

# **Tweens & Teens**

## **Support for the 'middle years'**

**Supporting Young People's Connection  
to Activities Project (SYPCAP)**

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## Acronym guide for SYPCAP framework document

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| SYPCAP | Supporting young people connection to activities program                                  |
| OSHC   | Out of school hours care  |
| OOSH   | Out of school hours   |
| PCYC   | Police and Community Youth Clubs  |
| DoCS   | NSW Department of Community Services<br>(now Department of Family and Community Services) |
| CCB    | Child Care Benefit  |
| CoS    | City of Sydney  |
| WAYS   | Waverley Action for Youth Services  |
| LGA    | Local Government Area   |
| AASC   | Active After School Communities   |
| LINCS  | Local Information Network for Community Services  |
| NSW    | New South Wales   |
| YMCA   | Young Men's Christian Associations  |
| NIDA   | National Institute for the Dramatic Arts  |
| CSIRO  | Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation                              |
| SMOP   | South Maroubra Outreach Program   |

## Model framework for the Supporting Young People 9-13 Connection to Activities Project (SYPCAP)

The *Supporting Young People's Connection to Activities Project* (SYPCAP) was funded under the NSW Government's Better Futures Strategy which aims to support children and young people aged 9-13 years. This report provides a summary of project history, processes and outcomes. It also seeks to promote to a wider audience the benefits of adopting the project's model framework.

### WHAT IS THE PROJECT ABOUT?

The SYPCAP has been about creating an integrated and flexible approach to engaging with children across a range of out of school and recreational settings.

A key outcome of the project has been the creation of a service framework that can assist service networks and local government authorities to engage with this age group across urban and regional areas of NSW.

This model was developed across five local government areas in eastern Sydney, but its principles of engagement and collaboration are highly adaptable to local conditions. The processes set out in this framework facilitate continuous improvement and are flexible and applicable to local needs and resources.

### WHY TARGET 9—13-YEAR-OLDS?

In 2003, a series of community service consultations conducted by the Department of Community Services highlighted the need to work with 9—14-year-olds. The aim was to develop a regional plan in response to identified issues and gaps. Three planning forums in inner and eastern Sydney specifically looked at local area issues. The five participating Local Government Areas (LGAs) within Inner and Eastern Sydney were:

- Randwick
- Waverley
- Woollahra
- Botany Bay
- City of Sydney.

The resulting Regional Plan identified three priorities, acknowledging that gaps existed in the provision of services for 9—13-year-olds (pre-teens) and that it was important to work with this age group. Children at this age are less inclined to use Out-of-School-Hours Services (OSHC) and there were few alternative services to engage them and meet their needs.





Waverley Council was commissioned to research the recreational needs of young people and children across inner and eastern Sydney and to get a better picture of what children and young people wanted to do in their spare time. This work was supported by the Better Futures Inner and Eastern Sydney Regional Working Group.

### WAVERLEY COUNCIL'S PRE-TEENS RESEARCH PROJECT

The Waverley Council Better Futures Inner and Eastern Sydney Pre-Teens Research Project (2005) identified a range of issues for this age group in accessing after school services. These included:

- service gaps
- perception of the age group as being 'difficult'
- services confronted by challenges of retaining older children
- systemic barriers
- lack of integration with other services
- poor promotion and lack of information
- insufficiently trained staff
- inappropriate programming for the age group.

It was also recognised that there was potential for many services and organisations to provide support and activities to pre-teens.

Since 2007, Better Futures funding has assisted Waverley Council to build the capacity of child care and youth services to provide better targeted activities for 9-13 year olds. SYPCAP has listened to children and translated their ideas into a flexible program model. This model brings together service providers to offer activities that are fun, create resilience in children and connect them to their communities.

### MAKING THE MOST OF THE IN-BETWEEN YEARS

Adults often refer to children aged 8-12 years as tweens. A tween is a person who is neither a young child nor an adolescent. Many tweens want to be teens but are not quite old enough yet. The pre-teen years are often about testing the boundaries of independence. They still need the reassurance that children require, but they also need to be able to exercise autonomy, choice, control and safe risk-taking.

Tweens can be a complicated age group to connect with in a relevant and authentic way, as developmentally they are in transition. However it is relatively easy to consult with them in a genuine way. They enjoy being asked about their views and having their say. Having grown up with the internet, tweens are the first demographic that takes the online world completely for granted; they are media savvy. Tweens have more choices as to how to spend their time, so they want their time to be valued. Tweens need experiences that bolster their sense of belonging and achievement.

Community, relationships and 'fitting in' with their peers is critical for children at this point in their development. This is the age at which they want to move out of a 'care' environment such as the OSHC service sector into one that offers more variety and freedom. Targeted support systems delivered through activities is a critical strategy that helps to keep them safe.

Successful programs for 9—13-year-olds include a mixture of structured and unstructured activities that offer the time and space for children to be independent and make their own decisions, including the decision not to be involved.

Because we have a better understanding of the nature of the biological and developmental changes experienced in early adolescence, the 9-13 years age group is under increasing focus. We have a window of opportunity with children in the pre-teen years, building resilience through relationships and strengths-based youth work is a critical part of how we work with them at this stage of their life.

## THE CONCEPT

The basic approach of SYPCAP was to use the OSHC and youth services as the key providers, as they already deliver the majority of accessible and affordable after school and vacation care activities across NSW. The aim was to successfully re-engage (or retain) children with these services by designing more attractive and targeted programs in after-school hours and during vacation periods.

Parents who need financial help can claim Child Care Benefit (CCB) as fee relief when their children attend OSHC services; this makes them affordable for families who struggle with the cost of childcare. The majority of OSHC services are CCB approved. CCB fee relief can be applied to any childcare age as long as the provider is registered.

As the auspice organisation for the SYPCAP, Waverley Council employed a project officer who not only worked with OSHC services but also with Waverley Council and other local government staff and programs. For example, libraries, holiday programs and vacation care providers were encouraged to trial age-specific programming in a range of settings.

The SYPCAP assisted OSHC services by either bringing in external providers (eg arts programs), or by taking children to age-specific activities and co-delivering programs with partner agencies.

The City of Sydney youth services with their 'On the move' tweens holiday programs already had some experience of working in this way, transitioning children from childcare services in the fourth school term. In the eastern suburbs the first agency to test this approach was Waverley Action for Youth Services (WAYS) with their 'Tweens on Tuesday' program.

## How the tweens OSHC and youth services transition program worked:

Early in 2007 SYPCAP worked with youth and out-of-school-hours care services to trial an approach that would introduce children into youth services as part of a transition process. A cluster of OSHC services that were located close to the WAYS and Shack youth services, participated in bringing the older children along to the youth service once a week in after-school hours to co-deliver an afternoon of activities at the centre.

## PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

Waverley Council provided a bus at no cost to the program. One worker from each OSHC service rode on the bus with the children and WAYS provided a youth worker to facilitate the afternoon program. Children helped to plan the program. Activities included circle time, cooking, arts projects, excursions to local parks and to Sydney attractions. Youth centre drop in activities like pool and computer games were popular. Attendance permission forms signed by each parent were collected by the OSHC centres before any child was allowed to participate. The tweens program had 25 children attending at any one session, with a maximum of 35 registered or attending.

Attendance records at participating OSHC service showed that 9—12-year-olds who had previously disengaged from OSHC services would re-enrol in order to attend these activity afternoons. Vacation care programs for children at the older end of the age range saw as much as a 400% increase in enrolments.



For participating workers, children and their families, the highlights of the tween programs included:

- feeling special (only children aged 9+ could attend)
- having a say in planning the activity programs
- being able to hang out and relax with friends
- not being treated like a little kid
- getting away from the smaller kids
- it's exciting to get on a bus to a purpose built youth centre where usually only the older kids (11+) go
- meeting kids of similar ages from other centres and being able to organise age specific activities
- both youth and childcare staff are learning new skills through the activities delivered for children at the older end of the age range
- enabled low-cost (and often free) access to after-school activities for all families across the project areas
- introduced children to a range of new services and organisations

'Tweenies at WAYS' Tuesday program continues in 2011, with some modifications owing to difficulties caused by transport to and from those OSHC centres that are located furthest away from the WAYS premises. The average attendance at each session is 14 children. These numbers are boosted when OSHC centres participate in the shared program outings and excursions that happen at least twice per school term.

The Shack youth services workers now go into OSHC services several times each school term to build relationships with the children. Once each term the Shack hosts OSHC children at their centre for a special activity. These contacts have markedly increased tweens' participation in both the OSHC and youth service's vacation care programs and are a valuable part of the transition process from primary to secondary schooling.

## KEY PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

At the core of the model is a shared understanding that improved service delivery must be based on providers (local government, specific agencies, generalist services) working in partnership. Services who have started to embrace a more collaborative approach described the benefits and opportunities of integrated planning as follows:

- better resource sharing
- reduced costs
- better access
- improved information pathways
- sustainability
- more varied and flexible programming
- working effectively with a more challenging age group.



## THE SYPCAP ACTIVITIES THAT BROUGHT ABOUT POSITIVE CHANGES INCLUDED:

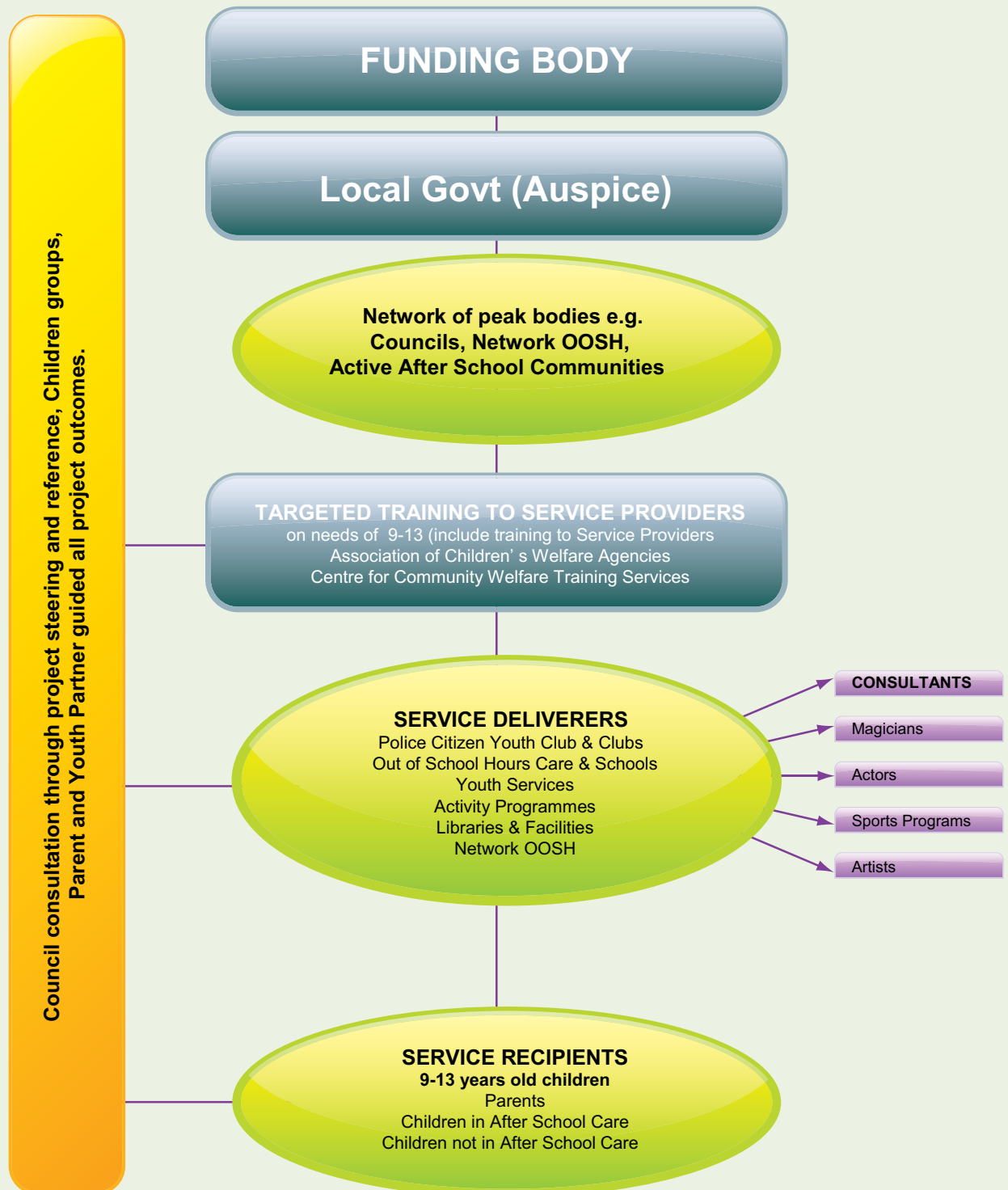
- Asking children what they want to do and trusting them to design their own programs
- Identifying the key services and Local Government partners offering after school and holiday programs across the region and assisting these to improve services for 9—13-year-olds
- Simplifying program planning by identifying relevant services and organisations as well as venue capacity in each LGA in a new activities directory
- Creating a focus in local government planning on the needs of 9—13-year-olds in relation to OSHC services and youth agencies
- Promoting the importance of working with pre-teen children at interagency forums across the region
- Delivering training and information sessions for youth, childcare and State Library staff that focused on the specific developmental needs of 9—13-year-olds
- Developing a protocol that helped services to plan and work together more efficiently
- Assisting services to establish tween-specific programs in OSHC, libraries, youth services and other organisations
- Bringing children of the same age from different schools across neighbourhoods and LGAs together for shared activities
- Providing small amounts of funding to services and projects to trial and model activities for 9—13-year-olds in after-school and holiday periods
- Collating and promoting information resources about the kind of projects that will attract children aged 9+
- Forming 'service clusters' of childcare and youth service agencies in each geographical area of the sub-region, who are now delivering programs for 9—13-year-olds in a more integrated manner; making best use of shared resources
- Ensuring that transition projects from primary to high school include services that can support tweens as they grow into adolescence.



