

LGSWA Case Study – Community Gardens for Children



Ascolta ELC Coogee

When Ascolta Coogee opened they recognised the importance of ensuring the children within the service felt connected to their local community. The opportunity to be involved with the local Coogee Community Garden WA was one way in which they established they could facilitate this. Having a family that was currently involved in the Coogee Community Garden provided them with guidance on how they could establish this connection successfully.



Ascolta Coogee started by donating five garden beds to the Community Garden, allowing one to be set aside for them to be responsible for. The children visit the garden at least once a week, whilst there they are supported to engage in a variety of experiences. The focus is to help the children learn about seasonal planting and changes as well as a wide range of topics. Below is a sample of the learning that has been happening:

- Plant seasonal vegetables and maintain these by weeding and watering.
- Treasure hunts of objects hidden – supporting memory recall
- Bird watching with binoculars, checking against brochure information for local species.
- Nature drawing with pencils and textas, then taking them back to service to continue the learning by painting them.
- Nature collection of found objects such as leaves, small sticks, nuts etc.
- Nature walks through a small wild natural garden.
- Finding bugs and worms, investing them with magnified glasses
- Composting tasks such as turning the heap, adding weeds and dry material.



Links



EYLE:

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world.

Outcome 3: Children have strong sense of wellbeing.

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners.

NQs

1.1 The Educational program enhances child's learning and development.

2.1 Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.

3.2.3 The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

6 Collaborative partnerships with families and communities.

EFP:

Transport and Air
Biodiversity
Purchasing and waste

SHP:

Community partnerships
Childrens wellbeing
Economics and built environments

SDG:

Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities

Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production

The children enjoy planting seeds and seedlings depending on the season. Some of the varieties planted include Carrots, Broccoli, Tomato, Peas, Chilli, Strawberries and Onions.

Lots of photos are taken so that the children can see the changes in the plants as they emerge and grow. The children enjoy learning how to care for the environment by nurturing the garden. The service also has a small bush tucker garden, and they have also successfully grown baby carrots and green beans within their learning environment. A worm farm helps manage some of the kitchen waste, the children assist with feeding and caring for the worms daily.

Not only have the children learnt about the garden, and sustainability but also the importance of safety, and how they can keep themselves safe when out and about. The garden is near a nature site, which allows for collaborative learning about being aware of snakes, and the safety that goes hand in hand with this. It's important for the children to know what to do if they see a snake.

Another important skill is learning road safety, this is practiced when walking to and from the garden. The children have the opportunity to socialize with the Secretary of the Coogee Community Garden, and are learning how to listen, follow instructions and relate to another role model who is not a parent or carer.

There are other members of the Coogee Community Garden who come at different times which the children are learning how to relate to as they too share their skills.

Other learning that is often highlighted is colour recognition, rich conversations which expand vocabulary and literacy learning, being responsible, spatial

awareness when setting up the garden and planting, distance and maps from the centre and the size of different objects they interact with, which is all amazing mathematical and scientific learning in action.

Future plans include making use of the new pizza oven the Coogee Community Garden has installed. The children look forward to making their own pizza creations and enjoying them in a place that means so much to them.

Ascolta Coogee looks forward to extending the current Community Garden program so that all the children have the same opportunity that the older children have had.

The Centre has other initiatives in place as they continue to build their knowledge of sustainability. Including a recycling station where parents can bring in waste items for arts and crafts. The continued support from LGSWA helps with ideas and strategies to achieve their sustainability goals, the biodiversity lessons are beneficial for both children and educators.

