



# The Activity Program

## - Information about the program

The Activity Program is Scandinavia's largest program for activity and inclusion in primary and secondary school. Currently more than 1300 schools in Scandinavia participate. Non-bullying Activity Leaders (AL) are students who contribute to better cohesion and a safer school environment, through organized activity during recess. The fact the students who are facilitating well-being cannot bully, speaks for itself. In Norway, the National Education Act requires schools to prevent bullying. The Activity Program also contributes to increased activity in the classrooms through "Active AL Teaching".

### The Activity Program's vision:

«In Activity Leader Schools the students should be active and inclusive – with big smiles on their faces!»



### The Activity Program's goal:

- Increase wellbeing.
- Increased and more varied activities during recess.
- Increased and more varied activities in the classroom.
- Build friendship.
- Prevent conflicts and bullying.
- Provide inclusive, friendly and respectful students.

### Organization and operation of the Activity Program

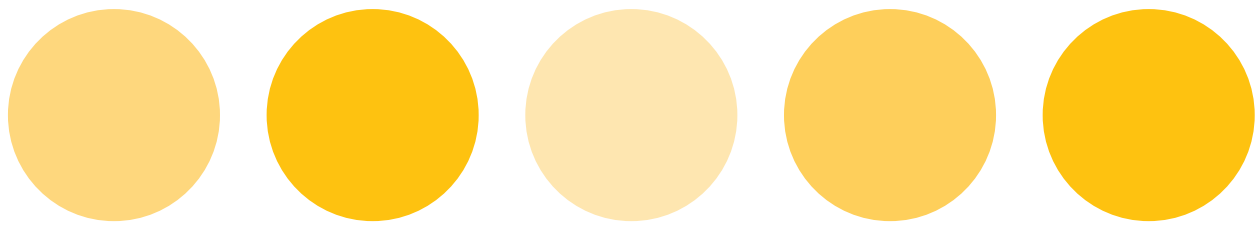
The Activity Program is run by a network model. Schools in geographic proximity are in the same network. Each network receives two annual activity courses for the Activity Leaders, network meetings, offers to attend a well-being seminar, as well as the Activity course for all staff members. Each network has an AL Coordinator (ALC). The main task of this person is to convey updated program information and keep in touch with the schools. In addition, each school has at least one AL Manager (ALM). This is a school employee that is responsible for running the Activity Program.

A School Manager (SM) is an employee in the Activity Program that is responsible for organizing and follow-up the program in the different network schools.

### What does an Activity Leader do?

The main tasks of the Activity Leaders are to contribute to increased activity, better cohesion and a safer school environment. They also have a special responsibility for including students who are alone. They have to be friendly, respectful and never bully. All Activity Leaders receive training at game and activity courses under the direction of the Activity Program. In addition, Activity Leaders learn how to act as leaders, what is important to succeed as an Activity Leader and about important values such as inclusion, kindness and respect.

Leaders lead the activities and ensure that everyone who wants to participate is included. The Activity Leaders make sure that everyone follows the rules and behaves nicely toward each other. At frequent meetings the Activity Leaders and the AL Manager plan and evaluate the games and activities.



## The Activity Program in Primary School

In Grade 4 to Grade 7 a nomination election of new Activity Leaders takes place twice a year. Students vote anonymously for classmates they find friendly and respectful to others and never bully. They can nominate several classmates, including themselves. The results from the election should never be presented to the students, just the teachers. If the class nominates students that the teacher believes is involved in bullying or shutting others out, the teacher must postpone the student's candidature to the next election period. This applies, for example, to "negatively popular" students who have enough friends in class to be chosen, but who shut single students out from the games.

Students are chosen one semester at a time but can be reelected. To ensure a rotation of Activity Leaders, the teacher can decide that an Activity Leader who has been elected two times in a row, cannot be reelected a third time in a row.

## The Activity Program in Secondary School

### Application

In secondary school, students in Grade 8 to Grade 10 apply to become Activity Leaders (AL) using an application form. The homeroom teacher collects the applications and makes an assessment of candidate's suitability as an Activity Leader. AL Managers make a comprehensive assessment of the classes' applications. In secondary school, the students are usually Activity Leaders for one year at a time. It is important that teachers make sure that new Activity Leaders are chosen when needed. Everyone who become Activity Leaders must be friendly, respectful and never bully.

### TL board

We recommend secondary schools to establish a TL Board consisting of 4-6 students with different roles. The TL Board has the main responsibility for follow-up and operation of the Activity Program. It is recommended that there are board meetings every other week.

### TL in electives

By implementing the Activity Program in electives, the TL Board will be established in the electives as well. After the election process is over, the Board members get the opportunity to immerse themselves in the Activity Program through work in electives.

Appropriate electives to implement the Activity Program may be related to physical activity and health, serving and caring for others. The Activity Program in electives should be linked to relevant curriculum.

### Booklets and culture cards

The Activity Leaders and school staff can make use of our booklets. We have game and activity booklets both for the primary and secondary school. The booklets contain activity descriptions for recess, physical education and more. In addition, we also have booklets for Active AL teaching.

