow them to connect with nature. These activities will help them become involved learners.

Providing children chances to explore develops skills needed for their future. Letting them interact with their local community creates a sense of respect. It also creates opportunities for children to cooperate and socialise with each other. It can help them develop a sense of responsibility as they feel part of a group. Experiences like these help build lifelong skills. It allows children to form connections that support caring for their environment. This section will discuss how to identify opportunities that allow children to explore.



Governing Laws and Regulations

There are guidelines in place for how you should execute your activities. These ensure that education providers prioritise the following:

The quality
of education

The safety of
the children

Stages of Development

Children under your care may be at different stages of development. This depends on their age group or the period group they belong to. You must ensure that your lessons and activities are inclusive to all. You need to make sure that they are realistic and achievable by all children involved.

Organisational Policies and Procedures

Your organisation will likely have policies and procedures set up regarding the following:

Quality of education

Appropriate treatment of children

- How to interact with children
- Who can interact with children

The last one is important to remember when you plan outdoor activities. These activities will expose children to interactions with different people. Be sure to consult your supervisor or employee guidebook to know all restrictions.

Environmental Conditions

Make sure your learning spaces are set in a way that would promote the following:

Interactions

Meaningful
play

Leisure

This includes assessing the natural and constructed environments where you take the children. Be sure to consider the following:

- Is the neighbourhood or place you have chosen safe for children?
 - No heavy traffic, no known provocative adult establishments, not near busy highways
- Is the environment practical? (i.e. the lesson planned is worth the time and travel)
- Do the chosen environments meet the standards required for physical environments?
- Is the activity planned compliant with laws and regulations?
- Do the environments meet the organisational requirements?

Below are examples of activities in natural and constructed environments:

Take neighbourhood walks to explore your community.

Explore a natural environment, like a forest or pond.

Visit zoo enclosures or animal sanctuaries.

Visit learning facilities like children's museums.

Have outdoor playground activities.

Plan Ahead

Remember to take safety precautions and consider logistics. Ask yourself whether you can collaborate with other adults in your community. Take into consideration the health risks of all your activities. Plan for varying weather conditions. Take into account health requirements for each child. You may check out Sparkling Stars Early Years Learning Centre to get an idea of safety policies and healthcare procedures.



Sparkling Stars Early Years Learning Centre

Access and review Sparkling Stars' policies and procedures through the link below.

[Safety Standards in Child Care](#)

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Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. When providing opportunities for children to explore nature, consider the following:
 - Laws and regulations
 - Organisational policies and procedures
 - Stages of development
 - Environmental conditions
2. Consider the ages of your children, their health needs and possible weather conditions. These are things to think about when planning outdoor activities.



Learning Activity for Chapter 2

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

III. Enhance Children's Engagement With the Natural Environment



In the previous chapters, you learned:

- How to identify opportunities for children to connect with nature
- How to provide opportunities for children to connect with nature

This chapter will explain how you can support children's connection with nature. You do this by enhancing their engagement with the natural environment. When children think of themselves as part of nature, they develop a sense of connection to it. The stronger this connection is, the more likely they are to protect it. You are responsible for prioritising the connection between children and nature.

In this chapter, you will learn how to:

- Identify opportunities for children to reduce impact on the natural environment.
- Support children to demonstrate respect for the natural environment.
- Provide opportunities to experience the growth and care of living things.

3.1 Identify Opportunities for Children to Reduce Impact on the Natural Environment



You must find opportunities for children to reduce their environmental impact. This section will discuss some strategies you could try.

Research on Environmental Issues

Educate yourself on the impact of activities on the natural environment. This helps you better understand the importance of sustaining it. It is imperative to always research the topic you want to discuss. It allows you to practice intentional teaching. Examine information to find suitable activities for children in your care. Take into consideration the outcomes that you want to see. You can do the following actions:

- Read articles about the impact of activities on nature.
- Watch the news for information on current environmental issues.
- Watch YouTube videos about sustainability.

Assess the Impact of Children on the Natural Environment

Observe the habits and behaviours of the children in your care. You may ask yourself the following questions:

- What actions or behaviours have a negative impact?
- What actions or behaviours have a positive impact?
- How can the negative impacts be eliminated or prevented?
- How can the positive impact be retained?

Figure out what projects are appropriate and accessible to you and the children. Take into consideration the stages of development of the children involved. Ensure that you are inclusive in your decision making and planning. Have logistical considerations such as:



Make Observations and Collect Data

Take note of the behaviours you notice. Section 1.2.4 discussed creating a behaviour management plan for each child. You may do the same in this chapter. Create a plan to give children opportunities to lessen their environmental impact. Here are some ways for you to do that:

Take note of behavioural patterns and habits.

Plan interventions.

Set goals and objectives for expected outcomes.

