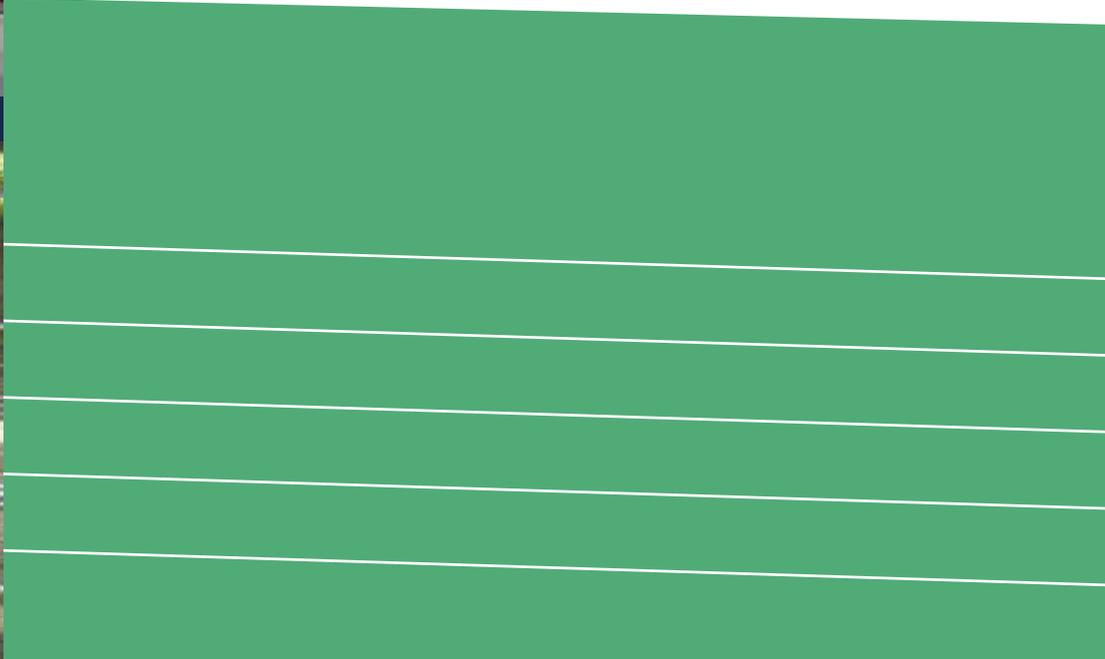


Guidelines for using external providers for physical activity in out of school hours centres



Acknowledgement

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Prepared by the Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) NSW in collaboration with Network of Community Activities for the NSW Premier's Council for Active Living (PCAL)

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Summary

In Out of School Hours (OOSH) centres, physical activity occurs most commonly as part of play. They also promote physical activity through organised sport, games and activities. OOSH staff have general knowledge of the benefits of physical activity and are often best placed to facilitate these activities. They are also better able to meet the individual needs of children. However, some OOSH centres may choose to engage an external provider to extend the physical activity program.

These guidelines are designed to help OOSH centre management committees / coordinators if they choose to hire an external provider. The guidelines may be used by management committees / coordinators to make informed decisions about which provider to select. There are four parts to the guidelines:

1. **Background** - The benefits of physical activity, and the role OOSH centres can play in encouraging children to be physically active.
2. **Choosing a provider** - A checklist of criteria to consider when hiring an external provider, such as qualifications, insurance cover and equipment. It is not essential that a provider meets every one of these criteria, but they are all highly desirable, and a good provider should be prepared to meet the majority.
3. **Responsibilities of the OOSH centre** - A checklist of responsibilities an OOSH centre should meet when hiring an external provider, such as child protection, supervision by OOSH staff, and consulting with parents and caregivers about the proposed use of a provider and the cost involved.
4. **Further information** - A list of organisations and resources that OOSH centres may choose to access.



1. Background - The OOSH centre's role in promoting physical activity

The benefits of physical activity

Communities are increasingly recognising the personal, social and health benefits of an active lifestyle. For children, regular moderate or vigorous physical activity can:

- Reduce depression and anxiety
- Build self-confidence and self-esteem
- Combat chronic disease
- Help manage weight and prevent obesity
- Strengthen the heart and lungs
- Build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints, and
- Promote better sleep patterns.

Despite these known benefits, today many children are spending considerable time in sedentary activities such as watching television, playing computer games and travelling in cars. Urban design has meant that many do not have regular access to backyards, playgrounds, cycleways and other recreation areas. Children's opportunities to participate in regular physical activity can be further reduced by community perceptions about safety and child protection. Because of these concerns some parents and caregivers place greater emphasis on supervised, structured physical activity (eg training for a sporting team) and less emphasis on unsupervised, unstructured physical activity (eg playing in a park). Some structured physical activity may incur costs, which may limit access and / or opportunity for some children.