## Model framework

### Supporting Young People 9-13 Connection to Activities Project (SYPCAP)

The flow chart below illustrates the key components of the integrated service model and demonstrates the connections and relationships between funding body, auspice body and all participating stakeholders.





## Showcasing the integrated planning approach

### EXAMPLE - SUCCESSFUL PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIP

The fun-based 'Play For life' seven-week soccer program in the Randwick LGA was a highly successful activity. It is a good example of careful collaborative planning and partnership in the delivery of a simple, cost-effective and popular program.

The 35 participants were children attending OSHC service in Maroubra Junction, South Coogee and Coogee. The program was delivered at the Eastern Sydney PCYC in Daceyville which was free to use, and tutors were from the Active After Schools Communities program, (AASC) a federally-funded initiative.

All three OSHC centres used their AASC funding for the purpose of delivering this after-school activity. Better Futures paid the children's PCYC membership fees and the final excursion costs. This contribution

enabled the children to be eligible for a whole range of activities after the OSHC program had finished. It had the further advantage of introducing the PCYC to a whole new target group around which to plan services and programs.

Combining children from the OSHC services let them meet new faces and develop relationships with children from the surrounding areas. The children experimented with a range of sport programs and were introduced to a well-resourced facility they didn't previously know about.

Total cost to the SYPCAP project was \$350. This after school sports program illustrates a co-operative approach that can be adapted and used to create projects in a range of service settings.



## The service framework – planning and working together

This section provides a detailed checklist and service planning toolkit to help services build greater capacity for delivering popular and cost-effective activities for 9—13-year-olds.

Other activity ideas and a great example of a 'Seniors in OSHC' program are attached in appendices 1 and 2. More information and project planning templates will be made available on Waverley Council's website [www.waverley.nsw.gov.au](http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au) as part of SYPCAP project documentation.

Most services have a good grasp of planning essentials so what is needed is a stronger focus on relationship building – with the target group as well as potential project partners and program providers who can help you deliver great outcomes.

Here are a few things to think about before planning a program:

### Researching and scanning your environment

How do we identify local needs? Who are our potential partner services?

Who to consult? Who to work with?

### Talking to 9—13-year-old children

What do children love about the OSHC and vacation care programs for tweens? What do 9—13-year-olds want? What makes a good program for them? How do we give them more say?

### Evaluating feedback and developing the activity

How can we meet their expectations? Who can we partner with? Do we need to recruit staff? How can we support our staff – information, resources, training? How can we get the message out? How much will it cost?

### Working together

Do we need partnership protocols and agreements to make things work better?

### Monitoring and reviewing

How are things going? What do parents/carers think? What feedback do we get from the participants? What can we do better?

### Promoting and reporting what we do

Who should know more about us and this activity? Can we cross-promote our services? What information products can we create to promote what we do and get more funding?



## The service framework – a step by step approach

This section reflects on the SYPCAP experiences, approaches and outcomes and describes in detail the individual service planning components.

### 1. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTNER SERVICE PROVIDERS AND LOCAL NEEDS.

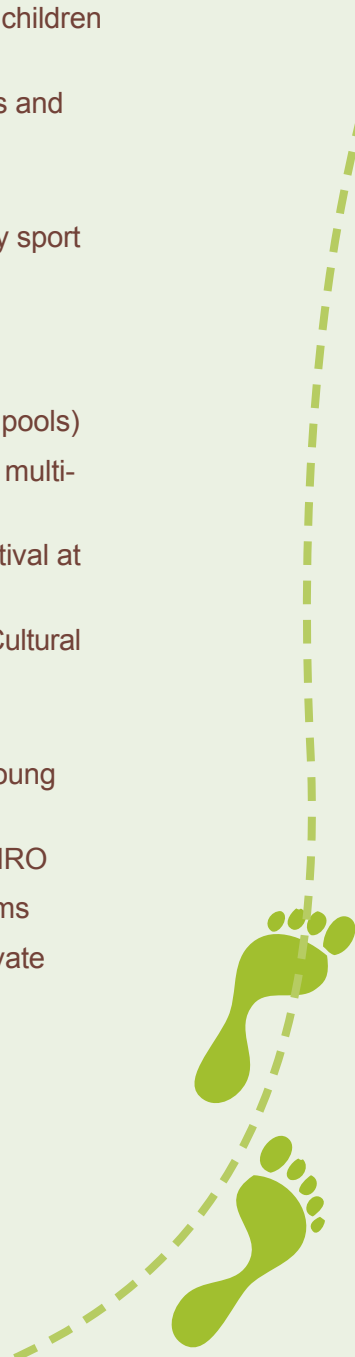
A first step to project planning and the building of effective networks is a local audit of what is available for the age group in your area. Libraries, recreational sports groups, art and holiday program providers across your geographical areas need to be identified. SYPCAP produced a directory of Inner and Eastern Sydney Sport and Leisure Activities for 9—13-year-olds with the help of all project partners. It includes information about transport facilities, service providers including clubs, schools, organisations and service networks, and sector-specific interagencies. It is a useful planning aid for services and agencies wishing to work together.

Local councils produce community service directories on their websites and in libraries. In NSW this database is called LINCS. It is possible to create subdirectories out of LINCS that can collect the specific information required by your local group.

It always helps to contact people in your service network to get updates on new programs and emerging services and share this information across partner networks.

In inner and eastern Sydney, relevant activity providers include:

- Out-of-School-Hours Care services (OSHC)
- Arts and recreation programs
- Public schools that provide after school activities (rare for this age group)
- Surf schools
- Tween-specific programs (offered by some youth services)
- Museums
- Galleries (creative programs for children in school holidays)
- Community-based sports groups and clubs
- Girl Guides and Boy Scouts
- NSW Sport & Recreation holiday sport camps
- PCYCs and YMCAs
- Libraries
- Sporting facilities (eg swimming pools)
- Active after-school communities multi-sports program
- Sydney Children's art-based festival at Carriage Works
- The Bondi Pavilion Community Cultural Centre
- Pine Street Arts Centre
- NIDA & Australian Theatre for Young People holiday courses
- Holiday Science Programs - CSIRO
- Cooking classes holiday programs
- Dance, art, drama and other private providers





## 2. WHO TO CONSULT?

The SYPCAP began by asking OHSC and youth service providers already predominantly working with the age group.