Incorporate Sustainability in Daily Routines and Practices

Sustainability means that your activities are not harmful to the environment. The natural environment is maintained and remains the way it is. Sustainable practices empower children to make decisions that contribute to a sustainable ecosystem. You can collaborate with the children to incorporate sustainability in your activities. You can base these on your observation and collected data. These activities can include the following:

Having a
recycling bin

Conserving
water

Allocating
roles and
responsibilities

For example, an educator in Sparkling Stars Learning Centre plans to have a local investigation activity. They would assign simple tasks for children to do. Tasks include finding out if there are recycling bins in their neighbourhood. They would have walks around the community. They would explore what they can do to help sustain the environment. Children would then make suggestions about what they see. Together, they would collaborate in making changes.

Organise Routines and Spaces

Create an environment where children can contribute to sustainability. Make sure your learning areas give children access to sustainable materials. Having meaningful play can support them to be responsible. When children participate and collaborate in everyday routines, they learn to be interdependent.



Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. You should find ways for children to reduce their environmental impact. To do this, you must do research about how children's activities can impact nature.
2. Other ways you can help reduce children's impact on the environment include:
 - Assessing their environmental impact
 - Making observations and collecting data
 - Incorporating sustainability in daily routines
 - Organising routines and spaces.

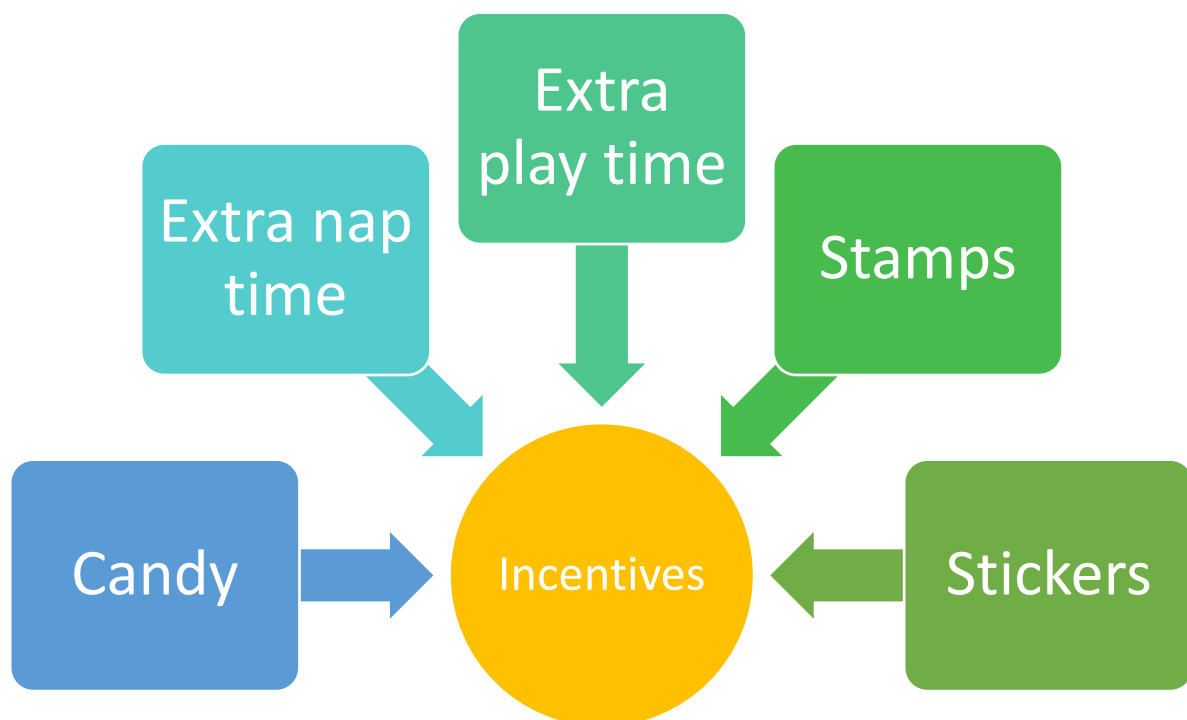
3.2 Support Children to Demonstrate Respect for the Natural Environment

Children are instinctively connected to nature. You should support them to further connect with nature. Help them develop a sense of respect for the natural environment. When children show respect for the environment, you must support them. Let them know that you accept and expect that behaviour from them.

You can help children show their respect for the environment. Give them opportunities that encourage them to show respect and appreciation. This subchapter will discuss ways you can help children show respect for the environment.

Encourage Respectful Behaviour Through Incentives

Incentives are rewards given to children for good behaviour. When you reward positive behaviour, children are more likely to repeat it. They understand that the reward system is for behaviours they should repeat. By giving rewards, children can learn what behaviours are right and wrong. Incentives may be in the form of the following:



Here are some instances where you can give them incentives:

- **During practical routines**

Practical routines are the routine activities that you have daily. You may observe learned behaviour or consult your behaviour management plan. You can make a list of the respectful behavioural goals you want them to achieve. Make sure to collaborate with your colleagues and let them know what your plans are. They should know which behaviours you want to reinforce in the children. This allows them to also incentivise these respectful behaviours.

