

Education



Kindergartens



Achieving water and wastewater goals in Early Learning Centres













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We would like to thank:

Belinda, Country Buddies Epsom

.

Campaspe Shire and City of Greater Bendigo waste education officers

All of the kindergartens who allowed us to take photographs and shared their initiatives and activities.



Water Hero Kindergartens

Introduction

Did you know that Coliban Water manages, maintains and operates 35 reservoirs and water storage basins across North-Central Victoria and provides water and wastewater services to rural and urban customers across an area of 16,500 square kilometres?

Our service region includes 49 towns, extending from Cohuna and Echuca in the north, to Kyneton and Trentham in the south. The western boundary incorporates Boort, Wedderburn, Bealiba and Dunolly and the eastern boundary includes Heathcote and Tooborac.

Our Corporate Education Officer often visits Early Learning Centres (ELCs) delivering Water Hero incursions, including water-related activities and demonstrations. It is evident during these visits that teachers, children and centre management care about their water consumption. Many teachers have asked for further ideas for incorporating water efficiency into their program and centre.

We have developed this booklet to celebrate the contribution of ELCs in teaching our future generations about water efficiency by sharing initiatives from within our region. We have also provided a checklist to allow teachers and centre management to gauge their efforts and offer suggestions for next steps.

As well as water efficiency, this booklet explores:

- How we can encourage children to protect their teeth by making tap water their primary drink, and
- How we demonstrate our care for the water cycle by being mindful of what is flushed down toilets and disposed of in sinks.



This booklet supports the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and the National Quality Framework.

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

Outcome 2 — Community:

Children are connected with and contribute to their world.

• Children develop an awareness of the impact of human activity on the environment and the interdependence of living things.

Outcome 3 — Wellbeing:

Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.

- Children recognise and communicate their bodily needs.
- Children show an increasing awareness of healthy lifestyles and good nutrition.

National Quality Framework

- **Element 2.1.3** Healthy lifestyle: healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.
- **Element 3.2.3** Environmentally responsible: the service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.





Do our small scale actions matter?

Yes. Behaviour change research suggests that once we practice a certain environmental behaviour (for example, emptying a pet's water bowl on the grass when changing their water) we can change our self-perception. We start thinking, "I'm the kind of person who cares about the environment", resulting in an increased likelihood of changing other environmental behaviours. Therefore, starting with small actions is a valuable way to approach behaviour change.

How to use this book

We hope this booklet is one you can revisit often for inspiration and to record your actions.

The booklet is provided in a PDF format to allow you to print just the pages you need, in the desired quantities.

The checklists are set out to include a range of actions; from easy everyday actions that have minimal cost and time inputs to the purchase of new appliances and plumbing fixtures. No one would expect all of the changes to occur in a term or a year. We hope that when the time comes to upgrade appliances and fittings you consider water efficiency in your decision making.

Ex	Example Checklist		
Acti	on	Resources / examples	
	Label dual flush toilets and talk to children about when each button should be used.	Appendix 1	
	Make a water hero roster so children can take turns being responsible for kindergarten water use. Coliban Water supplies capes, charts and suggestions for water hero jobs for kindergartens in our region.	Central Echuca Kindergarten	

The checklists are a starting point; we know from our regular kindergarten visits that there are many initiatives occurring. It is important to point out that some of the actions have been included because we saw them during a kindergarten visit — we are simply sharing what we have seen working well in local ELCs. We love hearing and seeing how ELCs approach water efficiency, as well as programs such as Choose Tap and Bin it, Don't flush it. Please send your photos to:

communications@coliban.com.au



How do Early Learning Centres already approach water efficiency?

When we visit kindergartens to deliver an incursion, teachers are asked how they save water.

Kindergartens are busy places and we can't capture all that is being done, however teachers generally report at least one or two ways they are saving water.

Below is a list of water saving measures that have been compiled from 142 incursions from February 2018 – August 2019, from most to least common.

- Reuse of water (emptying water containers onto plants)
- Teaching children about turning taps off properly and limiting water during handwashing (for example counting to 10 and then turning water off)
- Limiting water in sandpit play
- Dual flush toilets with signage
- Use of rain water tanks (for watering garden and water play)
- Use a bucket to prewash dirty items (hands after messy play, plates)
- Automatic shut off taps
- Timer on garden watering systems, watering garden at night
- Native plants/drought tolerant plants in garden
- · Wicking beds
- Acknowledgement of Country references water/saving water
- Use of flow restrictors



Saving Water

Water is our greatest asset and an essential resource for the communities that we service. Current projections show that our region will have less water, while facing growing populations and changing consumer demand. Our customers expect to be able to maintain community liveability during drought. Educating young people about their water use behaviour is an important step in ensuring water is used carefully in homes and gardens.

