



Sport scores revival

By VIVIENNE OAKLEY

TEACHING children how to catch, throw, hop, skip and run is on the education agenda for 2006.

A fundamental skills program is being offered to NSW primary schools to give children the building blocks to participate in physical activity.

Introduced at Canley Heights Public School last year, the program is an important step towards ensuring children are active.

Deputy principal Dianne de Graaf said contrary to popular belief, children do not pick up fundamental movement skills naturally as part of their normal growth and development.

"Children need to be taught these skills and given opportunities to practise them," she said.

"It takes between 240 and 600 minutes of instruction time to become proficient in one fundamental movement skill."

The program is based on 12 skills considered to be at the foundation of all games, sports or physical activities including how to sprint, jump vertical, catch, throw overarm and dodge.

Ms de Graaf said focused teaching of the skills had led to an increased participation in physical activities as the confidence of children grew.

For the Saunders boys — Max, 8, Louis, 6 and Oliver, 3 — ball sports are an important part of life.

"They don't go to the park without a ball," their mother Nea said.

Mrs Saunders said her sons started learning ball skills at kindergarten, but have had to teach friends how to throw and catch.

The University of Sydney is this year starting a five-year \$460,000 study into why teenagers reject sport.

A survey will be sent to 500 students in NSW and Queensland.