

## Go4Fun Information Sheet

The issue of childhood overweight and obesity is progressively more relevant to our community, with 1 in 4 NSW children now overweight or obese. As a result an increasing number of children are facing physical, emotional, social and medical consequences.

### What is Go4Fun?

Go4Fun® is a free, 10 week healthy lifestyle program for overweight and obese children aged 7- 13 years and their families, funded by the NSW Ministry of Health as part of the government's Healthy Children's Initiative and the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health. Healthy Children Initiative Programs focus on a settings approach with Go4Fun focusing on the community and family setting to increase healthy lifestyle behaviors and decrease the prevalence of childhood obesity.

Go4Fun® program is offered **FREE** to families and is run after school for two hours at a range of locations across Western Sydney. Local, tertiary trained leaders use the Go4Fun educational program to combine three essential elements necessary for safe, effective weight management and sustained healthy lifestyle change.

- Exercise and physical activity
- Good nutrition
- Behaviour change

An important aspect of the Go4Fun Program is that a parent or carer must attend each session with their child so that lifestyle change is addressed as a family issue. As a result parents are also provided with information and discussion time on:

- the importance of families eating meals and being active together,
- setting goals,
- the importance of routines and sleep for children.

More than 1000 children and their families have already benefited from the Go4Fun program in Western Sydney, and we hope that this program can assist you in your daily role supporting children and families that may have a mix of negative lifestyle behaviours, negative body image and self esteem issues.

### Success to Date

The research behind the Go4Fun 7-13 program (Feasibility Trial, Pilot Trial and Randomised Control Trial) has demonstrated significant sustained benefits for participating families including reduced waist circumference, significant improvements in children's BMI (Body Mass Index),, increased physical activity, cardiovascular fitness and improved mental well-being.

Results to date in NSW have shown on average per participant:

- BMI decreased from 27.1kg/m<sup>2</sup> to 26.4kg/m<sup>2</sup> (an average 0.7 BMI unit reduction)
- waist circumferences decreased by 2.2cm,
- 6.3 hour decrease in sedentary activities per week
- average increase of 4.8 hours per week physical activity
- improvements in self-esteem, body esteem and self-confidence.

Western Sydney Programs have also collected information from participants that showed a positive impact on the mental and emotional health of participants with social networks increased and friendships developed. This impact is evident in the following comments made by children who attended the program:

*"It's fun learning new ideas"*

*"The kids are friendly, the leaders are also very friendly"*

*"I loved the fact that it was suitable for everyone and we had lots of fun and laughs"*

*"I liked fitting in because sometimes I don't fit in much"*

Parents also provided positive feedback about the program:

*"I liked meeting new people and learning to eat healthier"*

*"The program was easy to follow and informative, I like the non-competitive sporting activities the children took part in every week"*

*"I feel they are more active, not complaining as much, eating the right food, helping me out at home, having a walk and helping me do the shopping"*

*"They eat on time, sleep on time and my family starts eating healthy food and they are starting to be more active"*

There are several ways you can help spread the word:

- Go4Fun advertisement in your newsletter/on your website
- Go4Fun posters on your notice boards
- Go4Fun story/ article in your newsletter
- Go4Fun complimentary brochure to patrons
- Like Go4Fun on Facebook
- Brief presentation about Go4Fun/Childhood obesity at a staff meeting
- Information stall at your venue during school holiday events
- Host a Go4Fun program at your venue
- We're open to any other ideas you have

Our Go4Fun team are available to answer any questions. Please phone us on (02) 9840 3603 or email anytime.

Thank you in advance for playing a significant role in helping children and families in your local community lead healthier lives.

Kind regards

Michelle Nolan

Health Promotion Officer | Go4Fun | Healthy Children's Initiative

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