Water use by numbers

- 9 litres Modern water efficient showerheads use no more than 9 litres of water per minute, while old style showerheads use up to 20 litres per minute.
 A 4 minute shower with a modern water efficient showerhead uses 36 litres of water, or 4 standard buckets.
- 16 litres A running tap uses about 16 litres of water per minute.
- **18 litres** The amount older toilets use per flush. Look for models with a fourstar water efficiency rating. These can save the average home up to 35,000 litres per year. These toilets use just 4.5 litres for a full flush and 3 litres for a half flush.
- **12,000 litres** How much a dripping tap can waste in a year! (30–200 litres of water per day).
- **25–50%** of the average home's water use occurs outside
- 40% of all water used in the home is in the bathroom and much of that is wasted
- 25% of all the water we use in the bathroom is flushed down the toilet
- **10%** of total household water consumption is used for cooking, cleaning, washing or drinking.
- 70% Spread mulch on garden beds and reduce water loss by up to 70%



(Source: Smart Approved WaterMark website)

Water saving initiatives:

The Handwashing Song

Huntly Kindergarten uses a song and photos at the sink to teach children how to wash their hands. We love this song as it teaches children to use less water and soap, while the flicking action they teach keeps water in the sink rather than a slip hazard on the floor. The kindergarten has a face washer-sized towel for each child – these are cleaned on a rotational basis by parents.

(Turn on the tap)

When we wash our hands we get them wet, wet, wet

(Turn off the tap, apply one pump of soap)

We go bubble, bubble, bubble on the front and the back

(Turn on the tap)

Then we rinse them off

(Turn off the tap)

And go flick, flick, flick
And we dry them on our towel.



Signs for dual flush toilets

The difference between the amount of water used for the half and full flush, depending on the water efficiency of your toilet. As a general rule, the half flush is around 3 litres, while the full flush is 6 litres.

At Kangaroo Flat Kindergarten and Golden Square Kindergarten the toilets are labelled to help children choose the appropriate button. The images are colourful, easy to understand and capture children's attention. Refer to appendix 1 for our half/ full flush signs.







Collecting water for reuse

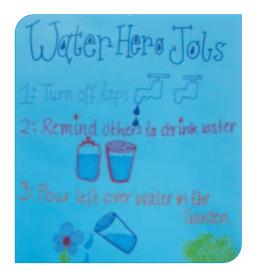
Many of the kindergartens we visit collect water for reuse on gardens. There are many ways to do this.

At Havilah Road Kindergarten children collect the water that has been used to wash their hands. They empty their bucket into a larger container which is used for watering plants.

A child at Huntly Kindergarten made a sign for the sink area, encouraging other children: 'Don't fill up the buckets, keep them as low as you can.'







Rainwater tanks

Rainwater tanks are common in kindergartens. The rainwater can be used to flush toilets or for water or messy play activities. At Inglewood Kindergarten children cart tubs of water from the tank to the mud pit – the hard work involved has been a good way of limiting access to water. Recently the kindergarten has installed a new water pump that is attached to a wooden tub. Teachers fill the tub once for the day; children know that is the daily allocation for water play.



Timed flow taps

White Hills and Spring Gully Kindergartens have installed taps that turn off after a certain time period. The taps save water when children forget to turn them off.



At Spring Gully Kindergarten, children are invited to bring along 2 bottles of water for their bush kinder session. One bottle is for drinking and the other bottle is for play, for example: making mud or rock paint. Having a limited water supply for play encourages children to consider their water use.

Water Hero monitors

We provide capes and a Water Hero of the Week chart to all kindergarten programs in our region. The capes have been popular and we love seeing them being used when we visit kindergartens.

At Echuca Central Kindergarten the cape is displayed next to a Water Hero jobs poster. The job list was developed collaboratively during group time. Children have a great visual reminder of tasks when they get their turn as the Water Hero of the Week.

Other resources

- Eaglehawk Preschool recommends the big book Saving Water by Emmaline Marvig.
- Gumboot Boogie CD by Dirt Girl has music that children will be familiar with if they watch dirtgirlworld. The song 'Every Little Drop' is about using water carefully.



