

# waste preschool case study



## Ainslie Baker Gardens Preschool

### Profile

Ainslie Baker Gardens Preschool was opened in 1950 by the ACT Department of Education and Training. Around 40 families attend the preschool each year. It offers both long and short learning sessions.



### Initiatives

#### Vision

We endeavour to create an environmentally sustainable learning environment. Our play environments develop relationships beyond our

immediate preschool community, and encourage the participation of young children, their families and communities across the ACT to take action to implement sustainable practices.

#### Planning

In 2007, children, families, and staff at Baker Gardens Preschool discussed becoming a sustainable early childhood environment. We were determined for it to be a whole-of-school approach, so the school community was actively involved from the start. We applied for grants and sought the advice of experts.

Each child at Baker Gardens is an **'Eco Warrior'** and is expected to contribute to making the preschool an environmentally sustainable environment.

#### Implementation

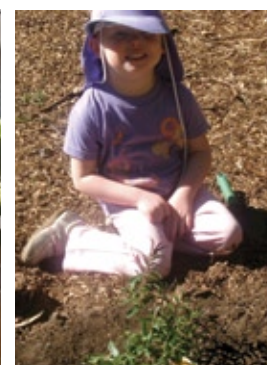
Through our emergent curriculum and support from our Parent Association we implemented the following:

- Installed recycling stations, for organic waste to feed the chooks
- Purchased recycled paper, toilet paper and chemical free cleaning agents
- Reused recyclables and other waste materials to create ART and technological artefacts
- Advocated daily, no waste lunches and smart purchasing
- Stocked the parents library with pre-loved books

- Refilled printer cartridges
- Produced an interactive Baker Gardens Newsletter to save paper
- Visited the **Materials Recovery Facility (MRF)** with Duntroon Preschool to see how our waste is recycled
- Promoted Waste Wise initiatives at community events, including fundraising at Ainslie Shops
- Collected recyclables and organic waste on excursions and recycled them back at Baker Gardens
- Increased the use of natural light to conserve energy
- Ensured no electrical items were left on 'standby'
- Installed automatic turn off taps and dual flush toilets

We were keen for students to understand the importance of protecting biodiversity and to be actively involved in growing plants. We undertook the following:

- Regenerated our play environments with natural flora
- Propagated and sold organic herbs



- Planted, maintained and ate our organic vegetables
- Constructed scarecrows to protect our veggie patches
- Investigated our biodiversity through Mt Ainslie walks, local parklands and visits from local rangers
- Purchased literature to support environmental initiatives, including conservation and education



As we progressed to being more environmentally sustainable, we also wanted to promote healthier lifestyles. To achieve this we:

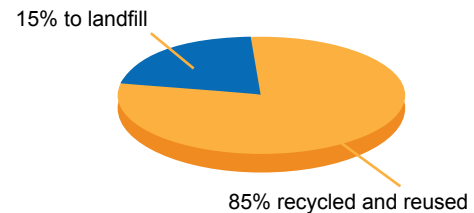
- Promoted health initiatives including fruit and water breaks
- Educated on healthy food choices through immersion in cooking experiences and lunch time conversations
- Empowered individuals through Yoga, brain basics and self awareness experiences

## Results and Benefits



- We had many donations from community members who heard about our sustainable practices including, second hand art paper and quality pre-loved books
- Waste per month was greater than four wheelie bins and a trash pack full at the beginning of 2007. We now have two yellow recycling bins that are emptied every fortnight and no trash pack. We only fill half a green landfill bin per week.
- Establishing recycling stations has reduced our landfill waste to 15% compared to 100% previously
- 95% of lunch box waste is recyclable or reusable
- Our interactive newsletter has saved over four reams of paper in one year
- Double-sided printing has reduced paper wastage
- Our school won a *Schools as Communities* grant for creating sustainable learning environments
- We gained a community water grant to install a rain water tank, with pumps to collect rain water and use it to flush our toilets
- We won the Education Category of the ACT NOWaste Awards

Waste disposal after the new system



## Facts, Quotes, Hints

Get the children engaged in each sustainable initiative. They become the advocates and will remind you to feed the worms and put out the recycling bins.

The changes flow into the community. The community is rethinking waste management.

**“If you are stepping on a can and it goes squash, pick it up and put it in the recycling bin”** - Katherine

**“Don’t put rubbish on the ground, put it in the bin or the recycling bin.”**- William

**“Do not put plastic bags in the recycling bin, it breaks the machine”** - Kyle and Ben

**“Recycling trucks dump recyclables at the MRF and lasers sort it out”** - Liana

## Challenges

Educating our community on becoming plastic bag free.

Being patient! changes take time, but the results are worth the wait.



Australian Sustainable Schools Initiative  
A Partnership of the Australian Government, the States & Territories

For more information go to:  
[www.sustainableschools.act.gov.au](http://www.sustainableschools.act.gov.au)

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