



KinderGym

Guiding Principles



**Gymnastics
Australia**



Gymnastics Australia
Gymnastics For All

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Introduction

Gymnastics is an exciting and diverse sport. Gymnastics Australia offers many Gymsport programs catering for all ages, from the very young to the young at heart. KinderGym is the most fundamental movement program of all, especially for children five years and younger and is part of Gymnastics for All - one of the 8 recognised Gymsport programs.

One of the most unique components of a KinderGym program is the physical 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 a key developmental principle on which the KinderGym program and Guiding Principles have been developed.

The KinderGym 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 accept and adopt the KinderGym Guiding Principles when conducting KinderGym programs. This acceptance will be acknowledged by your club through signing the KinderGym Provider Agreement.

Based on this basic philosophy, clubs wishing to be recognised as offering KinderGym programs should provide the opportunity for involvement of both parent and child within their programs.

To be recognised as offering a KinderGym program, your club will be required to accept and adopt the KinderGym Guiding Principles. This includes statements on:

- Names and Definitions
- Philosophy
- Aims and Objectives
- Age Groupings
- Parent/Caregiver Involvement
- Child/Adult Relationship
- Program Content

This acceptance will be acknowledged by the signing of the KinderGym Agreement within the Club Affiliation documents. The Guiding Principle statements are detailed below.

Clubs who sign the KinderGym Guiding Principles will:

- have the KinderGym logo beside their name on the Club Search facility on the Gymnastics Australia website;
- will receive a KinderGym passport for each registered participant when their annual affiliation has been processed; and
- have access to KinderGym flyers and posters.



Names and Definitions

KinderGym:

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

KinderGym Providers:

- Are affiliated members of the State Gymnastics Association.
- Have adopted the KinderGym Guiding Principles.
- Have signed the KinderGym Provider Agreement.
- Are endorsed by Gymnastics Australia for agreeing to and adopting the KinderGym Guiding Principles.
- Conduct all KinderGym programs using qualified and accredited KinderGym Coaches (a KinderGym program may be conducted by a KinderGym coach in training while under the supervision of an accredited coach).

Kindergym Coach:

- A person who has completed a Level One or Intermediate Level KinderGym course.

Gymnastics Australia:

- The governing body for gymnastics across Australia.
- Includes eight (8) State and Territory Gymnastics Association Members.
- Owns the copyright to all KinderGym documentation and material including the Kindergym Crew Manual and the LaunchPad Kinder GymMix.
- Develops and reviews all National Policies, Products and Services.

Gymnastics for All:

- One of Gymnastics Australia's eight recognised Gymsport programs.
- Includes KinderGym as an identified program.
- Caters for all ages and abilities and is predominantly non-competitive.

The Adult:

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

The KinderGym 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 philosophy of providing experiences through a child-centred program.
- To provide facilities in which children of all abilities aged 5 years and under may explore and develop their physical skills at their own rate, in an inclusive and non-competitive atmosphere.
- Programs aim to:
 - Structure the environment rather than the child.
 - Promote a situation of one child to one caregiver, where possible.
 - Provide safe, stimulating and challenging activities.
- To liaise and co-operate with other education and health groups interested in the growth and development of all young children.

Age Groupings

Any combination of age groupings is possible within a KinderGym session depending on a club's needs, including age appropriate activities for all involved. This may be influenced by:

- Location: potential market needs
- Venue: size and equipment
- Number of accredited KinderGym coaches.

Child/Adult Relationship

- A positive, nurturing relationship is fostered between the child and adult developing and improving the child's confidence, self-esteem, physical, social and emotional skills.
- The child and adult enjoy the worthwhile pursuits of play together.
- The adult provides support and encouragement to the child to practise and improve physical skills.

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 as a child develops, 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 – see following pages for more details.



Why retain parents within programs?

Gymnastics Australia believes that adult involvement in a KinderGym program:

- Plays a major role in the development of society, by providing an opportunity for adults to spend quality time with their child including:
 - Learning
 - Sharing
 - Having fun
- Provides substantial benefits to the child including:
 - Safety
 - A greater rate of development, due to the child feeling secure in a known, friendly and supportive environment
 - Expanded learning opportunities through continual follow-up activities by adults.
- 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 by allowing for a higher participant to coach ratio.
- 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 parents over a longer period therefore educating and exposing them to the concept of "Gymnastics for All" and the club's overall philosophy.
- Creates a valuable marketing tool for the delivery of health messages, which can influence parental attitude towards better and healthier outcomes.

Program Elements

The recommended length for a 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 Elements	Duration (minutes)	
	0 – 3 year olds	3 – 5 year olds
Free Exploration	5	10
Welcome and Warm – up	5	10
Group Time	10	10
Guided Exploration	20	20
Cool-down and Farewell	5	10
Total	45	60

All the above class elements may be included within a session and can vary in length of time due to varying factors, including the age of the children in the session. For further details and explanations on each of the above components refer to the LaunchPad Kinder GymMix resource.



Program Guidelines for 4 and 5 Year Old Children

The following factors should be taken into consideration when applying the KinderGym Guiding Principles to KinderGym programs for 4-5 year olds:

- The changing needs of the child with 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 naturally 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.

- Class ratio may be reduced. There are many other factors that influence class sizes and ratios and these must be considered (i.e. coach experience, venue size and layout, availability of equipment).
- Duration of individual program elements will change. More time may be given to “Guided Discovery” and skill development with less time given to “Free Exploration”. The coach should take into account that children may respond to different teaching techniques.
- Adults may play the role of an observer encouraging their child throughout activities such as Warm-up and Group Time, rather than being actively involved in all elements of a program.
- Adults may become actively involved through encouraging activities at one particular station during circuit work rather than continually moving around with their child.
- Program objectives and/or themes will further encourage and develop independence and begin school readiness. Emphasis can be on colours, numbers, shape recognition, problem-solving techniques and societal values such as sharing, friends and health. In addition, more complex movement patterns like skipping can be included.

Gymnastics Australia believes the benefits of adult involvement are substantial and the coach should make every effort to involve the caregivers either directly or indirectly in the growth and development of their child. It is the responsibility of the coach to encourage adult and child interaction. Remember that the parents are not trained coaches and should not be expected to “teach” or supervise skills above their level of ability.

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

