West Coast Institute Eco Playgroup

A unique community comprising of children, families, educations and students located in the heart of Joondalup, Perth, Western Australia.

The Eco Playgroup has a unique approach to building relationships and invites parents and their children within the local community to join a playgroup that is facilitated by student Educators and lecturers who support and guide our students.

At the core of our philosophy is social and environmental sustainability. This is demonstrated on a daily basis as Eco Playgroup students come together with the children to design and create opportunities that facilitate the exploration of sustainability within a variety of concepts from science to music.

Unique learning experience

Students spend time in a classroom setting gaining knowledge of children’s development and brainstorm ideas to support it. Integrated within this is a focus on environmental sustainability which teaches the student Educator to consider this aspect in all designs and planning within a service. When engaged with the children the student Educators can explore with the children their interests and incorporate these into the planning.

Whilst learning, planning and implementing the student Educators see firsthand how trusting and caring relationships enable and enhance children’s agency and the excitement of the children spurs the motivation of the student Educators. The relationships create new experiences for both the children and student Educators.
Community engagement

The variety of relationships that exist to run the Eco Playgroup offers children a real insight into how communities come together to socialise, solve problems, celebrate success and how to share knowledge, space, time and resources in many ways.

An example of educating children about sharing knowledge and space is the strategic placement of the Institute’s support and networking centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, ‘Yellagonga Meeting Place’.

As they are adjacent to each other, the Eco Playgroup and Yellagonga Meeting Place share the same physical entrance which includes a colourful footpath painted by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

The Institute’s Carpentry and Joinery students have built many of the Eco Playgroup’s features and facilities including decking, storage and a cubby house. Horticulture students have landscaped the area with native plants and donations made by local nurseries have made the Eco Playgroup gardens a real place of discovery for the children.

The families who attend the Playgroup have for many years, been bringing mum and dad, grandparents, foster parents and Fly in Fly out (FIFO) parents who enjoy the freedom of spending time playing with their children or sharing parenting techniques with other parents.

By having the families stay the students have the enviable experience of hearing family points of view, how they see their child, and how they expect their child should be cared for.

Lecturers

All of our lecturers in the Children’s Services Department bring a rich experience of current industry knowledge and training.

Our lecturers strive to impart passion and enthusiasm for our industry to our students through role modelling, professional conversations, training and development.

Transforming lives

The Eco Playgroup touches the lives of 50 children and their families, 60 West Coast Institute Student Educators, and countless other community members.

The learning that takes place at all levels is extraordinary and lecturers at the Institute are most appreciative of the community for their ongoing support.