



FREE-RANGE KIDS

ORGANISERS'S GUIDE

What is Free-Range Kids?

Free Range Kids is a simple program, that costs no money to run, and encourages children to walk to and from school. Students earn points each time they walk, and when their class reaches a certain number of points, their class earns a reward.

Children do not have to walk all the way, just as far as they are able. Organisers suggest some drop-off and pick-up points at varying distance from the school.

Free-Range Kids is a class-based program and teachers can chose whether they participate, or not.

Children can walk with an adult (Learner's License) or indepently (Open License).

What are the benefits for the child?

Evidence shows that 'free-range' kids develop skills that help them succeed as adults, including: resilience, self-confidence, ability to manage risk, and social skills.

Children who get exercise before class also concentrate better.

Who can be an organiser?

Anyone can start *Free Range Kids*: Teachers, School Admin Staff, Parents, or Local Government Staff.

Details



SETUP

Get school on board: Print out all sample materials. Have meeting with Principal to get approval.

Meeting with Teachers: Give *Teachers Guide* to teachers and explain how the program works. Invite them to participate. (Free-Range Kids will work even if only one class signs up.)

Decide rewards and reward levels: Work with participating teachers to decide how many points children must earn for their first reward and what reward the children will get. The teacher may decide to create a short list of rewards and give students a vote. Rewards should cost no money.

Decide drop-off points: Decide the best drop-off and pick-up points for children who live too far away to walk all the way. It is best if these offer a range of walking distances

Create map (optional): Create a map of drop-off points.

Put the Free Range Kids logo on the top along with the starting date for the program. Send home with the *Parent Info* document.

Print materials: Print all the materials you will need.

Publicity: Put information about the program, including which classes will participate, in the school newsletter. You could also send a press release to your local newspaper (see downloadable samples).

Stencil chicken feet (optional): Stencil chicken feet on the footpath at strategic points along the safest walking routes.



PRE-LAUNCH WEEK

Presentation to class: Ideally this should happen on the Monday or Tuesday before *Launch Week*. It can be delivered by one of the organisers or by the teacher. It should take no longer than 15 minutes.

- Explain to students how the program works and how they can earn points.
- Pin their Points Chart on the wall. Tell them what the reward will be or let them vote on their reward.
- Give them the *Parent Info* document.
- Questions and answers.



LAUNCH WEEK

Update Points Chart: The teacher, or a student, updates the Points Chart each morning before class starts. This should only take 1–2 minutes.

Thank You Adventure Sheet: On the Friday, the teacher gives those students who walked the opportunity to draw or write about the adventures they had while walking, and to take this home to their parents as a thank you.



MAINTENANCE

New rewards: When students reach their first reward, the teacher sets a new reward. (See *Teacher's Guide* for ideas.)

Ongoing publicity: Tell positive stories of parents' and children's experiences in the school newsletter or local media. See *Sample Newsletter Articles*.

Create a Free Range Community: Encourage individuals and community groups to help create a safer environment for children to be able to free-range. See *Sample Press Releases*.