Stakeholders to consult or seek feedback from vary from community to community but will primarily include the following:

- Children
- It is crucial to a successful youth activity program to consult children before all others about their interests and the sorts of things they would like to do. Giving children the opportunity to have meaningful input into program design and coordination is a top priority for participation. Getting 'buy in' by children, youth services, and planning authorities at a local government level will ensure sustainability of project outcomes. OSHC services regularly consult with children through their programs but extra input can be gained by talking with children in Years 4, 5, and 6 in schools or informally.
- Out-of-School-Hours Care Services (OSHC's) staff can be canvassed on their ideas for programming and on their capacity to provide for the age group
- Arts and sport providers/clubs
- Parents, through forums, questionnaires, at P&C meetings or informally on the school playground or in parks
- Council's recreation and social planners, community services, youth and childcare program managers or project workers
- School staff - sports teachers, welfare staff and other teachers
- Existing service providers such as holiday and vacation care providers or NSW Parks and Sport and Recreation program providers.
- Volunteers - organisations like community centres and youth services
- Libraries
- PCYCs

## 3. WHO TO WORK WITH?

Creating partnerships and building networks were critical to the rollout of the program. Earlier research had identified that there was great potential in bringing together services that are in close proximity to each other and across sectors, (eg youth services, schools, PCYC's, libraries, OSHC service) to plan and deliver services for 9—13-year-olds.

When forming partnerships, care must be taken to identify partner service providers within the context of local needs. The identification and sharing of resources and infrastructure such as premises, halls, playing fields, staff, consultants, materials, and transport is a useful planning exercise that will make collaborative programming a reality.

Developing a protocol or memorandum of understanding with partner agencies will streamline and simplify working together. Clear planning procedures between youth and OSHC staff assisted in the rollout of joint programs and brought more 9—13-year-olds back into the OSHC services for special 'twins' after school programs.

Some of the key players involved in the SYPCAP have included:

- Waverley Council (auspice and project coordination)
- The Eastern Sydney Youth Services Network (ESYSN)
- The Eastern Sydney OSHC coordinators' forum
- Randwick City Council
- City of Sydney (Youth and Children's Services)
- Waverley Action for Youth Services (WAYS) in Bondi
- The Shack Youth Services
- Kool Kids Club
- South Sydney Youth Services
- Maroubra and Woolloomooloo PCYCs
- Active After School Communities program and several OSHC services.

### 3.1 Working together - Effective strategies for working in partnership

Working in partnership with different agencies and providers is rewarding but can also be challenging. Here are some strategies we discovered that helped us build relationships and made working together easier:

- Partnerships, once established, need to be nurtured for the benefit of all involved. This can be done with regular email contact, attendance at interagency or service specific meetings
- Regular planning and evaluation meetings at the beginning and end of school term to help with programming for after school and vacation care.
- Establish connections with arts and sports groups to link them to the tweens program for mutual benefit.
- Ensure that program activity schedules get sent to school newsletters in time for parents to organise their children's activities in after-school or vacation programs.
- Offer the opportunity for email contact with participants to be able to promote upcoming activities and think about using Facebook or Twitter for your tweens programs.

### 3.2 Working Together - OSHC partnerships with youth services

SYPCAP was successful in creating and sustaining many productive partnerships. Some enduring working relationships include:

- The Waverley Action for Youth Services (WAYS)/OSHC program was developed in partnership with Waverley Council, WAYS and OSHC services at Bondi Beach, Clovelly and Bronte
- An earlier program called the South Maroubra Outreach Program (SMOP) was developed in partnership with Randwick Council, Eastern Sydney PCYC, NSW Departments of Health and Housing, and Shack youth service as well

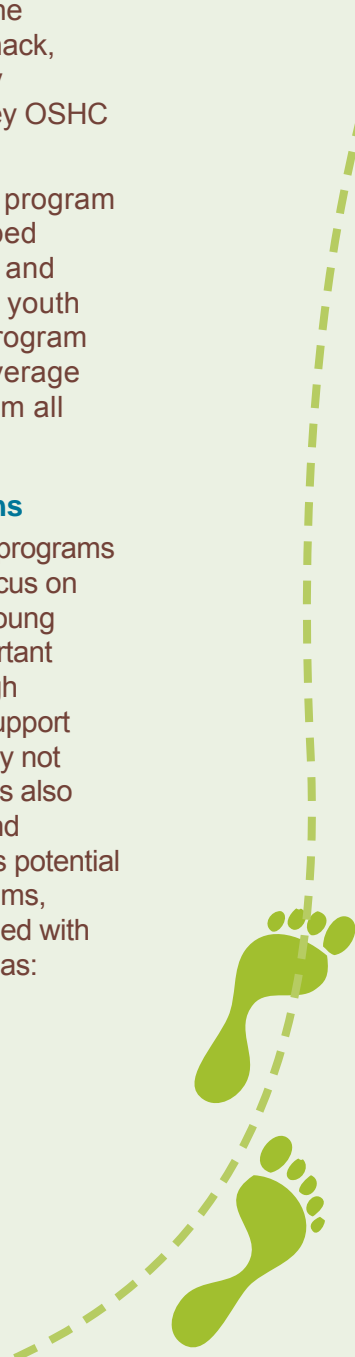
as three OSHC services. This program has now become a combined program with The Shack, Maroubra Junction Care, Coogee Care and the Kool Kids Club,

- All CoS Tweenies programs that the project worked with are coordinated and resourced within Children and Youth Services. They are overseen by the CoS Children Services Officer OSHC Coordinators and Youth Development Officer. Participating services are Maybanke and Millers Point Youth Centres/Pymont OSHC Woolloomooloo Youth Centre, Children's Centre and the PCYC.
- PCYC Junior Dance Party was developed in consultation with the Eastern Suburbs PCYC, The Shack, Botany, Randwick and Waverley Councils and the Eastern Sydney OSHC Coordinators Forum.
- The Junior All Stars basketball program in Woolloomooloo was developed in collaboration with the PCYC and City of Sydney Juanita Nielsen youth and children's services. This program continues with full program coverage for tweens and adolescents from all three services.