Every Activity Leader gets a culture card that is valid during the period they are selected. This card offers free or discounted access to various cultural events.

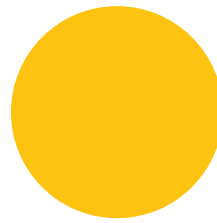
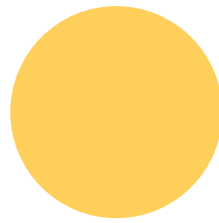
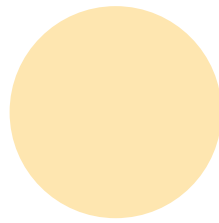
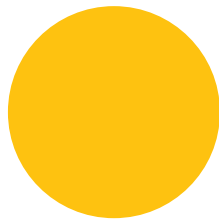
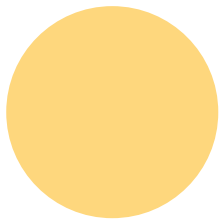
### Active AL teaching

Active AL teaching is a teaching plan where physical activity is used as a method.

Each teaching plan suggests what grade level it is suitable for and refers to relevant competence goals. The teaching plans provide opportunities for the teacher to differentiate according to the students' level of knowledge.

We hope Active AL education will contribute to varying teaching and let the students learn through practical experience. Students themselves like the practical approach to knowledge. They highlight the physical activity and the social fellowship as valued factors in the learning processes. Through Active AL teaching, we therefore hope that teaching will be even more fun, active, engaging and motivating for the students so that more children experience success.





### Why invest in increased physical activity in school?

According to the Norwegian Directorate of Health (2014), all children and adolescents should be physically active a minimum of 60 minutes every day. In school, children and adolescents may sit still for over 90 percent of the time in the classroom due to few hours of Physical Education and little activity in other subjects. Of today's 15-year-olds only 43 percent of girls and 58 percent of boys achieve the 60 minutes of daily physical activity which the Directorate of Health recommends.

Research shows that physical activity has both short-term and long-term effects, giving immediate positive effects on behavior, attention, concentration and the ability to memorize (Samdal et al.2009). Research also shows that physical activity has very positive impact on learning and learning environment, and on academic results, especially mathematics, reading and writing (Pedersen et al. 2016). Another important benefit of physical activity is that it counteracts depression, anxiety and behavioral problems.

A total of 80 percent of adolescents between the ages of 13 and 18 say that they feel lonely from time to time (Norway's School of Sport, 2013). This can lead to anxiety and depression. Physical activity counteracts depression, anxiety and behavioral problems in children and adolescents.

Furthermore physical activity lets students and teachers experience other aspects of each other, and qualities like care and tolerance naturally appear (Bø and Sandvoll, 2016).

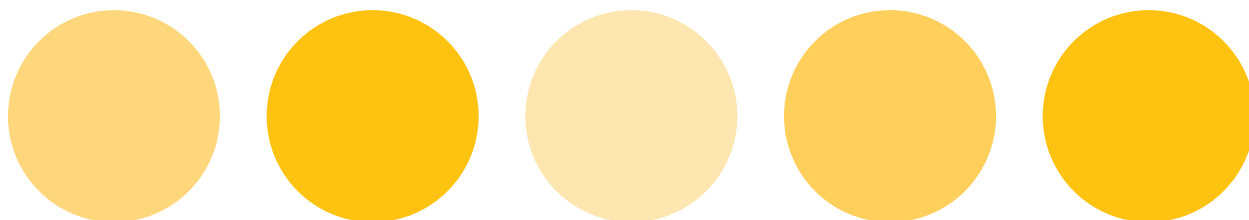
Physical activity helps create active, safe, independent and social people!

Enjoyable physical activity in adolescence makes a foundation for lifelong pleasure of being active!

### Advantages of being a well-being school

- The school gets continuity in the work of physical activity.
- The school receives experience exchange, motivation and follow-up via SL and network.
- The school gets increased activity, structure and safety during recess.
- The Activity Program contributes to a high degree of student participation.
- The Activity Program helps schools to work preventive in relation to the school environment.





## Feedback

"I feel that the Activity Program is increasing unity and friendship across groups, Grade levels and age. The program consists of low-threshold activities, that everyone can join. The Activity Program further develops the students' social skills in addition to strengthened student participation".

**Mette Mikkelsen, Department Leader Flaktveit skole**

## The Activity Program works!

Both the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) Community Research and DNV GL (formerly the Norwegian Veritas) have done research. NTNU's survey (2014) showed a significant difference between schools participating in the AL program and non-participating schools, regarding the well-being of the students, the well-being during recess and the amount of bullying.

The DNV GL report (2017) shows that the Activity Leaders grow with the task, there are fewer students that do not like school, the schools have more exciting activities, it is less bullying and a calmer classroom environment. The Activity Program also conducts surveys for the Activity Program Managers at each school, where more than 90 % respond it is less bullying and that fewer students are alone during recess.

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"If our school burned down, I would save the AL box first! It is the most valuable item at our school!"

- 10 year-old student

«Thanks for this opportunity which made me happy to go to school again. I'm never alone during recess anymore.»

- Secondary school student

