

Childcare

and Children's Health

AN INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS



Environmental Sustainability

'Reduce, reuse, recycle, repair and rethink'. As carers who are modelling sustainable practices for children, maybe we can add yet another 'R' – **refuse**.

Reduce:

- Water use
- Energy use
- Waste of resources, including food

Reuse: Reuse materials and products when ever possible. Sometimes an object can be reused for a different purpose – for example, newspaper can be used as garden mulch. Packaging materials can be reused in play.

Recycle: Recycle glass, plastics and paper products through local recycling services. Recycling can also involve passing on things you no longer need or use.

Repair: Repair rather than throwing things away. Children can be involved in some basic repair activities and gain valuable practical and problem-solving skills while learning that things do not automatically become rubbish if they break or are damaged.

Rethink: Practices that use excessive energy or are wasteful in terms of resources need rethinking. Is there a more environmentally friendly way of doing things? Do we really need to do this? What value does it contribute?

Refuse: Refuse unnecessary packaging and single use products when reusable products are available. We can also consider refusing to become part of the seemingly endless cycle of purchasing new things and resist pressures from commercial advertising.

Here are a few easy steps to begin practicing and modelling environmental sustainability:

- Replace ordinary light globes with long-life, energy efficient lighting
- Use biodegradable 'green' cleaners, instead of toxic chemicals
- Drink tap water rather than buying water in single-use bottles that may have been transported long distances
- Toilet paper from recycled unbleached paper saves trees and reduces the use of harmful chemicals
- Minimise the use of plastics, including plastic bags and wraps
- Reduce food waste by serving smaller portions and offering 'seconds' only if the initial serve has been eaten
- Establish a compost system for food scraps (not animal products) and garden materials
- Minimize the use of clothes dryers
- Dress appropriately for the weather, for example wearing warm clothing on cold days, rather than relying automatically on heating or cooling

Children are creative thinkers who may enjoy being actively involved in these, as well as contributing their own creative ideas about the natural world and environmental sustainability.

This Parent Fact Sheet is available in different community languages and can be downloaded from the Early Childhood Connections website www.econnections.com.au

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