### 3.3 Working together - transitions

A key objective of all the SYPCAP programs funded by Better Futures was to focus on transition processes that support young people. These processes are important when young people move on to high school from care services or into support services and activities that they may not have previously encountered. It was also important to make organisations and services aware of this age group as potential service users. To deliver the programs, creative partnerships were developed with organisations and individuals such as:

- Metro Screen
- The Power House
- Lend Lease
- Arts studios





- The Bondi Pavilion Community Cultural Centre
- Bowling Clubs
- Guest artists and writers
- Musicians and hip hop artists
- Surfing and sports clubs and associations
- Recording studios
- Community artists and muralists
- Council's youth and environmental services
- Beaches and parks
- Libraries

Much of the feedback and reflections coming from these joint projects indicate how much the services and participants have benefited from engaging with a target group that had not been considered before.

### 3.4 Working together - partner support

With services busily running projects and activities, we've found that the support we provided to our project partners has kept the planning focused. The project worker has a valuable role in providing resources such as fresh ideas and contacts, information about funding sources and financial contributions, access to buses, and coordination.

The Waverley Council project worker helped to set up projects, broker new partnerships, convene planning and evaluation meetings and keep communication flowing across service provider networks. In many cases, once a tweens project is established the follow up required from Council is strategic advice, planning and evaluation input and small amounts of funding to implement project ideas.



#### 4. WHAT MAKES A GOOD PROGRAM?

Good activity programs for 9—13-year-olds need to ensure a close fit between local needs and service delivery capacity. These may vary widely across a region. Programs need to be designed in collaboration with children, local services and community partners.

Program elements work best when they meet identified local needs and are flexible and complementary to existing services. Sources of sustainable funding need to be identified. Consideration needs to include issues such as socio-economic factors, cultural factors, and structural factors including accessibility issues, transport availability, and geographical distribution of population.

##### 4.1 What do 9—13-year-olds want?

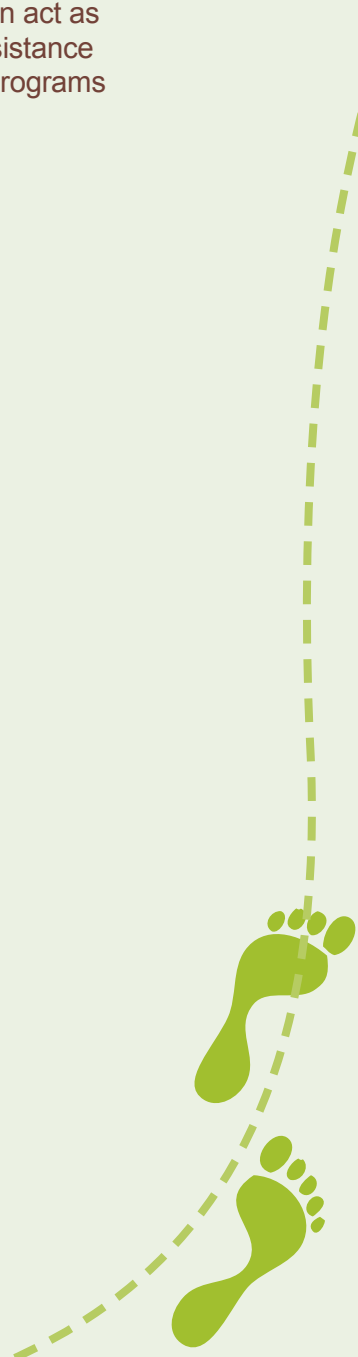
We learned a lot by listening to what children were telling us. The feedback we received over the four years the project ran suggests that:

- Programs should be flexible, child-centered, fun, varied and developed with the full consultation of children at an early stage
- Opportunities need to be provided for children to be independent and make decisions that may include safe risk taking
- Linking with external agencies and organisations helps to offer new experiences and useful transition support
- Activities need to be age- and developmentally-appropriate and include some longer term or continuous projects
- Peer culture values need to be represented
- Projects are valued when they include and involve 'real work' and 'income' made from activities (eg car wash, fund raising, fashion parades, talent shows)
- A dedicated space for the tweens to operate in is important

- Opportunities are valued that offer competence building and creative self-expression
- A mixture of group and individual activities are popular
- It makes a difference to have staff who are trained and enthusiastic about working with tweens

#### 5. RECRUITMENT AND LOGISTICS

Staff and equipment, including transport requirements need to be identified at the early stage of activity planning. It helps if staff from youth and OSHC services familiarise themselves with the venue and visit each others' centres before the start of the program. Have older children act as mentors wherever possible for assistance with transition support into youth programs or high school.



## 6. WHAT ABOUT TRAINING?

In earlier research, youth and child care services staff expressed a need for specific training in providing activities for tweens. Training can build on existing service capacity and provide additional skills, greater confidence and specific programming ideas that will make activities for 9—13-year-olds more relevant and attractive. Local services need to be consulted to find out about their particular training needs.

SYPCAP brought together youth and childcare staff for joint training in how to work with 9—13-year-olds. The training package 'All Aboard' was developed by the Network of Community Services (the peak body for OSHC services in NSW), SYPCAP and reference group members. The Network can provide customised packages for specialised training needs and this information can be found on [www.netoosh.org.au](http://www.netoosh.org.au)

Using external agencies or providers to run arts and sport programs brings expertise and variety to the service but is ideally limited to program set up and training of OSHC or youth services staff. This will maximise cost benefit to the program. Where possible ensure that the interaction with external providers will result in continuing service benefits. It can be counter-productive if there is no skills transfer and the activity can only be run with a costly instructor. More information about using external agencies is provided in Appendix I.

## 7. GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT AND INFORMATION PRODUCTS

It is important to advertise and disseminate project ideas and outcomes across your project region. This will assist the professional development of the services that provide tweens programs and elicits support from the schools and the community. If you have a good tweens vacation care or after school program, tell other services about it.

There are many different ways of promoting your services and informing people in the community about what you do. We have found the following distribution channels to be really useful:

- School newsletters and parent/citizen groups
- Interagencies and their email networks
- Services and clubs
- Local media
- Local government websites
- OSHC services' and youth services' websites
- Holiday and after-school programs
- Children or youth social networking sites
- Libraries

Information products such as directories, brochures or newsletters that describe and promote the project to funding bodies, existing and potential partner services, service users and their families are a valuable resource. The directory 'Inner and Eastern Sydney Sport and Leisure Activities in Eastern Sydney Ages 9-13' is one of many examples.

The directory is popular with parents and workers as it offers accurate and current information on what is available for this age group. It's a great tool to link services and allow them to develop more imaginative programs. SYPCAP developed listings for community transport providers and free buses for excursions across the region. You can find the directory and other information resources on Waverley Council's web site [www.waverley.nsw.gov.au](http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au). Follow the links to the Better Futures Sport and Leisure Activities Directory 9-13 years under the children's and youth services menu.

