

Active In-Betweens is an after school program designed to support the overall health and well-being of children aged 8-12, particularly those living in socially disadvantaged communities. The program focuses on improving physical activity, healthy eating habits, and social connectedness by providing a safe, supported environment where children can explore and learn together through play and community involvement.

Inputs

- Program Facilitators & Regular Volunteers: Guide and support the children through the program activities.
- Community Partners & Collaborators: Provide resources and opportunities for additional activities and community engagement.
- Local Communities: Engagement with families, community centres, and local organizations.
- Behavioural Guidelines ("The Promise"): A collaborative agreement between participants and facilitators to foster respect, cooperation, and positive behaviour.
- Project Advisory Group: Oversees the program's development and ensures it meets its goals.
- Funding and In-Kind Support: Financial and material resources provided by funders and partners.

Outputs

Participants

- Children aged 8-12 from socially disadvantaged communities within the Shellharbour and Wollongong regions, with a focus on promoting health and resilience.

Activities

- Weekly 1.5-hour afterschool sessions that include a mix of structured and unstructured play, physical activities, and learning.
- Provision of healthy snacks, including seasonal fruits, vegetables and a "weird and wonderful" (food), to promote good nutrition.
- Connections with local organizations through guest speakers and group excursions.
- Opportunities for children to take on leadership roles and engage in group decision-making.
- Positive role modeling provided by facilitators and guest mentors from cultural, sporting, and creative sectors.

Products

- Data sets on children's health, nutritional knowledge, physical activity levels, and social connectedness, gathered through observations and participant feedback.

Outcomes & Impacts

Short term

- Increased interest in physical play and active lifestyles.
- Improved understanding of healthy snacks and hydration, leading to better dietary choices.
- Greater awareness of local community activities and available services.
- Enhanced social skills and emotional regulation as children learn to interact with peers and mentors in a supported environment.
- Strengthened relationships between children, facilitators, and community centres.

Medium term

- Development of group cohesion and social connections, fostering a sense of belonging.
- Improved communication, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution skills.
- Increased physical activity levels and skills, reducing sedentary behaviour.
- Strengthened self-determination and resilience as children face new challenges in a supportive environment.
- Feelings of safety and trust established within the community centres and program facilitators.

Long term

- Children develop lasting healthy habits, leading to improved physical activity and nutrition.
- Reduction in sedentary behaviours and anti-social tendencies as children become more engaged in positive activities.
- Strengthened community and relationships with positive role models that persist beyond the program.
- Increased sense of agency and leadership in community and family settings.

Assumptions:

- Regular attendance, engaged community partners, and a focus on leadership and activities will drive behaviour change.

External Factors:

- Availability of funding, competing school events, and weather conditions may affect program delivery. Other services available to participants could also influence engagement.