Saving Water Checklist

Acti	on	Resources / examples		
Grou	Group time discussions and routines			
	Handwashing: use the handwashing song or count to 10 and then turn off water	Huntly Kindergarten		
	Teeth brushing: Use a cup for rinsing			
	Make a water hero roster so children can take turns being responsible for kindergarten water use. Coliban Water supplies capes, charts and suggestions for water hero jobs for kindergartens in our region.	Central Echuca Kindergarten		
	Book a Coliban Water incursion to teach children about the water cycle and how water gets to our tap	Incursion info 🖎		
Colle	ct water for reuse on the garden from:			
	Handwashing			
	Drinking cups or bottles	Havilah Road		
	Water play	Kindergarten		
	Other activities where water has been 'lightly used'			
Wate	ering gardens outdoors			
	Set watering systems to water between 6 pm and 10 am			
	Use a trigger nozzle on your hose			
	Check that your hose is leak-free	Dawn an ant Water		
	Use a broom to clean hard surfaces. If needed, a high pressure device can be used occasionally.	Permanent Water Savings Rules <i>ぺ</i> ゝ		
	Only use fountains or water features that recirculate water	-		
	When planning new gardens, choose drought resistant plants and grasses			
	Ensure gardens beds are mulched			
	Pre-wash messy play items in a bucket to reduce water use at the sink.			
	Limit water in sandpit play by using a large tub in sand pit that is not refilled.			
If you	u wash clothes and bedding			
	Always run your washing machine on a full load	WELS rating information		
	Choose a water efficient front-loading washing machine	æ		
In th	e kitchen			
	Use washing-up liquid sparingly to reduce the amount of rinsing required when washing dishes by hand			
	Use a plugged sink or a pan of water			
	Have a dishwashing roster for coffee cups, rather than rinsing individually under the tap			
	Place a container next to the sink for water reuse on the garden			
	Dishwashers: Always run your dishwasher on a full load. Choose a water efficient model			
Toile	ts			
	Label dual flush toilets	Appendix 1		
	If you have an older toilet, put a water filled plastic bottle or a brick in your cistern to reduce the volume used with each flush	How to check if your		
	Check toilets for leaks by adding food dye into the cistern	toilet leaks video 🖎		
	Buy top-rated dual flush toilets			
Insta				
	Water tanks for toilet flushing, gardening and water play			
	Install automatic shut off taps			
Shar	e how you save water with:			
	Families (newsletters, events, notes by the sign-in book, social media)	Email Coliban Water		
	Other kindergartens (cluster meetings), Coliban Water	a		



Choose Tap

Communities in our region expect to have access to clean and safe drinking water and wastewater services. The United Nations has explicitly recognised water and sanitation as a human right, and that clean drinking water and sanitation are essential to the realisation of all human rights.

Water is the preferred everyday drink for replenishing fluid lost to the environment due to perspiration, urination and respiration. While other drinks contribute to hydration, they may be sugary and acidic – two factors that contribute to poor dental health. The Smiles for Miles website says that 1 in 3 children aged five and under who attended Victorian public dental clinics in 2010-11 experienced tooth decay. Elevated sugar consumption is also linked to obesity and type two diabetes.

In our region we are lucky to have easy access to safe and inexpensive tap water. Find out more about your town's water supply here. ∞

By refilling our drink bottles or cups at a tap we can:

- reduce plastic waste
- reduce money spent on bottled drinks
- enjoy the health benefits of a closely monitored and treated water supply

The benefits of drinking enough water may include:

- · feeling alert and energetic
- weight loss or maintenance (particularly if water replaces soft drink, flavoured milk or juice)
- clearer skin
- digestive system working more efficiently
- less tooth decay

Choose Tap by Numbers

- In our region, five litres of tap water costs about one cent.
- More than 50 per cent of plastic bottles end up as landfill or litter.
- If our brains don't get enough water, our ability to concentrate can decrease by 13 per cent and our short term memory can drop by seven per cent.
- You can lose between one and two litres of water an hour in sweat when doing moderately hard exercise.
- Our bodies are 70 per cent water and staying hydrated is essential for good health and performance.
- Light-headedness, dizziness and headaches are early signs that we are not getting enough water.

More information can be found at Choose Tap. <a>





Activities

The Water Bottle song

To the tune of Justine Clarke's song 'Watermelon'.

Water bottle, water bottle
Have you got your water bottle?
Great big sip – fill at the tap
Put on the cap – easy as that
Water bottle, water bottle
Have you got your water bottle?