## 8. FEEDBACK

Appropriate feedback mechanisms for parents, children and existing services need to be in place at every stage of development and project implementation. This includes both formal (questionnaires, letters) and informal (talking with children, parents, and services) means of seeking feedback. Parents often appreciate information resources on the services that work with children aged 9-13 years.

## 9. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

Evaluation should include factors such as attendance, children's and parents'/ caregivers' feedback, and service providers' feedback. Any specific issues or problems that emerge should be highlighted and addressed. To ensure effective evaluation strategies, these can be developed in collaboration with existing service providers.

## 10. POOLING RESOURCES AND COST SAVINGS

There are a number of ways that cost savings can be made. Tweens programs in OSHC and youth services can be run entirely within existing budgets and staffing arrangements. Extra costs for more elaborate programs can be spread out over the year and drawn from centre budgets.

With the 2007–08 WAYS tweens program, the sharing of program tasks meant that the workload for WAYS staff was minimised. Each OSHC service sent one staff member along to the WAYS youth service tweens program with the children from their centre and thus saved on youth service staffing costs. The use of Waverley Council's 20 seater bus and WAYS vans were free to the program so this saved on transport costs. Many services report that they have the free use of service club vehicles in daytime hours and many youth services and PCYCs have their own vehicles.

Ensuring that staff members are licensed to drive a bus can save on driver costs for excursions. The SYPCAP covered the costs of some youth and OSHC staff to gain bus licences.





## 11. FUNDS

Funding is critical to ensure good project outcomes and acts as an incentive to encourage new programming for tweens. The majority of OSHC services are council run or not-for-profit and often need extra funding to initiate the tweens projects/ programs that involve extra costs. Under the SYPCAP, Better Futures funds assisted OSHC services and other providers with extra materials, equipment, consultant costs and occasionally club membership fees to run programs and trial innovative ideas with the target age group. By pooling resources and accessing in-kind support, average individual project expenditure can be kept low, and for SYPCAP activities typically ranged between \$200 and \$500.

## 12. COUNCIL SUPPORT, RESOURCES AND COSTS

Councils are well placed to drive SYPCAP initiatives. They have the capacity to deliver free or low cost programs through their own services and facilities such as libraries, galleries, art centres and childcare services in addition to council-supported cultural organisations and programs. The type of assistance available often includes but is not limited to:

- free or subsidised use of buses and facilities
- advertising in publications and on the web
- organisation of school holiday activities that are age group-specific (eg 5-8 years and 9-13 years or similar) and highly-subsidised where appropriate
- facilitating coordination and planning input.

There are also many other free community resources available to maximise program potential and sustainability. Checking what resources are available through your service organisations and networks will show what potential partnerships/sponsorships might be available in your community.

In regions where services are far apart, or have poor interagency connections, time will need to be spent in the creation of integrated networks. Community development tasks generally require a higher level of funding than that allowed for simple program costs. Placing funds within a central agency or local government authority (that has a measure of control and a strategic approach to planning for children's services) will help to ensure that an integrated approach is being utilised in the sustainability of activities programming for 9—13-year-olds.

## Further information

SYPCAP planning templates and further project information can be found at [www.waverley.nsw.gov.au](http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au)

## Appendix 1

### Thinking outside the square – some inspiring activity ideas

OSHC and youth workers are often the most resourceful people in the human services sector. They are used to getting great outcomes on very sparse resources. Here are a few attractive ideas for programs for tweens developed by the Supporting Young People's Connection to Activities Project (SYPCAP) in partnership with services across the inner and eastern Sydney region.

#### Arts programs

##### MURALS

Artists work in consultation with OSHC staff and children to design and develop a mural. The artist organises the materials, ensures the design is workable and gets the group started. OSHC staff work with the children over a few weeks to paint and finish the mural. The artist then makes a final visit at the end of the project to check progress and to help finalise the work. Successful projects under the SYPCAP included Paddington, Coogee and Glenmore Road public schools. Usually one OSHC will lead and host the project and link children from neighbouring services that want to participate.

##### ZINES

Zines are small magazine projects that can be written in a variety of formats, from computer-printed texts to comics and photography and handwritten text. Print remains the most popular zine format, usually photocopied with a small circulation. Topics covered are broad, including fan fiction, politics, art and design, ephemera and personal journals. They are very popular with the 9—13 years age group and can be created to act as a reflective process relating to topics of interest such as social and physical environment, friendships and other adolescent issues. Projects can be spread over five to six weeks of 90 minute sessions and costs are minimal. Children need access to a digital camera, a photocopier, A4 paper, pencils, glue, string, magazines and a label writer.

##### ARTISTS IN OSHC PROGRAM

The aim of the artists in OSHC programs is to enhance the skills and abilities of OSHC staff to provide interesting and age-appropriate art activities in their services to attract and retain children aged 9—13 years. The program works better with qualified visual artists who are trained and experienced in engaging young children. The artist documents art templates and resource lists that can remain in the service as part of the 9—13 years curriculum. OSHC staff and the artist work closely together to support the activity and children designate their program choices. Activities in the SYPCAP included zine production, self portrait drawing, plarning, (making yarn out of plastic bags) and making mosaics from eggshells and other materials.

##### MOSAIC

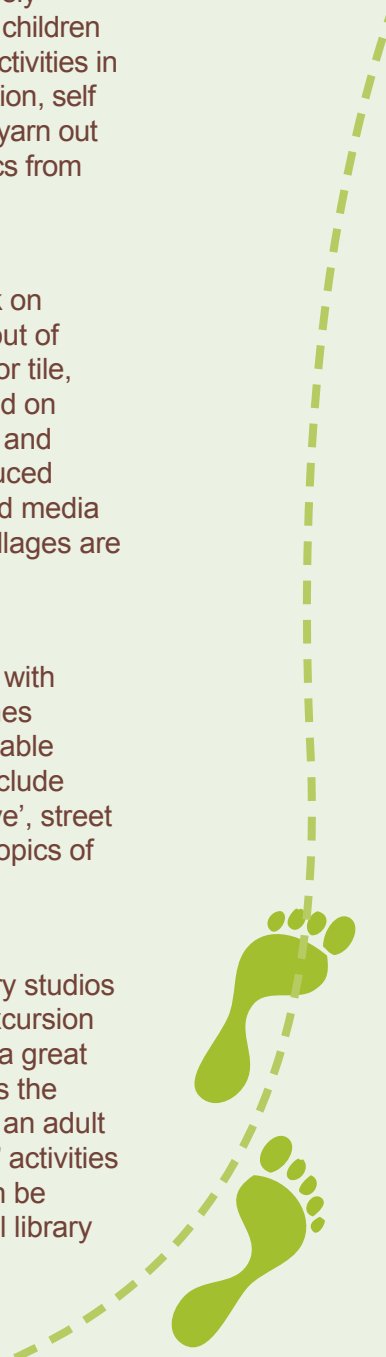
Mosaics are great projects to work on over time. Mosaics can be made out of fabric, paper, mixed media, wood or tile, assembled on boards and mounted on walls or on table tops. Paddington and Coogee public schools have produced beautiful works in both fabric mixed media and tile. Topic- or theme-based collages are effective and cheap to produce.

##### PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECTS

Photographic projects are popular with 9—13-year-olds and great outcomes can be achieved with basic disposable or digital cameras. Themes can include 'what you love about where you live', street life, nature, portraits or any other topics of participant interest.

##### POTTERY

If there are any professional pottery studios in your community, a pull-out or excursion program over a few weeks will be a great attraction. Any activity that involves the 9—13 years age group working in an adult setting where they can do 'special' activities is likely to be a hit. Final works can be displayed in exhibitions at the local library or at school.



## RECYCLED ART AND JEWELLERY MAKING

Most local council areas will have a sustainability or environmental services officer, who can be contacted about potential project partnerships or resources that can serve the dual purposes of raising awareness and promoting positive environmental outcomes. 'Plarning', or weaving with plastic bags, jewellery making with cloth buttons beads and wood off-cuts, or creating sculptures with plastic containers or bottles are popular and fun activities that promote the 'reuse, recycle' message.

## GRAPHIC DESIGN, MANGA, ANIMATION AND GAME DESIGN

A multitude of freeware programs are available for use by the 9—13 years age group to create digital art. GIMP (Graphic Image Manipulation Program) and Scratch (for music, animation, game design and other multimedia projects) can easily be downloaded and are targeted at this age group. Cards, calendars albums and posters are can be achieved with some preliminary training. Other freeware game development packages are available through a Google search and access to computers is a must for these activities. Libraries have great potential to run with these types of initiatives and IT skills training and requirements are being reviewed by the State Library to enable children's libraries to meet the demand for more technical activities in after school and vacation care programs. Skilled instructors can be found through TAFE and university graduate programs.

## Film making

Short filmmaking projects can be run at libraries and venues such as arts and youth centres. Film training companies are often costly, so it is advisable to get service staff trained in the basics of filmmaking. Customised training for staff can be arranged through film schools and training organisations such as community colleges and the Powerhouse Museum. TAFE and university graduate students in multi media

can also be invited to run programs if they have experience in working with children. Feedback from participants in film projects run as part of SYPCAP demonstrates a preference for two- to four-day workshops. Projects can also be spread over a term in after-school hours.

Topics such as scripting, camera skills, lighting, interviewing and editing techniques can be learned and provide a great inducement to continual attendance. Finished films can be entered into film festivals such as Trop Jr and other youth film awards. Many councils offer community grants in addition to Art Council funding that can be applied to, to support these types of projects on an ongoing basis.

## Performance

Theatre skills, stand up comedy, music, hip hop and dance all rank highly in the preferred activities for tweens. SYPCAP ran a hip hop program over four days with three-hour sessions. Council owned venues and spaces were used to run the program, such as Waverley Library for choreography and scripting of songs, the Bondi Pavilion recording studio for recording, and Oxford Street Mall as a performance space. The activity was timed to coincide with the Waverley Council literary festival as a youth component of the event.

Stand up comedy can be fun but it is important to engage with a tutor who can work confidently with this age group.

## Sport and science

Randwick Library has established the Big Bang Science Club, a members-only club aimed at inquisitive young scientists aged 8—12 years. Members can experiment, learn and discover through regular interactive and hands-on science workshops.

CSIRO education program Fizzics, can be invited to do fun, interactive science shows at school, after school and at youth services. Most councils have sustainability



budgets that can be used to resource these activities particularly where there are environmental outcomes.

Basketball is a popular activity for after-school hours and can be run with youth services in conjunction with OSHC service. Projects that SYPCAP supported include a mixture of physical training, structured play and social skills.

The Woolloomooloo Junior All Stars program ran for 10 weeks and was subsequently funded under a NSW Sport and Recreation youth engagement grant to continue for a further nine weeks.

Many but not all schools and OSHC service in inner and eastern Sydney receive Federal funding through the Active Schools Communities program. An example of good resource sharing was shown when children from three OSHC services collaborated to run a nine-week multi sports program at the Daceyville PCYC. The only cost of the program was the membership fee for each of the 35 participants which amounted to \$170.00, paid for by the services. Children are now lifelong members of the club and entitled to use the facilities forever.

The City of Sydney youth and children's services collaborate with the PCYC to deliver a range of activities for tweens and early adolescent children in the areas. Activities range from cooking to skate programs and boxing. The focus here is on working together to avoid duplication at the same time as offering good choices for the age group.

The Shack youth services ran a nine-week after-school hours Trapeze Program with a targeted group of children from their tweens program. The children were introduced to an activity they would not otherwise have thought of pursuing and had great outcomes related to fitness, working as a team and safe risk-taking.

### A GOOD TIP

An important consideration with all after school programs is the provision of good quality food. Kids this age need continuous refuelling; taking care of their dietary needs will have a big impact on their overall behaviour and capacity to maintain focus.

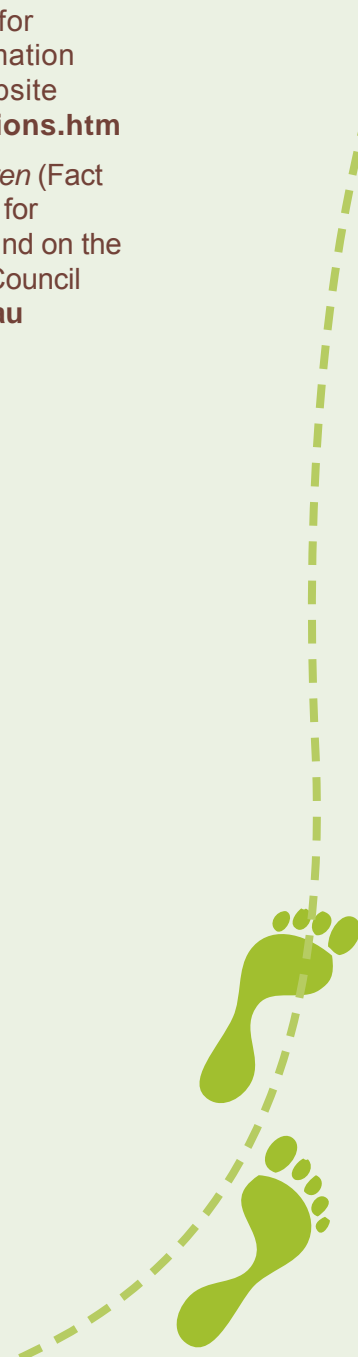
### FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information relating to tweens programs can be found on the Waverley Council website [www.waverley.nsw.gov.au](http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au)

