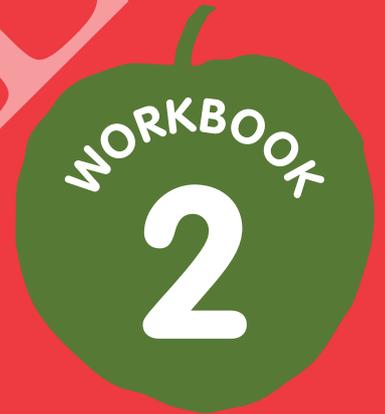


KITCHEN GARDEN PROGRAM for EARLY CHILDHOOD



Kitchen
garden
team



Volunteers in your kitchen garden

Volunteers are members of your community who can support your kitchen garden program. They might be parents, grandparents or members from local community groups. Their role is to support your kitchen and/or garden experiences. They might work with groups of children, maintain the kitchen or garden spaces, or develop community resources such as adding kitchen garden information to newsletters.

Brainstorm the names of people from your community who might be willing to volunteer in the kitchen or garden.



Download the [Poster/handout to attract volunteers](#) from the Shared Table.

Update your policies

Embarking on the pleasurable food education approach at your service is a great opportunity to review and update existing policies.

Think about how to create positive behaviour change on issues such as food, health, wellbeing and sustainability.

Consider whether your policies cover these aspects:

- dietary, cultural and religious requirements
- special considerations for children with allergies
- regular menu assessment for food prepared at your service
- food and beverages brought from home
- definitions of relevant words and phrases, such as 'healthy eating,' 'nutrition' and 'pleasurable food education'
- how staff promote a positive food culture
- play and the natural environment
- waste management and the conservation of resources
- community involvement.

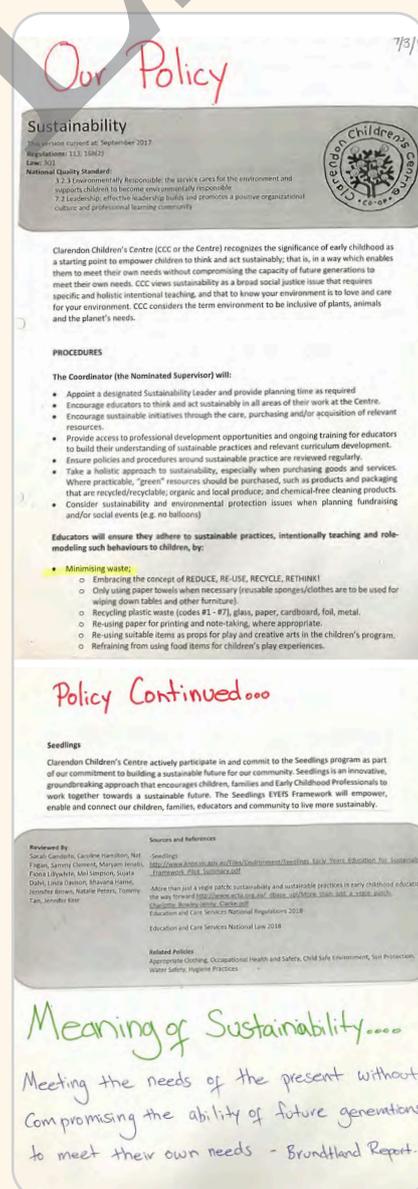
Is there potential to add to these policies or enhance existing policies?

You could also consider creating a food and beverage policy for the staff at your service, to encourage role modelling positive food habits. This can be a good way to strengthen your practice in meeting the outcomes of the [National Quality Standard](https://www.nqs.gov.au/) (bit.ly/ACECQANationalqualitystandard).

Where possible, involve the community in the review of your policies by consulting with children, families, staff and management, and asking for their feedback. Email your policies to families, host a community meeting or post a copy in a visible place, like a foyer, where people can add comments.

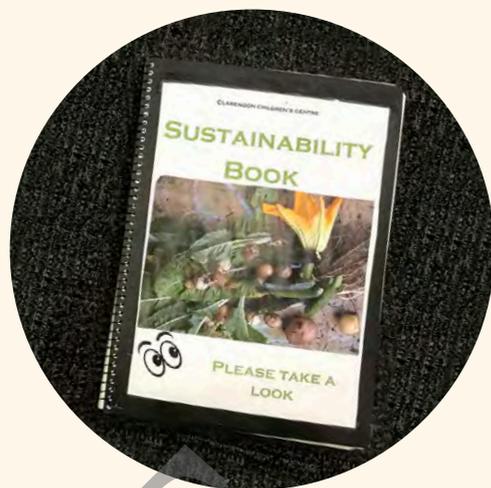
Consulting in this way will help to create inclusive policies.

Make sure that your policy updates are approved by management at your service, and are reviewed often. Reviewing policies may also inform content for your [Quality Improvement Plan](https://www.nqs.gov.au/) (bit.ly/ACECQAqualityimprovement).



Set your goals – start small, dream big

In the early stages of planning your kitchen garden program, it's worth taking some time as a team to consider what you want to achieve, and why. This could include thinking about the vision for your kitchen garden program as a team.



Children and Sustainability

"Nurturing children's Curiosity and connections with the natural world, and their respect for all people and living things, provides the foundation for what they learn about Sustainability. And rather than focusing on problems or concerns for Sustainability, with young children our emphasis is on involving them in things we can all do to make a difference, and responding with openness when they ask questions."

Sneddon, S, & Bell, A. (2016) Sustainability in Action: In Early childhood settings.

Our role as parents and Educators:

- role model appropriate behaviours
- Talk about what, why, how, when, as we go
- Allow for opportunities for children to explore, discover and build strong connections with their environment.
- Be resourceful in play, At home or work
- Repurpose, Re-use, Recycle
- Enjoy the simple things in life eg Birds, leaves, Rustling bushes, point these out to children.
- Make it fun and enjoyable!

What We are Already Doing

- Worm Farm - Feed scraps Feed worms
- Composting
- Water tanks - used on gardens + water play
- Turning of light switches when not needed
- Wearing weather appropriate clothing
- Collecting Worm wee - putting on our garden + setting to help fund sustainable needs
- Planting seasonal produce - which is used in our meals - children help collect, plant, water plants (back to plate)
- Solar panels - Electricity bills and usage has decrease to almost nothing
- Turning off all electrical Appliances at the end of the day, or when not in use.
- Recycling
- No waste Kitchen days - Julie cooks something ingredients left in fridge

Start by setting some short-term goals for establishing your kitchen and garden spaces, and beginning gardening and cooking experiences with the children, and some longer-term goals based on the vision for your program in the future.

What this might look like is a set of smaller goals that are simple, achievable and realistic, and larger goals that are about continuity and embedding pleasurable food education, strengthening family and community partnerships, and building cooking and gardening skills and knowledge.

When setting goals, take the following into consideration.

- How you want your garden, kitchen and dining spaces to look and feel.
- What you and the children want to grow and cook together.
- How often you want children to garden and cook, who will deliver these gardening and cooking experiences, and how and when they will deliver them.
- Other learnings you want the children to experience through your kitchen garden program, and the skills you are aiming for them to develop.
- How to involve families and the local community in your kitchen garden program.
- The long-term sustainability and continuity of the program, including staff professional development.

Creating an action plan (see pages 17–18) will also help you break down your goals into manageable steps.



INPUT FROM CHILDREN

Include the children in setting goals for your kitchen garden program. Incorporating the children's voices and ideas creates an inclusive program. Linking the program to the children's interests is also a great way for you to identify opportunities for teaching and learning.