

Health professionals

92% of attendees said they learnt effective strategies for engaging with and motivating schools and services in health promotion

Kids – ‘Go for your life’ works with health professionals across Victoria to help develop their capacity to engage with primary schools and early childhood services on healthy eating and physical activity.

On Tuesday 5 April 2011, with the support of the Australian Health Promoting Schools Association, Kids – ‘Go for your life’ held a forum for members of its health professionals network. The forum was on the topic of engaging and motivating primary schools and early childhood services in health promotion.

The evaluation and feedback from attendees was very positive, with 92% of attendees advising they learnt effective strategies for engaging with and motivating schools and services and 67% stating that their confidence has increased as a result of attending the forum. 90% learnt techniques for developing meaningful and sustainable relationships and 95% felt the forum provided them with practical examples and resources.

The day consisted of an overview of the evidence, real-life case studies and the opportunity for discussion and reflection. **Professor Lawrence St. Leger**, a well-known health promoting schools expert, gave an inspiring keynote presentation on the evidence regarding effective strategies for engaging with and motivating schools and services in health promotion.

Lawry said, ***“I thought you organised a wonderful day on Tuesday. I like how you balanced the evidence with the case studies. I am sure all the participants will have a better idea about how to do things that are going to get results and how to work with schools. Keep up the strong leadership.”***

Over 75 health professionals registered from across metro (63%) and rural/regional (37%) areas of Victoria (e.g. Alpine, Baw Baw, Buloke, Indigo, Mildura, Wimmera, Cobaw, Gippsland and inner city LGAs.) The majority of attendees were health promotion officers from community health - others included, school nurses, program managers, dietitians and allied health staff.

The forum was delivered in response to a 2009 survey, in which the outcomes indicated that health professionals wished to develop their skills and confidence in:

- Engaging and motivating school staff within early childhood services and primary schools;
- Developing effective relationships with staff; and
- Increasing their ability for negotiating, influencing and advocating for health promotion with the education sector.