For Waverley Council holiday programs, schedules and good ideas, go to [www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/things\\_to\\_do/holiday\\_programs](http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/things_to_do/holiday_programs)

Network OOSH, the peak body for OSHC services has great information resources available on their website [www.netoosh.org.au/publications.htm](http://www.netoosh.org.au/publications.htm)

*Planning for 8—12-year-old children* (Fact Sheet No 21) is a useful resource for children's services that can be found on the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) website [www.ncac.gov.au](http://www.ncac.gov.au)



## Appendix 2

### The Super Seniors – A great OSHC example of a 9-12 years program



#### The Coogee Care Centre Super Seniors Program

##### What was the background to this program - how did we identify a need to change?

We started off by noticing how uninvolved our older kids (9-12) were at the centre. We wondered what staff thought about our tweens and how the children found the staff attitudes. Staff found the senior children difficult and senior kids found the staff unsympathetic. The senior children consistently complained they were bored, started dropping out and refused to have any involvement with the general after school program. Something had to change and so the idea for a seniors' group was born.

##### What were the steps we took to introduce the program?

1. Surveyed the group on butcher's paper asking key questions, no answer was accepted as "stupid". Some key questions were: do the staff like you? What would you like to do at after school care? Who should a 'senior' be?
2. Identifying key staff to make the program work
3. Researching other models that have done this program, contacted Harbord OSHC and Maggie Brown at the Waverley Council Supporting Young People 9-13 project
4. Identifying a space for the program to work that was away from the rest of the group
5. Prepping and planning with the kids two weeks in advance
6. Naming the club Kids came up with the name themselves
7. Children were invited in and orientated slowly and in a staggered manner into program over two weeks (i.e. inclusion was not automatic as soon as you were in Year 4)
8. Addressing children's expectations of the program and determined how it is to be developed (4 - 5 week program)
9. As children were invited they were given welcome packs, this included a contract, permission forms, programs and menu

##### What's the afternoon routine?

- Kids sign themselves in with a staff member to greet them (Staff counter sign at the end of the day)
- Another staff member greets kids in canteen and children make their own food. Some food options include, making their own two minute noodles, sandwiches, Milo, fruit etc
- Children are responsible to wash their own dishes
- Children are on a roster system to clean the canteen
- All senior children must commit to the whole four to five week program
- At 5 p.m. the senior children join the junior group

### Behaviour management tools

- Group dollars and group rewards
- Daily opportunity to sit down and discuss what is on their minds. This is done with a 'talking cow' (acts as a talking stick)
- Community service cards were the children's idea for promoting good behaviour and discouraging bad behaviour (act like yellow cards in football)
- Group finds solutions to their collective problems
- Listening to the children's ideas and giving immediate staff feedback is taken extremely seriously
- Staff being flexible and standing back from time to time to let the children come up with own solutions
- Staff being open to let the children take calculated risks

### What we have found since beginning the program

- Parents have commented that the seniors have been recharged and enthusiastic about the group
- A 'club' mentality has formed, meaning children feel connected as a group and responsible for each other
- Children are listened to and respected
- Children remember what daily activities are on and look forward to them, rushing to the centre after school
- Parents have commented that their children are saying that the staff is "listening to them for the first time"
- Casual staff filling in for permanents have said the seniors are "happy" and "fun" to be with

The numbers for the seniors' group is growing as are the days they attend the service. Currently numbers are 40 children per afternoon. Numbers in the separate seniors vacation care program have also increased and are currently at 35.

### Things that have been challenging

- Parents expecting that their child to be introduced into the program sooner
- New staff coming into the program and adapting their expectations the style of interaction with the older children ie allowing more autonomy and safe risk taking

### For further information about this program contact:

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## SAMPLES OF SUPER SENIORS VACATION AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE PROGRAMS



## Super Seniors Program Weeks 7-10

| Monday   | Tuesday   | Wednesday   | Thursday   |
|--|---|---|--|
| <b><u>Billy Cart Making and Racing</u></b><br><p>On Mondays we will be building billy carts. We will work in groups of friends to build the billy carts, then on Monday, week 10 (27<sup>th</sup> June) we will be going to Centennial Park to race our inventions!!</p> | <b><u>MasterChef</u></b><br><p>Tuesday is a 4 week Masterchef program</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Break into groups and hand out ingredients which kids make</li> <li>2. Mystery Box</li> <li>3. Invention Test</li> <li>4. Time Trial</li> </ol> | <b><u>Excursion/Centre Day</u></b><br><p>Today is going to be an option day when there will be two choices – one excursion and one in centre activity.<br/>Options are:<br/>- Going to Maroubra skate park <b>OR</b><br/>- Going to Fox Studios</p> | <b><u>Extreme Art day</u></b><br><p>On Thursday seniors will be heading to Baker Park for some extreme arts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Graffiti</li> <li>2. Paint Balloon canvases</li> <li>3. Extreme shoe make over</li> </ol> |

## COOGEE CARE CENTRE SUPER SENIORS VACATION CARE PROGRAM JULY 2011

| Monday 11 <sup>th</sup> April  | Tuesday 12 <sup>th</sup> April  | Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> April  | Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> April  | Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> April   |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| <b><u>Games Arcade</u></b><br><p>Get ready to have lots of fun on our first day of the Autumn holidays as today we will be going to the games arcade Intensity at Broadway. There will be unlimited games and interactive video games so friends can compete against each other and the staff!</p> | <b><u>000 day</u></b><br><p>Get your bandages, fake blood, fireman outfits, police uniforms and life saving gear as today we will be having some special visitors to the centre to show us their skills. There will also be prizes for the best dressed and the most creative costumes. Come and see how the experts help keep us safe.</p> | <b><u>Roller disco and Plaster Painting</u></b><br><p>Skater HQ will be bringing roller skates and a DJ to the centre with top 40 music and turning the bottom playground into a roller disco party, whilst children will be waiting their turn they will be able to paint their favourite plaster mould.</p> | <b><u>Sydney Trapeze School</u></b><br><p>Roll up, Roll up!! It's time to join the circus; everyone will have a go at 5 dangerous circus tricks, such as tight rope walking, stilt walking and even have a go at the flying trapeze.</p> | <b><u>Boys day in, Girls day out!</u></b><br><p>Girls – Get on your pretty clothes and get ready to head up to the spot for a babyccino and a chick flick! We will have a relaxing walk around the shops and then play some girl games at the centre.</p> <p>Boys – enjoy having the centre to yourself with a BBQ sausage sizzle lunch, as well as a CCC best athlete competition with prizes, and computer games.</p> |