Guess the tap water: taste test activity for adults

You can set up a simple water taste test to see if adults can tell the difference between tap and bottled water. We find people really enjoy this simple activity and they are keen to see if they can tell the difference. It is a great way to get people talking about drinking water. The activity could be conducted at a staff event, set up in a break room or for parents when they are waiting to collect children at the end of a kindergarten session.

Equipment: 2 jugs, cups, tape and paper or sticky labels, enough bottled water and tap water for participants, scraps of paper, pens and a container for a secret vote.

The activity: Label 2 jugs: A and B. Pour the tap water and bottled water into the 2 jugs. Write down which jug has the tap water (and guard this information carefully!). Place both jugs in the fridge to cool.

To set up your tasting area: provide cups, slips of paper, pens and a container for votes.

Ask people to taste water from both jugs and guess which sample is the tap water. Participants write their answer (A or B) on a slip of paper, fold and add it to the voting container. When participants have voted, count the votes and announce which sample was tap water.







Sugar content of soft drinks

Equipment: empty drink containers (soft drinks, juice, flavoured milk and a water bottle), plates or clear cups, sugar and a teaspoon

The activity: A teaspoon of sugar is 5 grams. Use the ingredients label to work out how many teaspoons of sugar are in each drink container. Spoon out the amount of sugar onto the plate or cup. Compare the amounts of sugar; order the drinks by the amount of sugar or discuss how larger sized containers have more sugar. The water bottle has no ingredients list; unless the water is flavoured it will contain no sugar.

Acidity

Acidic liquids can cause damage to things around them, including teeth. The acids in some drinks can erode the enamel on teeth. There is a simple – and fun – way to find out if a drink is acidic: mix the drink with a solution made from red cabbage. If the solution (a pH indicator) turns pink, the drink is acidic. If the solution stays purple or turns light blue, the drink is not acidic. The blue colour indicates a basic or alkaline solution – these don't erode your teeth. The purple colour indicates a neutral solution. All amounts are approximate.

Equipment: Some clear drink samples (tap water, lemonade, and soda water), a clear jar or cup per sample, red cabbage (1/4 or a chunk of cabbage will be enough for a class), a heat proof jug, strainer, knife and chopping board.

Optional: An acid (lemon juice or vinegar) and base (bicarb soda mixed into water) to compare to drink samples

Make the indicator solution: roughly chop ½ of your cabbage and place in a heat proof jug. Cover with boiling water (about 1 litre) and leave for 10 minutes, or until cool. Strain to remove cabbage. The indicator is now ready to use.

The activity: Refer to the photo to set up your work space. Half fill each jar with the drink samples. Add ½ cup of red cabbage indicator. Swirl the water while the colour develops.

Discuss: what colour is the drink now? If it is pink, it is acidic and best considered a "sometimes" drink. To pack up: samples can be used to water the plants, cabbage can be composted or feed to chickens or a class pet.



Cł	Choose Tap checklist		
Action		Resources / examples	
	During group time talk to children about water as a good 'everyday' drink.		
	Introduce our Check your Wee charts and place in bathrooms.	Contact Coliban Water for charts	
	Conduct a 'guess the tap water' taste test with parents or staff.		
	Conduct an infused water tasting for parents – set up near the sign in book or include at Mother's Day or Father's Day events as a treat.	Pinterest has many recipe ideas. Appendix 3	
	Teachers and adults are positive role models – they drink water from reusable water bottles.		
	Water bottles are accessible during the session.		
	Spare cups are available if children forget their water bottles.		
	Drink water or Choose Tap signs are displayed.	Contact Coliban Water for posters.	
	Tap water availability is considered when planning excursions.		
	When educators are drinking enough water they will need to leave the classroom more frequently for bathroom breaks. Plan how to accommodate bathroom breaks while still maintaining supervision ratios.		
	Provide 'Have you got your water bottle?" signs to be put up in children's homes	Appendix 2	
	Consider loaning our free resources: a large board game, refill stations.	Appendix 3	





Bin it, don't flush it



On a daily basis, without realising it, the average household, small business or education facility contributes to:

- blocked pipes,
- sewer overflows, and
- environmental pollution

Toilets

We ask that people only flush the 3 Ps; Poo, Pee and (toilet) Paper. All other items should be put in a bin, including all disposable wipes. Even 'flushable' wipes do not break down in the sewer network. Wipes, paper towel and tissues get caught inside pipes and sewer plant equipment and are expensive to remove. Similarly cotton buds, nappies, sanitary items and toiletries belong in the bin. Toilet paper dissolves quickly so it is safe to flush. Paper towel and tissues can placed in your green lidded organics bin. Paper towel should not be placed in recycling bins.

