



A U S T R A L I A

"Our future at play"

Kindergym Australia

Guiding Principles



Kindergym Australia Guiding Principles

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Introduction

Gymnastics is a varied and diverse sport. Gymnastics Australia offers many gym sport programs catering for all ages, from the very young, to the young at heart. General Gymnastics is one of the 7 recognised gym sport programs and includes the most fundamental program of all, kindergym.

Kindergym is one of the most unique programs offered by gymnastics clubs. Kindergym includes involvement of both the child and their adult caregiver. It is this element that sets kindergym apart from other programs offered within gymnastics and the wider community. Child and adult interaction is the fundamental ideology on which these Guiding Principles have been developed.

The Kindergym Australia Guiding Principles are intended to set the framework by which Gymnastics Australia may endorse an affiliated club's kindergym program. Clubs wishing to gain endorsement will be required to adopt and accept the Kindergym Australia Guiding Principles for conducting kindergym programs. This acceptance will be acknowledged by your club signing of the Kindergym Australia Provider Agreement (Section 9 of the Club Affiliation Form).

The Kindergym Australia Guiding Principles include statements on:

- Names
- Definitions
- Philosophies
- Aims and Objectives
- Age Groupings
- Adult Involvement
- Child/Adult Relationship
- Program Content

The Names

Kindergym is the term used by Gymnastics Australia to identify programs for children 5 years of age and under.

Kindergym Australia is the brand used by Gymnastics Australia to identify affiliated clubs who provide kindergym programs that meet the criteria of the Kindergym Australia Guiding Principles.

Kindergym Australia Provider is the title provided to an affiliated club endorsed by Gymnastics Australia for agreeing to and adopting the Kindergym Australia Guiding Principles.

Definitions

Kindergym:

- Is a movement program for children 5 years and under and their adult caregiver.
- Is designed to develop the whole child.
- Is conducted in a safe, structured and multisensory environment.

Kindergym Australia Providers:

- Are an affiliated member of the State Gymnastics Association
- Have adopted the Kindergym Australia Guiding Principles
- Have signed the Kindergym Australia Provider Agreement
- Are endorsed by Gymnastics Australia for agreeing to and adopting the Kindergym Australia Guiding Principles.
- Conduct all kindergym programs using qualified and accredited Kindergym Coaches

Kindergym Coach:

Within these Guiding Principles the following will be used to define a Kindergym Coach:

- A person who has completed a Level One Kindergym Coaching Course and is accredited with Gymnastics Australia.
- A person who has attended a Level One Kindergym Coaching Course and is in the process of completing the post-course requirements under the supervision of an accredited coach
- A person who is enrolled in a Level One Kindergym Coaching Course

*Please note: All affiliated clubs sign an agreement declaring they meet and will maintain the National Affiliation Standards. One of the National Affiliation Standards states that **all** club programs will be conducted by an accredited coach. Whilst it may be acceptable for a coach to be in training, they should not conduct any program without the direct supervision of an accredited coach.*

Gymnastics Australia:

- The governing body for gymnastics across Australia
- Includes (8) State Gymnastics Associations
- Owns the copyright to all Kindergym Australia documentation and material including the Kindergym Crew Manual
- Develops and reviews all National Policies, Products and Services

General Gymnastics:

- One of Gymnastics Australia's (7) recognised gym sport programs
- Includes kindergym as an identified program
- Caters for all ages and abilities (predominantly non-competitive)

The Adult:

- The assigned caregiver, parent or guardian responsible for the safety and supervision of the child

Whole child:

- Socially, emotionally, cognitively and physically

The Kindergym Australia Philosophy

- Positive movement experiences can influence a child's outlook on physical activity for life.
- It is possible to assist in the development of the whole child by providing an environment where the child may creatively explore and practise skills safely in order to increase self-confidence and self-esteem.
- The provision of a fun environment in which a child and caregiver may play together is worthwhile.

Aims and Objectives

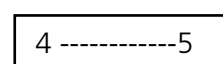
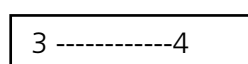
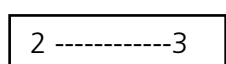
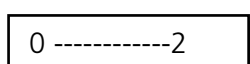
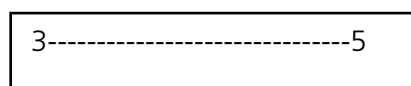
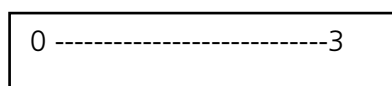
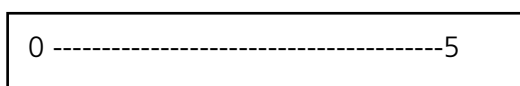
- To promote the Kindergym Australia Philosophy through a child-centred program.
- To provide facilities in which children of all abilities, aged 5 years and under, may explore and develop at their own rate, in an inclusive and non-competitive atmosphere.
- Programs aim to:
 - Structure the environment rather than the child
 - Where appropriate, promote a situation of one child to one adult
 - Provide safe, stimulating and challenging activities
- To liaise and co-operate with other Education and Health groups interested in the growth and development of children.

