Person/s completing this form:_____ Date: _____

Sustainability Education Self-Evaluation (SESE)

The **Sustainability Education Self-Evaluation (SESE)** is designed to help early childhood centers assess and enhance their sustainability practices across four key pillars: **Leadership, Children, Staff & Teachers, and Families**. This tool provides a structured approach to evaluating and improving sustainability efforts within the learning environment.

Program Current Level Rankings: N = not yet addressed, E = emerging, P = proficient

I. Program current level	II. Principles and Strategies	III. Examples of Practice that Support the Principles and Strategies	Prioritize
PILLAR #1: Leadership sets the tone for sustainability initiatives and ensures their integration into the center's culture.			
	1. Does the center have a written sustainability policy or commitment?	● Develop a formal sustainability policy that outlines goals and strategies. ● Display the commitment statement in common areas and include it in enrollment materials. ● Regularly review and update the policy to align with best practices.	
	2. Are sustainability goals incorporated into the center's mission and vision?	● Ensure sustainability language is embedded in mission and vision statements. ● Regularly review and update these statements to reflect evolving sustainability priorities. ● Discuss these goals in staff meetings to maintain focus.	
	3. Does leadership provide training or resources on sustainability for staff?	● Offer workshops, invite guest speakers, and provide digital or print resources on	

		sustainable practices for early childhood educators. ● Create an online resource hub for ongoing access to sustainability materials.	
	4. Are sustainability initiatives regularly assessed and updated?	● Conduct annual sustainability audits, gather feedback from staff and families, and implement new practices based on findings. ● Develop a checklist to track sustainability progress over time.	
	5. Does leadership support partnerships with community organizations focused on sustainability?	● Collaborate with local environmental groups, farms, and sustainability-focused nonprofits for educational programs and materials. ● Partner with recycling centers or other community partners for educational field trips.	
	6. Is the center involved in local sustainability events or initiatives?	● Participate in Earth Day events, tree planting initiatives, recycling drives, or eco-fairs. ● Host sustainability workshops or green market days at the center.	
	7. Does the physical environment reflect sustainability principles?	● Use eco-friendly building materials and non-toxic paints. Incorporate natural lighting and energy-efficient appliances. ● Design outdoor learning spaces that integrate natural elements. Install rainwater collection systems or green roofs to enhance sustainability. ● Sustainable landscaping, waste reduction stations, energy-efficient lighting, water conservation measures, and eco-friendly furniture. ● Sustainable Facilities: Eco-Friendly	

		Building Materials, Energy Efficiency, Water Conservation, Natural Outdoor Learning Spaces, Recycling & Compost Stations, Sustainable Play Materials, Reusable Classroom Materials, Indoor Plants & Air Purifiers, Green Transportation Options	
PILLAR #2: Children's experiences with sustainability should be interactive, engaging, and developmentally appropriate.			
	1. Are children provided with hands-on experiences related to sustainability (e.g., gardening, composting, recycling)?	● Create a child-friendly garden, compost food scraps, and set up recycling stations for hands-on learning. ● Introduce a worm composting bin for interactive learning.	
	2. Do nature-based learning opportunities encourage sustainability awareness?	● Integrate outdoor exploration into daily learning, such as observing local wildlife, weather patterns, and seasonal changes. ● Organize scavenger hunts that focus on natural materials and biodiversity.	
	3. Are children involved in waste reduction practices, such as sorting recyclables?	● Implement sorting activities where children separate paper, plastic, and compostable materials during snack or meal times. ● Encourage reuse of materials through craft projects. ● **Children's Sustainable Behaviors: Sorting Waste, Upcycling & Repurposing Materials, Using Resources Mindfully**	
	4. Are there opportunities for children to explore and care for their natural environment?	● Plan nature walks, encourage children to care for plants, and involve them in habitat restoration projects. ● Introduce a "garden buddy" system where children take turns watering plants.	

	5. Do children participate in sustainability-themed projects or activities?	• Facilitate craft projects using recycled materials, create upcycled art, or engage children in water conservation challenges. • Create a sustainability-themed storybook corner with eco-friendly literature.	
PILLAR #3: Teachers and staff play a key role in modeling and implementing sustainability practices.			
	1. Are staff members trained in sustainability best practices?	• Offer sustainability-focused professional development sessions and encourage ongoing learning in eco-conscious teaching methods. • Provide mentorship opportunities for new staff to learn about sustainable practices.	
	2. Are teachers integrating sustainability concepts into the curriculum?	• Incorporate sustainability themes into lesson plans through books, experiments, and storytelling. • Use real-world examples and community projects to deepen understanding.	
	3. Do staff members model sustainable behaviors, such as reducing waste and conserving resources?	• Use reusable classroom materials, minimize printing, and encourage children to turn off lights and conserve water. • Introduce a sustainability challenge to track and reward eco-friendly behavior. • **Staff & Teachers' Sustainable Behaviors: Modeling Eco-Friendly Habits**, **Minimizing Paper Use**, **Leading by Example**, **Promoting Sustainable Snacks & Meals**	

	4. Are sustainability-related professional development opportunities available?	• Provide access to sustainability workshops, webinars, and peer-learning groups focused on eco-friendly education. • Encourage staff to attend sustainability conferences and bring back insights to share.	
	5. Do teachers and staff collaborate to improve sustainability efforts within the center?	• Form a sustainability committee to identify goals, track progress, and share best practices. • Conduct brainstorming sessions to create new initiatives for reducing waste and promoting conservation.	
PILLAR #4: Engaging families in sustainability efforts fosters a community-wide approach to eco-conscious learning.			
	1. Are families encouraged to participate in sustainability activities (e.g., nature walks, recycling programs)?	• Host family-friendly sustainability events such as community clean-ups and recycling workshops. • Create a monthly eco-challenge for families to complete at home. • **Families' Sustainable Behaviors: Participating in Green Initiatives**, **Practicing Sustainability at Home**	
	2. Does the center communicate sustainability initiatives and progress to families?	• Share updates through newsletters, bulletin boards, and social media highlighting sustainability efforts. • Develop a "Sustainability Spotlight" section in communications featuring family contributions.	

	3. Are families provided with resources or tips on practicing sustainability at home?	● Distribute take-home guides on composting, reducing waste, and eco-friendly home practices. ● Offer DIY sustainability kits with simple activities for families.	
	4. Are family engagement events designed to promote sustainability awareness?	● Organize sustainability-themed storytime sessions, DIY eco-crafts, and parent-child gardening activities. ● Create an eco-pledge wall where families can share commitments to sustainable actions.	
	5. Does the center collaborate with families to enhance sustainability initiatives?	● Invite families to contribute ideas, share sustainable practices, and participate in decision-making for center-wide initiatives. ● Develop a “Green Parent Committee” to support sustainability goals ● **Families’ Sustainable Behaviors: Donating & Reusing Materials, Using Sustainable Lunch Practices, Advocating for Sustainability**	

Sustainability Education Self-Evaluation Continuous Improvement
ACTION PLAN

Select a strategy or strategies from column II as a target goal or goals for improvement. Develop a plan of action including the activities, timeline, and the person/s responsible for completing all aspects of the plan. Activities should be observable and measurable and evaluated regularly.

Target/s for Improvement State in observable, measurable terms	**Activities** Observable and measurable tasks that relate directly to target goals	**Timeline** Start and end dates	**Person/s Responsible**	**Check when complete**	**Specific Program Examples**
Principle/Strategy: Goal/s:					
Principle/Strategy: Goal/s:					

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