The OOSH setting

OOSH centres can provide a supportive environment that enhances the health outcomes of children. They can offer children the chance to participate in physical activity that is supervised yet challenging, and to build physical skills in a non-threatening environment before and after school and during school holidays.



In doing this, OOSH centres can play an important role in developing positive attitudes to healthy lifestyles among children.

The planned physical activity programs provided at OOSH centres enable children to improve their health status through opportunities to apply what they learn in physical education and school sport programs to develop and refine new physical skills and interests.

The importance of play in children's development

Principle 7 of the United Nations *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* identifies the importance of play and recreation as rights of children – that they have the same purposes as education and that society and public authorities are duty bound to promote the enjoyment of these rights. Thus according to the NSW Board of Studies *Personal Development, Health and Physical Education K-6 Syllabus* children should be physically active every day in as many ways as they can, and as reported by Egger et al. in *Physical activity guidelines for Australians: Summary and appendices* they should think of physical activity as an opportunity, not an inconvenience. The Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing recommends that children aged 5 to 12:

- Need at least 60 minutes (and up to several hours) of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day
- Should spend no more than two hours per day using electronic media (computer games, television, internet, etc.) for entertainment, especially during daylight hours.

The OOSH environment is founded on the philosophy of play and its importance to children's development according to Finlason in *The Network: When dreams become reality*. As Smith highlights in the publication *Play is important*, any physical activity offered in the OOSH sector must recognise the following essential principles:

- Play is a process by which children learn. Good play opportunities are vital to the full development of the child.
- The type, quality and diversity of children's physical settings directly affect the type, quality and diversity of children's play.
- The type, quality and diversity of the social setting (leadership and programming) directly affect play value. Leadership refers to the critical role of trained or other experienced staff engaging children in creative interaction with each other and their surroundings.



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- Children with physical, mental, emotional and social disabilities have an equal right to play opportunities as able-bodied children.
- Integration of children with a disability and able-bodied children is based on the concept of accessibility, which relates to both the physical and social environments (eg the attitudes and awareness of staff towards children with disabilities will greatly affect the rate and depth of integration).
- The quality of settings and their play value are severely threatened by the possibility of liability costs. Risk management strategies and management policies should be developed to protect the quality and value of children's play settings.

Planning physical activities

The OOSH sector has a long history of providing programs for children that incorporate physical activity as a critical component of a balanced and child-friendly environment. The OOSH Quality Assurance system based on Principle 5.2, Quality Area 5 of the National Child Accreditation Council's (NCAC), *Quality practices guide*, and implemented in 2003 supports this practice.

When planning physical activity programs, OOSH centres need to recognise that formal physical activity sessions are designed to complement informal play opportunities, not replace them. Time allocated to informal play enables children to practise and refine skills learnt in formal physical activity sessions.

While OOSH staff may be best placed to deliver formal physical activity programs, some centres may choose to engage an external provider to extend and enhance the physical activity program - and doing this effectively is the main focus of these guidelines. However, OOSH centres should consider carefully why they are employing an external provider to deliver parts of the program, and whether they need to do so.

Ideally, no additional fee should be charged for this service. Some Child Care Benefit (CCB) approved OOSH centres are able to access Federal Government funding through the Australian Sports Commission to provide physical activity free of charge. This has generated a renewed community interest in providing a range of physical activity for children. In responding to this, many OOSH centres are engaging external providers to deliver structured physical activities for children who participate in before school, after school and vacation care activities. The Australian Sports Commission has accredited through a registration process a number of external providers.



Part 3 of these guidelines details the responsibilities OOSH centres should meet when engaging an external provider, but in brief they include the following:

- All appropriate child protection procedures must be addressed.
- The provider must have relevant insurance policies and provide a copy of a certificate of currency for each.
- Duty of care and supervision responsibilities remain with OOSH staff.
- The program must extend and not replace the centre's program.
- All children must have access to the centre's programs, which typically reflect the school's physical education and / or sport programs.
- Where a fee is charged for sessions delivered by an external provider, alternative provisions must be made for children who are unable to pay.
- Activities must be suitable for the children participating in any session delivered by a provider.
- The program should be an opportunity for centre staff to undertake professional learning to develop their skills in this area.

About the guidelines

These guidelines refer to situations where OOSH centres plan to engage an external provider to deliver formal physical activity programs. The guidelines should not be taken as an endorsement of the external provision of physical activity within OOSH centres. They are meant to assist management committees / coordinators to inform their decisions about whether or not to select an external provider.