Age Groupings

Any of the following age groupings, or combinations, are possible within a kindergym program depending on the club's needs.

Age groupings may be influenced by:

- Location – potential market needs
- Venue – size and equipment
- Number of Accredited Kindergym Leaders



Adult Involvement

- Adults are responsible for the supervision and safety of their own child
- Adults share their child's fun and achievements. The real benefit comes from the child's self-initiated play rather than adult-directed play.
- Adults provide encouragement and positive reinforcement for the child through play
- Adults observe the child while at play
- Adults reinforce the healthy lifestyle message provided at kindergym
- By being actively involved, adults reinforce to the child a positive lifelong attitude towards physical activity

Gymnastics Australia acknowledges that through a kindergym program, the child develops and their independence grows. Recognising this, guidelines have been developed to provide clubs with ways of meeting the developmental needs of the 4-5 year old child while fostering adult involvement.

Child/Adult Relationship

- A positive, nurturing relationship is fostered between the child and the adult, developing and improving the whole child
- The child and the adult enjoy the worthwhile pursuits of play - together
- The adult provides support and encouragement to the child, to practise and improve the whole child

Program Content

- The recommended length of a kindergym session is between 45 and 60 minutes, depending on the age and experience of the participants. The class components below are offered as a sample of how kindergym classes can be programmed.

Class Components	Duration (minutes)	
	0 – 3 year olds	3 – 5 year olds
Free Exploration	5	10
Warm – up	5	5
Group Time	10	10
Guided Discovery	20	25
Cool Down	5	10
Total	45	60

For further details and explanations on each of the above components refer to the Kindergym Crew Manual on pages 81-83.

Program Guidelines for 4 – 5 Year Olds

The following factors should be taken into consideration when the Kindergym Australia Guiding Principles are applied to kindergym programs for 4-5 year olds:

- The changing needs of the child in regard to independence and the need to develop school readiness
- The increased skill level of the child
- Changing trends in society seeing more young children in Childcare centres
- The changing developmental nature of the child

With the above in mind, the role of the adult within a kindergym program for 4-5 year olds may also change. The following guidelines are designed to assist clubs in maintaining the Principles that ensure a quality kindergym program while also addressing the changing developmental needs of 4-5 year olds.

Why retain adults within kindergym programs for 4-5 year olds?

Gymnastics Australia believes that adult involvement in a kindergym program:

- Plays a major role in the development of society, by providing the adult an opportunity to spend quality time with their child including:
 - Learning
 - Sharing
 - Having fun
- Provides the child with substantial benefits including:
 - Safety
 - A greater rate of development, due to the child feeling secure in a known friendly and supportive environment
 - Expanded learning opportunities, through follow-up of activities by parents/caregivers
- Provides the adult with an opportunity to learn and ultimately provide greater support to their child's development
- Ensures the club's kindergym programs are economically viable
- Provides the club with an additional resource from where new coaches and volunteers can be identified and sought
- Provides the club with an opportunity to involve adults over a longer period, therefore educating and exposing them to the concept of "Gymnastics for EveryBody" and the club's overall philosophy
- Is a valuable marketing tool for the delivery of health messages, which can influence the adult's attitude towards healthier outcomes.

Guidelines for teaching 4 – 5 year olds

Gymnastics Australia provides the following suggestions for incorporating adult involvement into a kindergym program for 4-5 year olds.

Please note: Adult involvement may also include appointed Childcare, Kindergarten or Early Childhood Learning staff. These staff are likely to hold additional qualifications with regards to early childhood learning and care.

- Class ratio may be reduced. There are many factors that influence class ratios and these should be considered (ie: coach experience, venue size and layout, availability of equipment)
- Duration of individual elements within the program may change. More time may be given to “Guided Discovery” and skill development. The coach should take into account that children may respond to different teaching techniques (please refer to the Kindergym Crew manual page 71 for suggested teaching methods).
- Adults may play the role of observer encouraging their child throughout each activity. Therefore, the adult may not be actively involved in all elements of a program such as Warm-up and Grouptime.
- Adults may become actively involved through encouraging activities at one particular station during a circuit rather than continually moving around with their child.
- Program objectives and themes can assist to encourage and develop independence and begin school readiness. Positive experiences linked to movement and play can offer opportunities to explore colours, numbers, shapes as well as encouraging social interaction.

Program Content for kindergym programs for 4-5 year olds

The following is an example of how a kindergym program for 4-5 year olds may assist in **school readiness by increasing the time children spend working independently:**

Class Components	Child + Adult	Child independently
Free Exploration	✓	✗
Warm-up	✓	✓
Grouptime	✓	✓
Guided Discovery	✓	✓
Cool down	✓	✓

If accompanying adults are not active during Guided Discovery, overall class ratios should be adjusted accordingly. Coaches need to take into consideration: their level of experience as well as the number, behaviour and experience of the children. Accompanying adults need to be ready to assist and encourage throughout all stages of a kindergym class, where necessary.