Kids - 'Go for your life' Award Program

Introduction
Research shows that children’s settings can be effective environments for improving healthy eating and physical activity behaviours in children, particularly as part of broader community-based interventions. Drawing on worldwide and Victorian research projects, such as Deakin University’s Be Active Eat Well and Fun n Healthy! in Moreland, Kids - ‘Go for your life’ has developed an Award Program for children’s settings.

Key Objective
To motivate and support children’s settings to implement sustainable strategies that promote healthy eating and physical activity (Kids - ‘Go for your life’ Strategic plan, objective 3).

Target settings
The children’s settings targeted within the Kids - ‘Go for your life’ Award Program are:
- Child care centres, family day care schemes and kindergartens
- Primary schools – government, catholic and independent primary schools.

Key strategies

i. Working and advisory groups
Kids - ‘Go for your life’ working and advisory groups have been established for early childhood and primary school sectors. These working groups provide expert advice and feedback on the development, planning and implementation of the Award Program and promote strategies to coordinate and streamline healthy eating and physical activity programs in Victoria. Representatives include Department of Human Services, Department of Education and key sector stakeholders.

ii. Kids - ‘Go for your life’ Award Program
The Award Program provides a guide and support to create environments that promote healthy eating and physical activity for children. It recognises primary schools, kindergartens, childcare centres and family day care schemes for their achievements in implementing healthy changes. Similar to Sunsmart, schools and early childhood services are supported to meet key criteria to support healthy eating and physical activity. Once the criteria have been met the school or service is recognised as an Award School or Award Service with an outdoor sign.

The program is adapted from the World Health Organization’s Health Promoting Schools model, which integrates health into the regular day-to-day activities of schools and services.
iii. The Award Plus framework
Awards Plus is designed for schools and services that wish to build on their achievement of becoming an Award School or Service or wish to take a more comprehensive approach to creating an environment that supports children to enjoy healthy eating and physical activity, every day. Awards Plus provides a self-assessment checklist to guide schools and services toward further positive changes and allows them to monitor their progress.

iv. Uptake and promotion
All Victorian primary school and early childhood services are eligible to join the Kids - ‘Go for your life’ Award Program by completing a membership application form. The program is free.

The promotional strategy for the program recognises the importance of partnerships between children’s settings and the community. More intensive promotion will occur in local government areas which have employed Kids - ‘Go for your life’ Local Government Coordinators or have coordinated support from community health professionals.

v. Support for member schools and services
There are four key ways that schools and services will be supported.

1. A Starter Pack and a member CD, containing information, step by step planning tools, presentations, policy samples, tips and strategies and links to supporting programs and resources is provided to all members
2. Kids - ‘Go for your life’ partner programs Start Right Eat Right, Smiles 4 Miles, Healthy Canteen Advisory Service and the Fruit + Veg program provide professional development programs and resources to help schools and services meet specific criteria. Additional programs or resources that can support the members will identified and reviewed in conjunction with Filling the Gaps program (The Royal Children’s Hospital/Murdoch Children’s Research Institute)
3. Professional development through existing networks is being developed in response to identified needs of children’s setting staff
4. On-the-ground support for schools and services is being increased though the Kids - ‘Go for your life’ health professional network and ‘Ready Community’s strategy

vi. Evaluation
- Phase 1: An evaluation of the Award Program assessing the uptake and acceptability of the program in the City of Casey was undertaken by Dynamic Outcomes in 2006
- Phase 2: Evaluation to review the supporting resources for the Award Program and identify professional development needs of children’s settings staff Undertaken in early 2007
- Phase 3: Collection of baseline data through membership application and self-assessment checklists to support the long term evaluation of the program Undertaken in early 2007 and ongoing

Other documents
- Ready communities
- Membership application form
- Kids - ‘Go for your life’ Strategic Plan

Contacts
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