- **During play and learning experiences**

You can plan play and learning experiences to encourage respect for the environment. You may plan an activity that would allow children to show how much they respect the environment. You may then provide awards and prizes for all positive ideas and opinions.

Be a Role Model

Children tend to mimic adult behaviour and replicate what they see. Use this to model the behaviours you want to expose children to. When children see that adults are doing similar acts of respect, it will encourage them to do the same.

Start Interactions

It is important during daily routines to start interactions with each child. This builds rapport and develops mutual relationships. Remember the verbal and non-verbal forms of communication discussed in Section 1.1.2. Young children may not always act respectfully towards nature. They may not have a full grasp of what is respectful and what is not. As an educator, start interactions that teach children what respectful behaviour is. Give them examples of how they can show respect in their daily lives. With consistent interactions and reminders, you can build their trust. Then, you can help them develop positive habits.



Encourage Collaboration

You can encourage collaboration by having respectful relationships with children. Build a foundation of trust that encourages them to work with you. Here are some steps you can follow in encouraging collaboration with them:

1. Ask the children how they think they can show respect for the natural environment.
2. Listen and be open to comments and suggestions.
3. Reflect on negative behaviours that you need to correct to achieve desirable outcomes.

Other ways you can encourage them to collaborate with you include the following:

Recognising ideas and contributions

- Paraphrase ideas
- Explain how they may be used
- Thank the child for their idea

Acknowledging positive behaviours

- Praise respectful behaviours
- Let children know when they did something good

Rewarding successful transitions.

- Tell children when they show improvement
- Let children know that the change is appreciated
- Give reward or praise



Other Ways of Demonstrating Respect

Here are other ways to support children to show respect for the natural environment:

- Limit single-use containers and disposable products. You can discuss the effects of disposable materials on the environment. Collaborate with children to try using less of these.
- Incorporate learning materials that come from the natural environment. You can have children collect objects such as leaves and twigs outdoors. Allow them to use those for arts and crafts rather than plastic alternatives.
- Include sustainable resources and practices in your activities. For example, you can discuss water conservation. The children can practise how to use less water.
- Collaborate with other members of your community, such as the children's parents. Members of the community can allow the children to show what they have learned.



Further Reading

The New South Wales Government website discusses sustainable action plans. Read about them by accessing the link below:

[Sustainability action process](#)



Multimedia

This video shows the impact of teaching children about the environment:

[How Environmental Education Inspires Climate Action](#)





Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Children should have opportunities to show their respect for the natural environment.
2. You can support children show respect for the natural environment by doing the following:
 - Using incentives to encourage respectful behaviour
 - Encouraging collaboration
 - Being a role model
 - Initiating interactions to help develop positive habits

3.3 Provide Opportunities to Experience the Growth and Care of Living Things

It is crucial for children to experience the growth and care of living things. Exposure to the natural environment will introduce them to these things. Early childhood is a significant window of opportunity for educators. This is a great time to mould the way children view the world. Their experiences during this time are the foundation of their development. This is when they learn to empathise with and express concern for others.

In finding ways for children to experience the growth and care of living things, you must do the following:

Consider the laws and regulations in your state or territory.

Remember your organisational policies and procedures.

- Check what activities are not allowed and why

Assess the environmental conditions of the learning space.

Consider the stage of development of your children.

Here are ways you can let children experience the growth and care of living things:

- **Provide children with access to a range of natural materials in their environment.**
 - Incorporate open-ended materials to allow children to express themselves in various ways.
- **Enable children to care for and learn from the land.**
 - Assess your environment to figure out the best projects and activities.
- **Discuss the ways the life and health of living things are interconnected.**
 - Understanding how living things need each other helps children develop empathy. It fosters a sense of community.
- **Organise environments and spaces in ways that promote group interactions and meaningful play.**
 - Social interactions with their peers help children develop strong social and emotional connections.



Here are some ways to promote social interactions and meaningful play:

- **Grow something.**

You can start a kitchen garden. This is a garden you can create with children where you can harvest fruits and vegetables. You can use these for your school meals or for snacks. This is a great opportunity for children to experience the growth of living things and care for them.

- **Explore pond life.**

If you are near bodies of water such as swamps, lakes, or ponds, you can plan excursions in them. This is a way for children to observe plant and animal life. They can get an up-close view and explore pond life.

- **Have a class pet or have pet visits in your class.**

You can introduce children to pets. Make sure to follow safety regulations and childcare policies. Let the children interact with them and develop a sense of appreciation and care.

- **Visit animal sanctuaries or zoos.**

Children will have an up-close view of the animals in their habitats. They can learn about how animals grow. They can see how caretakers care for the animals.



Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Children should have the chance to witness the growth and care of living things. It allows them to develop empathy and a sense of community.
2. Provide children with opportunities to care for the natural environment. Let them experience growing plants or taking care of animals. Give them chances to explore the natural world.



Learning Activity for Chapter 3

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

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