Small Changes, Big Impact

Educator Toolkit:
Recycling and Upcycling in Early Childhood

1. Educator Self-reflection Checklist

- [ ] Do I place recyclable items in the correct bin?
- [ ] Do I know what my local council accepts for recycling?
- [ ] Do I reuse items before throwing them away?
- [ ] Do I avoid unnecessary waste when planning activities?
- [ ] Do I check what resources we already have before purchasing new ones?
- [ ] Do I model sustainable practices for children?

One change I would like to make:

_____

_____

_____

2. Conduct a Service Waste Audit

Observe the types of waste being generated over five service days.

Waste source	What are we noticing?	What could we change?
Food and mealtimes		
Paper		
Arts and crafts		
Packaging		
General waste		

Team reflection:

What is our biggest source of waste? _____

What could we reuse instead of throwing away?

_____

What is one change we can introduce? _____

3. Recycling Station Checklist

- [ ] Recycling and general waste bins are clearly labelled.
- [ ] Bins are accessible and easy to identify.
- [ ] Educators know what can and cannot be recycled locally.
- [ ] Containers are emptied before recycling.
- [ ] Food scraps and general rubbish are kept out of recycling bins.
- [ ] Batteries and electronic waste are disposed of appropriately.



Check local recycling guidelines at Recycle Right WA.

4. Upcycling Thoughtfully

Material	Possible Idea
Cardboard boxes	Puppet theatre or construction play
Fabric offcuts	Reusable bunting or imaginative play
Suitable containers	Planters for herbs or flowers
Paper offcuts	Drawing and collage
Existing resources	Repair or repurpose for continued use

Avoid combining materials such as cardboard with glitter or plastic decorations if this makes recycling difficult.

Before upcycling, consider:

- [ ] Can we reuse the item without changing it?
- [ ] Will it have an ongoing purpose?
- [ ] Can the materials be recycled afterwards?
- [ ] Is it safe and suitable for the children using it?

5. Our Sustainability Action Plan

One change we will make:	Who will be involved?	When will we review our progress?	What difference have we noticed?
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____