Sinks

Fats, oils and grease harden and build up inside pipes. It's safest to let them cool, pour them into a container and dispose of them appropriately. Please contact your council for more information. There are household chemical collection points (including Bendigo and Shepparton) or regular Detox Your Home events run by Sustainability Victoria. Small amounts of oil or fat can be placed in your green bin (if it accepts food scraps as well as garden waste). Scrape plates into a benchtop organics canister and use a sink strainer to keep food scraps out of the sewer system.

Water wise appliances

When water is flushed into the sewer network, the system works hard to carry everything away from your home and towards the plant. Choose water efficient washing machines, toilets, dishwashers and showerheads to help ease the load.

Art and messy play items disposal

Poster paints, paste and PVA glue:

- Use sparingly, and cover paint pallets for reuse another day (this will reduce wastage and the amount of paint/glue going into the wastewater system).
- When cleaning is necessary, put excess paint/glue into the bin and clean brushes and containers in one bucket of water. If further cleaning is required, empty the bucket onto the grass or a tree and repeat.

Oblek (corn flour slime) and homemade playdough:

Scrape as much as possible into a compost bin or green bin (if it accepts food scraps as well as garden waste), then rinse containers in a bucket.



Activities







Salt crystal ornaments

These sparkly ornaments are a great STEAM activity using simple materials.

Equipment: Salt, boiled water, large heat proof jug, long spoon, wide neck jar or cup, thread, chopstick, skewer or stick, pipe cleaners, beads (optional), ribbon.

The activity: Children make an ornament using pipe cleaners and beads. Tie the ornament with thread and hang on a stick balancing on a jar. Add the saturated salt solution and allow to sit, submerged, for around 48 hours. Remove the ornament from the solution and allow the ornaments to dry. Add a ribbon loop for hanging.

Salt solution: Boil the kettle and let the water cool for 5 minutes. Pour the water into a heat proof jug. Add salt, stirring until it no longer dissolves.

Glitter alternatives

Glitter is a form of single use plastic that is not biodegradable. If you love using glitter, try these alternatives:

Coloured table salt, sea salt and rice: place a cup or rice or salt into a jar with a couple of drops of food dye. Fasten the lid and shake.



Flushable?

Compare how different items breakdown when they are flushed.

Equipment: Jars, water, items to observe (toilet paper, tissues, wipes, cotton buds, paper towel).

The activity: When items are flushed down the toilet, they move through the pipes to get to a water reclamation plant (where the wastewater is treated). For this activity, the jar is the pipe. Half fill the jars with water and put one item in each jar. Carefully put the lid on and check it is water tight. Shake the jars for 30 seconds. Compare the items. After 30 seconds the toilet paper will have dissolved. What happens to the other items? By breaking down toilet paper will flow easily through the pipes. Items that don't breakdown can block up pipes and form 'fatbergs'.



Psyllium husk slime

This slime uses natural ingredients and can be composted after use.

Equipment: A range of consistencies can be made depending on the amounts you use. Psyllium husks are available in the supermarket health food aisle for under \$6. One bag makes lots of slime. You can also use *Metamucil* or other branded psyllium husks.

Runny slime	Thicker slime
3 cups of water	2 cups of water
3 teaspoons psyllium husks	4 teaspoons psyllium husks
food dye	food dye

The activity: Mix psyllium husks, water and food dye in a saucepan.

Heat (low-medium) while stirring. Takes about 5 minutes.

Tip the slime into a container to allow it to cool and thicken. Make the slime in advance so that it has plenty of time to get to a suitable temperature for children. Fill the saucepan with cool water and then clean with dish detergent (Easy to clean – slime comes off quickly). Keeps well in the refrigerator.

Bi	Bin it, don't flush it checklist		
Acti	ion	Resources / examples	
	Use a sink strainer to collect scraps for the compost or green bin (if it accepts food scraps as well as garden waste).		
	Compost vegetable scraps, tea leaves, coffee grounds and egg shells rather than washing them down the sink.		
	Scrape your plates into a compost bucket; a silicone spatula works well.		
	Pour used cooking oils into a container and contact your council for disposal information.		
	Place a rubbish bin next to the adult toilet: encourage everyone to only flush the 3 Ps; Poo, Pee and (toilet) Paper.	Appendix 4	
	Call your council if you have chemicals/house paints to dispose.		
	Consider disposal when you plan messy play activities. Aim to mainly use ingredients that can be composted.		
	If disposable wipes are used to help children with toileting, ensure there is signage to request the wipes are placed in the red landfill bin.		

