



ALL IN ORDER: Dextan Williams gets his back to school health checkup from Dr Yalini Thevashangar. PHOTO: Monty Jacka

Healthy kids a priority

BY MONTY JACKA

IT WAS undoubtedly a summer of grazed knees and long days in the sun for the city's children.

But now the holidays are winding down, Griffith's youth are making sure they're in tip-top shape before heading back to the classroom.

Back to school health checks are well underway in medical centres across town, as doctors ensure everything

is in order health-wise, ahead of a big school year.

It is a flat out time of the year for Griffith Aboriginal Medical Service (GAMS), who are expecting over 100 children, between the ages of four and 18, to come through for health checks as the school year kicks off.

During the checks, doctors conduct a simple physical examination on the children, and discuss with parents any issues that might have been noticed at home.

GAMS child and maternal health worker, Linda Johnston, says the check-up is crucial to making sure kids have a healthy year.

"Over the holidays, eating habits change, sleeping habits go back in to school with a fresh start," Mrs Johnston said. "The good thing about it is, apart from getting them healthy and ready to school, we can pick up on any issues that might pop up down the line." According to Mrs

Johnston, the back to school checkups offer a chance to pick up early on any hearing or speech issues, as well as any medical situations surrounding weight or chronic illnesses.

Aside from keeping on top of all childrens' health, GAMS takes the opportunity to help young Griffith residents get stocked up for the year ahead. Kids coming in for health checks get new backpacks, water bottles, lunchboxes, hats,

pencilcases and pretty much everything they'll need at school this year. As well as the back to school supplies, children also receive hand sanitizer and a sheet with some healthy eating options to give their parents. Health checks with doctors at GAMS are available all year round, and open to all members of the public. The centre advises that children between four and 18 should be getting medical checks every nine months.



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