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*Our Vision
“an active,
environmentally
aware
community that
ensures a
sustainable
future for our
shared world.”*



ECA NSW Branch proudly
auspice NSW ECEEN

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The SPROuts Practice and Encouragement Awards



Jerry Coleby-Williams presents the SPROuts Practice Award to the The Point Preschool community.

On Wednesday, 28 February, amid thunder and lightning, Director, Catherine Lee, staff, children and families of The Point Preschool of Oyster Bay opened their doors to celebrate winning the SPROuts Practice Award for 2006. This, the second year of SPROuts Awards, ECEEN teamed with the Total Environment Centre (TEC) to celebrate the positive changes taking place in the lives of young children.

Jerry Coleby-Williams, Gardening Australia presenter and sustainability champion presented the Awards. Jerry shared stories of his childhood when his love of nature began and emphasised the importance of avoiding chemical use to ensure our well-being.

The Point's entry "Our Place" is a holistic approach to environmental education. The children proudly share their discoveries and knowledge on worm farming, water saving, creating a frog pond, visiting birds, planting a bush tucker garden and the delights of their fairy garden.

Catherine thanked all those who helped The Point develop the sustainable projects.

They included parents, local indigenous leaders such as David Wright, SDN SCAN and John Lennis of the Gangara Land Council who assisted with their bush tucker garden; local State Member, Barry Collier; Loftus TAFE Child Studies teachers and Sutherland Council's waste and environment officers. Catherine Lee said it was a successful collaborative, community approach.



Catherine Lee presents Barry Collier MP with a bio pot plant made by the children.

There are two SPROuts Encouragement Awards this year reflecting the high standard of entries. They were awarded to "A Natural Approach" by Kindiclub Preschool at Thornton, entered by Teacher, Catherine Owen who won a Bokashi Bucket kindly donated by Bokashi Composting Australia. (www.bokashiaustralia.com.au) The other award donated by The Book Garden (www.thebookgarden.com.au) went to "Recycling Food Scraps" entered by Kiri Combi of Eco Preschool Pty Ltd Seaforth.

NSW ECEEN aims to support and acknowledge those Early Childhood Services in NSW who are demonstrating outstanding commitment to promoting environmental best practice and sustainability through the **Sustainable Projects Recognising Outstanding Practice Awards**.

SPROuts Practice Award Projects: What makes a successful project?

“Our Place—connecting with the environment.”

The Point, is a community based pre school with a big emphasis on **community**. It is a “Place” where children, families and staff work together and with others to achieve great things for our world. Catherine Lee says “The children’s dedication and care of the environment has been our inspiration and strengthened our commitment. This commitment has also strengthened the children’s and families’ understanding of the importance of nurturing and caring for each other. We have seen first hand how environmental education has enhanced the preschool community’s pride and empowered the children with a sense of responsibility to environmental sustainability and conservation.”

Some of their outstanding collaborative projects include;

- * **Sustainable fundraising** which involved making bio pots from newspaper, planting pots with vegetables, bottling worm juice which the children sold at their fun day. The money raised was used to continue to sponsor their lace monitor, the Oyster Bay Dharawal totem at Taraonga Zoo.
- * a **Low Waste Lunch Challenge** which reduced their waste from 750grams to 25grams, supported by Sutherland Council .
- * Establishing a **local bush tucker/ bird attract-ing garden** with the Gangara Land Council.
- * **Biodiversity projects** in which children are involved in monitoring local fauna visiting their playground recording types and numbers. They excitedly search for “possum poo” and are thrilled that their playground is shared with the possums.

An inspiring quote from the Point, “I hear butterfly wings flying” said Rose. The children stopped and listened in the hope of hearing them too.



The fairy garden at The Point Preschool, Oyster Bay.

As Jerry Coleby-Williams said “The Point Pre School can only be described as a vital and nourishing environment for kids to learn.”

Encouragement prize winner Kindiclub’s entry “A Natural Approach”, demonstrated commitment to promoting young children and families’ awareness of the environment in a general and natural way.



From this...

To this



Kindiclub is a new service that has developed a rich, natural environment from a bare paddock, involving children, staff and families along the way. Kindiclub has created an environment that includes an increasing variety of flora and fauna. The children’s wonder and curiosity is stimulated through play experiences using natural materials.

At Kindiclub they recognise the importance of widening young children’s understanding of how their environment and people interrelate.

Some of their **projects** include;

Community veggie patch which started when one of the children brought strawberry plants from home. Families are encouraged to participate in the centre’s veggie garden.



The preschoolers help Kindiclub cook Les collect veggies & salad items for lunch & strawberries for our afternoon tea

SPROuts Practice Award Projects: What makes a successful project?

