



Adventure Based Learning (ABL) Activities

Good Practice Guide

Version 1

2018

Adventure Based Learning Activities

Adventure Based Learning (ABL) describes the purposeful use of sequenced activities, including games, trust activities and problem solving or team challenges, for educational or developmental outcomes.

ABL activities involve minimal or portable props and can be used in a wide range of environments. Outcomes can be focused on individual or group learning and development.

For the purpose of this GPG, this category includes large group games (also referred to as 'wide' and 'night' games) - these are often played in camp and other youth development focused environments.

This GPG covers situations where participants are being supervised by a designated leader and is not intended to cover unsupervised or free-time use.

This guidance is specific to **ABL** activities and is designed to be used in conjunction with the [General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities](#) and the [Adventure Based Learning Activities Planning Template](#) .

Potential value of activity

ABL ACTIVITIES CAN PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPANTS TO:

- Learn more about themselves and each other
- Enhance ability to communicate and work co-operatively
- Overcome challenges - as individuals and/or in groups
- Increase their awareness of, and respect for, each other's strengths
- Develop better relationships with each other (and others, e.g. teachers)
- Develop their confidence and self esteem
- Experience different teaching styles and learning contexts
- Develop their team leadership skills
- Meet goals associated with the curriculum.

In order to generate valuable outcomes it is recommended incorporating principles of adventure based learning be considered. These include building group rapport prior to the activity, contracting, 'challenge by choice', personal and group goal setting, and processing during and after the activity.

“You can learn more in an hour of play, then you can in a year of conversation”

Planning considerations

*Guidance on:
Activity specific planning.*

In addition to the generic considerations (see **General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities**) consider:

- Checking the venue:
 - The surrounding area and grounds should be suitable. Identify any potential hazards, e.g. slippery, sloping or hard surfaces, other users.
 - Any additional portable equipment (planks, ropes etc) needs to be fit for purpose.
 - What boundaries (if any) need to be placed on the activity area. Are boundaries likely to be obvious? Will they also be obvious at night if the activity happens at night?



Participants

*Guidance on:
How to ensure the activities match the participants' abilities and needs.*

In addition to the generic participant considerations (see **General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities**) organisers of ABL activities should consider:

- *Do the participants have sufficient fitness and mobility to be able to undertake the planned activities?*
- *Can participants be relied on to carry out safety sensitive tasks (either as participant or spotting)?*



Supervision

Guidance on:

The level and style of supervision typically required for this activity.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING WHEN DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE SUPERVISION STRUCTURE FOR ABL ACTIVITIES:

- The need to understand each activity, including its risks and challenges
- Use sufficient leaders to ensure that participants can be supervised at a level where leaders can detect and correct improper procedures
- Know where to position leaders in order to be able to intervene or provide additional support if required
- Spectators or participants that are not actively involved should not interfere with the activity(s). They should be appropriately engaged and may require additional supervision.



Leader competence

The experience and knowledge required by those running the activity, both for normal operation and for managing emergencies. What competence assistant leaders need should also be considered (e.g. where parents or other adults are helping the person running the activity).

Skills and knowledge

Requirements of a leader who is working independently, or is responsible for a larger group of activity leaders include:

Are they familiar with the area, any site-specific requirements and emergency procedures?

Do they understand each separate activity, including risks, challenges and instructions for use?

Do they understand the set up requirements for the activities, including determining the suitability of the environment?

Can they identify, manage and communicate hazards and risks?



Can they prepare the group, including:

- *Their understanding of safety roles (e.g. spotting)*
- *Ensuring they are appropriately clothed and equipped*
- *Briefing activity outcomes and instructions?*

Can they monitor use of the activity, including spotting if required, and intervene to manage safety or behavioral issues?

Do they understand how to dismantle the activity?

Other activity leaders (including parents, other adults or trainee leaders helping to run an activity) should be operating under supervision and have received training that includes:

- Understanding the activity they are responsible for, including risks, challenges and instructions for use.
- Being able to brief, monitor use of the activity and intervene to manage safety or behavioural issues.

Relevant qualifications

The following qualifications contain a component relevant to ABL:

- New Zealand Certificate in Outdoor Recreation (Leadership) Level 5, with strand in Adventure Based Learning
- Unit Standard 24664 (Level 5): Facilitate Adventure Programmes for the Personal and Social Development of the Participants
- National Certificate in Outdoor Recreation (Leadership) Level 3, with strand in Adventure Based Learning
- Unit Standard 468 (Level 3): Assist in Facilitation of an Adventure Based Learning Programme for the Development of the Participants

“Competent leaders are one of the mainstays of ensuring safety”

Resources and equipment

Consider what equipment and resources are required to run the activity safely. The participants may be required to bring this or it maybe provided to them.

Participant

- Personal clothing should be suitable for active participation, and for the weather conditions
- Consider tying long hair, and limiting loose clothing, jewelry and belongings in pockets
- Closed footwear may be necessary
- Personal medication (EpiPen, asthma inhaler), sunblock and insect repellent
- Sufficient water and food.

Leader

- Site map and information (e.g. instructions for using the venue, emergency evacuation information)
- Activity specific operating procedures
- Group medical and contact information
- Communications device
- First aid kit.



Venue

- The surrounding area and grounds should be suitable. Identify any potential hazards (e.g. fallen branches, slippery or sloping surfaces).
- Any additional portable equipment (e.g. planks, tyres, ropes) needs to be fit for purpose.

Further support

Places to gain more information from.

Activities / Ideas / Tools for EOTC:

<http://eotc.tki.org.nz/EOTC-home/For-teachers/Teaching-resources/Activities-ideas-tools>

Project Adventure Publications:

<https://www.flaghouse.com/General-Education/Project-Adventure/Publications/>

Playmeo – online Group Game Activity database, training and books:

<https://www.playmeo.com/>

Education Outdoors New Zealand:

<https://www.eonz.org.nz/>



[ABL Planning Template](#)

[Overarching Risk Management Guidance](#)