



DESIGNING SPORT PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOLS INSIGHTS FROM THE EXEMPLARY SCHOOL PROGRAM

In 2019, Sport Australia implemented the Sporting Schools Exemplary School Program in partnership with six physical activity providers. The program supported schools to engage more students in physical activity through a whole school approach to physical literacy, encouraging them to live more active and healthy lives. This resource highlights key learnings to inform development of school based programs by sporting organisations and physical activity providers.

Key learnings

- Understand the school's motivations for participating in the program and their expectations.
- Align the program with the school's priorities where possible. Priorities are commonly framed around wellbeing, mental health, academic performance and behaviour management.
- Make teachers' lives easier. Don't be overly prescriptive.
- Offer diverse and engaging experiences.
- Identify and understand influential moments, including:
 - when to introduce the program
 - when to provide refreshers and spaced learning opportunities
 - when key staff/leaders/champions are likely to change.
- Create a good first impression when introducing the program – it creates a lasting perception of the experience.
- Give schools advice about implementation, including anecdotal feedback on how the program is impacting school priority areas.

More resources about designing school based programs are available on the [Supporting Sport in Schools](#) page on the Sport Australia website.

Engaging the least active children

- Design programs that engage all participants. While it can be difficult to engage the least active students, it is possible.
- Consider language – try not to trigger negative habitual or automatic associations with common phrases such as sport, PE and exercise.
- Focus on basic skills rather than complex sports.
- Offer a diverse range of activities.
- Use technology.
- Give children more choice in activity planning.
- Give children time and space to engage with the program and content.

Do I need to supply equipment?

Programs don't necessarily have to provide new or additional equipment and resources to enable schools to have an enhanced capability to offer an active environment.

While new and customised equipment can be appealing and useful, it comes with a cost.

Programs that can show schools how to do more with what they have, or how to be more active without equipment, can increase the activity-potential within the environment at no additional cost to school budgets.