- * Frogs and other creatures sharing their environment
- * The children’s interactions with nature are expressed in their art work
- * The children and families have been introduced to the concept of the 3Rs—reduce, reuse, recycle. It involves sorting of food scraps for the worms, reuse and recycling of packaging.
- * Paperless reporting for families such as daily journals, children’s portfolios & all project work are done on lap-tops using Microsoft Power Point program.

Kindiclub’s vision is to respect and understand our environment. It believes that you can educate young children to become environmentally responsible people. Educators at Kindiclub hope that the children will stimulate and promote the same environmentally responsibility in their families.

The Kindiclub community hope to develop life-long skills that will encourage future generations to embrace the natural world.

Eco Preschool’s Project “Recycling Food Scraps”.

This program aims to integrate environmental education to the whole of preschool life, creating learning opportunities by working toward a healthy, peaceful sustainable environment.

The actions undertaken for this project included:-

Identifying areas of rubbish which involved drawing a plan of the centre, discussion and marking rubbish areas.

Examining waste then sorting waste into categories.

The children discovered food, plastic wrap, cardboard and paper, and plastic containers were in their waste.

The children’s actions and involvement included;

- * labeling containers for each type of waste
- * sorting the waste at their tables after meal times
- * washing their own containers with warm soapy water ready for reuse.

- * Monitors chosen to complete weekly ‘jobs’. This is a great enforcer of positive behavior and children learn the responsibility involved in completing their set tasks
- * The worm monitor feeds the smaller food scraps to the worms
- * The guinea pig and rabbit monitor feed the fruit and vegetables to the guinea pigs & rabbit
- * The chicken monitor feeds the rest to the chickens.



Creating with recycled materials

Children are developing working theories about waste. They understand how and why they sort waste.

Families are involved in exploring new avenues for the centre’s waste minimisation and are encouraged to bring their food scraps to the centre if they can’t recycle at home.

The **results for Eco Preschool** are halving the amount of their rubbish that goes to landfill, provide fresh eggs from the chickens that eat the food waste and fresh worm castings for the garden.

Eco preschool Enviro Program allows the child to plan, design and create according to their own interests. The program centres around zero waste and natural resources while fostering important skills in numeracy, literacy and responsibility.



Three chooks eat the food scraps and make delicious eggs which are used in cooking and art programs.

April shovels compost for the veggie garden.



ECOSWITCH TODAY!

Free energy saving products for childcare premises

Here is some good news for the early childhood community. Low Energy Supplies and Services (LESS) Pty Ltd has launched the Ecoswitch Program and is offering **your childcare premises** an opportunity to **obtain and install free energy saving bulbs and 3 star WELS showerheads** under the NSW Greenhouse Gas Abatement Scheme.

While there is no limit to the number you can install, our 15,000 hour energy saving bulbs use 80% less energy than a standard bulb. Installing just 6 energy savings bulbs saves around \$540 on your energy bills and 5.4 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions over their lifetime. Installing one 3 star WELS showerhead saves around 18,000L of water each year, (about half the average swimming pool) \$100/yr of utility bills and 4.5 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions over the life of the showerhead.

To take up this free offer contact LESS today on 1300 882 412 or ecoswitch@lowenergy.com.au to obtain an **Ecoswitch Install Information Pack**.

Spread the word - If you know other childcare centres who might benefit from this offer tell them to contact LESS.

SAVE MONEY.

SAVE ENERGY AND WATER.

SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT.

LOOKING FOR GREAT RESOURCES TO SUPPORT YOUR SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS go to

<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~eeec/index.html>

EEEC Vic Inc Environmental Education in Early Childhood

Phone (03) 9471 4673

eeec@alphalink.com.au

KEEP 1, 2, 3 NOVEMBER 2007 FREE

ECEEN is working towards holding the next Australasian Early Childhood Environmental Education Conference as part of the NSW Environmental Educators Conference to be held on Cockatoo Island, Sydney Harbour.

Total Environment Centre's **Safer Solutions** Education Program is committed to raising awareness and knowledge of the environmental, health and safety risks of hazardous household chemicals by presenting safer alternatives and encouraging the community to change their behaviour and practices. Safer Solutions aims to assist families of young children as they are the most susceptible to the adverse effects of chemicals.

The objective is to educate and inform the community on how they can reduce and minimise their exposure by identifying risks and what steps can be taken to reduce or eliminate these risks.

Safer Solutions Easy Guide to reducing hazardous chemicals in your home is available at http://www.tec.org.au/dev/safersolutions/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=277&Itemid=141

BECOME A MEMBER of NSW ECEEN

For more information go to

www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/nsw_branch/eceen.html and download a form to-day!!!



Our aim is to bring together interested people and organisations in order to promote the paramount importance of integrating environmental education into all facets of young children's lives in NSW

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