Appendices

We hope the following signs and resources will be useful in your teaching:

Appendix 1 | Half/full flush

These can be used to differentiate between buttons on dual flush toilets. Laminate the images and attach to the toilet or wall behind the toilet.

Appendix 2 | Have you got your water bottle?

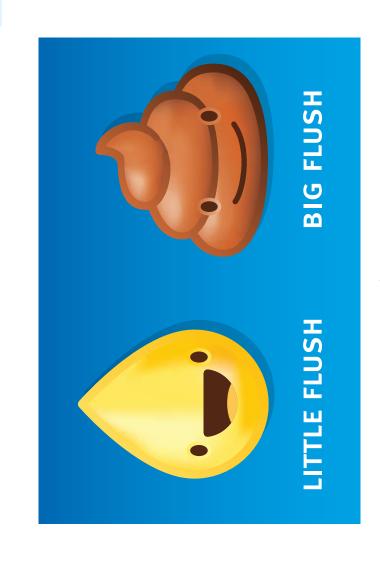
Children can practice scissors skills and name recognition in this activity. Once the water bottle is cut out and named, children can take them home to be hung up and used as a reminder. Possible places for the signs include: near kindergarten bag, back door, shoes or sun hat.

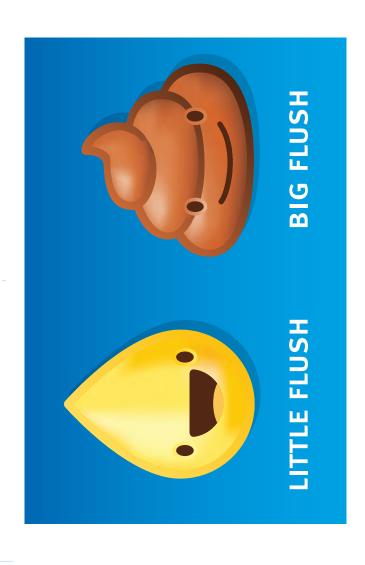
Appendix 3 | Choose Tap Items available for loan at no charge

We offer water stations, infused water dispensers and a large board game for your events. Please contact us for more details.

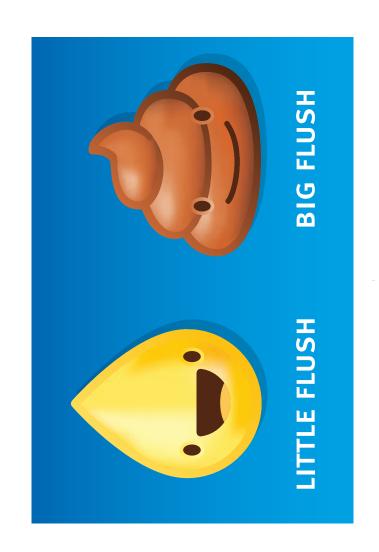
Appendix 4 | Only flush the 3Ps

Place these signs in the adult toilets to remind teachers and visitors about the 3 Ps and reduce the likelihood of blockages.













NAME:

Water bottle?

Water bottle?

NAME:

Coliban WATER

Coliban WATER

Have you got your

Water

bottle?

NAME:

We offer water stations, infused water dispensers, a large board game for your events. Please contact us for more details.



Drinking water stations

We have a range of water stations available through our sponsorship program. <a>



Infused water dispenser

Please contact us if you would like to borrow the dispenser. Generally the kindergarten will need to organise for the dispenser to be picked up and returned to our Bendigo office.



Giant board game

The game is 6×6 metres and folds to approximately 1 square metre for transport. Generally the kindergarten will need to organise for the board game to be picked up and returned to our Bendigo office.



Tap visit

Tap is very sensitive and aware that some young children are not huge mascot fans. Our visits to library story times have been popular: Tap loves to dance and join in with group time. Tap prefers to let children approach for high fives, if they are keen.











CONTACT US

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General and billing enquiries and 24-hour faults and leaks.
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RVICE) NATIONAL RELAY SERVICE

If you are deaf, or have a hearing impairment or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service:

- > TTY users phone **133 677** then ask for **1300 363 200**
- Speak and Listen users phone 1300 555 727 then ask for 1300 363 200
- Internet relay users connect to the NRS then ask for 1300 363 200.



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