2. Choosing a provider

A checklist of criteria to consider

It is not essential that an external provider meets every one of these criteria, but they are all highly desirable, and a good provider should be prepared to meet the majority.

Area of focus	Is the external provider prepared to:	Yes/No
<i>Legal and safety requirements</i>	Supply evidence (eg referral from another service) to the OOSH centre to confirm its suitability as a provider?	
	Provide proof of relevant qualifications (eg Australian Sports Commission Community Coach Training Program) and experience (eg have worked with children) of staff?	
	Only engage staff who have satisfied the requirements of the NSW legislated Working with Children background check or Prohibited Employment Declaration, as appropriate? (This must be done each time a provider and their employees enter into employment at an OOSH centre.) See www.kids.nsw.gov.au for the current version of the <i>Working With Children Employer Guidelines</i> .	
	Provide documentation of business registration, including an ABN?	
	Have professional indemnity, public liability and worker's compensation insurance policies and provide a copy of a certificate of currency for each? (Those who receive an honorarium or receive no payments are considered volunteers for worker's compensation purposes.)	
	Provide a risk assessment to enable the program to be customised to meet the needs of the children and the OOSH centre and its environment?	
	Ensure that all equipment and activities used in the sessions are safe for children?	

Checklist continues over page ...



Checklist of criteria continued ...

Area of focus	Is the external provider prepared to:	Yes/No
<i>Program delivery</i>	Operate from a written program that can be viewed by centre staff and parents or caregivers on request?	
	Evaluate its physical activity program on a regular basis, including asking centre staff to provide feedback on instruction and program effectiveness?	
	Demonstrate the ability to deliver age and ability appropriate child-centred physical activity sessions that enable children to develop skills through hands-on activity?	
	Use sufficient equipment to ensure all children are enthusiastically engaged in the activity throughout the session?	
<i>Working with OOSH centre staff</i>	Conduct, where required, an orientation session for centre staff on the physical activity being delivered?	
	Encourage centre staff to actively participate in the session to assist them to develop their skills in physical activity instruction?	
<i>Engaging with children and the community</i>	Enable children to learn skills and understand how and why they move, rather than just play a game or do an activity?	
	Enable all children, including children with additional needs, to freely participate without pressure in a variety of physical activity experiences at a level that is appropriate to their abilities?	
	Provide opportunities for all children to experience personal success through physical activity that promotes cooperation, enjoyment and fun?	
	Reflect the socioeconomic, cultural and / or religious backgrounds of children at the centre?	
	Provide children with physical activity links to the local community so they can continue activity outside school and OOSH centre times?	

3. Responsibilities of the OOSH centre

A checklist of responsibilities centres should meet

The checklist in Part 2 gives guidance for OOSH centres in choosing a suitable external provider for physical activities. However, OOSH centres should also meet a number of key responsibilities to ensure quality program delivery. The following checklist outlines these responsibilities, some of which correspond to criteria from the provider checklist.

Not all these responsibilities must be strictly met for a program to proceed, but centres must endeavour to their best ability to meet all the requirements.

Area of focus	The OOSH centre should:	Yes/No
Legal and safety requirements	Ensure all appropriate child protection procedures (eg Working with Children background check or Prohibited Employment Declaration) have been addressed. (A Prohibited Employment Declaration must be completed each time a provider and their employees enter into employment at your centre.) See www.kids.nsw.gov.au for current version of the <i>Working With Children Employer Guidelines</i> .	
	Examine the provider's risk assessment of the planned activity to ensure the provider complies with centre requirements.	
	Ensure the provider has professional indemnity, public liability and worker's compensation insurance policies and provides a copy of a certificate of currency for each.	
	Ensure professional advice is sought before signing a contract, licence agreement, indemnity form or any other document the provider has asked the centre to sign.	
	Develop a letter of agreement that details what service the provider is to deliver and on what terms, which both the centre and provider will sign.	
	Conduct a risk assessment if children are being taken to participate in activities at another location or venue.	
	Identify the centre's physical boundaries for the provider and establish the importance of working within these boundaries.	
	Instruct the provider and its staff on what to do in the event of an accident, fire drill or other emergencies.	
	Advise the provider and its staff on the medical, physical, socioeconomic, cultural and / or religious considerations relevant to the centre.	
	Ensure the provider and its staff are familiar with centre protocol and reporting procedures for accidents.	
	Follow OOSH centre policies regarding excursions and travel when children participate in activities at a location or venue off site.	

Checklist continues over page ...



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Checklist of responsibilities continued ...

