



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

Fact Sheet

Active After-school Communities program — benefiting culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities



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'The children come home relaxed and happy, with less stress on their faces, and when I ask them to help with tea they do it straight away.'

This is what one parent from a CALD community says about the Australian Government's Active After-school Communities (AASC) program.

The AASC program is a free initiative delivered nationally by the Australian Sports Commission. It is inclusive of CALD communities. The program is improving attitudes towards sport within these communities while also strengthening the communities themselves.

Parents of participating children find the program extremely beneficial and relate their positive experiences. As one mother says, the program is a great idea: 'That's what's needed for children. It is conducted free of charge and in the safe environment of the school'.

Many parents from CALD communities comment that since participating in the program, their children have become more cooperative, relaxed and happier.

Children's communication skills had also improved along with their confidence and self-esteem.

Improving health

Research shows that children from CALD communities are less likely to be involved in sports than children from non-CALD communities.

The AASC program is helping to turn this around and, according to one community organisation, 'The students, parents, deliverers, school and the wider community can feel the difference in the way children have improved their fitness and health levels'.

One school says it helps obese children achieve fitness by allowing them 'to play the sports they like most'.

Many parents in CALD communities see the AASC program as playing a vital role in the growth and development of their children. 'It's a program designed to help keep your children fit and enjoy a variety of activities after school. It offers plenty of sports activities after school; your kids will love it,' says one parent.

Eighty-seven per cent of schools and after-school care providers in CALD communities agree that the children and their families are more aware of the benefits of physical activity after participating in the program.

Improving attitudes

The AASC program is creating more positive attitudes towards sport among children from CALD communities, with the vast majority of program stakeholders agreeing that children from CALD communities feel more positive towards physical activity after participating in the AASC program.

A CALD student at Lakemba Primary School says, 'I enjoy playing sports instead of sitting down watching TV. I like to keep fit, I like whatever sports opportunities I have — I'll go for it!'

Parents are impressed by the structure of the program, the types of activities available and the fact it is provided free of charge. Several parents have told the Australian Sports Commission how enthusiastic their children are about the AASC program.

'The kids love it,' a parent from Macquarie Fields says. 'They really enjoy it and have lots of fun; there really are no rights and wrongs and they are all encouraged in the right way.'

‘... well designed for kids in disadvantaged communities. The programs are run locally with a real commitment to support community involvement and it works in partnership with other organisations’

Some parents report that the AASC program has changed the whole family’s attitude towards the importance of regular physical exercise. As one parent explains, ‘It has made parents more alert and involved in their children’s wellbeing and fitness level’.

Because the AASC program is free, most participating schools and after-school care providers agree it is inclusive of socio-economically disadvantaged groups. It is also inclusive of children with a range of fitness levels and abilities. Almost 90 per cent of schools agree that children who are less physically active feel welcome participating in the program.

Many parents also commented that the program is helping their children to develop important ‘life skills’ such as teamwork and sharing. One parent says their child ‘is learning a heap of new things; new games ... coordination, take turns, wait your turn, be fair. All very valuable life skills — how to wait, be patient’.

Ninety per cent of school and after-school care providers in CALD communities agree that children find the activities interesting.

According to their parents, 40 per cent of children from non-CALD households would be doing a physical activity if they were not attending the AASC program, while in CALD households, 24 per cent would be doing a physical activity if not attending the AASC program.

Over three-quarters of the parents of children living in CALD households agree that their child has become more physically active, compared to 63 per cent of non-CALD parents.

Thirty-seven per cent of CALD parents agree strongly that their child has become interested in participating in a sport or other structured physical activity as a result of participating in the AASC program, compared with 27 per cent of non-CALD parents.

Strengthening CALD communities

More than half the schools and after-school care providers participating in the AASC program and who cater for children from CALD communities have seen increased links with local sporting clubs and other sporting organisations as a result of the program. One program stakeholder says, ‘The program is helping to rebuild the community — by providing training and leadership opportunities, embedding coaches into local community groups and providing opportunities for kids to become involved’.

A majority also agree that the community has more skilled people to deliver sports to children as a result of the AASC program.

Stakeholders in CALD communities have commented that the program is well funded and provides grants to help purchase equipment which can be used beyond the life of the program. According to one stakeholder, ‘The program covers deliverers’ and teachers’ salaries, afternoon tea and we have also been able to purchase some sporting equipment that we needed’.

Another example of the AASC program strengthening CALD communities comes from a stakeholder in Macquarie Fields, who says the program is ‘well designed for kids in disadvantaged communities. The programs are run locally with a real commitment to support community involvement and it works in partnership with other organisations’.

Almost 75 per cent of school and after-school care providers in CALD communities are satisfied that the AASC program is stimulating community involvement in sport.

Active After-school Communities

Helping kids and communities get active

For more information visit
ausport.gov.au/aasc

Facts at a glance

- Children from CALD households are also much more likely to be classified as inactive according to national health guidelines (57%) when compared to children from non-CALD households (39%)
- 94% of schools and after-school care providers in CALD communities are satisfied with the program overall
- 64% of schools and after-school care providers in CALD communities strongly agree that children of all ethnic backgrounds feel welcome participating in the program
- 84% of schools and after-school care providers in CALD communities agree that children feel more positive towards physical activity after participating in the program
- 78% of schools and after-school care providers in CALD communities agree that children feel more positive towards sport and other structured physical activity