

Guzzler @ Beverton Preschool

At Beverton Preschool our whole community i.e. the children, their families and the key workers consider sustainable living to be an important addition to our long-term curriculum. Through everyday routine and events, the children and adults work co-constructively to remind each other about energy saving, recycling and water conservation.

Our efforts to practice sustainable living and our commitment to continuously learn about how to look after our planet have been recognised by the Green Schools Project; and to date we have been awarded not one, but three Green Flags. These represent the practice and learning that has occurred in relation to litter and waste, energy saving and water conservation. We are now working towards achieving our next green flag which represents travel.

Waste reduction and recycling was our first Green Schools project. Normally the programme is aimed at primary and secondary schools, so we needed to figure out a way that the preschool children could relate to it and share their learning from preschool back to the home environment. In response to this, the children at Beverton decided that they needed to have a mascot to represent their recycling campaign. So, with the help of a parent who is a talented seamstress, the preschool created two superhero dolls that would help the Beverton children spread the knowledge and awareness about litter and waste.

Naturally enough when we approached the energy saving project for Green Schools, the children decided once again we needed a mascot to support our learning. An energy saving mascot was needed and it was the Guzzler book from SEAI that influenced the type of mascot we could create.

Before the mascot was created the children had read the book, introducing Guzzler who lives in a little girl's wardrobe and uses up all the energy in her house. After much discussion with the keyworkers, the children suggested having our very own guzzler. So once again we invited our talented parent from our preschool community, back to Beverton to help us design our very own Guzzler mascot. At the time back in 2015, there was no guzzler puppet available to supplement the book and its story. But not to worry, the children at Beverton are very creative in their thinking and were able to come up with their own ideas as to how a Guzzler might look.

Naturally as a green school it was decided that guzzler should be made from recycled materials. The children at the time also couldn't agree if Guzzler was a boy or a girl so in true democratic fashion, the children came to a compromise and so our Guzzler has two heads. Guzzler also has a special pocket in his tummy which

contains picture cards which show all the areas around our homes that we can help guzzler save energy.

The *Guzzler* book and *Guzzler* mascot is brought home with every child so that they can share their knowledge and learning with their families and spread the word about sustainable living. The book provides children with a story that helps the concept of energy wastage become more relatable as children often take considerable learning from stories. The story assisted with the children's understanding about the importance of energy saving and heavily influenced the design of our energy saving mascot. Both resources together offer enjoyable and relatable learning experiences for the children in Beverton.

We often bring guzzler on treks into the area where we can help other community members learn about energy saving too. When other people ask about the two heads poking out of the bag, the children can inform them about who *Guzzler* is and what he promotes i.e. energy saving.

Although the children who designed *Guzzler* have now moved on to national school, we still use the book and our mascot to support continuous learning about energy saving and sustainable living to the new cohort of pre-schoolers that come through our doors.

We had visitors from SEAI come and visit our preschool back when *Guzzler* was first born in Beverton (2015) and they were so impressed with the idea of using a mascot to support further learning with the story. We can't help but feel that the creative thinking that came from the Beverton children influenced the creation of the *Guzzler* puppet that is around today.

Beverton preschool would love for our *Guzzler* to meet the new *Guzzler* puppet so that children can expand even further on their learning experience.

