



## 2. Building Water Wise Early Learners

### How you can help your children to care for water

Caring for water starts at home and at our school sites. Learning how to use water resources responsibly is one way a child can help to establish their place in the community. As dry conditions continue, we have a great opportunity to start a conversation about how we use water, and model responsible water use for the next generation.

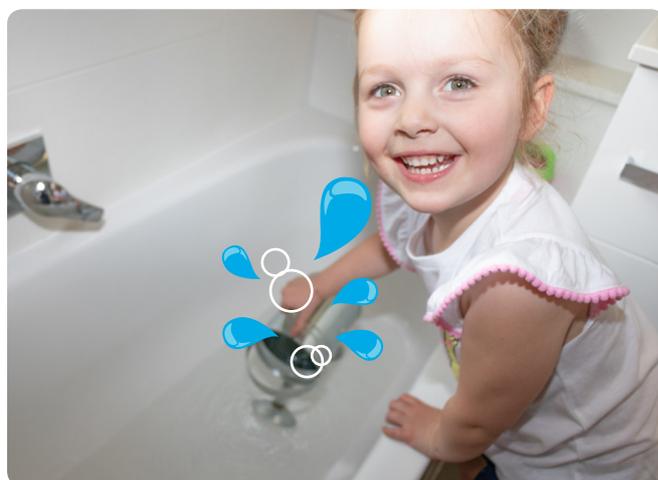
If there's a young person in your life who takes long showers, leaves the tap running or tips their drink bottle down the sink instead of on the garden, the following ideas can be implemented into your classroom

### Water wise tips for school sites

- Encourage refillable water bottles for sipping in class. Empty any unused water on plants or gardens not in the sink.
- Collect the water used to wash fruit and vegetables and reuse it on the garden.
- For art rooms and painting lessons, use a bucket of water to clean paintbrushes rather than a running tap. Remember to put this on to the garden or lawn and never down the sink.
- Conduct a basic water audit – become leak detectors to catch and stop those leaking drippy taps.
- Place posters or water saving reminders at water-use areas and taps to encourage water saving behaviours.
- Have containers or buckets to catch the drinking bubbler water drops. Create a classroom watering

roster and encourage students to tip the buckets on the garden when full.

- Teach effective handwashing practises and encourage children to turn off the tap while lathering their hands
- Install dual flush toilets (and encourage children to use the half flush).
- Ensure you are only using your site staff room dishwasher and washing machine with full loads.
- Wash toys in the full loaded dishwasher.
- Create water wise gardens at school. Use the Actsmart water wise plant selector to help ensure the plants in your garden are water wise for your local area.
- Apply mulch to reduce evaporation on school and home gardens and your veggie patch.
- Only use sprinklers to water school grounds and home gardens before 9am and after 6pm. Reduce sprinkler times by two minutes per station.
- Install a rainwater tank to use for water play.





## Water wise tips for our homes

With your class, encourage students to take the message home for parents to have conversations around the dinner table about how we can all work together as a family to reduce your water use this could include:

- Commit to keeping showers to four minutes each. Find a fun short song and play when showering or use a timer. Add an incentive anyone who goes overtime has to do the washing up!
- Keep a bucket in the shower to save and collect the cold water for your garden.
- In the kitchen, each member of the family can scrape dinner plates instead of rinsing under the tap for putting into the dishwasher.
- Get outside together and put mulch on the gardens to reduce evaporation
- If you've got a freshwater fish tank at home, make sure the dirty water goes on the garden! It contains lots of nutrients your plants will love and gives the water a second life too.
- Use a broom to clean outside instead of a hose.
- Encourage children to water gardens with watering cans. Fill the cans using the excess bathwater or shower water.

**Make it interactive** – become leak detectives with younger kids and go on the hunt around your house to check taps and appliances for leaks.

You're looking for taps, hoses or showerheads that drip, wetness around your washing machine and dishwasher connections, damp patches on the walls or soggy patches of grass outside. Kids also love checking for toilet leaks by lifting the top of the cistern and adding a few drops of food colouring to the water. Wait 10 minutes (without flushing) and see if there's any colour in the toilet bowl –

if there is, you've got a leak! Don't forget to wash your hands. More information can be found [iconwater.com.au/My-Home/Leaks](http://iconwater.com.au/My-Home/Leaks)

**Get out in nature** – there are lots of things you can do and go visit the dams which are a great tool for starting a conversation about water.

Head to the Cotter Dam for a picnic (there's BBQ and toilet facilities and a big kids playground) and walk the discovery trail to learn about Canberra's water history. It's hard to take a trip to the Cotter without seeing wildlife too!

Icon Water sponsored the ACT frogwatch programs ran by Ginninderra Catchment Group. You can check out North Ainslie Primary School year two frog blog page at [iconwater.com.au/frogwatch](http://iconwater.com.au/frogwatch) to see the learning activities the students participate in as they explored and discovered the amazing process of metamorphosis. The program not only gave kids a fun learning experience and an understanding of amphibians, but an appreciation for the wider natural world. In this way, students learn all about our local fauna and the importance of protecting our local ecosystems and protecting our catchments.

