

Kids – ‘Go for your life’

Governance of the Kids – ‘Go for your life’ Program

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Background

Kids – ‘Go for your life’ is managed by Diabetes Australia – Vic and Cancer Council Victoria, and is funded by the Department of Health, as a part of the broader Go for your life initiative.

Kids – ‘Go for your life’ encourages early childhood services (ECS) and primary schools (PS) to create policy and practise changes to promote and support healthy eating and physical activity using a health promoting schools approach. In addition, Kids – ‘Go for your life’ also builds the capacity of local governments and health professionals to support these policy and practise changes within ECS and PS within their local area.

Discussion

The breadth of activity and level of funding for this statewide program requires very clear governance structures as well as support and input from a range of relevant organisations and sectors to ensure efficient and effective design, implementation and evaluation.

Table 1 illustrates the program governance, with the shaded boxes indicating the program management structures, which are accountable for quality program development, implementation, monitoring and communication with relevant stakeholders. The unshaded boxes represent advisory committee and working groups, which input into the direction and guidance of the program and activities to ensure they are appropriate, feasible and increase coordination. These groups also provide opportunities for partnerships and organisational relationships.

The advisory committee provides advice into the overall direction for the program and has representation from Victorian community based interventions focusing on children. This representation allows knowledge translation and exchange to occur, to help ‘scale up’ the successful elements of these interventions to a statewide program. Other statewide organisations and government departments are also represented on this committee. The working groups have a range of statewide and local level organisations represented to assist in guiding the process and operational activities of the program.

In addition, the Department of Health, as funding agency, provides overarching approval of strategic directions, and operational plans and is represented on the advisory committee and each of working groups.

The broad representation of organisations and government departments on Kids – ‘Go for your life’ committees and working groups has assisted in developing supportive partnerships and collaborations to increase the coordination and subsequent reach and outcomes of the program. Alternatively, key challenges have been the level of committee and working group member turn over throughout the duration of the program.

Conclusions

Kids – ‘Go for your life’ has developed and implemented clear governance structures for the effective and efficient delivery of the program and engagement and coordination with relevant sectors and organisations. However, given the number of sectors and organisations represented on committees and working groups, turn over of representatives often occurs. To ensure ongoing effectiveness and efficiency of these structures briefings are required for new members and terms of reference need to be reviewed regularly.

Table 1

