



Community Programs

ewba in action...



**Morphett Vale and Murray
Bridge communities share
how they've put *eat well be active*
into action**

Implemented by Southern Primary Health of Southern Adelaide Health Service and
Murray Mallee Community Health Service of Country Health SA



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What has your site been doing in relation to ewba's key message/s and strategy/ies for action? Who has been involved?

Our kindy has been holding healthy, active family fundraisers (Games-a-thons) linked with fundamental movement skills experiences and activities for children within our curriculum.

Our Games-a-thons have been set up to run with approximately eight activity stations, each supervised by a staff member or volunteer parent. At each station children participate in a specific physical activity (like dancing or aerobics moves) using different fundamental movement skills (e.g climbing, hopping) for three minutes. After children complete each station's activity, they receive a special reward like a sticker or badge for their participation.

To raise needed funds for our kindy, children have been asked to seek donations from family members or friends, rather than sponsorship per 'lap' of the stations. This has enabled us to keep the focus on children's participation and willingness to try activities, rather than rewarding only those children with high level physical skills who complete 'laps' quickly.

To enable greater family participation and provide an opportunity for parents to be active with their children, we changed the time of our Games-a-thons to a weekend rather than a weekday. This proved successful in engaging more siblings and Dads of our children at the events.

Our staff realised it was very important to enhance children's enjoyment, level of participation and confidence to participate at our Games-a-thons. To do this we decided to embed fundamental movement skills activities in our regular curriculum by setting up gross motor activities circuits several times a week. This enabled us to provide regular opportunities throughout the term prior to our Games-a-thon for children to practice their fundamental movement skills and activities they would engage in at the Games-a-thon. To individually cater for each child's level of abilities, staff used an individual learning plan for each child which may include movement skills development goals. These individual learning plans have proven very valuable in tracking each child's progress and skill development. They have also been a helpful tool for staff to use in discussion with parents, as staff have shared children's goals with their parents. Parents have been really interested to find out about the specific goals staff have been working on with their children, and staff have encouraged them to support this work at home.

Has this been a new event/project/activity/practice/environmental changes/policy for your site, or does it build on existing elements?

These practices have built on/enhanced existing practices within our kindy to support children's fundamental movement skill development and engage with families.

What has been the best part of your site's action/s?

Our staff have really enjoyed seeing families actively playing and engaging in healthy activities together during our Games-a-thons.

It has also been wonderful to have the opportunity to talk and interact with parents and siblings during our events, particularly with Dads, who we don't get to see very often.

What has been the biggest challenge (if any) that has had to be overcome?

One of our biggest challenges was trying to find a time/day to run our family Games-a-thons that suited the majority of our families.

We have also needed to accept that as families have very busy time schedules and a lot on their plates, we don't get huge numbers of families participating in our Games-a-thons. We appreciate quality rather than quantity in terms of family involvement.

What have been some of the outcomes so far, what changes have you noticed, or what are you hoping for as a result of your new activity/project/policy?

Children have improved their fundamental movement skills like jumping and ball skills.

Our staff have also observed the children to have improved their confidence in their physical skills and their willingness to try new and challenging physical activities.

Holding Games-a-thons on weekends, rather than week days and combining them with family events like BYO picnics and Sports Days have engaged more Dads, siblings, and have enabled whole family participation.

What do children /students / young people /parents / the community say about this?

Parents and relatives of our children that attend our family-focussed Games-a-thons have really enjoyed themselves, with lots of families chatting and mixing together. They have been really supportive and encouraging of all the children (not just their own) participating in the physical activities in the Games-a-thons. Children have loved all this extra attention from parents, siblings and extended family members!

Parents have also expressed how they have appreciated their families having the opportunity to take part in safe, supervised, organised physical activities where parents, siblings and even relatives also have the opportunity to join in the fun and participate!

Where to for the future?

With sufficient interest, we could perhaps consider holding two Games-A-Thon events - one in session time to suit families who are unable to attend on weekends and one on weekends for families unable to attend during session time.

What advice would you give to others who would like to start a similar project?

- Plan well in advance for family active fundraisers (Games-a-thons or similar).
- Embed the fundamental movement skills children will use in their participation in the active fundraisers in your curriculum/programming. This gives children the opportunity to become familiar with the skills, enhance their skill development through repetition/practice, and it becomes part of their routine which increases their confidence/success when they participate in the fundraisers.
- Active fundraisers are a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the movement skills children have learned and show their family and friends what they can do!

If you would like to ask any questions or follow up further about this story, please contact Tania (Director) at Calvary Kindergarten, email: calvarykgn@picknowl.com.au

Do you have a photo/s you would like to share to accompany this story?

