



Active Insight: Evidence in Action



Tip #1159: Building Active Community Recreation Partnerships

Overview

Connecting physical education to the local community gives students direct experience of the activity options available to them beyond the school gate. Partnerships with sporting clubs, councils, and recreation providers expand the range of activities on offer and introduce students to community mentors who model active participation. These connections build social networks and a sense of belonging that supports sustained engagement in physical activity over time. Students who know their local active spaces are more likely to use them independently.

Key Teaching Ideas

Community partnerships work best when they are built around genuine shared purpose rather than a one-off visit. Teachers can identify local organisations whose programs align with curriculum goals and negotiate regular, structured involvement. Introducing students to varied, authentic activity contexts builds the confidence and familiarity needed to transition from school-based participation to independent community recreation over time. Starting with a single strong partnership and building from there is more sustainable than managing multiple loose connections at once.

Practical Application

- **Club Come-and-Try Sessions:** Invite a local sporting club to run an introductory clinic during school hours, giving students a low-pressure first experience of an activity they may not have tried before.
- **Facility Sharing Arrangements:** Use community recreation facilities such as a council aquatic centre or gymnastics hall for a dedicated unit, familiarising students with local active spaces they can access independently.
- **Community Guest Speakers:** Invite local athletes, coaches, or recreation coordinators to share their physical activity story, providing students with relatable examples of active community involvement.
- **Active Travel Programs:** Work with local council to promote safe walking or cycling routes to school, embedding incidental physical activity into the daily commute for students who live nearby.



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- **School-Community Active Events:** Organise a shared event such as a community orienteering session or twilight walk that invites families and community members to participate alongside students.

Next Steps

Teachers building community partnerships can find practical starting points on the [Active Education Australia website](#). [Anywhere PD](#) provides school-based resources to support community-connected physical education programs.

References and Research

1. Australian Curriculum: Health and Physical Education (v9) – Identifies community connections as a key context for developing health and movement literacy across year levels.
2. Australian Sports Commission: Physical Literacy – Describes how community environments support the development of physical participation habits and social connection in young people.