Area of focus	The OOSH centre should:	Yes/No
<i>Advising and overseeing the external provider</i>	Ensure the externally delivered program extends, rather than replaces the centre's program.	
	Appoint a centre staff member to liaise with the provider and oversee the program.	
	Ensure that a centre staff member is in attendance and actively supervises each session of physical activity delivered by the provider, regardless of location or venue.	
	Hold an orientation session for the provider, including discussing centre philosophy and relevant policies and procedures.	
	Inform the provider of the centre's duty of care and supervision responsibilities.	
	Instruct the provider and its staff on the centre's use of rewards and sanctions.	
	Instruct the provider and its staff on the arrival and dismissal protocols for physical activity sessions implemented by the centre.	
	Instruct the provider and its staff on behaviour management strategies used by the centre.	
<i>Meeting needs of children and parents and caregivers</i>	Ensure proposed activities are suitable for the children attending the centre.	
	Make alternative provisions for children who cannot participate through injury or illness or other circumstances.	
	Consult with parents and caregivers about the activity, the cost of using a provider to deliver physical activity sessions and whether or not they are able / willing to pay.	



4. Further information

Organisations

Network of Community Activities -
www.netoosh.org.au

Lead agency for Out of School Hours services
in NSW.

Active After-school Communities, Australian
Sports Commission -
www.ausport.gov.au/aasc

National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC)
www.ncac.gov.au/aasc

Lead agency for Quality Assurance matters.

NSW Commission for Children and Young
People
www.kids.nsw.gov.au

The current version of *Working With Children
Employer Guidelines* can be found under the
Working With Children Check icon.

Briefing Papers

Australian Sports Commission -
www.ausport.gov.au/junior

- Paper Number 5. *Physical Activity Pedagogy
for Junior Sport.*
- Paper Number 8. *Preparation of Personal
Responsibility for Junior Sport Delivery.*

Guidelines

Australian Sports Commission -
www.ausport.gov.au/junior

- Guidelines Number 2. *Getting Young People
Involved.*
- Guidelines Number 6. *People Making it
Happen.*

NSW Commission for Children and Young
People -
www.kids.nsw.gov.au

- *Working With Children Employer Guidelines.*



Resources

Australian Sports Commission (2000). *Beginning coaching*. Canberra: Australian Sports Commission.

Australian Sports Commission (2001). *Better coaching*. Canberra: Australian Sports Commission.

Community Coach Training Program (CCTP) - www.ausport.gov.au/participating/schools_and_juniors/aasc/get_involved/deliverers

A course with five modules developed by the Australian Sports Commission for deliverers of the Active After-School Communities (AASC) program.

Finlason, J. 2004. *The Network: When dreams become reality*. Sydney: Network of Community Activities.

National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC). 2004. *Quality practices guide*. Sydney: NCAC FDCQA Publications.

Smith, W. 2006. *Play is important*. (Revised ed.). Sydney: Network of Community Activities.

Copies of the Guidelines

Copies of the *Guidelines for using external providers for physical activity in out of school hours centres* can be found on the PCAL website at www.pcal.nsw.gov.au. Links to this site are available on the following websites:

Network of Community Activities - www.netoosh.org.au

NSW Department of the Arts, Sport and Recreation - www.dasr.nsw.gov.au

Australian Council for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (ACHPER) NSW - www.achpernsw.com.au



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Department of Health and Ageing, 2004. *Australia's physical activity recommendations for 5-12 year olds*. Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia. Retrieved from www.health.gov.au, on 3 November 2007.

Egger, G, Donovan, R, Swinburn, B, Giles-Corti, B, & Bull, F, 1999. *Physical activity guidelines for Australians: Summary and appendices. A report of the University of Western Australia and The Centre for Health Promotion and Research Sydney for the Department of Health and Aged Care*. Canberra: University of Western Australia and The Centre for Health Promotion and Research Sydney. Retrieved from www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-physical-guidelines-summary-cnt.htm on 16 November 2007.

Finlason, J. 2004. *The Network: When dreams become reality*. Sydney: Network of Community Activities.

National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC), 2004. *Quality practices guide*. Sydney: NCAC FDCQA Publications. Retrieved from www.ncac.gov.au/resources/fdcqa_pub.htm on 31 March 2008.

NSW Board of Studies, 2007. *Personal Development, Health and Physical Education K-6 Syllabus*. Sydney: NSW Board of Studies.

NSW Commission for Children and Young People, February 2008. *Working With Children Employer Guidelines*. Retrieved from www.kids.nsw.gov.au on 8 May 2008.

Smith, W. 2006. *Play is important*. (Revised ed.). Sydney: Network of Community Activities.

United Nations General Assembly, 1959. *Declaration of the rights of the child*. General Assembly Resolution 1386(XIV), 14 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No.16) at 19, U.N. Doc. A/4354 (1959). Retrieved from www.cirp.org/library/ethics/UN-declaration/ (revised 26 September 2006) on 22 January 2008.





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