

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Top tips: Sow, grow and recycle: Cultivating sustainability

Sustainability is more than just a buzzword; it's a vital concept that affects every aspect of our lives. As practitioners you are helping to shape the future caretakers of our planet.

Incorporating sustainability into your practice will contribute to a healthier environment and empower children to become thoughtful, responsible, and environmentally conscious individuals.

Here are ten top tips to support you in integrating sustainability into your daily activities:

- Encourage outdoor exploration and nature-based activities, such as nature walks, hands-on experiences with animals and planting seeds (see our seed ball activity) so children can observe, interact with and appreciate the natural world around them
- Reduce, reuse, recycle. Provide opportunities for children to participate in recycling within the nursery, e.g. sorting selected waste materials. Incorporate recycled materials into activities, especially creative projects. Repurpose items, e.g. biscuit tins to store toys or other objects
- Create an environment that reflects sustainability values, e.g. natural materials for furniture and resources and plants to improve air quality. Create a garden or nature area where children can observe plants and wildlife, learn about eco-systems and develop an appreciation of and connection to nature
- Involve parents. Let them know what you are doing in terms of sustainability and caring for the environment. Engage them in discussions and share eco-friendly tips to use at home. Encourage the use of reusable containers if they bring in snacks or drinks etc.
- Use stories or songs to introduce concepts such as conservation and the protection of natural habitats, e.g. *Dear Earth* by Isabel Otter and Clara Anganuzzi
- Lead by example by practising sustainability in your own actions, e.g. turn off lights when not in use, conserve water, and reduce paper usage within your setting. Create a culture of appreciation by recognising eco-friendly actions of others, such as picking up litter, being careful with water use, showing care for animals or plants. Positively reinforcing these actions helps to ensure its



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continuation

- Collaborate with parents, local businesses, and environmental organisations to organise visits related to environmental conservation. Have a look here for some inspiration: <https://www.ecoattractions.com/great-green-days-out>
- Enhance children's creativity and innovation. Provide open-ended materials such as loose parts or natural objects that inspire children to use their imaginations and find innovative solutions to problems. A solution to a loose part conundrum today maybe the mindset we need to find solutions to climate change tomorrow
- Celebrate earth-friendly holidays and give eco-friendly presents (such as handmade gifts), natural materials and activities that promote environmental awareness, e.g. visit a nature reserve, build a worm farm or a bug hotel
- Stay informed about current environmental issues and best practice in sustainability education.

NDNA products to support you with these tips

- Face to face course – [Developing Quality Outdoor Provision](#)
- Publication – [Nature Play - Inspiring Outdoor Approaches](#)

And more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna