



Exploring the Success of the Community Active Partnerships Strategy in the Logan Region

Evaluation Report



Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and play.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Attribution

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Executive Summary

Logan Together through the Community Active Partnership (CAP) strategy has developed with the Logan community, a city-wide play and physical activity strategy to increase physical literacy, physical and psychological development, and social connectivity opportunities for children and their families. The strategy was a pilot program from that operated from January 2020 to June 2022, testing a place-based approach to increasing local children's physical activity through play and community-based education and development opportunities for parents and children's development stakeholders.

This coordinated strategic initiative focused on localised solutions to support physical activity for children was structured around five guiding pillars; Play-Based Strategies, Child's Voice, Local Sports and Recreation Enhancement, Capacity Building and Sustainability, and Research. It was demonstrated that organised play events, and other child-focused events offered a chance to teach healthy messages as well as promote healthy behaviours and the importance of play for child development to community participants. The strategic direction of Logan Together was able to demonstrate the value of children as citizens and co-contributors to their physical literacy, and provided a platform for children to express thoughts and feelings on issues that were important to them and relevant to stakeholders in the Logan region.

Logan Together showed a strong ability to work with existing stakeholders in each child's physical activity to increase access and opportunities for participation, and by developing genuine and meaningful partnerships with the community. This proved vital as Logan Together co-designed and co-created children's physical literacy and physical activity programs with local community and organisations to provide strong training and development opportunities for children's stakeholders in the areas of play.

This partnership recognised the centrality of the child in developing strong and healthy physical literacy using play across the various child development domains. This was then enabled by a committed community made up of parents, family and kinship to enable a play environment that was creative and supportive of learning. Logan Together was able to expertly craft a support package for play in the home environment that further functioned to embed this important Community Active Partnership (CAP) project within community and the homes of Logan families.

Impact of Logan Together

Logan Together Community Active Partnership (CAP) program strategy is a Queensland Government supported initiative that aims to work closely with the Logan community to improve and increase play and physical activity in all children.

Through iterative development of the CAP program strategy, five pillars outlined the overarching goal. The foundational pillars of the CAP program are Play-Based Strategies, Child Voice, Local Sport and Recreation Enhancement, Capacity Building and Sustainability, and Research. The proposed outcomes of these goals were an increase in participation in local physical literacy and physical activity opportunities for children within the target areas, and enhanced parental values and behaviours in relation to physical literacy development and physical activity engagement. Logan Together through the CAP program embedded community within the governance, program structures and operations. This led to significant community participation and strong community ownership of the CAP program. Featured in this community-centred partnership was a collaboration between a range of child service providers who partnered with children, families and kinship carers to provide high quality community level outcomes, as will be explored throughout this evaluation report.

This evaluation aims to provide an insight into how Logan Together achieved these goals, the impact they have had on the community, and recommendations for future practice.

Opportunities for Play in Logan

Using the CAP program, Logan Together targeted children from the Logan City local government area, with a honed focus in Eagleby, Woodridge and Kingston due to AEDC data. The residents of the Logan area are culturally diverse, with 34.2 % of the population being born outside of Australia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

Some key issues facing Logan, identified by stakeholders and residents were defined as “economic disadvantage”, “young people who are disengaged from education and the workforce”, and “the stigma associated with Logan City” (Zappia & Cheshire, 2014).

In 2019, Logan City Council had seven suburbs with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage, ranging from 75-100% of the highest levels of disadvantage in the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage. This comprised 25% of the local population in Logan (James, 2019).

Recent research has shown that the more disadvantage a child experiences during their development (such as poor neighbourhood perceptions, economic disadvantage, and limited access to parks or leisure facilities) the higher their risk of poor developmental outcomes are as they age (Goldfeld et al., 2018). For this reason, Logan provides an opportunity for Logan Together to support developmental outcomes in children from a strengths-based approach.

Table 1: Percentage of developmentally at risk or vulnerable children by domain in Logan versus Australia (2021)

Developmental Domain	Logan		Australia	
	At risk	Vulnerable	At risk	Vulnerable
Physical health and wellbeing	12.5 %	14.2 %	11.7 %	9.8 %
Social	17.0 %	12.1 %	14.4 %	9.6 %
Emotional	18.1 %	11.2 %	14.5 %	8.5 %
Language	13.3 %	10.1 %	10.1 %	7.3 %
Communication	15.2 %	11.4 %	14.5 %	8.4 %
Children vulnerable		29.0 %		22.0 %
1 or more domains				
Children vulnerable		15.5 %		11.4 %
2 or more domains				

Retrieved from Australian Early Development Census, 2022

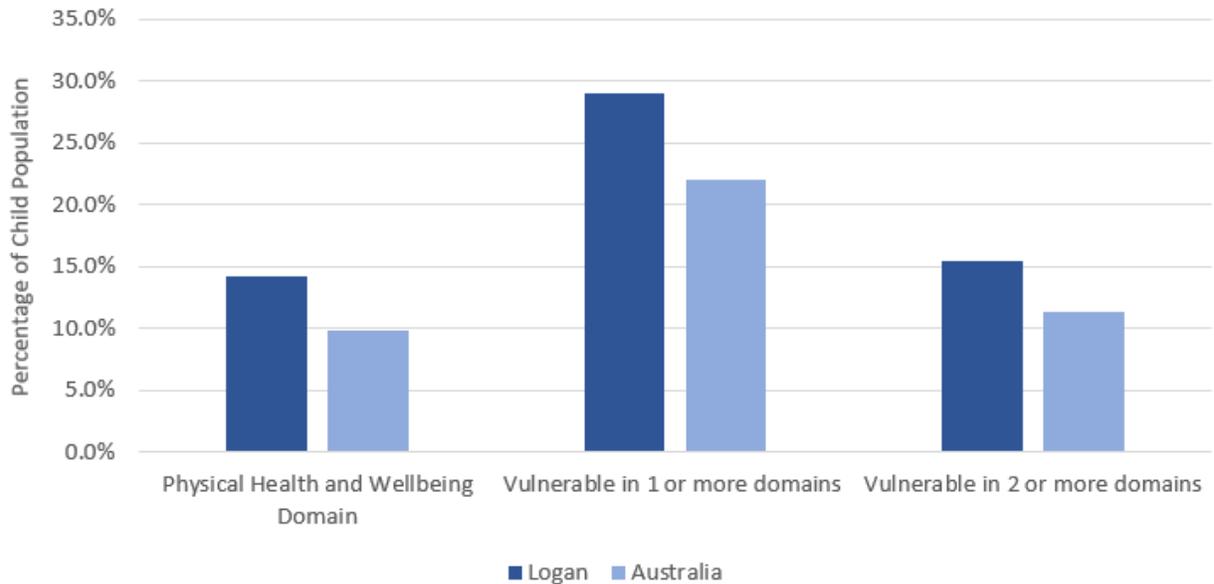


Figure 1: Developmentally vulnerable children in Logan versus Australia (2021)

Logan has an increased percentage of children who are developmentally at risk and vulnerable across all developmental domains (Table 1). These developmental domains encompass the characteristics that a child needs to develop so that they can be put in a place to succeed in adolescence and adulthood (Figure 1).

The physical health and wellbeing domain describes a child's ability to be ready for and participate in school, as well as fine and gross motor ability, while the social, emotional, language and communication domains cover the ability to communicate successfully with peers and adults around the child, confidence, emotional regulation (Australian Early Development Census, 2019).

These statistics highlight why children in the Logan area are an appropriate target group for the CAP program. Activity and play can improve all developmental domains in vulnerable and at-risk

children, so that they can position themselves for success in school as well as within a diverse range of social and physical environments (Dankiw et al., 2020).

Strategic Imperatives

- Work with existing parenting groups to enhance physical literacy and physical activity awareness opportunities for children
- Include opportunities for parental role modelling / interaction between parent/carer and child
- Work with existing gatekeepers to children's physical activity increase opportunities for participation
- Co-design and cocreate children's physical activity programs with community
- Value children as citizens and co-contributors to their physical literacy solutions
- Develop a key target area public awareness campaign to enhance parental awareness of:
 - a. Benefits of children developing a strong and healthy physical literacy
 - b. The sufficient levels of daily physical activity for children.
 - c. The full spectrum of where children get their physical activity across the varying age groups
 - d. The role grown-ups play in supporting children's physical activity

Strategic Outcomes

1. Enhanced parental value, attitudes and behaviour in relation to:
 - a. Physical literacy development across key target age groups
 - b. Spectrum of physical activity opportunities for children
2. Potential increase in participation in local physical literacy and physical activity opportunities for children within key target areas.



Background to Logan Together

The community in Logan has come together to partner with Logan Together in the CAP strategy. An overarching idea of the CAP strategy was to use community engagement to promote and improve social inclusion, social ties and connectedness for children and families as part of a holistic approach to impact childhood wellbeing.

The community, local activity providers, schools, early childhood educators, community hub leaders and children themselves were identified as key stakeholders of the CAP project, thus their input was an important consideration throughout the decision-making processes of the project. In turn, the Logan community has come together to support and lead this project for the success of their children.

Schools, sporting clubs, early childhood educators, community hub leaders and activity providers provided support for projects with early and eager engagement, while parents and neighbourhoods played a key role by supporting children and being drivers for change. Overall, the Logan community, via the CAP program, have initiated a positive change for play and physical activity culture so that children can develop in a supportive and active environment.

Vision

In 2025, Logan kids will be as healthy and full of potential as any other group of Queensland kids. If all of us can assist 5,000 more Logan kids to arrive at 8 years old in great shape, we will have achieved our goals.

Purpose

Logan Together's purpose is to partner with Logan children so that they have the best possible developmental outcomes that they can. They seek to achieve this through focusing on important milestones along the way, to ensure that children and parents are on track in their development.

Key pieces of Logan Together's purpose are:

- Address improvements for every child, at each age and stage of childhood
- Build a community movement to value children and their development
- Create an empowered community to take lead in shaping the decisions on issues concerning them
- Shared local decision-making for coherent social investment
- Affect policy change and system shift, answering the question: how can Logan's children thrive?

Logan Together Governance

The Community Active Partnerships Strategic Advisory Committee (CAPSAC) guides the approach, values, permissions, direction and overall strategy to achieve the goals for the CAP program. The CAPSAC also looks to the community, relevant professionals, consultants and researchers for input on the direction of the program, in an effort to maintain a feedback loop with the community over the duration of the program.

The role of the CAPSAC is defined as follows:

- To provide informed advice and oversight of the program
- To facilitate access to research, information and perspectives that may assist in achieving the program's outcomes.
- To facilitate connection with other programs, projects and processes that are going on in Logan and beyond which may complement the CAP program or feed into it – this will help avoid duplication and ensure the program is well integrated into other processes.
- To engage critically with the program at key points to sharpen thinking and strategy.

Feedback from CAPSAC Members

CAPPSAC members were invited to respond to a survey regarding their perspectives on the governance model and the CAP program. In total, 6 members responded to an online survey to reflect on the CAP program and the CAPSAC governance model.

In response to being asked how the governance model was effective in achieving the objectives of the program, CAPSAC member Esther Revell responded, "One of the strengths of the CAPSAC was having members from such varying backgrounds and work experience. This variety provided the CAPSAC with an array of differing perspectives, which in my opinion provided the project with opportunities for strong discussion which often led to brilliant ideas". Another response from Gregor Mews, shared that the model "created a platform in which key partners could guide and supported tangible solutions suitable to the local context while being informed by best practice".

In response to the question: "How do you think the CAPSAC governance model supported the development of children's physical literacy through the CAPP pilot?", the responses focussed around prioritising play as the focus of the project, and coming to a "unified perspective on what

physical literacy is. Esther Revell answered that “The CAPSAC regularly discussed physical literacy and its relevance to the individual programs being run as part of the CAP program. I believe that all aspects of the CAP program were strongly linked with improving physical literacy for 0–8 year olds in identified, local Logan communities”. Furthermore, they responded that “It fully supported the aims of increasing physical literacy once play was made a priority”, which many of the other responses also echoed.

Respondents were asked to provide examples of how the intended collaborative approach of the CAPSAC was effective in achieving the strategic imperatives, one member responded that “The strategic selection of CAPSAC members allowed for advocacy of the work in multiple sectors, (for example,) schools, Early Learning Centres, (and) Community support”. Another response highlighted CAPSAC’s value of community input, “The genuine demonstration of respect for local community organisations and the underlying research assisted a collaborative approach”.

CAPSAC members additionally explained that there were many positive unexpected outcomes from the governance model. One member shared that “the extraordinary coming together to hear children's voices at the Childhood Summit, (and) the level of take up of the Play Workers Training leading to a huge shift in understanding of the importance of play in early childhood across Logan” were two unexpected outcomes. Another noted that the “significant influence of schools beyond a superficial level (was an unexpected outcome), many schools now have embedded the teaching of physical literacy through play as part of their curriculum planning and pedagogical approaches”. Other unexpected outcomes were “longer term relationships and connections that can be applied more broadly” and “the extraordinary level of community buy-in”.

Major themes that prevailed in response to the question “Can you provide examples of how the CAPSAC governance has made critical decisions to promote the strategic outcomes of the CAP

Program?” were that there was a strong, timely response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that there was a “shift in trajectory when paly arose as a critical component”. One member commented that “Instead of presuming the CAPSAC knew the direction the project should take (during COVID-19), the project listened the community needs and changed its programs promptly to cater for these needs”, which highlights a community-driven approach to overcoming unforeseen obstacles.

When discussing improvements to the CAP program approach, the CAPSAC members shared a variety of components that would improve the future running of the program. It was suggested that “(ensuring) local government is actively involved in the project for the duration... (which) could have opened up more opportunities for the project”. they further commented that “as Logan Togethers direction had changed, a new organisation called ‘Australian Institute of Play’ (AIP) was developed to fill this gap. This organisation is extremely new, and now needs to attract funding to continue providing ‘play’ opportunities to the Logan community”. Another member suggested that “meetings (should be structured) around the strategic imperatives more explicitly”, while other possible improvements that were suggested were “providing more opportunities for families to meet together at times that suit their work/ life commitments”, and “further funding to enable sustainability of the program”.

In a similar vein, the respondents were asked “how can the governance model for CAPSAC be improved for future operations?”. Two responses shared a similar theme of clarity among members. One comment suggested a “common understanding of the opportunities of the approach from the outset”, while another discussed that “CAPSAC struggled in the beginning to define their role between becoming operational (which is what was suggested in the grant deed) and maintaining a strategic role... The CAPSAC governance model did struggle to manage ‘conflict of interest’ when the ‘Australian Institute of Play’ was developed”. Other members suggested that the governance model should have involved more community representation, with comments

such as; “local members of the community, (such as residents and elders) are part of (the governance model)”, and “perhaps a better method for retaining CAPSAC members. By the end of the project there are only a couple of us left. Maybe the Committee could have been renewed every 12 months. Maybe less academics involved. And definitely children should have been involved.”

The CAPSAC members were asked to reflect on strengths of the CAP program approach, each member’s response discussed different areas that the program showed strength. The responses were:

- Place based planning was integral to the success of the CAP approach. Having a diverse and strong CAPPASAC also ensured the direction of the CAP program was regularly checked and discussed so that the most appropriate decisions were made to improve the project. Also utilising so many collaborative partnerships was essential to offering so many different solutions and opportunities for each of the differing Logan communities.
- Community voice, child- centred.”
- The strengths lay in the open ended approach that enable the community to have a large say in what might happen. The Children’s participation was absolutely critical to the approach in the end. The access to the local schools really held the pilot together rather than a reliance on local volunteer sporting committees.
- The capacity building of the community leading to initiatives being community owned and run.
- Gathering children’s voice. Mobilising whole communities to come together Breaking down the barriers of the school fences Creating an energy around a different way to

improve learning attributes and outcomes Establishing beautiful, trusting relationships with children and their families.

- The program unleashed the power of play in Logan which is more than excellent.

Finally, when reflecting on the impact that the CAP program had on the vulnerabilities of the Logan community, the responses of the CAPSAC members focussed on the accessibility of the project for the community. The below responses highlight the ideas that were shared across all of the CAPSAC members:

- The CAP program provided an opportunity for community members, families and children to grow in personal confidence, to connect in ways that were safe and engaging and to provide hope and freedom.
- It has in part assisted vulnerable communities that were ready for change and assistance.
- The CAP program was able to minimise barriers to participation in Logan. This was achieved by providing opportunities within the three individual communities – not providing one opportunity in only one location that relied on transport. The project also utilised well known safe environments in those communities for activities, such as schools, local sports clubs, local streets etc.

A focus group identified key strengths regarding the CAPSAC governance model.

Participants identified that the key strengths of the CAPSAC governance model were:

- The varying number of organisations involved in the CAPSAC governance
- A wide range of organisations and people involved in governance

- Varying areas, backgrounds and experiences of stakeholders including schools, family day cares, Logan Together, QLD Government, Logan City Council which provided combination of different perspectives
- Partnership with academics helped keep evidence-based approach and strategic focus. Also allowed for funding to be allocated to projects providing most impact
- Shift from operational to strategic strengthen CAPSAC model and better facilitated links to other programs, research and potential collaborators
- Original focus of CAPSAC was to use physical activity to improve health benefits for children (0-8 years). This was a pivotal shift from the QLD Government who usually funded program for children greater than 6 years of age.
- CAPSAC focus of place-based activity was daunting but highly impactful
- The non-linear approach to programs delivered by CAPSAC added great emphasis the work that was being completed by stakeholders
- Shift to play focus allowed a new perspective on physical development and promoting link between play and physical activity.

Asked where funding for play should sit within the QLD Government, participants responded that it should sit in the Department of Sport and Recreation. Participants identified the importance of the Activ8 funding for the Logan Together and resoundingly supported the direction of the QLD Government to promote play and physical literacy through community-based delivery.

The participants were asked about the weaknesses of the CAPSAC Governance model and responded:

- Lack of application of play within the school environment. This was seen as a potential area for improvement from CAPSAC by making better links to school curriculum.

- CAPSAC stakeholders needing to better link play with academic performance and the development of language skills
- CAPSAC and stakeholders provided strong link between play and behavioural impacts for children

When asked to discuss how play could be better incorporated into the Australian Early Years Framework and the Australian Curriculum, participants responded that:

- Important to focus on pedagogy and pedagogical practice which was the focus of the CAP program
- It was recommended by participants that there is a strong focus on how we teach children and how we teach particularly through play
- Emphasise was given to a large shift needing to take place in teaching in order for the results of the CAP program to be embedded in the curriculum

Participants were asked about the barriers of play in Logan and responded:

- Teachers and schools must be supportive
- Importance of community facilitation
- Importance of children feeling safe in their home community

When asked about how CAPSAC attempted to breakdown these barriers participants responded by highlighting that:

- Professional development was offered within community to build capacity
- The diversity within the CAPSAC governance structure meant that representation was across multiple aspects of community

- CAPSAC designed and implemented a comprehensive and deliberate approach to community engagement
- CAPSAC has members that were key advocates for community
- Local businesses were activated through the CAPSAC to promote play within community

Participants were asked at what stage were these barriers challenged by CAPSAC and responded:

- COVID-19 lockdowns were acknowledged as a key barrier to the success of CAPSAC
- The interim plan for COVID-19 lockdowns was highly successful but only offered a band aid approach
- During the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020 the CAPSAC governance team sought to bring people together but just not face-to-face. Tried to establish a community to deliver play lessons, videos and equipment.
- Six months after COVID-19 lockdown in 2020 is when the CAPSAC really started to take shape and work at full capacity.
- The COVID-19 response and post-COVID response were based on a highly successful collective impact strategy from CAPSAC
- Emphasise was given on the effort, time and resources dedicated to the CAPSAC COVID-response and post-COVID plan

Participants were asked how important the funding environment was during the CAP program. They identified that there was a significant shift in the funding expectations from the QLD Government which promoted greater reciprocity, autonomy and sharing. This was skillfully led by the Logan Together employees who were able navigate reporting with community expectations.

When asked whether the CAPSAC model is transferable to other regions, the participants said:

- Important to have natural leaders in the team and the play agenda will naturally attract creative people. Governance structure need strong action-minded people.
- Collective impact employed through the CAPSAC is definitely transferable
- Need a strong agenda and governance framework in place for success
- Reporting was viewed as a hurdle but a great enabler if done correctly
- Childhood Summit was highly successful because it brought the right people into the right place and heading in the right direction

Participants were asked about what support needs to be offered to enablers such as those employed by Logan Together during the CAP program and responded:

- Strong wrap-around support is needed to build capacity
- Collaboration between Logan Together, CAPSAC and the Australian Institute of Play was a positive development from the CAP program but did lead to considerable conflicts of interest.
- Highlighted the importance of succession planning
- Emphasised the importance of trust and communication and faith in Logan Together employees which is pivotal for success

Participants were asked about the key learning moving forward from the CAP program. They highlighted:

- Importance of a thorough review of every component
- Future programs should consider impact on vulnerability and the most vulnerable children in community

- In the short term, promote lessons from pilot and particularly promote the achievements of the CAP program and CAPSAC
- Retain focus on being place-based

Program Evaluation Method

Approach

The CAP program strategic pillars were used to discern which goals each program or event helped to target the most, and background research on successful implementation of those pillars was completed so that the program could be compared to existing literature. It should be noted that many programs had an influence over multiple pillars, though this evaluation focuses on which pillar they had the largest effect in. Data was collected and provided by Logan Together, and consisted of qualitative and quantitative data, which were then analysed using descriptive statistics and phenomenological analysis to evaluate the project.

Participants

Participants for this evaluation are those who had data collected by participating in events and activities organised by Logan Together during the CAP program. Children participants were local to the Logan area and attended Logan schools, community centres and early childhood centres and adults were also local, many of whom worked within Logan. Parents and adults were the respondents to the surveys for play events. Participant numbers and survey responses were obtained from Logan Together's data collection. CAPPsAC members also participated in an online survey and focus group to discuss the governance model and direction of the program.

Interventions

The programs were conducted by Logan Together from early 2020, to 2022. Programs took place in the Logan community in areas such as schools, parks, early childhood centres, neighbourhoods, and community centres. Interventions involved play and activities for parents and children, opportunities for children to discuss their points of view on play and what is important to them, delivery of equipment and resources for families to engage in more play, and training

opportunities for stakeholders of child development to learn about the importance of play and how to incorporate into every day.

Data Collection

The data had all been previously collected by Logan Together. Data was collected using surveys, semi-structured interviews, workshops, focus groups and observations depending on the intervention.

Surveys were sent out to participants, or parents of participants, after the completion of events and were available to be answered anonymously online. Online surveys are typically cost-effective and simple to distribute to a large quantity of people, though it is common for them to have a low response rate (Murdoch et al., 2014).

Surveys typically asked allowed for multi-choice responses where appropriate, such as for attendees' ratings of satisfaction with the event, asked open-ended questions to allow for freedom in answers, and asked for final feedback or comments to allow for respondents to share anything that was not specific to the questions.

Semi-structured in-person interviews were used in some instances with children, parents and service providers as they are less formal and allow for a conversational tone in the interview. This technique uses set questions that remain consistent between participants, though they are used to guide the interview to facilitate the individual's experiences to be highlighted.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were analysed from survey data to identify basic patterns in the data. Phenomenological analyses were then conducted for the semi-structured interviews and open-ended question responses, to identify common themes that were present in the responses. These common themes were utilised to group similar responses together so that the frequency of responses could be analysed. Word clouds were formed to create a visual display of the results relating to overall program satisfaction. Larger sized words indicate that the words and phrases were used more commonly by respondents in their answers. Additionally, quotes were extracted from the interviews and utilised to directly address research objectives and to provide further depth of understanding.

Play-Based Strategies

The CAP program is structured around utilising play-based strategies to support positive outcomes for Logan children. This pillar guides the program to engage and collaborate with the community to facilitate play-based activities for children and families and establish neighbourhood play networks for children to engage in. In turn, children would be benefited by having additional exposure to the benefits of play, such as improved physical literacy and increased social exposure for progression in each of the developmental domains, as well as the learning opportunities afforded by play-based learning.

Goal

1. Engage, coordinate and collaborate between local community, local government departments, existing activity providers, kindy to prep groups and other physical activity providers, to facilitate play-based supportive activities for local children and families.

Performance Indicators

1. Increased focus on benefits of active play for developing the physical literacy of children aged 0 to 8. Increased physical activity in children 0-8, support all areas of childhood development across this age group, support cohesion and connectivity within these communities.
2. Engage, coordinate and collaborate between local community members to support establishing/growing local neighbourhood play networks.
3. Three neighbourhood play networks every 6 months (potential of 20-30 children within each neighbourhood). One neighbourhood play network in key each area. 15 neighbourhood play networks across 3 years involving 500 Logan children and their families, with potential long-term sustainable neighbourhood play narratives.

4. Ongoing local play friend networks; daily access for local active play; enhance connectivity, cohesiveness, friendliness and perceptions of safety within local neighbourhoods; enhanced local awareness of the importance of local play networks for children; support local children's physical literacy development; support local children's physical activity; support all areas childhood development across this age group.

Evidence-Based Decision Making

The concept of play-based strategies is to incorporate physical activity and play into more aspects of a child's life, be that in schools or recreational time (Jago et al., 2017). Encouraging and creating opportunities for children to engage in play has an array of benefits, including reduced risk of obesity and high blood pressure (Strong et al., 2005), and promoting cognitive development (Bhagat et al., 2018).

There are a variety of ways that children can be involved in more play and activity, from school-integrated activity programs to community-based programs such as after-school care, sporting clubs, or neighbourhood play (Jago et al., 2017). Whatever the medium, additional availability of these programs and activities for children to participate in can contribute to increased play and physical activity for better outcomes for children (Jago et al., 2017).

Young school-aged children should engage in physical activity that supports all areas of development for their age group, specifically, the activity should support both motor skill development as well as physical health and behavioural outcomes (Strong et al., 2005).

Increased play can help children to develop motor skills through the use of their body in various ways, improve social and language skills through interaction with other children and creating games (Hà, 2020), and has a positive influence on concentration and memory for benefits in the classroom (Ishihara & Mizuno, 2018; Strong et al., 2005).

Children should be afforded the opportunities to be physically active and play in their schools and community. Yancey et al. (2007), recommend an infrastructure for physical activity to be promoted from educational, organisational, and community levels for meaningful changes in engagement. Thus, play-based strategies are an effective step in increasing play and physical activity engagement for these wide-reaching benefits.

Programs Achieving this Goal

Over the duration of the CAP program's operation, many community play sessions were held for children and parents to be involved in. Some of the play events that had data collected will be analysed for success, those events were: Curious Communities, 2 Days of Play events, Ginger Sports Soccer, KinderGym, Markai Dance, and Under 8s Play. Neighbourhood Play Networks (NPN) were also established within Logan communities.

Evidence in Support of the Deliverables

A discussion of the Curious Communities project can be found under the 'Research' section of this evaluation, as that program has already been evaluated. The full evaluation is available as Attachment A.

Through October 2020 to March 2022, Logan Together organised and ran 35 play sessions which had attendance data collected. Though this data does not represent all of the play sessions that

were offered, based on the available data 35 events over the period of 21 months took place, 3,507 children took advantage of the opportunity to play in unique ways.

Table 2: Logan Together play events with attendance data

Event	Location	No. Children	No. Adults	Total Attendees
Slacks Creek Mobile Outreach	Wagensfeldt Park	18	7	25
Slacks Creek Mobile Outreach	Wagensfeldt Park	8	7	15
Slacks Creek Mobile Outreach	Wagensfeldt Park	15	7	22
Slacks Creek Mobile Outreach	Wagensfeldt Park	14	2	16
Woodridge Mobile Outreach	The Family Place	22	16	38
Mums & Bubs Logan	Springwood	18	18	36
Woodridge Mobile Outreach	The Family Place	12	24	36
Loose Parts Play session	Woodridge Nth Community Hub	25	25	50
Loose Parts Play session	Woodridge Nth Community Hub	25	25	50
Woodridge Mobile Outreach	The Family Place	43	19	62
Woodridge Mobile Outreach	The Family Place	70	40	110
Woodridge Mobile Outreach	The Family Place	43	19	62
Woodridge Mobile Outreach	The Family Place	70	40	110
Woodridge Mobile Outreach	The Family Place	43	19	62
Woodridge Mobile Outreach	The Family Place	70	40	110
Loose Parts Play session	Woodridge Nth Community Hub	62	39	101
2 days of Play	The Family Place	111	75	186

2 days of Play	The Family Place	80	43	123
Community Voice Workshop	Slacks Creek	4	25	29
Eagleby Sth State School Loose Parts Play	Eagleby	140	15	155
Crestmead Early Learning Centre	Crestmead	60	60	120
Waterford West Playgroup	Waterford West	55	20	75
Under 8s Week Celebrations	Meakin Park - Slacks Creek	391	250	641
Under 8s Week Celebrations	Meakin Park - Slacks Creek	276	231	507
Jarjums Matter Play Day	Woodridge	45	105	150
Mums & Bubs Logan	Berrinba Wetlands	15	15	30
10 Weeks of Play - Curious Communities (2hr play session every Saturday)	Berrinba East State School	724	630	1354
Mums & Bubs Logan	Loganlea	18	18	36
Child Friendly Neighbourhoods Child Voice Workshop	Berrinba East State School	25	10	35
Child Friendly Neighbourhoods Child Voice Workshop	Eagleby Sth SS	25	10	35
Childhood Summit	Gracehouse Slacks Creek	30	221	251
3 days of Loose Parts Play at Childhood Summit	Gracehouse Slacks Creek	363	161	524
Mums & Bubs Logan	Heritage Park	30	36	66
Neighbourhood Play Network	Eagleby			
10 weeks of play	Family Place			229
Loose Parts Play session	Loganhome SS	525	30	555

Child play space design workshop - Eagleby Sth State School	Eagleby Sth SS	32	7	41
10 weeks of play program	Eagleby Sth SS			240
	Total	3507	2309	6287

Data from an additional project, 'Curious Communities' can be found as Attachment 1 and is further discussed within the 'Research' section of this evaluation.

After the Ginger Sports Soccer, two KinderGym, and Markai Dance play events, 47 parents responded to surveys to share their thoughts, feedback, and takeaways from the day. They responded to questions asking if they think their children enjoyed the event, if they as parents learned new ways to play with their children, and if they would attend similar events again.

A largely positive response to all four events was observed (Figure 2). All 47 parents reported that their children enjoyed the sessions, and all (1 missing response) reported that they would attend a similar activity again in the future. It was also shown that 43 out of the 47 responses reported that they learned new ways to play with their children. The parents were also asked to share if they noticed any messages about healthy lifestyle habits during the play sessions with the common responses depicted in Figure 3.

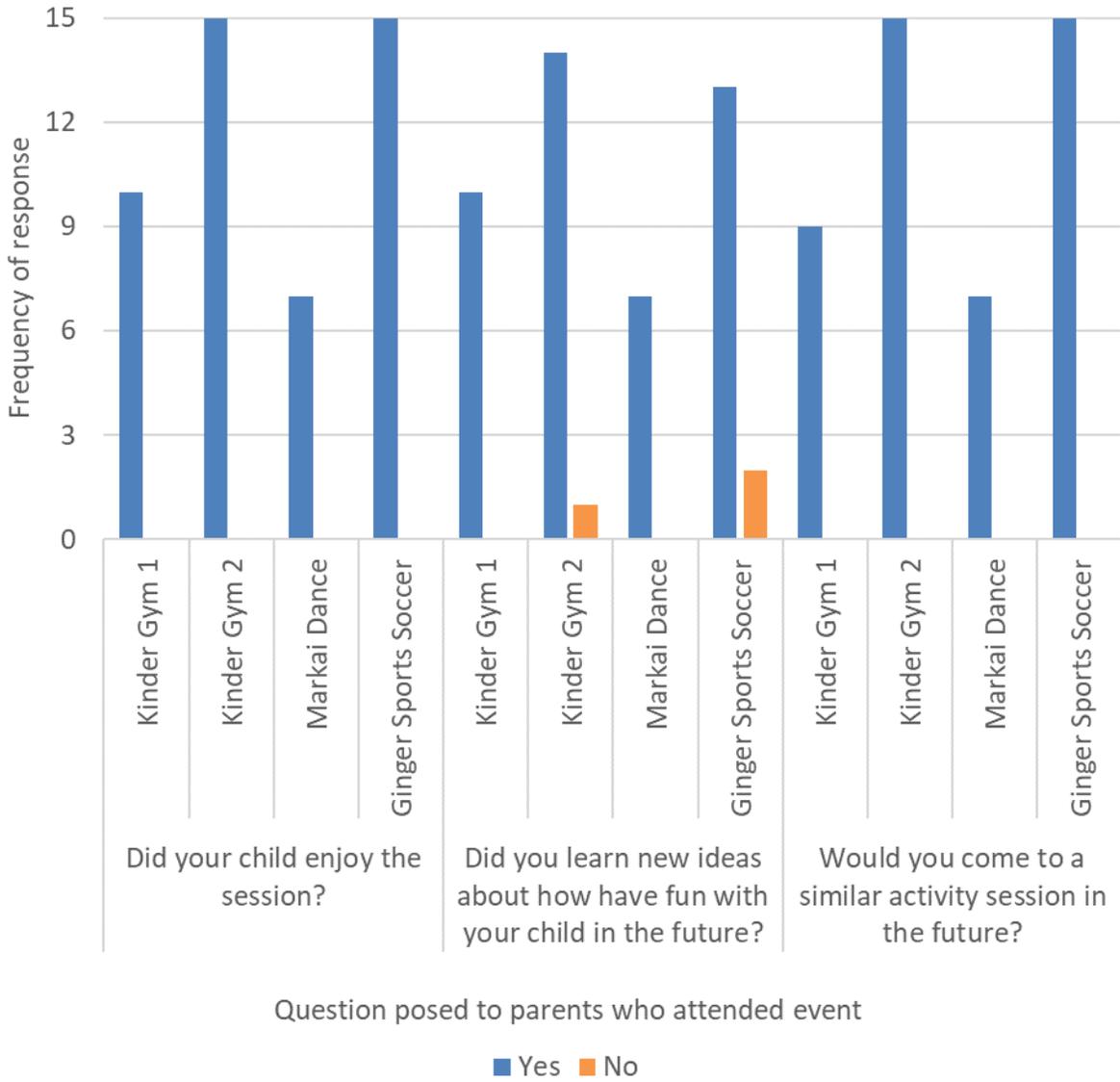


Figure 2: Parents' responses to post-event surveys



Figure 3: Word cloud of parent's identified healthy life habits from play sessions

Many of the takeaways that the parents had identified were based on play and exercise being fun, and that it is important to be active each day and drink water. Some healthy messages parents noticed were: “movement and exercise through fun”, “exercising is fun”, and “Getting our bodies moving every day is important”.

Other parents shared that they learned ways to get their children to be active, and that they can encourage or promote physical activity, saying: “(I learned) ideas to keep the kids active” and “there are fun ways to be active with my child/children”. The Under 8s Play event in May 2021 had 667 children attend. 40 parents responded to a post-event survey for data collection and to share their thoughts on the event with the majority being very satisfied (Figure 4).

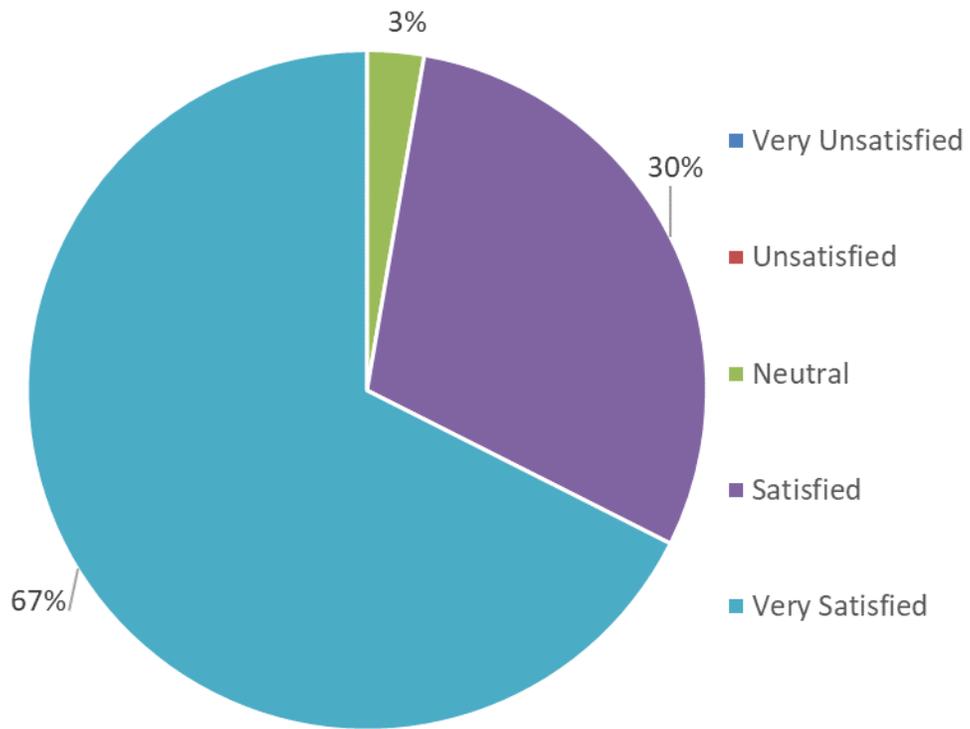


Figure 4: Parent's satisfaction with the Under 8s Play event

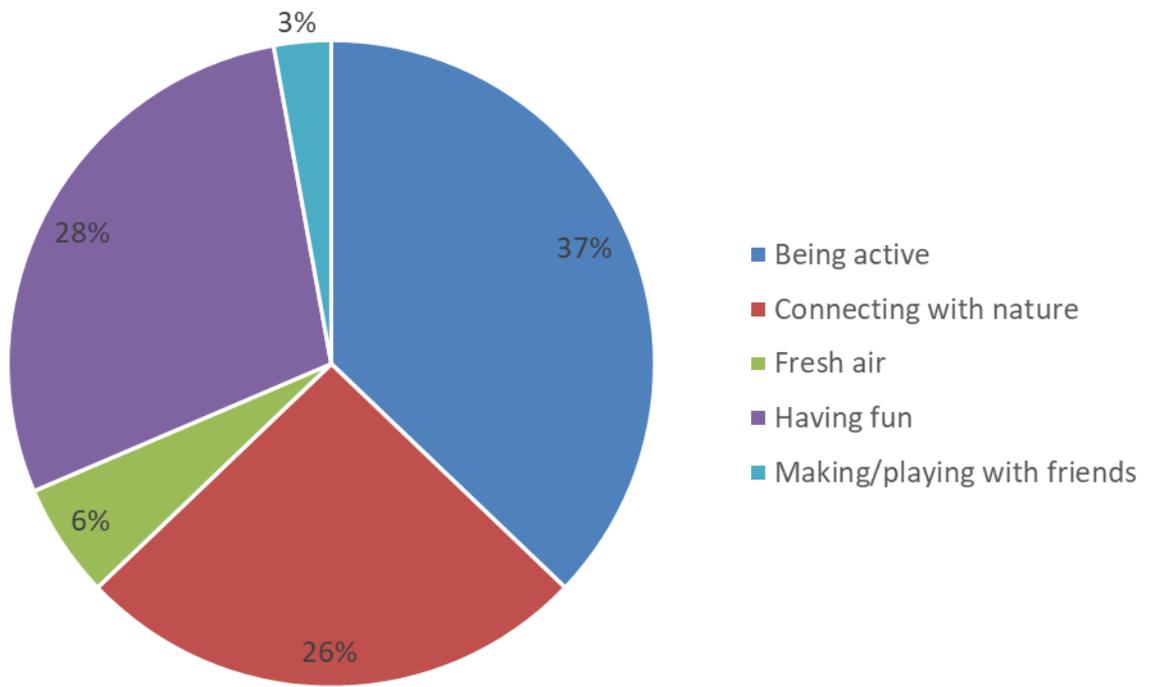


Figure 5: Parent's response to the question "What do you think is the most important reason for children to play outdoors?"

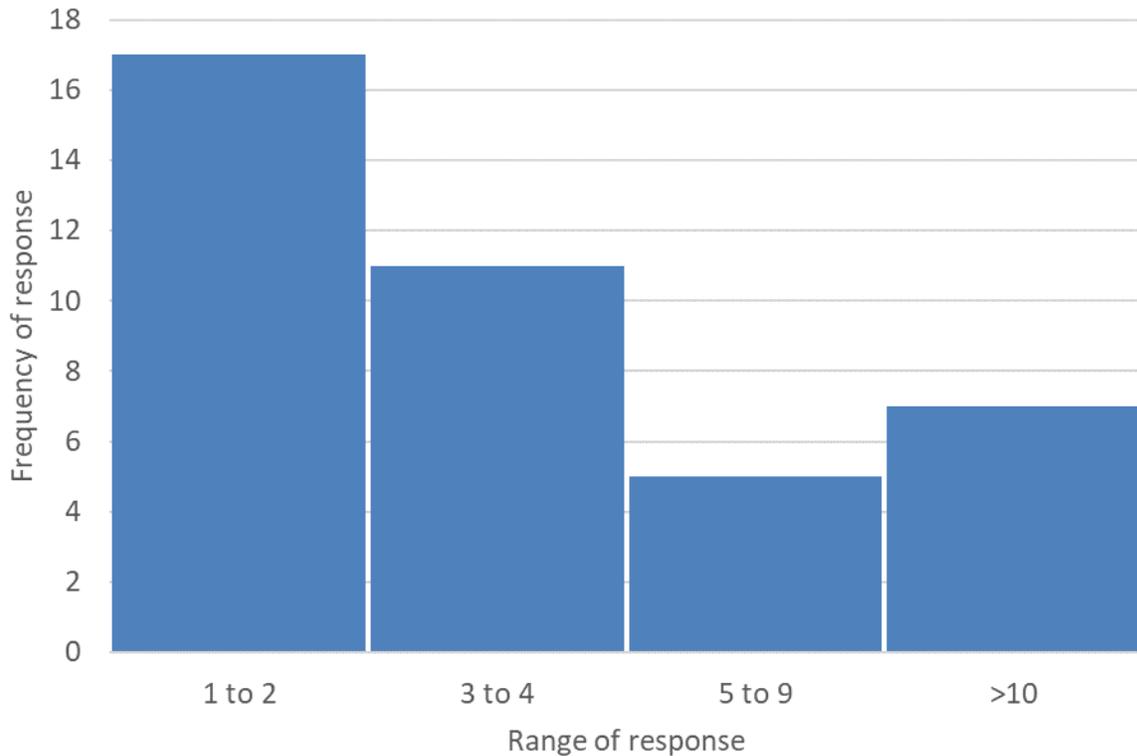


Figure 6: Frequency of response to the question "Over the course of a month, how many times would you want to attend play events such as this one?"

It was shown that 97% of parents were satisfied to very satisfied with the Under 8s Play event, and none were dissatisfied. In turn, most parents responded that they would attend similar play events 1 to 2 times per month, while 11 parents said they would attend similar events 3 to 4 times per month. 7 parents responded that they would attend 10 or more times per month, though those are likely outliers.

Figure 5 shows what parents believed were the most important reasons for children to play outside. 37% responded that being active was the most important reason for outdoor play, while

28% chose 'having fun', and 26% selected 'connecting with nature'. These responses highlight that the parents thought that being active and having fun were the most important reasons for outdoor play.

Table 3: Neighbourhood Play Network contacts by Logan suburbs

Location	Adult Contacts
Woodridge	24
Kingston	8
Eagleby	27
Total	59

Neighbourhood Play Networks were established in the Logan Suburbs of Woodridge, Kingston, and Eagleby. Specific data is not available for the play networks, though 59 total adults shared their contact information to create play networks within their streets so that local children can play safely with adult supervision. An example of an NPN in 2020, in Eagleby 17 adults and 14 children played in the neighbourhood. This helped children and adults both connect and form new friendships. The NPNs also provided opportunities to collect qualitative data directly from children and parents. That data is unpacked in the analysis of the Child's Voice and Capacity Building and Sustainability pillars, as the NPNs were able to address goals within multiple pillars.

Success relating to the Goal

During the operation of the CAP program, Logan Together has been able to create play opportunities for at least 3,500 children in accessible and creative ways. The State of Queensland

Department of Housing and Public Works (2019) published their Activate! Queensland strategy to promote physical activity and sport from 2019-2029 in Queensland.

The CAP program's Play-based strategies align closely to some of the goals of the Activate! Queensland strategy, they are "Get active together" and "Active community hubs", where target outcomes are to:

- Connect Queenslanders with community-based play and exercise events
- Support communities to be active through place-based, community designed solutions and culturally appropriate initiatives
- Connect and activate community spaces
- Encourage the use of public facilities to promote physical activity and opportunities to connect

(State of Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works, 2019)

The CAP program contributed towards achieving these goals to promote positive outcomes for Queenslanders, and especially children, through physical activity. This may have been done by creating play opportunities for local children within their spaces.

As discussed by Jago et al. (2017), additional availability of play for children to engage in can help with improving physical, mental and behavioural development.

The CAP program provided numerous play and activity events within the local community, which based on the feedback available, were successful and enjoyable for both parents and children who were involved.

Parents recognised healthy lifestyle messages that were being taught to the children in the play programs, which encourage activity and exercise that can be fun and exciting. This benefit is also relevant to the Capacity Building and Sustainability pillar.

These messages help children to become more engaged in physical activity, and thus promotes the associated development of the foundational physical health, social, emotional, language and communication domains (Hà, 2020; Strong et al., 2005).

Child's Voice

The Child Voice pillar of the CAP program states that children should be involved in discussion of issues that are important to them so they feel heard, and are given a platform and means to communicate autonomously. By supporting children in this way, the project aims to increase child buy-in through intrinsic motivation and help to make children feel more valued as members of their community.

Goals

1. Consult with local children on matters of play and physical activity as well as all issues of importance to them.
2. Create a platform for children to feel heard on issues of importance to them, as a resource for the community to consult children.
3. Run workshops to cater for the diverse means children of which all ages of children communicate.
4. Give priority to make time and space for children to govern themselves

Performance Indicators

1. Children feeling valued and heard.
2. Better quality play and physical activity provisions that suit local children's needs
3. Role model child voice consultation to community
4. Increase child buy-in to localised solutions
5. Increased opportunities for children's physical activity and physical literacy development.
6. Strengthening local agency, capacity, efficacy, determination, intrinsic involvement, and trust.
7. Validates and draws on local knowledge, expertise and history.
8. Supports local hope and positive perceptions of community.

Evidence-Based Decision Making

In 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child spelled out the basic human rights of a child, one of which was: to participate fully in family, cultural and social life (UNICEF, 2016).

Building upon that, in 2009, The National Early Childhood Development Strategy was developed by the Council of Australian Governments to guide the nation's effort to improve child outcomes (Australian Council of Governments, 2009).

A foundational idea of the strategy is that children are important contributors to society, and their ability to participate in society as adults is shaped by their childhood experiences (Australian Council of Governments, 2009).

By giving children an opportunity to express themselves and contribute to society through a controlled and supportive medium, they are provided with strong learning experiences that will be critical to the development of their social, language and communication skills (Australian Council of Governments, 2009; Bindman et al., 2015).

Consulting with children involves a sustained engagement over time and concerted effort before, during, and after the consultations (Harris & Manatkis, 2013).

A principled framework for children and young people's participation as valued citizens and learners lays out some guiding principles for running consultations with children (Harris & Manatkis, 2013), they are:

- Viewing the child as a valued citizen and social actor
- Appropriateness of engagement
- Respect for the child
- Shared understanding of purpose
- Handing the agenda to the child
- Being mindful of power disparities
- Ethical considerations

By addressing these guidelines, adults can give children the best platform to share their knowledge and insight and set them on the right path to feel confident and autonomous within their community. Giving children decision-making autonomy helps them to feel motivated and engaged in that situation (Bindman et al., 2015).

In turn, these skills transfer to home and school life, extracurricular activities and play, so that children develop autonomy and confidence in all situations they may find themselves in (Bindman et al., 2015; McClelland & Cameron, 2011).

Programs Achieving this Goal

The activities of the CAP program that targeted the Child Voice pillar are the Childhood Summit and Child's Voice Consultations, Neighbourhood Play Networks and Children in Action Reference Group.

Evidence in Support of the Deliverables

In one of the Child's Voice Consultations, 24 children aged 9-11 years old from Berrinba State School and Kingston State School were asked a series of questions about their feelings on their neighbourhood, and the nature of their play. Responses to some of the questions are displayed below in Figure 7.

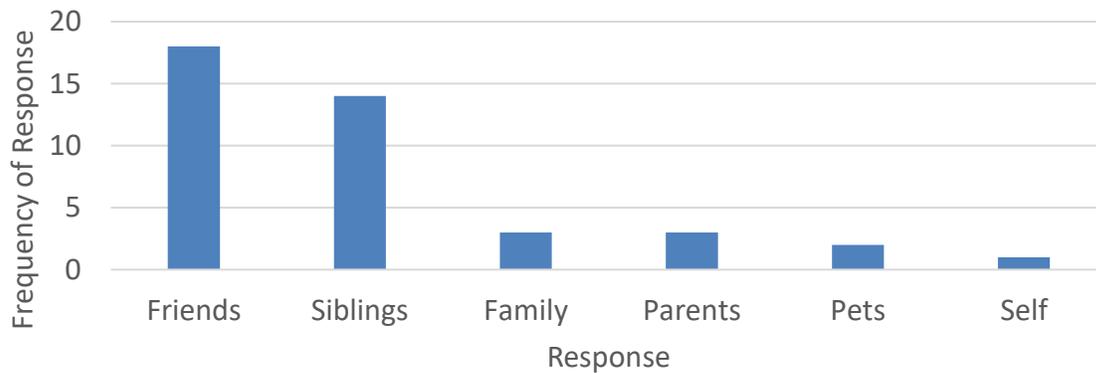


Figure 7: Frequency of responses to the question "Who do you play with?"

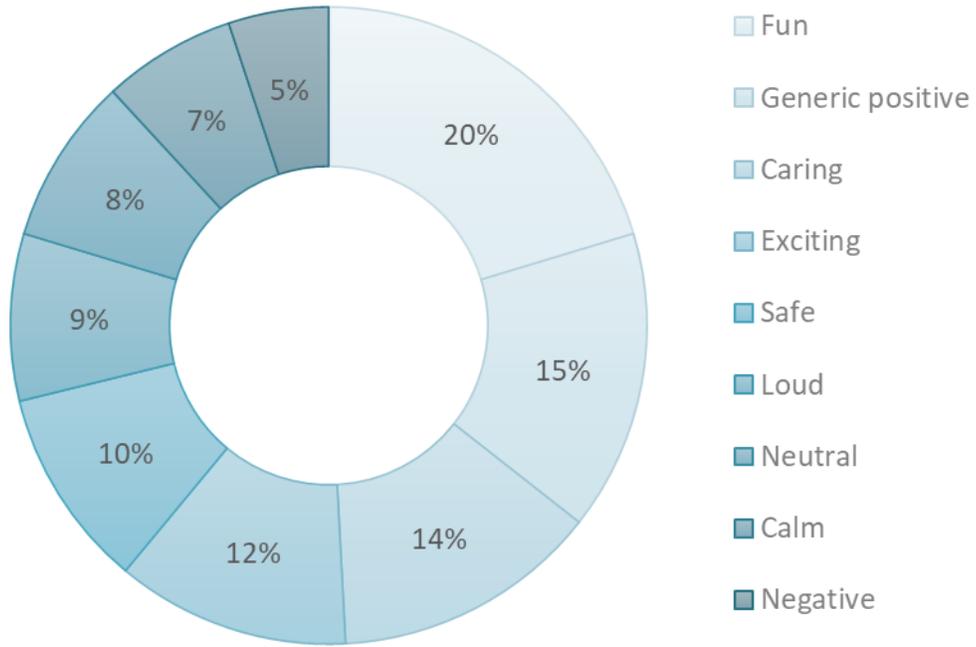


Figure 8: Theme of response when asked to describe their neighbourhood in 3 words

The children interviewed shared positive views on their neighbourhoods (Figure 8). Most responses were single words due to the nature of the question, though it is clear that these children find their neighbourhood to be a safe space for them to play and socialise with their local friends.

It was shown that 71% of the responses were comprised of clearly positive feelings towards the neighbourhood, with “fun” being the most frequent descriptor.

While they only make up 5% of the responses, some negative responses about the neighbourhood included “boring” and “unsafe”, however those responses were offset by the positive feedback that was given on the contrary to both of those points.

As demonstrated in Figure 7, these children also play most often with their friends and siblings rather than adults, which demonstrates that they prefer to engage with children their age.

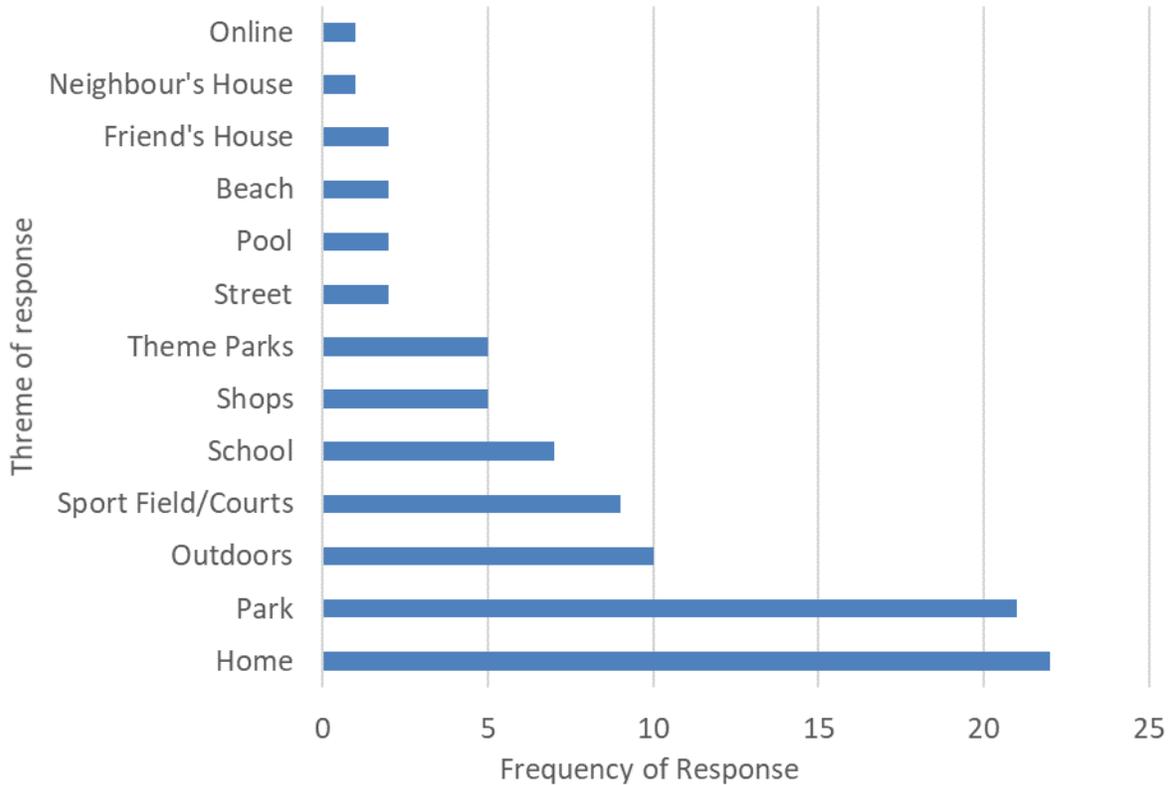


Figure 9: The responses from Berrinba State School, Kingston State School, and Eagleby State School students when asked where they like to play

The data demonstrated that the children played most frequently in their own homes, with 22 responses, and in parks, with 21 responses, when compared to all other areas (Figure 9).

Interestingly, although Figure 8 showed that some of the children in this group had very positive perceptions of their neighbourhood, only two children responded that they like to play in their street. Some of the responses labelled as ‘outdoors’ may also demonstrate neighbourhood play, one child responded that they like to play in the driveway, while another responded front yard. Other community areas such as shops and schools were somewhat common areas that children used for play.

In a continuation of the Child’s Voice project, 36 children aged 11 and 12 from the suburb of Eagleby were asked about their neighbourhood play patterns in the form of a survey. They responded to questions about the frequency of which they play outside or in their neighbourhood, and how often they would like to play in those areas, as well as if they think their neighbourhood needs changing (Figure 10 to 13).

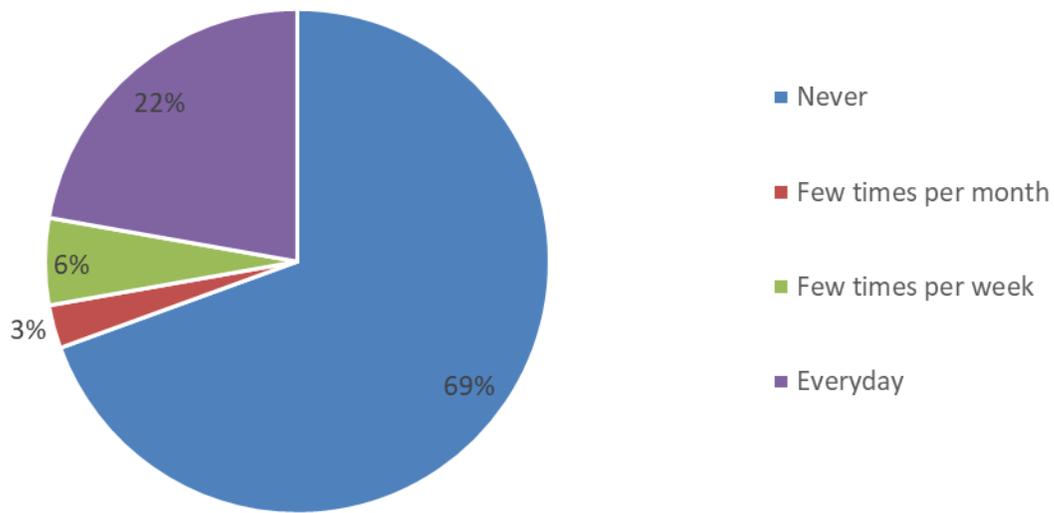


Figure 10: Eagleby children’s responses to the question “How often do you play outdoors in your neighbourhood?”

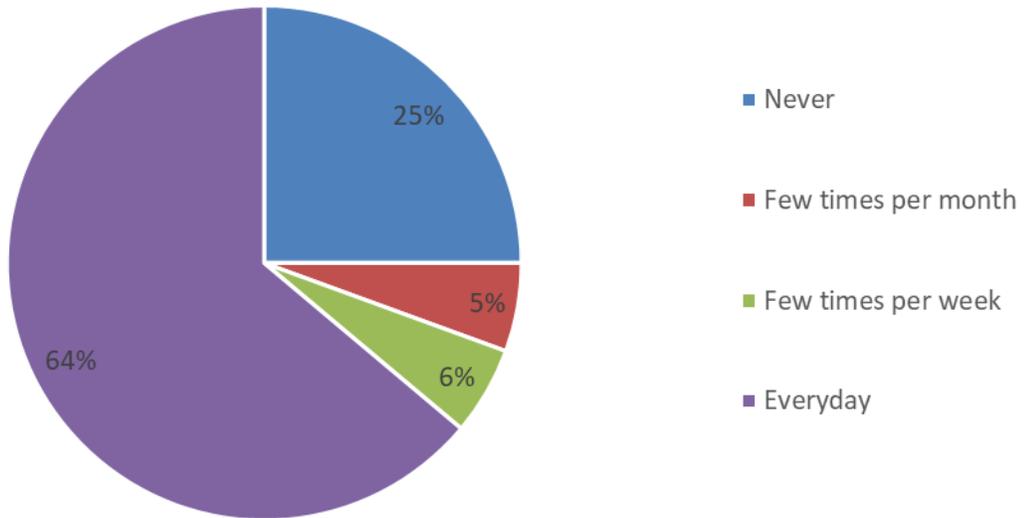


Figure 11: Eagleby children’s responses to the question “How often would you like to play in the neighbourhood with friends?”

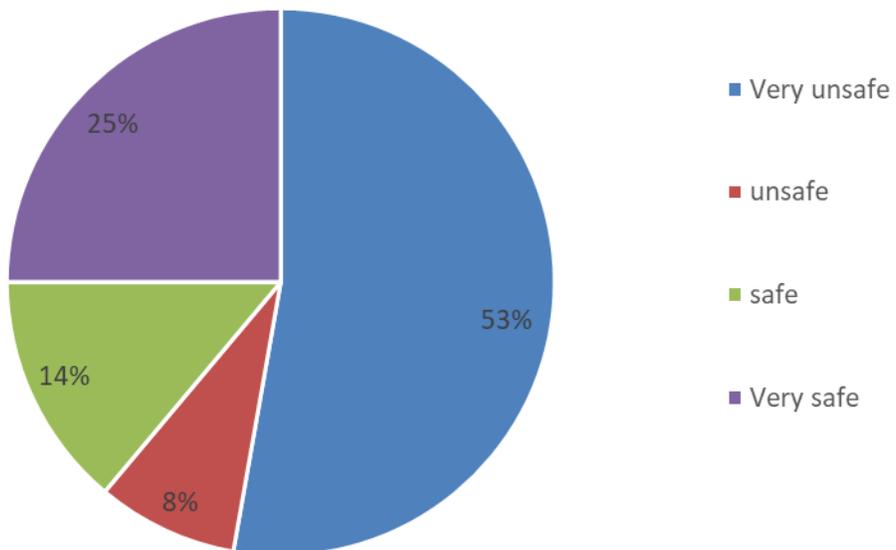


Figure 12: Eagleby children’s responses to the question “How safe do you think your neighbourhoods are for playing?”

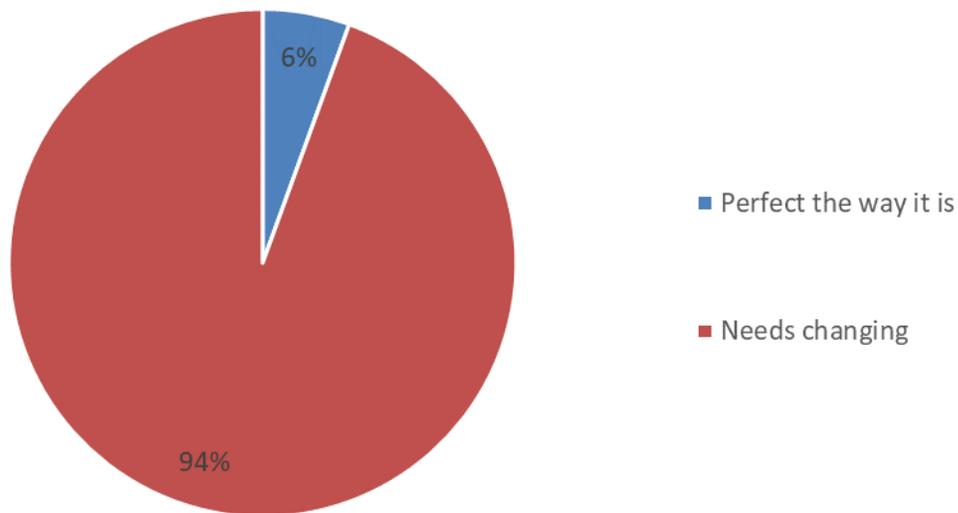


Figure 13: Eagleby children’s responses to the question “Does your neighbourhood need changing or is it perfect the way it is?”

Children responded that they don’t often play in their neighbourhood because it is “too dangerous”, they have “no one to play with”, and that they are “not allowed to go outside”, which is represented by 61% of children who believe that their neighbourhood is unsafe – very unsafe for playing.

Although only 22% of children reported that they play in their neighbourhood every day, 64% responded that they would like to play in their neighbourhood every day. Only 1 child believed that the neighbourhood did not need any change, while 94% thought that some changes would be beneficial to their neighbourhood.

A common theme that the children reported that made them feel unsafe was dangerous driving, and in turn, they believed that better control of dangerous driving would help them to feel safer.

The children suggested ideas such as “police”, “speed bumps” and “speed cameras” to improve safety, they also thought that “more space” to play and hang out would make the neighbourhood better to play in (Figure 14 to 15).

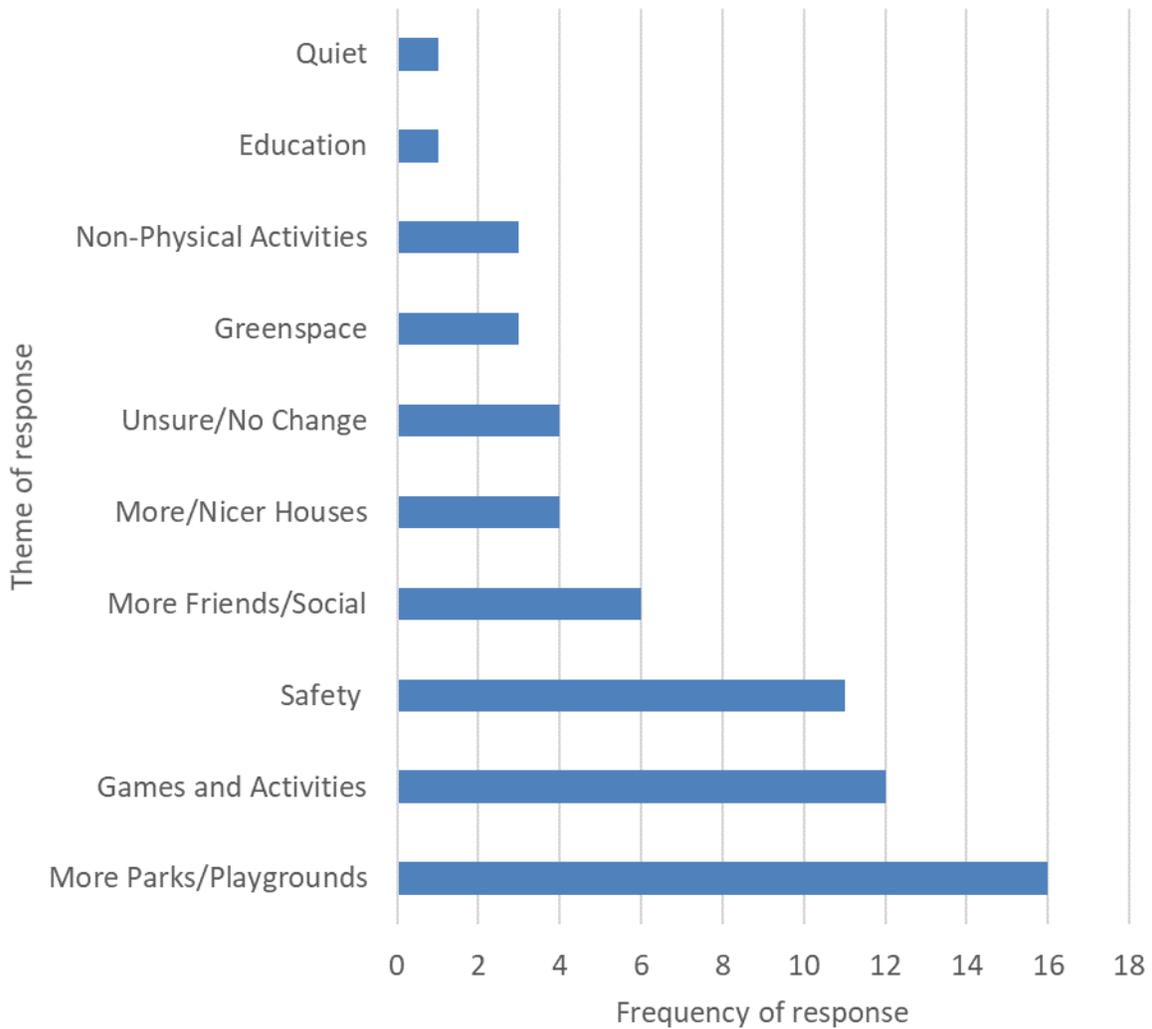


Figure 14: Response to the question "What would make your neighbourhood better?"

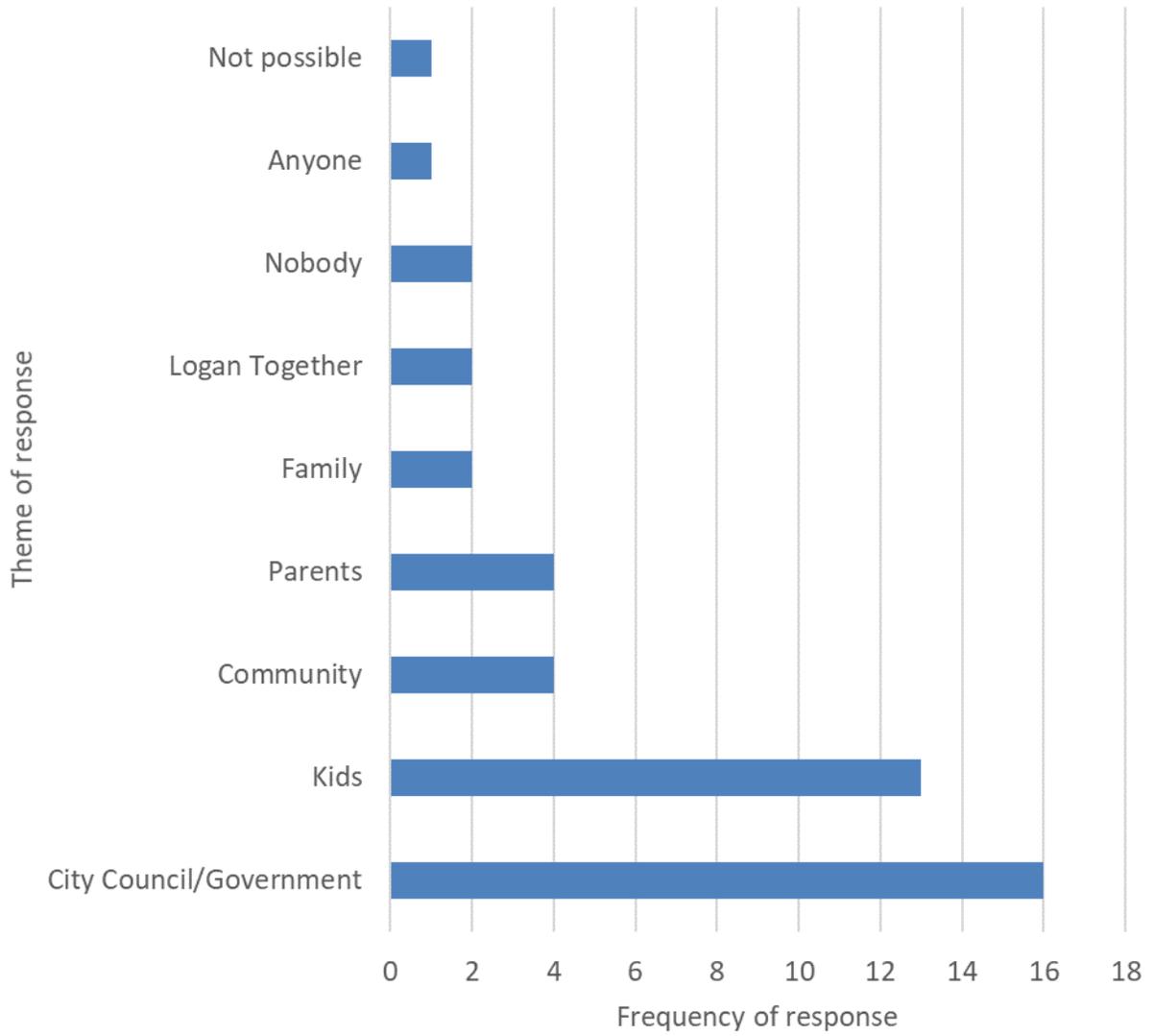


Figure 15: Follow up response to the question "who should make this happen?"

Similarly, children were asked what changes would make their neighbourhoods better, and who they believed was responsible to make the change. These children suggested that more things to do would make their neighbourhoods better, and suggested extra space to play, more parks, and having more games to play.

Safety was also a common area of concern for these children, a common theme for the need of safety was frequent crime in the area. Some children felt that having more friends to play with and expressed the want to have all children play together and become friends.

In terms of who the children thought should create the solutions they needed, the government was suggested for creating additional infrastructure for play, and the children considered that they would be the ones who needed to make the changes they wanted to see, saying “(it is) our job because we are the future”.

During the NPNs, children were interviewed to understand their opinions from the program. In response to being asked if their NPNs helped them become more active, one child responded “I started getting more active and now I'm here playing touch footy and rugby. I play sport now. It's made me more comfortable with being outside.” Another child responded similarly; “I use to be just sitting in class not doing anything for HPE... now I'm more physically active during HPE whenever they go out to play volleyball, soccer, (or) basketball I would go out with them.”

Furthermore, when asked what they would be doing if they weren't playing outdoors, the responses indicated that they would be playing videogames inside, sleeping or eating. One child responded; “(I would be) sitting home bored, alone playing PlayStation or iPad/ slacking around”, and another said “Eating, sleeping, laying down and watching TV”.

Some of the children were also asked what advice they would have for other children to get out and play more. A response from one of the children summarizes the theme of the responses to the question in general, they said: “don't be worried to give it a shot, just go out there and do it. When you do it trust me, you won't regret it”.

The Childhood Summit was an opportunity for children to speak about issues concerning them, such as play and physical activity or child’s voice. The summit provided 30 presenting children a platform to speak directly to adults and share their knowledge on topics that are pertinent to their development and future. In attendance were parents, teachers, principals and other adults who work frequently with children. The attendees were asked to respond to a survey that allowed open-ended responses to discuss their takeaways from the summit and provide feedback on the event. In total, there were 32 responses over the 2 days of Childhood Summit, from the 221 adults in attendance (Figure 16 to 17).

Overall, the attendees had largely positive reactions to the Childhood Summit. No attendees were unsatisfied with the event, while 91% were satisfied to greatly satisfied. In their presentations, the children spoke about topics such as the importance of play, types of play they enjoy, their opinions on what good play is to them, and research about play and physical activity.

The feedback displayed in Figure 17 shows that the adult attendees took home some important messages from the children's talks. Common themes shared among the attendees were that the children showed a lot of "courage" to speak on stage, and their words had "a profound impact" on them.

Many of the responses highlighted the importance of listening to the child's voice and the impact they can have on society, one of the attendees shared the sentiment "It was such a powerful reminder to really listen to (the children's) voices".

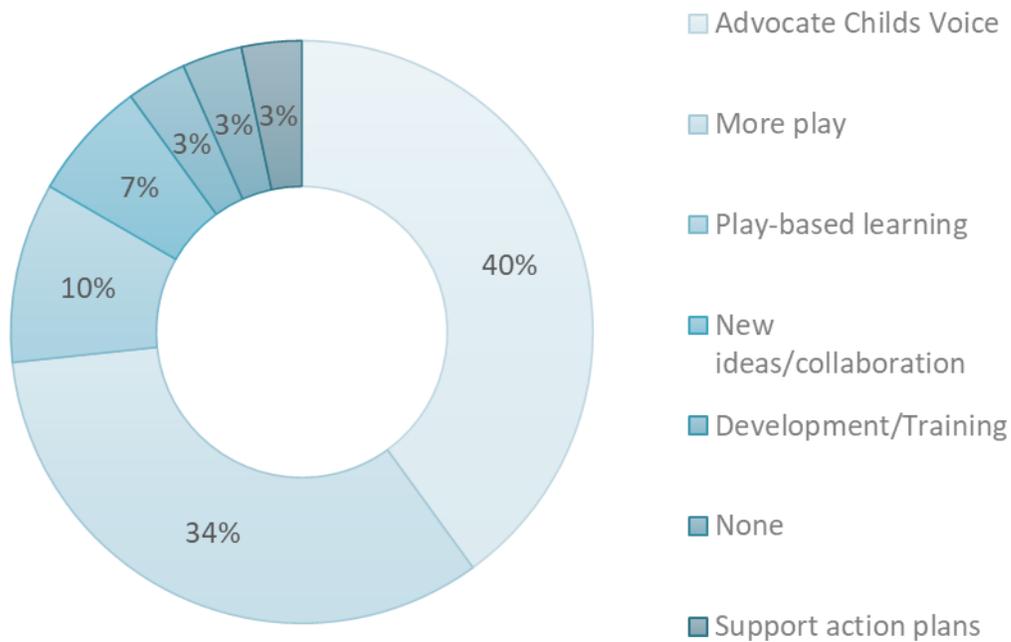


Figure 18: Theme of attendees' responses to the open-ended question "What changes, if any, are you likely to introduce into your work/life as a result of having attended Childhood Summit 2021?"

Figure 18 shows the theme of attendees' responses when asked what changes they are likely to introduce into their work and life after attending the Childhood Summit.

It was shown that 40% of the responses were around the theme of advocating for child's voice, a key thought that demonstrates this thought was "Driving harder for young children's voice to be heard".

Another 34% of responses highlighted a new understanding of the importance for play, while another 10% suggested that they would look further into increasing opportunities for play-based learning.

One of the responses categorised as ‘new ideas/collaboration’ depicts the adults taking on the advice of the children and being motivated for change: “I’m connecting with all of the people I met at the summit and integrating our programs to reach more families to engage in play”.

Success relating to the Goal

The research and data collected by Logan Together in the Child’s Voice Consultations and Childhood Summit demonstrate effective steps to meet the goals set for the Child’s Voice pillar.

The children were given platforms to speak about issues concerning them and were made to feel heard when sharing their thoughts by using appropriate strategies laid out by the framework discussed by Harris and Manatkis (2013). Moreover, by allowing children to share what they felt needed improvement in their neighbourhoods and speak directly to adults who can help them make the changes that they suggested, they were respected as valued contributors to society, thus making them more likely to engage in solutions once put forward (Bindman et al., 2015).

The children’s responses to the NPN survey were also useful in identifying what benefits that they saw themselves, and indicate that they learned about the importance of play and physical activity to be healthy and became more confident to join in and increase their physical activity.

Finally, these children were given the opportunity to think logically and problem solve in potentially challenging situations while in a safe and nurturing space, which provides them practice to develop their foundational language and communication skills (Bindman et al., 2015; McClelland & Cameron, 2011).

The positive feedback and thoughtful responses shared by the adult attendees in Figures 16 to 18 also showed that the children had a real impact on the thoughts of people who can begin to put in place changes that would benefit them. The responses from the attendees have strong links to the other pillars of the CAP project, such as capacity building and sustainability, play-based strategies, and local sports and recreation enhancement.

Local Sport and Recreation Enhancement

To develop a strategy to enhance sporting and recreation opportunities for children and families within the community, there should be collaboration between Logan Together, Logan City Council, and local activity providers. Doing so would increase physical activity engagement in children, and boost the connection between children, activity providers, and the community by reducing barriers to participation and increasing availability.

Goal

1. Collaborate between Logan Together Backbone Team, Logan City Council, local sporting clubs and associations, local recreation providers and associations, children's physical activity providers to develop a strategy to enhance sporting and recreation opportunities for children and families within the target area.

Performance Indicators

1. Reduced financial barriers to participation.
2. Enhanced participation in recreation, sporting and physical activities.
3. Boosted connection and involvement with local clubs.
4. Supported relationships between local families, local children and local providers.
5. Increased participation rates of children in physical activity.

Evidence-Based Decision Making

Organised sports and recreation facilities are a community staple for children to be physically active and develop their motor skills (Vallence et al., 2019), however, there can often be barriers to entry for children and families.

For families who experience low income, the cost of participation in sports and recreation can be a barrier, as club fees, equipment, or transportation can be expensive but necessary for participation (Clark et al., 2019).

Research has shown that children are more likely to participate in local sports and recreation with fee assistance from organisations or the government, however, those programs can feel dehumanising and potentially exacerbate the stigma associated with socioeconomic disadvantage (Clark et al., 2019).

Moreover, simply providing fee assistance does not address other barriers to entry such as a possibly lower importance for sport and potential cultural disparities between those who do receive financial aid versus those who do not within the same club (Vandermeerschen & Scheerder, 2017). Rather, other avenues to increase accessibility should be investigated.

One such strategy, suggested by Vandermeerschen and Scheerder (2017), is for managers of local sports clubs to work alongside social workers or other community organisations to promote activity participation.

There are multiple prongs to a strategy like this, but the managers and executives of sporting clubs and recreation providers play a large role in aiding those in need to access their services (Vandermeerschen & Scheerder, 2017).

To facilitate this, local sports club managers in the study conducted by Vandermeerschen and Scheerder (2017) used strategies such as becoming involved with the community through social organisations and by providing training to their leaders to work with disadvantaged groups.

To do this, those local sports and recreation authorities need support from organisations and government who can provide them a platform to reach out to the community and give them the training to work with the target population effectively, on top of financial support to break down the barriers to entry.

Programs Achieving this Goal

The activities of the CAP project that target the local sports and recreation enhancement were the Logan Kids Online Physical Activities (LKOPA), Physical Activity Packs, and Mobile Outreach.

Evidence in Support of the Deliverables

The LKOPA project was created as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing lockdown, it began in the beginning of April 2020, and the first film was released May 5th, 2020.

The aim of the project was to address the expected community issues arising from increased sedentary activity. Sedentary behaviour was estimated to increase significantly over the 6-week

COVID 19 lockdown and following restrictions. By project end on October 2nd, 2020, 116 physical activities were uploaded to YouTube to the Logan Together channel.

Table 4: LKOPA videos and interest type

Physical Activity Type	No. of videos
Active Outdoor Play	23
Basketball	5
Cricket	2
Dance & Music	15
Gymnastics	20
Kids Daily Exercise	25
Netball	1
Parent & Bubs Exercise	1
Rugby	5
Running	1
Skipping	2
Soccer	12
Tennis	2
Ultimate Frisbee	1
Volleyball	1
Total	116

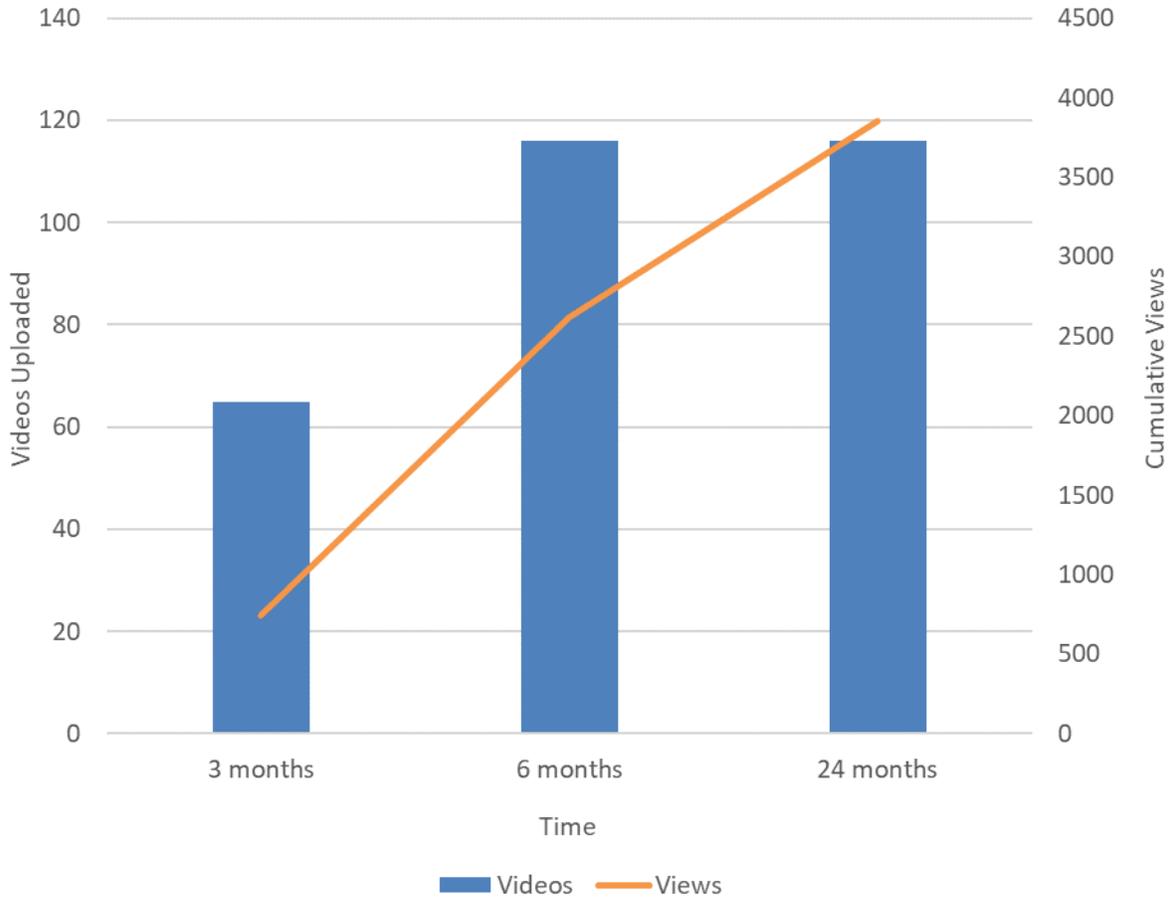


Figure 19: LKOPA videos created and cumulative views from project beginning to date

Since being uploaded, the 116 videos have accumulated 3,854 total views to date. The videos were actively marketed over the first 6-month period, recording 2,622 views.

In the videos, 15 different physical activity areas were covered by the videos, for children of all ages to engage in games at home or in local parks for increased physical activity. The videos were created in collaboration with 18 different Logan-based coaches from 5 local organisations.

The collaborating organisations were: ReLink/Hope in Movement, First Five Forever, Multicultural Sports Club, Fun Fit Gymnastics, and Dance with Diversity. This collaboration between Logan Together and community organisations makes it possible for the organisations to reach out and work with children in a way that is readily available to everyone.

The Physical Activity Packs (PAPs) were a collaboration of many community and government organisations to deliver equipment and games to Logan children and families so they can play at home without the need to purchase specific equipment for the games. The table below shows the distributors and contributors to the project.

Table 5: Distributors and contributors to Logan Together's Physical Activity Packs

Focus area	Logan Partner Organisation	Partner type	No of Packs
Eagleby	Eagleby Neighbourhood Centre (ENC)	Distributor	70
Eagleby	Twin Rivers Community Centre	Distributor	70
Eagleby	Eagleby Giants	Distributor	40
Eagleby	Jindi Mibunn	Distributor	90
Woodridge	Gunya Meta	Distributor	90
Woodridge	Family Place	Distributor	70
Woodridge	Access	Distributor	200
Kingston	Kingston East Neighbourhood Centre (KENG)	Distributor	81

Kingston	Multicultural Sports Club (MSC)	Distributor	80
Logan Wide	Hosanna	Distributor	80
Logan Wide	YFS	Distributor	90
Logan Wide	Caddies	Distributor	10
Logan Wide	Logan East Neighbourhood Centre (LENCA)	Distributor	30
Eagleby	Reclink	Distributor	150
Eagleby	Communities for Children	Contributor	150
Logan Wide	Logan City Council	Contributor	150
Logan Wide	Wesley Mission	Contributor	150
Logan Wide	Churches of Christ Care	Contributor	150
Logan Wide	Logan Together	Contributor	150

Altogether, 19 organisations including Logan Together collaborated to put together and distribute PAPs. The PAPs were comprised of balls for various sports and games and activities that can be played alone or in groups.

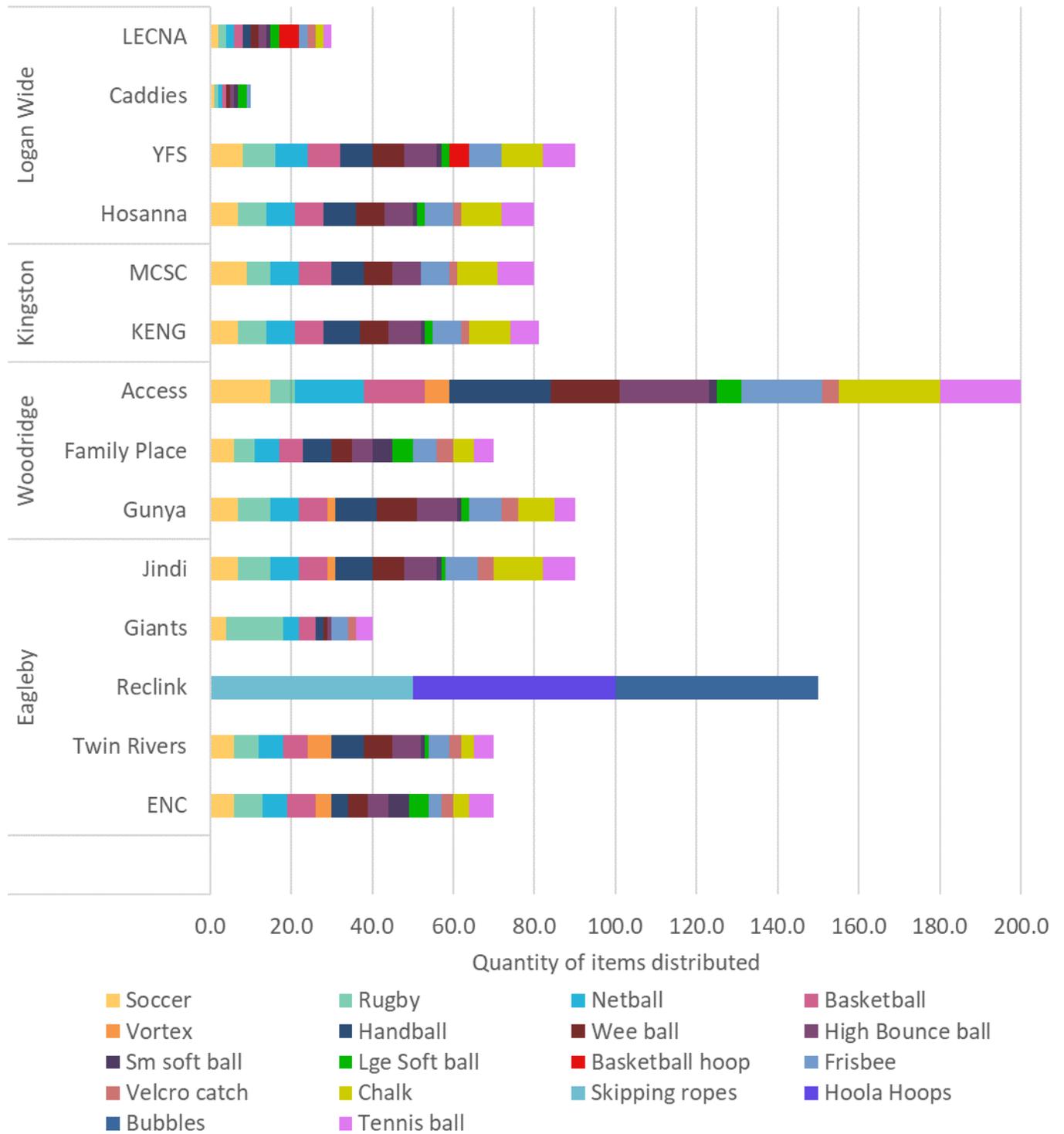


Figure 20: Quantity distributed to each area by distributors in the PAPA project

Figure 20 depicts the variety of play and physical activity equipment that was handed out to Logan suburbs by the collaborative distributors. This figure highlights the large quantity and variety of equipment that was gifted to the children of Logan, allowing them to play in ways that might not have been available to them before.

The large distribution of PAs spread across the multiple organisations shows that this collaboration helped to reach out to a greater range of children than would be possible without collaboration. The figures below demonstrate the response of the community to the PAs. The packs also included “adventure passports” with activities for them to complete outdoors.

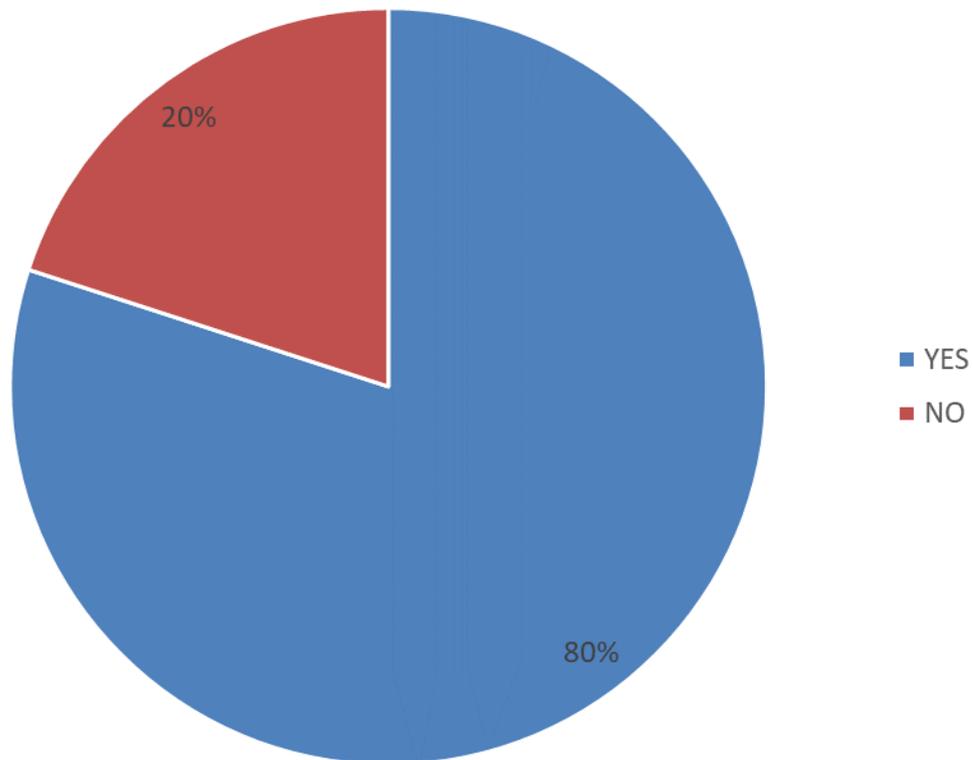


Figure 21: Were the Physical Activity Packs useful?

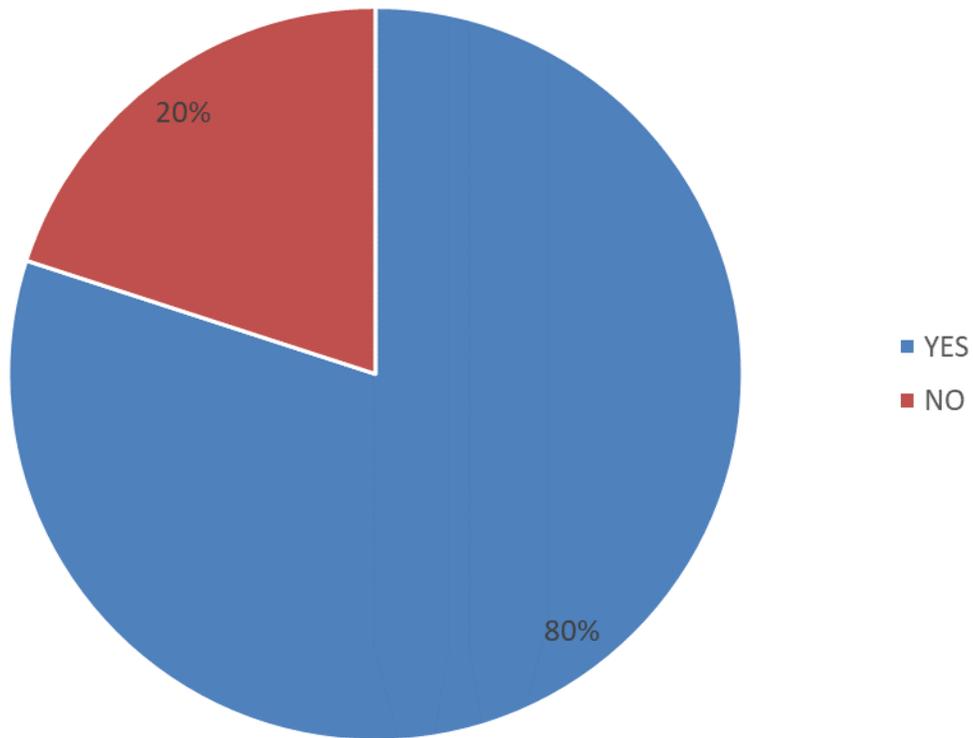


Figure 22: Did the PAs increase physical activity for children?

It was found that 10 parents responded to the questions associated with the PAP program (Figures 21 to 22). It was shown that 80% of these parents reported that the physical activity pack were useful and that they increased physical activity for their children.

Parents also left some feedback about how their children were using the PAs. Feedback included:

“This was a dream come true for her, as she has wanted a rugby ball for a long time”

“Lots of laughing and good family time”

“(My) son plays representative basketball and does not have his own basketball to practice at home. Now he does.”

These responses highlight some of the positive benefits of the PAPs. Children were able to play in ways that were previously inaccessible to them, with the rugby ball and basketball, and families were given new opportunities to play together.

In a similar project to the PAPs, Logan Together ran a Mobile Outreach program in the Logan suburbs of Eagleby, Kingston and Woodridge.

The aim of the Mobile Outreach was to take services and physical activity opportunities to the community during COVID-19 restrictions.

In 16 weeks of delivery, 4 weeks were spent in both Eagleby and Slacks Creek and 8 weeks in Woodridge. Over this time 430 children and 230 adults were involved, and 430 sets of PAPs were distributed in the target areas.

Success relating to the Goal

The Activate! Queensland strategy (State of Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works, 2019) also has relevance to the Local Sports and Recreation Enhancement pillar of the CAP program, some relevant goals from the strategy are “a fair chance to play”, and “where you belong”.

The aims of those goals were to enable disadvantaged children to participate in sport and recreational physical activity and to “address barriers to participation and focus on equity of opportunity for all Queenslanders”.

From the programs explored in this section, Logan Together contributed to making physical activity accessible to the children of Logan with their collaboration with multiple community organisations. Logan together, and the collaborating organisations put together many ways for children to engage in play and physical activity when access was limited by COVID-19 restrictions, as well as helping to overcome barriers such as cost, and local organisations reaching out to the community (Vandermeerschen & Scheerder, 2017).

Collaboration with local government and community organisations powered Logan Together’s ability to enhance local sports and recreation.

Children were provided with a deep catalogue of videos in the LKOPA program that encouraged play at home during and after COVID-19 lockdown, and were given tools and equipment to play in ways that may have been previously accessible to them with the PAPs and Mobile Outreach initiatives.

The CAP program allowed Logan Together and local organisations to embody the suggestions of Vandermeerschen and Scheerder (2017) for local sports managers to become involved with the community by working with disadvantaged groups in ways that specifically benefit them to break down barriers of entry to play and physical activity.

Capacity Building and Sustainability

An important goal of the CAP program is to create the capacity and sustainability for the community to continue to support positive play.

By increasing the knowledge, skills, and resources for high quality play in children, adults and organisations, the community will be set up to continue to achieve positive outcomes for children once the program comes to completion.

Adults should be made to feel confident to support children in play and understand the importance of it and have access to a variety of options for children to engage in play and activity. The four other pillars of the CAP project drive capacity building and sustainability.

Goals

1. Increase local knowledge, skills, resources, and value for high quality play for Logan children, with their parents, caregivers, teachers, early childhood services, OHSC, day cares and other services responsible for children by creating professional development and other learning opportunities.
2. Support all gatekeepers of Logan children's play to consider all their conditions and opportunities for play and assist these stakeholders to re-design, reshape or create new play spaces that afford high quality play.

Performance Indicators

1. Parents, caregivers, teachers, OSCH, day care providers feel more confident to provide and encourage high quality play for Logan children. Increased understanding of the importance of play for children.
2. Have more access to time and space for play. Increased opportunities to play, which supports all areas of childhood development.

Evidence-Based Decision Making

Capacity building in a community can be defined as improving the foundational level of skill, knowledge and resources that can be utilised to create a sustainable change within the community (Jones et al., 2018).

Local stakeholders should be the primary target of the development, so that they can then share their knowledge with the people that they work with (Jones et al., 2018). In the context of children, those stakeholders are parents, teachers and leaders of organisations that support children.

A bottom-up approach that involves those stakeholders in the planning, development and implementation of sports and activities helps to build capacity within the community (Jones et al., 2018; Skinner et al., 2008).

Local community champions who can take the lead on community-wide initiatives, acquire resources and motivate the community are required to build capacity (Edwards, 2015), and can

then create sustainability by working with children to create a new culture that highlights the importance of the change (Jones et al., 2018).

Programs Achieving this Goal

During the CAP program to date, Logan Together has implemented many sustainable and long-term capacity building activities centred on play along with high profile and high impact training and professional development sessions. It has implemented 34 training, development and information sessions between July 2020 to October 2021 for local community members.

Across the sessions, attendees were people such as parents, teachers, principals, people who work with or close to children, coaches, and more. In all, 866 people attended the 34 sessions, with a predicted reach of 25344 children who could be potentially represented.

Some of the capacity building training and development sessions had data recorded, those were: the Outsiders Workshop, the Outsiders Professional Development, the Outsiders Twilight, and Playworker Training sessions (Table 6).

The NPNs which have been previously discussed were also efforts in capacity building, as parents and community members were given the tools to create safe play spaces for children.

Additionally, in the Australian Institute of Play (AIP) was established as a local Logan-based not-for-profit charity. The AIP was formed from the partnerships developed and operationalised through the CAP program. “The organisation aims to secure child-led free play to build resilience

and wellbeing for and with children, where play is not a privilege” (Australian Institute of Play, 2022). Importantly, the Board of the Australian Institute of Play consists mainly Logan residents and stakeholders driven by positive change for the region and its children. The AIP works closely alongside Logan Together in the running of many events, and has recently secured funding through to June 2024.

Evidence in Support of the Deliverables

The Outsiders Workshop was run in January 2021 and was presented to local Logan school teachers. The workshop discussed the importance of play for the physical, mental, and behavioural development of children, as well as different types of play. Out of the 32 attendees from three local Logan schools, 97% were satisfied or greatly satisfied with the workshop. Only 1 attendee responded that the workshop was ‘very unsatisfying’.

Table 6: Attendees of The Outsiders Workshop

School	Attendees
Eagleby State School	25
Eagleby South State School	1
Berrinba East State School	6
Total	32

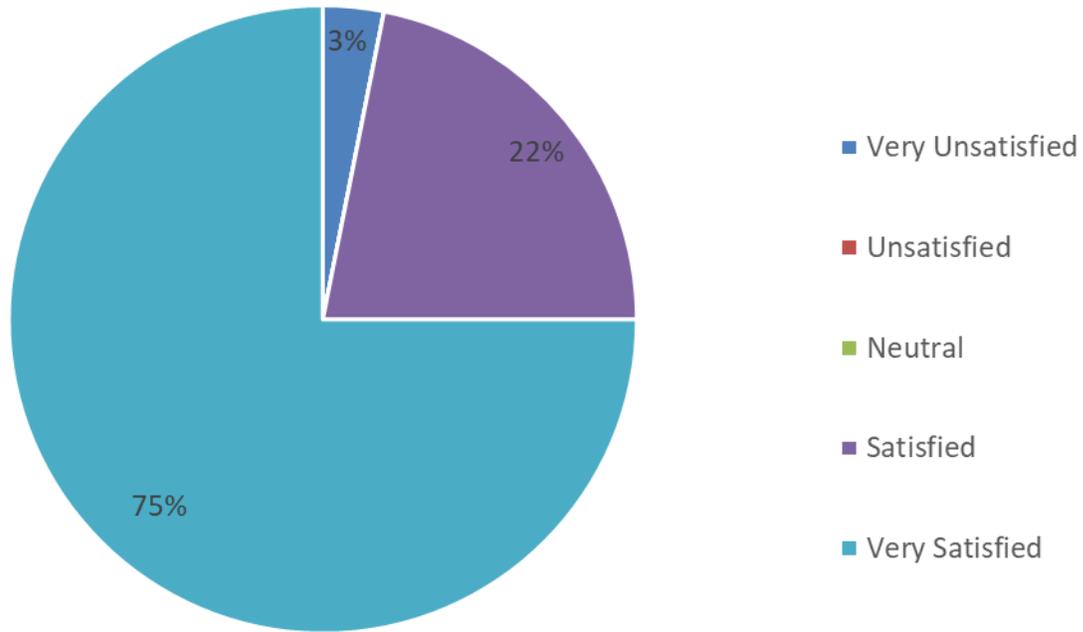


Figure 23: Attendees' satisfaction with the Outsiders Workshop

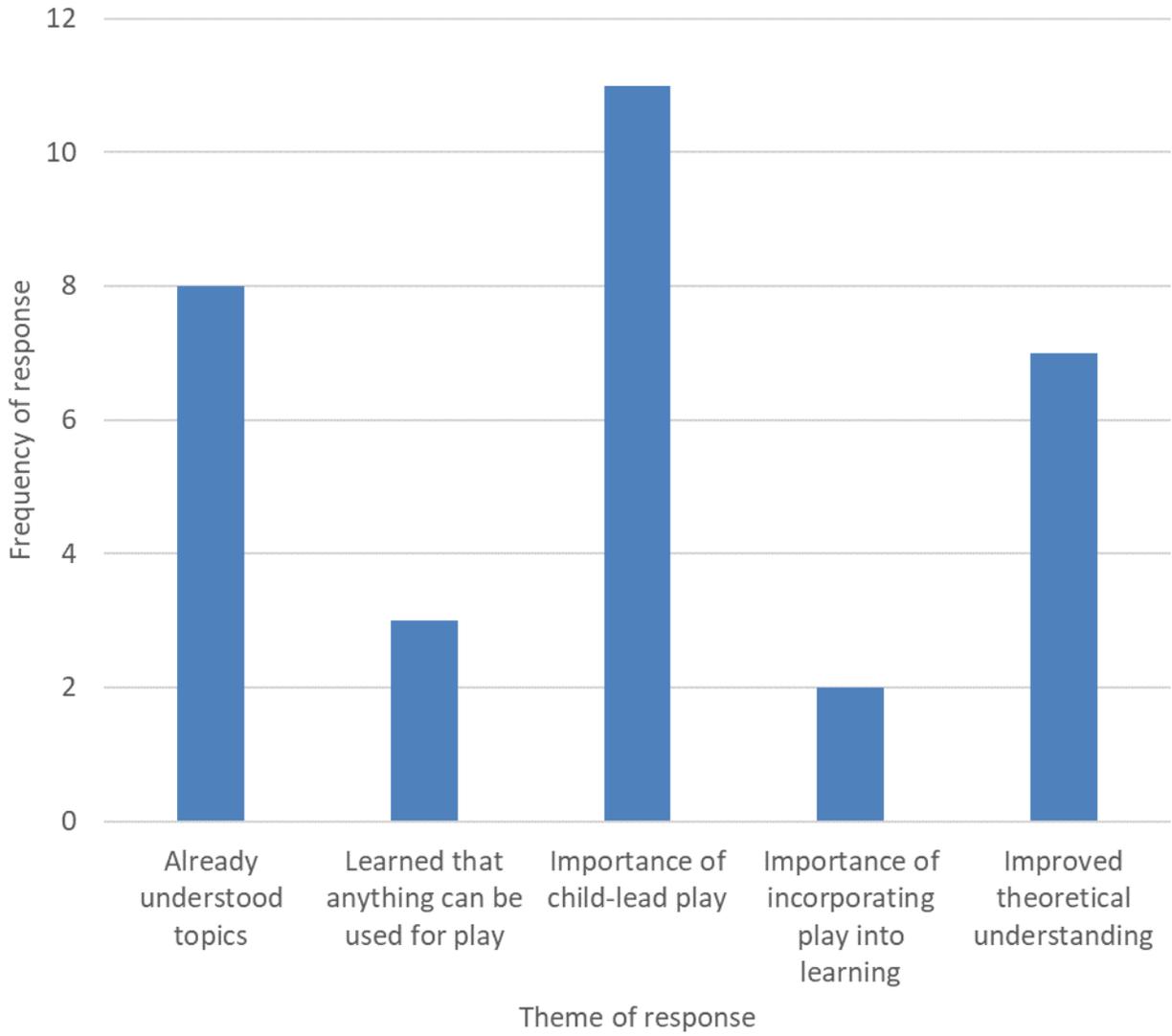


Figure 24: Theme of response to the question "how has this workshop changed your perception of play"

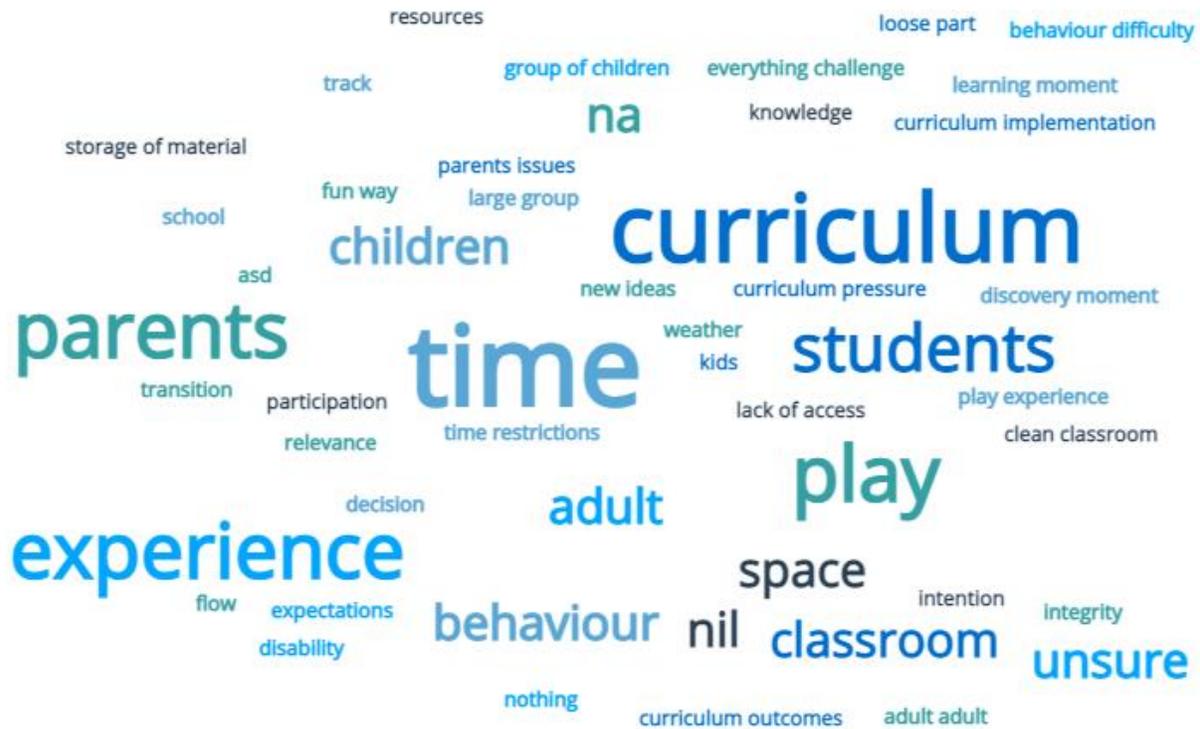


Figure 25: Word cloud of expected challenges to implementing changes in school

It was shown that 8 of the 32 attendees responded that they already understood the importance of play and some shared that the workshop reaffirmed their ideas (Figure 23 to 25).

A common sentiment among the attendees was that children should be allowed autonomy in play, and that adults should step back when appropriate to allow for children to take lead, one response said “(be) more of a watcher and not interrupt children(‘s) play unless needed”.

Three responses took the theme that ‘anything can be used for play’, this thought revolved largely around the concept of loose-parts play, one response said: “play doesn't have to look like what we as adults think it needs to look like”.

Another common theme that arose from seven of the responses was a new theoretical understanding of play and its benefits.

When asked what potential challenges may arise when attempting to implement change, 9 of the 29 submitted responses anticipated no challenges. From these responses, 2 shared that they have good support from their school, while the others did not elaborate.

Among those who anticipated challenges, their experience, time, curriculum, and students’ parents were the most common themes. “Linking the play experience with curriculum outcomes”, and “fitting everything in... with the curriculum” were responses to do with the curriculum, which were also linked in with time.

In April 2021, the Outsiders Twilight Workshop (TOTW) sessions were offered in Eagleby South State School, the sessions covered similar topics to the Outsiders Workshop discussed above (Figure 26 to 27).

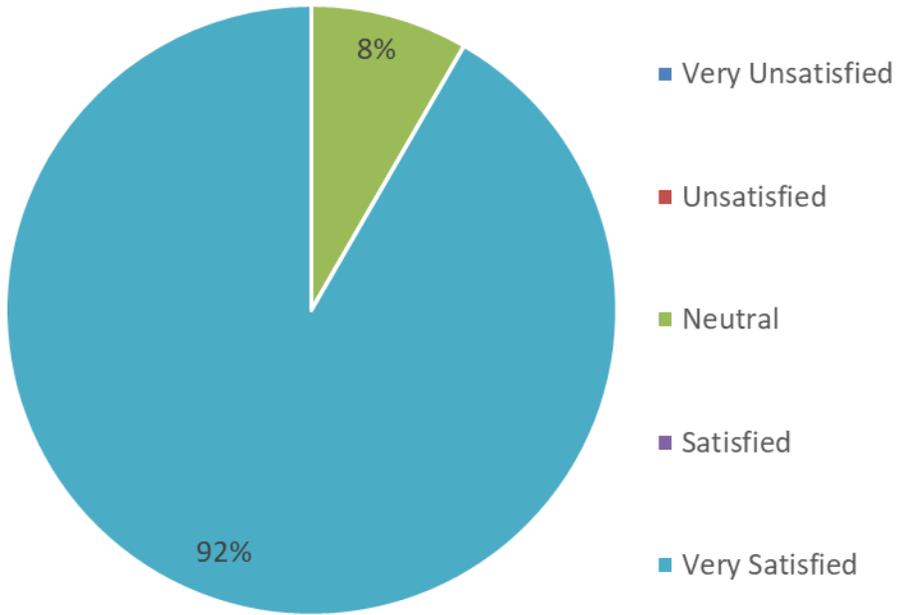


Figure 26: The Outsiders Twilight Workshop participant satisfaction

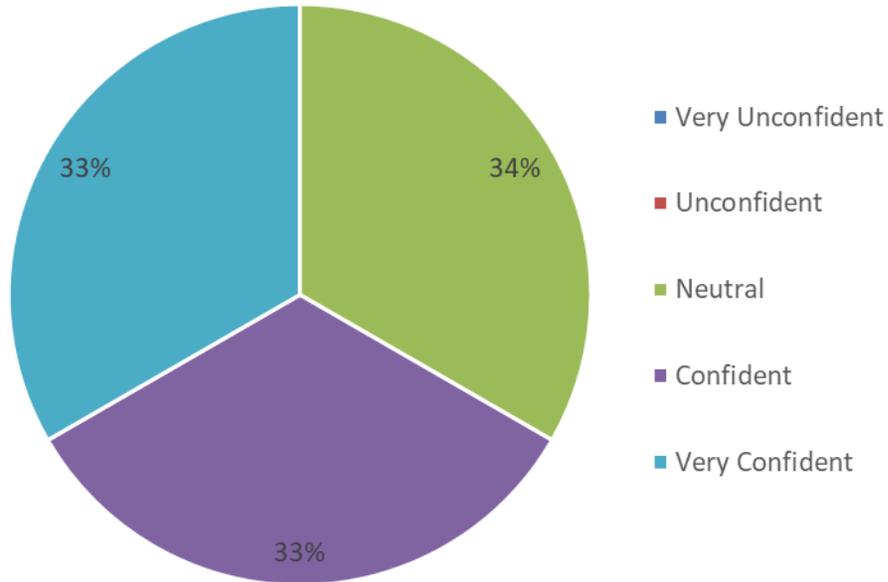


Figure 27: The Outsiders Twilight Workshop attendees’ ratings of confidence to run a 'loose-parts play' area at their school

All but 1 of the 12 TOTW session attendees reported that they were very satisfied with the session. Furthermore, there was an equal split of ‘neutral’, ‘confident’, and ‘very confident’ responses when asked to rate their confidence to supervise a loose-parts play session in their school.

This data shows that the TOTW session was successful in keeping the participants’ interest to teach them new information about play, and 67% of the participants would be at least confident to supervise an unfamiliar type of play for children at their school.

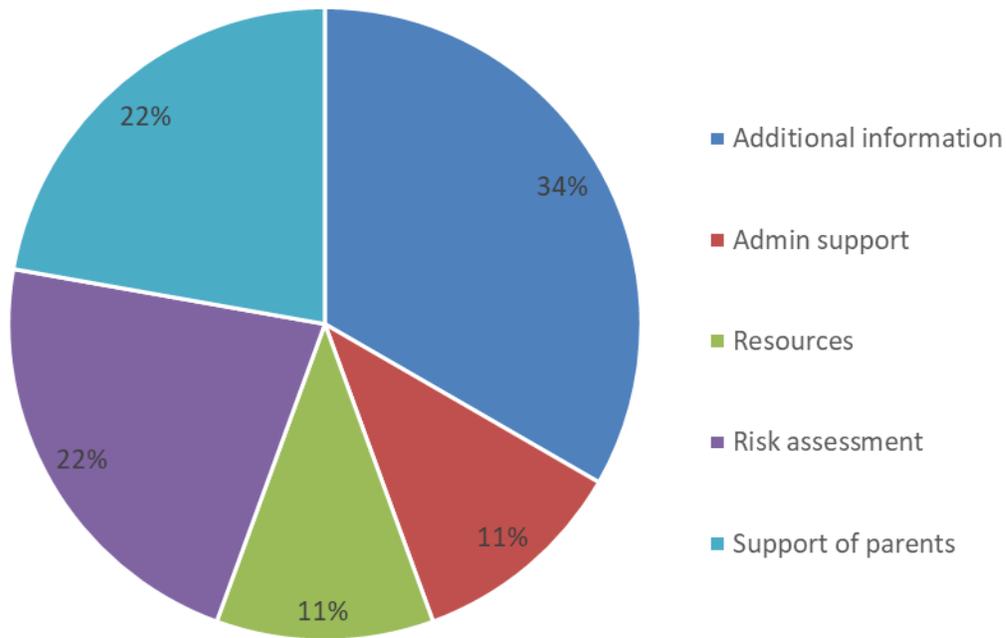


Figure 28: Themes of The Outsiders Twilight Workshop attendees’ responses to the question "what support might you need to overcome challenges to implement change?"

The attendees’ responses when asked what support they would need to overcome the challenges to implementing change were grouped into common themes (Figure 28).

The need for additional information was shared in 34% of the responses, one of the attendee’s responses summarises the sentiment of the whole: “(I need) back up documentation (and) evidence of theory”.

Parental support was also a common issue. One of the responses suggested that parents should be given information about play to help them understand and accept the importance of play for learning and development.

It was demonstrated that 22% of the responses were also concerned about risk assessment, specifically, one response was concerned if “teachers (would be) covered for any serious mishaps”.

Playworker Training sessions were held in July and September 2021, from both events combined there were 25 responses to the post-session surveys.

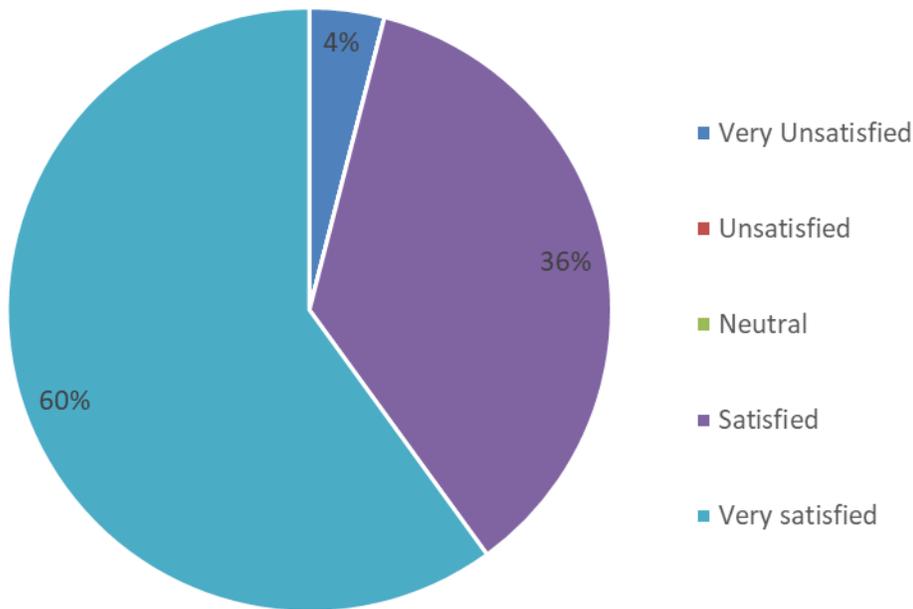


Figure 29: Playworker Training attendees' rating of satisfaction from the session

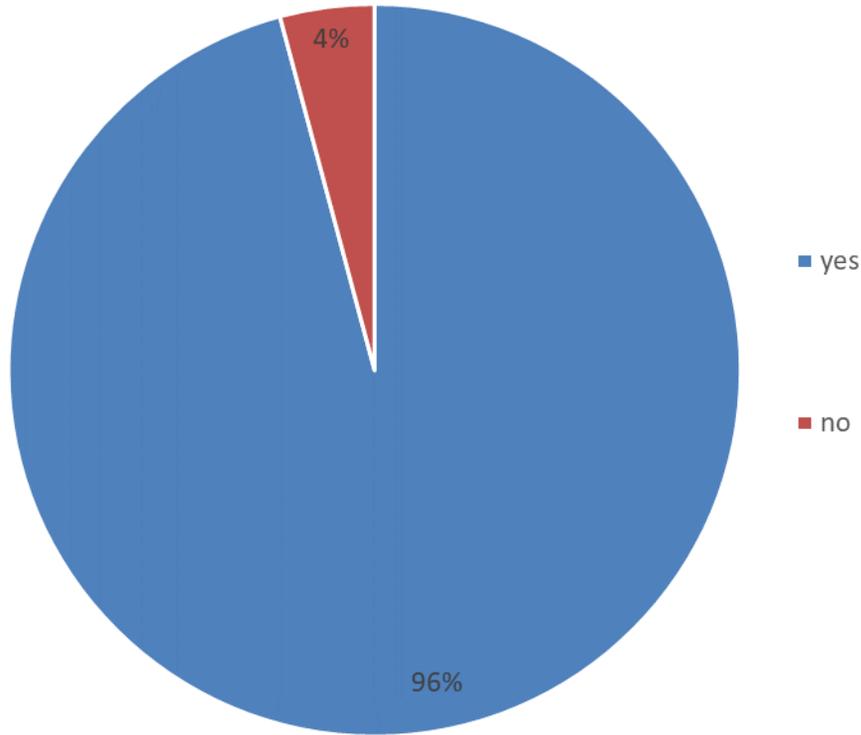


Figure 30: Playworker Training attendees' responses to the question "after attending Playworker training, will you implement any changes to your everyday practice?"

Figure 29 shows that 96% of participants were satisfied to greatly satisfied with the event. Although 1 response was 'very unsatisfied', the largely positive feedback left on the remainder of the response indicates that it is likely an error. 96% of the participants also reported that after attending the training session, they would implement changes into their daily practice when working with kids, based on the information that they learned.

These responses highlight that the attendees were taking on the information that was provided to them within the session to think about new ideas to incorporate research-based play into their programs and work.

Some parents of the children who were involved in the NPN discussed earlier were interviewed to discuss their thoughts on the program. When asked about their perceptions on how the neighbourhood has changed, the parents shared an increased sense of community among parents and children. One parent said “Our neighbourhood now is a place that you can count on your neighbours you can feel that your children are happy and safe”, while another said “knowing your neighbours and who's around you it makes a safer environment for your children to come out and play”. Each of the parents also shared that they feel more comfortable in their neighbourhood.

Furthermore, when asked about the benefits of the NPN program, parents shared that while the children experienced the benefits of increased physical activity and socialisation, the parents themselves also learned about the importance of play. One parent said “(the NPN has) brought an awareness to building a community and having a safe space and the importance of play”.

The parents were also asked what advice they would give to other parents wanting to do something like the NPN. Their ideas were similar to the children’s that were discussed earlier’ to not be afraid and go out there and do it. One parent said “Push those (fears) aside and push through it for your kids because I can assure you what you will receive in return is just incredible.”

Success relating to the Goal

The large amount of capacity building programs operated by Logan Together demonstrates that appropriate were steps taken in the effort to build capacity for play and activity.

As discussed by Jones et al. (2018), local stakeholders should be the target of capacity building efforts because they have the platform to advocate for change. In that sense, the CAP program targeted the primary stakeholders of child development with their programs: parents, principals, teachers, and those who work with children in a large quantity to have a potential impact on over 25,000 Logan children.

Furthermore, it is evident that the programs were impactful on those stakeholders. The workshops used evidence-based teaching approaches to highlight the importance of incorporating play and activity to the attendees.

The positive reception to the program and responses surveys showed that the attendees were open to taking on new knowledge and were excited to implement changes into their work, demonstrating a bottom-up approach to change (Skinner et al., 2008).

As the proposed changes that the stakeholders plan to implement are only recent and are still in development, it is difficult to judge the sustainability of the work at this time.

Logan Together's approach improved the knowledge of local stakeholders who can motivate the community to create change, thus, putting them in a place for sustainable change (Edwards, 2015).

Additional follow-up of programs and changes will be important to evaluating the sustainability of the capacity building projects.

The interviews from the parents in the NPN demonstrate that efforts in capacity building as the parents who were involves learned ways to bring their community together to create an engaging and safe space for their children to play. Thus, on a small scale, the capacity for play is increased as it is made available and encouraged, and may spread into other neighbourhoods.

The formation of the AIP is important for the continuation of the CAP program beyond Logan Together. In this sense, there the capacity to continue achieving the goals of the CAP program has been built, as well as an avenue for sustainability, as the AIP has the ability to extend the reach of the CAP program beyond the foundation that Logan Together built.

In a member survey, the AIP members were asked what they hope to achieve in the next 5 years. This response represents the theme, which was making Logan the most playful city in the world”: “AIP wants to embed Logan's Play Action Plans across all levels of community. It wants to continue the efforts from the CAP Program and honour the voice of children heard during the past three years. AIP will do this by continuing projects that are approved by community, and working to grow new projects to directly respond to community need.”

Research

Research is a driver for change, and thus, is an important facet of the CAP program. Good research to drive change should be collaborative, ethical and evidence-based, so that it can be used to advocate to stakeholders the importance and impact of the work being done. Furthermore, successful research will have impacts that can extend beyond Logan the benefit the industry on a larger scale.

Goals

1. Commit to being evidence based in our efforts as well as view the community as a strong source of local experts and data to inform physical literacy solutions.
2. Collaborate with multiple researchers to record, analyse, and test play efforts.
3. Publish all play research papers for public access.
4. Share literature on play as a means of advocacy. Sharing with local community, local government departments, existing activity providers, kindy to prep groups and others.

Performance Indicators

1. Strong effective physical literacy solutions that adopt the local considerations and lead to stronger outcomes for Logan children.
2. Collaboration and support from multiple universities to pool knowledge and resources. Strengthen data and results gathered throughout the program and present them in easily consumable ways.
3. Increased awareness about play and different cultures.
4. Better understanding of how play increased development outcomes across multiple domains. Deepened knowledge about how to include children in consultation regarding their play and how to replicate the same process for other projects.
5. Increased well-informed play efforts and higher value for play

Evidence-Based Decision Making

Community research is a tool to empower and develop the community. It should be grounded in community values and be designed with the best interests of the community in mind (Barr, 2005).

When researchers involve community stakeholders in the research that is relevant to them, they can have influence over the subjects and methodology of the research so that the data can be beneficial to their development and progression (Barr, 2005).

Rhodes et al. (2018) lay out important steps that should be taken for successful community-engaged research, a summary of those steps is:

- Networking and strong partnership establishment
- Building and maintaining trust
- Identification of priorities
- Collaborative research goals and design
- Accessible data collection, analysis, and interpretation

In all, a strong relationship must be formed with the community that is the target of the research so that their participation is beneficial to both the researchers and the community. Community development requires the exploration of relevant research and trust from the community (Rhodes et al., 2018).

Programs Achieving this Goal

All of the CAP programs that had data collection involved contributed to the achievement of the research pillar, thus, research has been a major component of each of the other 4 pillars. Research within those pillars has been used to plan and develop future events so that they can be improved upon each time and promote the goals and changes that are the objective of the CAP program. Furthermore, follow-up in some instances helped to show if programs had a lasting impact on attendees.

Another effort in research can be seen in a previous evaluation of part of the CAP program, which was the Curious Communities Early Learning Program. The evaluation is summarised here, though the full report is attached as Attachment A. The aim of this project was to evaluate the effectiveness of the early learning program implemented by Curious Communities in the low socioeconomic region of Logan. The program was conducted over a 10-week period at Berrinba East State School. Children from the age of 6 months to 5 years attended one 90-minute group session per week.

The activities offered were focused on risky and active play, sensory input, exploration, and development. Progress throughout the program was tracked via surveys and interviews completed by their caregivers in Weeks 3, 6, and 9. According to those who participated and completed the surveys and interviews, Curious Communities' program appears to be effective in enhancing the development and wellbeing of participants with 91% observing an improvement in physical activity participation, 77% believing their child was more socially connected, and 73% acknowledging their child was more confident communicating with others following engagement with the program. However, strong conclusions about program effectiveness cannot be made given limitations in design of the evaluation. The strong positive results nevertheless warrant further investigation into the program.

Evidence in Support of the Deliverables

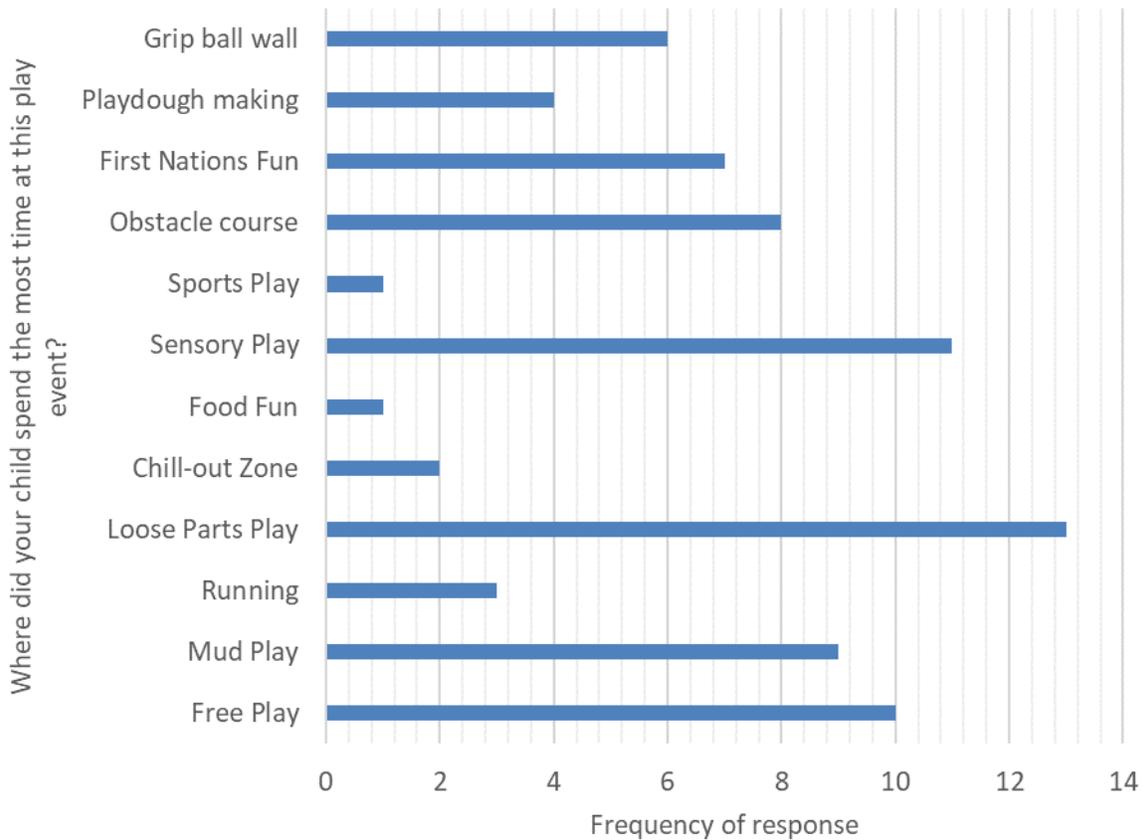


Figure 32: Parent's responses to where their child spent the most time playing at the Under 8s Play event

Figure 32 shows an example of research conducted within the Play-based strategy pillar. The responses highlight what the most popular play areas were at the Under 8s play event. This research on the event is useful for future events, as loose-parts play, sensory play, free play, mud play, and the obstacle course were the areas that children spent the most time. On the other hand, sports play, food fun, and the chill-out zone were less popular among the child attendees.

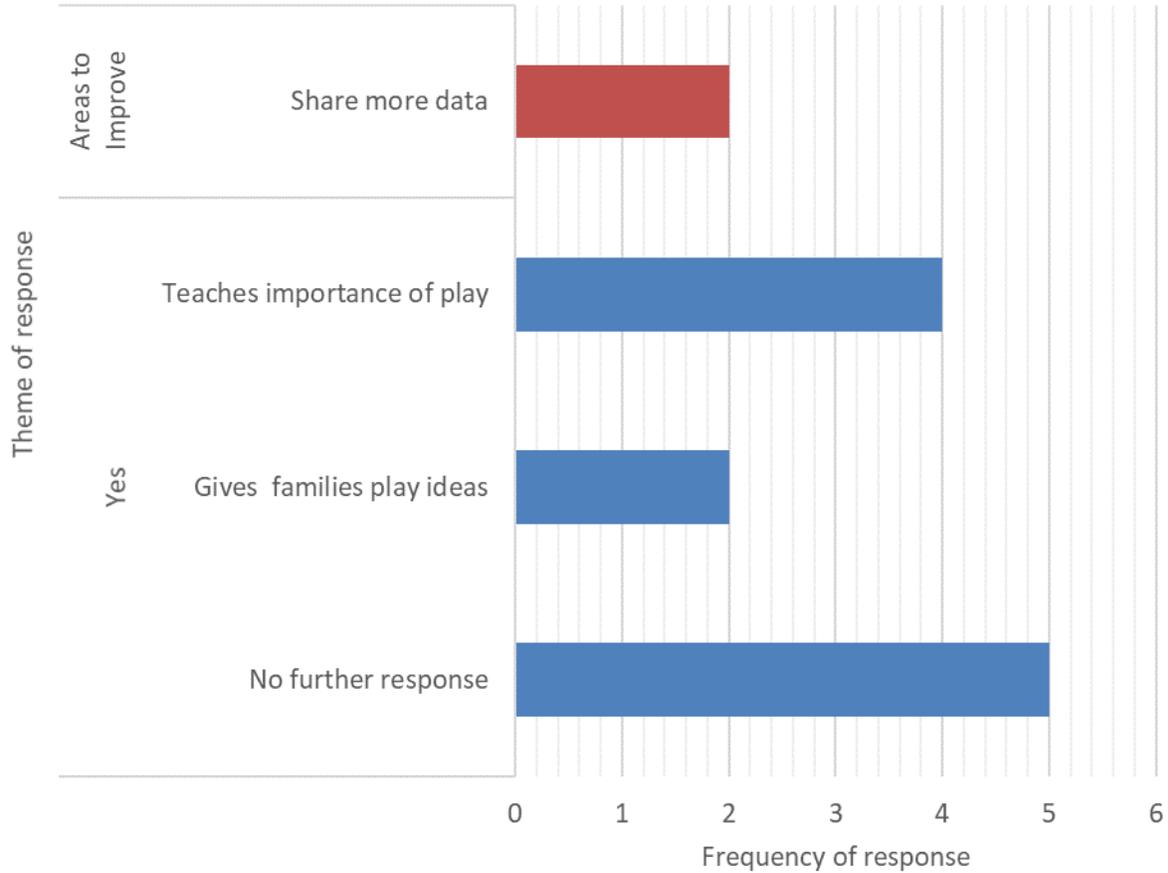


Figure 33: Theme of CAP program partner responses to the open-ended question "Are we doing the right things to address the issue of play declining?"

Further research from the Under 8s play event was collected in a partner debrief survey.

Figure 33 shows what the responding partners thought was being done well, or what needed improvement to address the issue of declining play.

It was observed that 11 of the responses reported that they believe that Logan Together is doing well to address declining play, and 2 of the responses elaborated that the events give families more ideas for play, while 4 others highlighted that the events do a good job of teaching the importance of play for children.

It was then found that 2 responses pointed out areas for improvement, they both highlighted that it was not made clear during the event that declining play is an issue, and they suggested sharing more information to the attendees about the purpose of the event.

A contribution to research that arose from the Child's Voice pillar is from the Childhood Summit event. 16 of the presentations by the children were recorded and uploaded to the Australian Institute of Play YouTube channel.

Since being uploaded in November 2021, these videos have been viewed 1052 times, and allow people from across the world to view the Childhood Summit presentations. This promotes the message of the CAP program to those who are interested and provides embedded links to learn more about the Childhood Summit and the Australian Institute of Play.

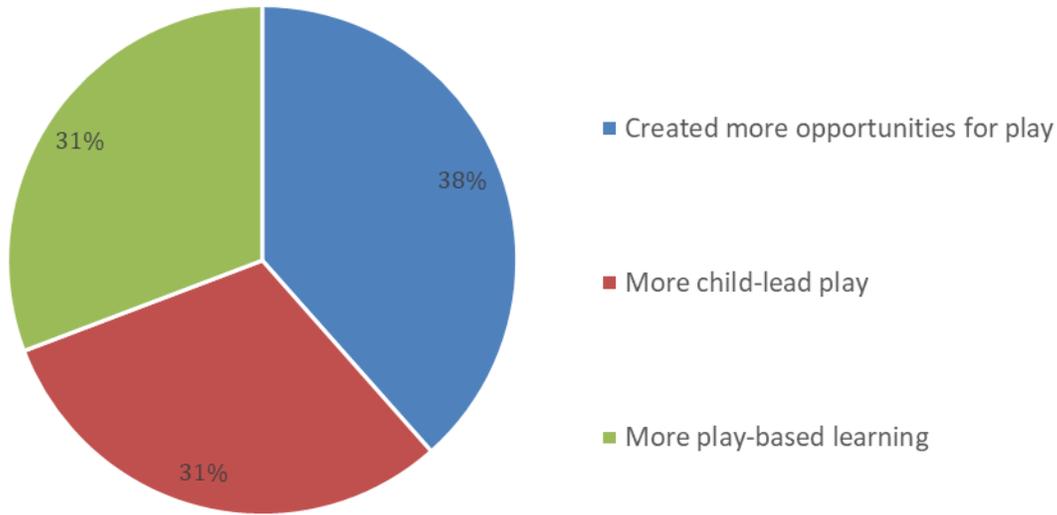


Figure 34: Theme of attendees' responses from The Outsiders Professional Development session to the question "Have you made any changes at your school as a direct result from The Outsiders Workshop in January?"

In a follow-up to The Outsiders Workshop, attendees were asked if they had made any changes in their schools or classrooms based on what was discussed at the initial workshop.

Figure 34 shows that all participants who responded to the surveys had begun to incorporate more play into their classrooms.

The theme of 38% of the responses was that they had created more opportunities for play within the classroom, and specifically, encouraging loose-parts play. There were 4 responses that fit the

themes of the other two categories, which took the themes of more play-based learning and more child-lead play, where teachers shared that they had been stepping back to allow children to have autonomy in play and incorporated play into their structured classroom teaching. This follow up provides a good example of ongoing research within the CAP project.

Success relating to the Goal

Research has evidently played a large role in the CAP program. Qualitative research from the responses to surveys has helped Logan Together understand the impact that their events have had on attendees and allowed for free communication from participants.

The largely positive receptions to all the events that have been analysed thus far, Logan Together has created a strong relationship with the local community and has support in their research (Rhodes et al., 2018).

The research that Logan Together has conducted through the CAP program has been community focussed throughout by working closely with community members and organisations to create a knowledge base specific to the Logan community, which assists in community buy-in to the research for further development (Rhodes et al., 2018).

Data collection was also shown to be a strength in many of the events. Collation of attendance numbers, impacted children, events ran, and services delivered helps to see the impact that the CAP program was able to have on the community.

Throughout the CAP program, research-based evidence was used to design and implement the events that were offered to the community, which can be seen by the success of each of the 5 pillars of the project. Furthermore, the efforts of Logan Together to seek out feedback on their events and the willingness of the community to engage with the research process allows for their program to be evaluated for success, so that the data can be used for the betterment of the community.

There are evidently some areas in which research can be improved. Additional quantitative data may help to show the impact of the play events on children's activity levels, and more follow up on the children and parents involved in events would illustrate the program's ability for capacity building and sustainability.

Finally, not all of the events had data available and the absence of this data limited the ability to show the scale of impact that the CAP program.

Conclusions

After a thorough investigation of Logan Together's strategic direction in the CAP program, it is evident that their strategies appeared successful in the completion of their goals. The CAP strategic direction was developed with the aim to increase local Logan children's levels of physical activity through multiple means, which were described in the foundational pillars of the program: Play-Based Strategies, Child's Voice, Local Sports and Recreation Enhancement, Capacity Building and Sustainability, and Research. By analysing the projects that were part of the CAP program under the lens of relevant literature, the events that supported the pillars were shown to be effective.

A caveat exists whereby all the take home messages from this Evaluation Report should be interpreted with the limitations of the data in mind. We cannot determine how representative the data was from those who participated in the CAP program when compared to those who did not, based solely on the research available. It is strongly recommended that further research takes place and stakeholders strengthen the existing research approach for future iterations of the project.

Key take home messages from the CAP program include:

- Evidence of a bond being formed with the community in terms of participation, buy-in and research, at least among participants who completed the evaluation.
- Many events over the course of the program created opportunities for more than 3500 children to engage in play and activity
- Events appeared successful in highlighting important healthy lifestyle messages to parents and children
- Neighbourhood play networks were created in local suburbs to increase physical activity

- Children were made to feel valued as contributors to the community, and were given platforms to share their knowledge and opinions
- Logan Together collaborated with 18 other local government and community organisations to make play more accessible to children
- Those collaborations provided tools and equipment for children and families to engage in physical activity when it may have been less accessible to them
- Professional development and training opportunities were provided to local stakeholders of children's development to increase knowledge and drive change
- Those training opportunities were successful in making participants consider increasing opportunities for play in daily activities, though data is not yet available to support sustainability
- Additional research to follow up on the programs could show the sustainability of the program's capacity building attempts
- All events had high levels of participant reported satisfaction

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Attachment A

**Evaluating the Curious Communities Early Learning Program
implemented in the Logan region**

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The University of Queensland acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and which its campuses operate. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

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Executive Summary

Physical activity can play an important role in supporting healthy development in early childhood. However, only about 20% of children are meeting both the screen-based and physical activity guidelines. Community-based interventions offer an accessible approach to improving physical activity levels whilst additionally providing a supportive environment for the development of social skills and connections. The aim of this project was to evaluate the effectiveness of the early learning program implemented by Curious Communities in the low socioeconomic region of Logan. The program was conducted over a 10-week period at Berrinba East State School. Children from the age of 6 months to 5 years attended one 90-minute group session per week. The activities offered were focused on risky and active play, sensory input, exploration, and development. Progress throughout the program was tracked via surveys and interviews completed by their caregivers in Weeks 3, 6, and 9. According to those who participated and completed the surveys and interviews, Curious Communities' program appears to be effective in enhancing the development and wellbeing of participants with 91% observing an improvement in physical activity participation, 77% believing their child was more socially connected, and 73% acknowledging their child was more confident communicating with others following engagement with the program. However, strong conclusions about program effectiveness cannot be made given limitations in design of the evaluation. The strong positive results nevertheless warrant further investigation into the program.

Context Points:

- Participation in regular physical activity and reducing sedentary behaviour is essential for healthy physical, social and cognitive development during a child's early years. However, an ever-increasing sedentary lifestyle, particularly in childhood, has become a major concern of Australian governments (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2017, Blewitt et al., 2018, Khanlou & Wray, 2014).

Current recommendations state that children between the ages of 3 to 5 years, should participate in at least 3 hours of physical activity a day with no more than 1 hour of screen time (Tremblay et al., 2012). This is vital for healthy physical development, attaining correct movement patterns, promotion of mental, emotional, and social wellbeing, and to facilitate improved cognitive function (Australian Government Department of Health, 2021). Yet, the 2011-12 Australian Bureau of Statistics National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey [ABS NNPAS] revealed that only 20% of children aged 2 to 4 years met both the physical and screen-based activity guidelines, where they averaged 84 minutes a day of screen time (Australian Institute of Health & Welfare, 2020). As this is expected to increase risks of future health concerns and developmental issues amongst children, it becomes vital that access to high quality physical activity programs is improved immediately.

- Regular community-based play with enhanced opportunities for social development through facilitated peer and parental interaction, may be used to conclude that these

benefits will not be acquired with limited engagement in physical activity opportunities. Reduced exposure may therefore hinder a child's ability to regulate their emotions, increasing their likelihood of engaging in anti-social behaviour and resulting in the development of mental health disorders (Blewitt et al., 2018).

- Current research shows that interventions at a community level have been effective in improving physical activity participation amongst children as they offer increased opportunities for engagement in non-sedentary play. Naylor et al (2015) conducted a systematic review which revealed that 11 out of the 15 included community interventions offered a positive impact on at least one health outcome (Naylor et al., 2015). Heath et al (2012) identified that community programs may contribute to a decrease in health and social disparities, particularly in low socioeconomic areas, through the provision of services in accessible locations and at a low cost (Heath et al., 2012). Likewise, there is encouraging evidence supporting the use of community programs to enhance social and emotional wellbeing as well as other early learning outcomes in young children through fostering a supportive environment for development (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2017). Community programs have been identified as an effective method for reaching target groups in their natural living environment, and therefore possess the capacity for achieving high population-level impact (Brand et al., 2014).
- Curious Communities is an initiative held at Berrinba East State School within the low socioeconomic region of Logan. The early learning program was designed to use play in

engaging and enriching ways while also ensuring accessibility and affordability. Thus, the underlying objective of the program is to facilitate improved physical activity opportunities for children with the capacity to enhance developmental outcomes for the participants. The activities offered aim to engage all seven senses through the inclusion of unconventional and risky play, with a 'pros vs cons' approach applied. The children are invited to play with small, breakable, and loose items, all of which are generally used with caution. The founders of the initiative are passionate about children participating in genuine, unstructured, and child-led play and this is reflected in the foundations of their program. Through the implementation of effective community-based programs, there is potential to make significant progress towards meeting physical activity guidelines and in turn achieve improved developmental outcomes.

The aim of the project is to evaluate the effectiveness of the 10-week early learning program implemented by Curious Communities, based upon available data collected by the program administrators. Program administrators were primarily interested in the following questions: (1) has the program impacted physical activity participation? (2) how has the program impacted sense of social connection? (3) how has the program impacted confidence levels communicating with others? The overall program satisfaction will also be assessed Program administrators were interested in whether or not children and parents enjoyed the program, and whether their experiences were positive and developmentally enriching.

Methods

Participants

Survey participants included 22 children who were attending the Curious Communities Seven Senses Program in Logan City, Queensland. The program was offered for children aged 6 months to 5 years. Inclusion criteria applied were that participants needed to have attended a least one session of the program across the 10-weeks. The caregivers of all eligible candidates were contacted via email to participate in the survey on behalf of their child; 27.5% agreed to participate. Five of these participants (23%) lived within the local area of Berrinba, whilst the remaining participants travelled from surrounding suburbs. As the surveys were conducted anonymously, all other defining characteristics of each participant are unknown.

A separate 13-person sample was used to conduct the short interviews with all children between the ages of 11 months to 5 years old. Seven of the participants had more than one child involved in the program. These participants had attended a Curious Communities session on one to four occasions across the intervention timeframe.

Intervention

The Curious Communities Seven Senses Program was conducted over a 10-week period in 2021, at Berrinba East State School, within the City of Logan. It was developed in partnership with the State Library of Queensland First5Forever program and Berrinba East State School. Participants attended one hour-and-a-half group session per week during their involvement with the

program. Staff and parents were present during each session, however primarily allowed the children to play independently.

The weekly sessions focused on sensory input, exploration, and development through the incorporation of elements that stimulate sight, smell, taste, sound, touch, proprioception, and the vestibular system. The activities offered were unstructured and child-led, targeted towards their interests to attract attention, and created learning opportunities for those involved. For example, there were stations labelled as 'messy play' which utilised mud, paint, and slime, and were open for children to use as they desired. There were also coloured rice and pasta stations or building stations where children were invited to use their imagination and create pretend play situations. The children were also encouraged to make use of their natural surrounds by climbing trees and balancing on logs. New activities were offered each week with corresponding weekly themes such as Dirty Dinosaurs, Harry Potter and Halloween. The participants had free choice to play independently, however many chose to collaborate during the activities which helped to foster new friendships and encourage them to develop their communication skills.

Data Collection

The design involved surveys and semi-structured interviews.

Surveys

Surveys were sent to the caregivers of program participants in Weeks 3, 6 and 9 of the intervention. Online surveys offer significant speed and cost advantages over many other

research techniques and are generally easy to interpret and complete (Sauermaun & Roach, 2013). However, it is not uncommon for low response rates to be received, thus the surveys were completed anonymously in an attempt to increase the likelihood of candidates responding (Murdoch et al., 2014).

The surveys were identical in format and content for each of the relevant weeks. These covered program satisfaction levels, changes in their child's behaviour and wellbeing, and improvements in their current physical activity levels. A focus was placed on three proposed benefits of the intervention, which formed the outcome variables for the research project, through enquiring if the caregivers noticed that the program had made their child more physically active, socially connected, and confident communicating with others. Participants were required to subjectively rate the effectiveness of the program for their child, with regards to each variable, via allocating a numerical value of 1 (strongly disagree) through to 5 (strongly agree). The final question of the survey welcomed participants to leave feedback for the organisers via a written format. A total of 14 survey questions were posed to the participants which were received online and later used for analysis.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with 13 participants in Week 9. This technique uses a fixed set of questions as a guide yet allows for the introduction of supplementary questions to facilitate further discovery into the individuals experiences and perceptions (Kihl et al., 2014). These type of interviews are less formal and more conversation-

like, which assists with placing the subjects at ease and initiating the development of rapport whilst retaining control over the discussion (Cachia & Millward, 2011).

Each interview began by asking demographic questions including name, number and age of children, and the length of time they had been involved with the program. The purpose of these questions was to produce background information on each of the subjects as well as to relax the interviewees. These were followed by questions surrounding the quality of the delivery of the program and the benefits associated with program participation. Focus was placed on observable changes in physical activity status and ability to effectively interact and participate with others. Generally, these questions expanded on those posed in the surveys, so the participants were already somewhat familiar with the topics that were raised. Probing questions were utilised for clarification purposes and to gain further specific examples of the participants experiences throughout the program. Finally, the interviewees were offered an opportunity to provide constructive feedback for the program organisers. The interviews were video recorded, ranging in length from 5 to 15 minutes, and were later transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics and donut graphs were generated from survey data to identify basic patterns in the data. A phenomenological analysis was then conducted for the semi-structured interviews. This enabled the identification of significant emerging themes for which the data could be organised around. Word clouds were formed via an online generating tool, labelled WordItOut, to create a visual display of the results relating to overall program satisfaction. The greater the size and boldness of the word, the more often they were used by participants to describe their experiences. Additionally, quotes were extracted from the interviews and utilised to directly address research objectives and to provide further depth of understanding.

Results

The phenomenological analysis of semi-structured interviews revealed four broad themes: overall satisfaction, physical activity, social connection, and communication confidence. These aligned with the topics presented in the surveys and thus the data from both methods of collection can be presented together.

Question 1: Has the program impacted physical activity participation?

When participants were queried on whether they believed their child's physical activity levels had improved through engagement with the program, the results were consistently positive and in favour of what Curious Communities had offered their child. This is presented in *Table 1*, whereby from Weeks 3, 6, and 9, a rating of between 4.75 and 4.46 and 4.50 out of 5 on the item

measuring parental perception of increased physical activity was obtained. . *Figure 1* shows that 91% of survey responders agreed that there had been a significant increase in their child’s engagement with physical activity. Statements provided by caregivers corroborated the survey results. For example: “For a weekend we didn’t used to really do much at all... so that compared to 2 hours of play, play, play, there is a big difference” (Chelsea – Interviewee 5); “Here they get to use their body outside, they get to build muscle, that’s something I find a lot of kids lack... They get to be away from technology which is a big thing that’s stopping this sort of play” (Danika – Interviewee 4); and “I watched my 2-year-old climb up the equipment and jump off, I didn’t think he would be capable of that until today” (Hannah – Interviewee 10).

Table 1: *Survey results of participants perceptions of the impact of Curious Communities’ program on their child’s physical activity levels*

Question Posed: My child is more physically active when engaged in play at the Curious Communities sessions

Week	Average Rating (1-5)
3	4.75
6	4.46
9	4.50

5 – strongly agree, 4 – agree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 2 – disagree, 1 – strongly disagree

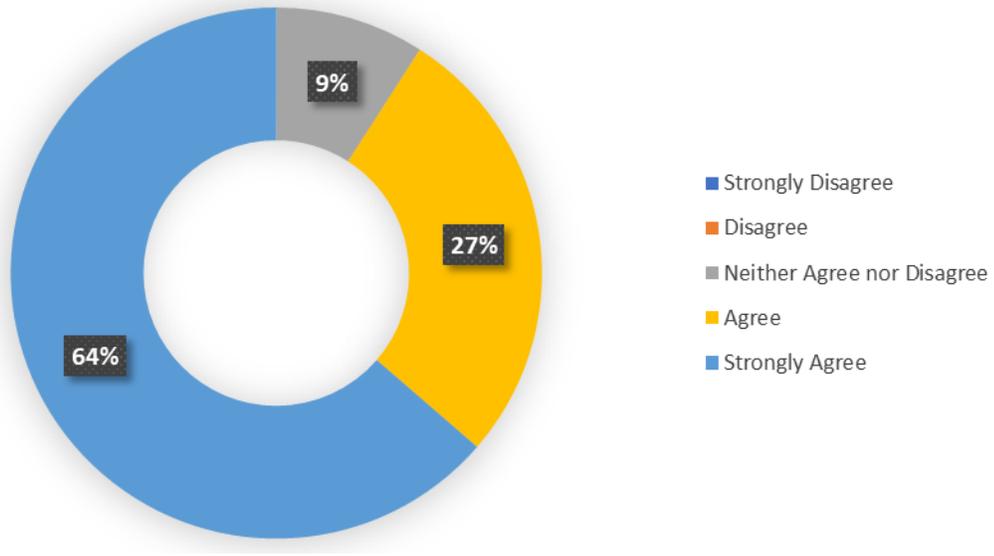


Figure 1: Survey results from final week of program relating to the impact of Curious Communities' program on their child's physical activity levels

Questions 2: How has the program impacted sense of social connection?

The results in *Table 2* show equally high endorsement of the item measuring parental perception of social connection following the program. 77% of survey participants either agreed or strongly agreed that their child had a greater connection with their peers, following involvement (see Figure 2). Less than a quarter of participants were undetermined regarding the programs impact on social connection. Stemming from the respective question, social connection was a major theme which arose during the interviews, as evidenced by the following quotes: “The social benefits are one of the key reasons why I brought her here, she likes coming out and making friends” (Samantha – Interviewee 1); “We are recent migrants so this is a great event for my children to find their way to be a part of the local community” (Hoi Ting Sun – Interviewee 8); and “He had a lot of trouble previously making friends, he had quite a lot of anxiety, but now it’s easy to make friends playing together” (Marissa – Interviewee 11).

Table 2: Survey results of participants perceptions of the impact of Curious Communities’ program on their child’s sense of social connection

Question Posed: *My child feels more socially connected as a result of participating in Curious Communities sessions*

Week	Average Rating (1-5)
3	4.50
6	4.33
9	4.20

5 – strongly agree, 4 – agree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 2 – disagree, 1 – strongly disagree

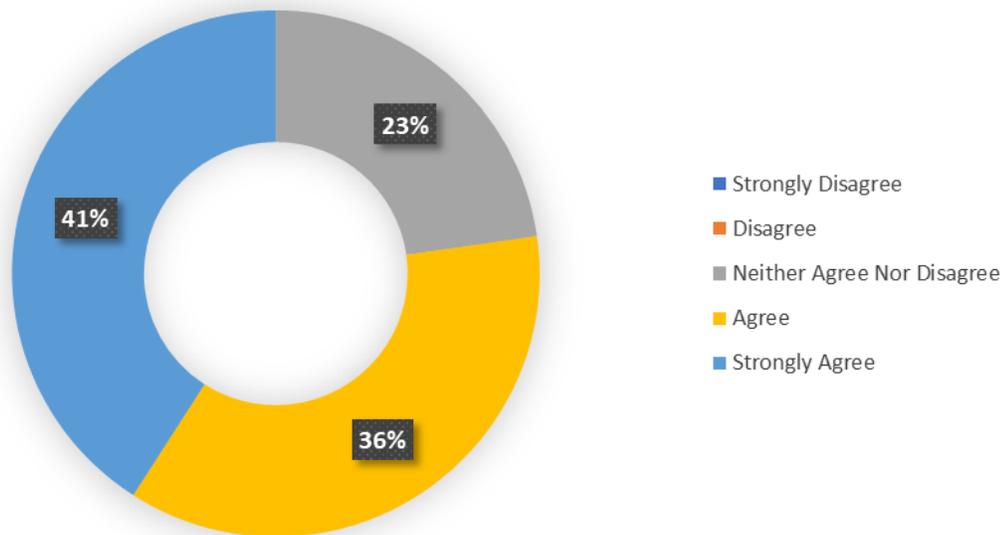


Figure 2: Survey results from final week of program relating to the impact of Curious Communities' program on their child's sense of social connection

Question 3: How has the program impacted confidence levels communicating with others?

A significant improvement in the participants confidence communicating with others was similarly observed through the analysis of survey data from the Curious Communities program. *Table 3* demonstrates again shows strong positive endorsement of the item measuring parental perception confidence in communication over the 3 measurement periods of the survey. *Figure 3* shows over 70% of participants agreeing that the program had positively impacted their child's confidence levels relating to communication with others, by the end of the program. Just 4% of participants believed the program had not benefited their child's communication confidence. The following comments made by caregivers of program participants reflects the effect the intervention had on improving communication confidence levels: "He is also now super

responsive to people in our community... asking who are you? How are you? Have a good day! And he never used to that. It has made me really proud to see him come out of his shell” (Chelsea – Interviewee 5); "She's building more confidence being around other kids and speaking up, getting in, and having a go, because she can be a bit shy sometimes" (Tony - Interviewee 6); and "I really believe that having all these opportunities of play, trust, and learning are the reason he's speaking so far above average for his age" (Teaghan - Interviewee 9).

Table 3: Survey results of participants perceptions of the impact of Curious Communities’ program on their child’s confidence communicating

Question Posed: My child shows more confidence speaking with others when engaged in play at the Curious Communities sessions

Week	Average Rating (1-5)
3	4.0
6	4.21
9	4.1

5 – strongly agree, 4 – agree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 2 – disagree, 1 – strongly disagree

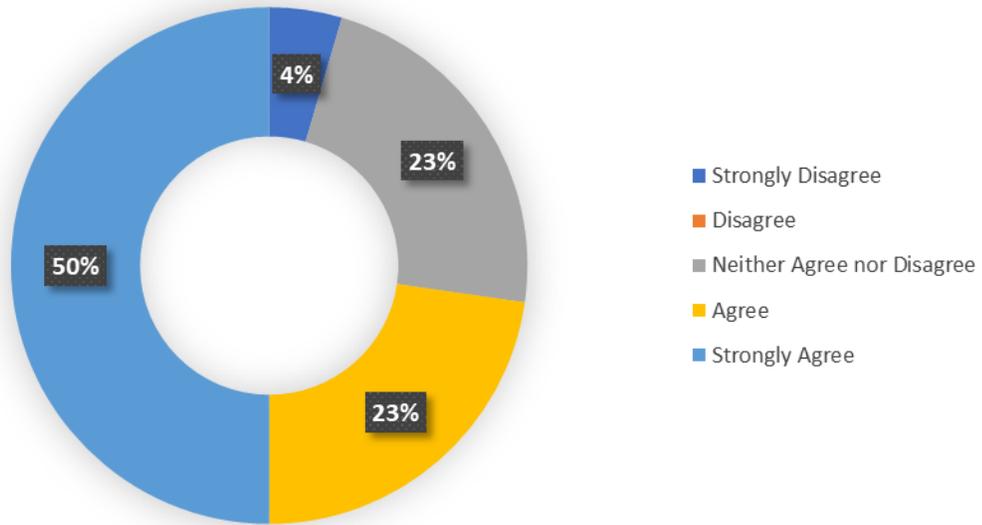


Figure 3: Survey results from final week of program relating to the impact of Curious Communities' program on their child's confidence communicating

Overall program satisfaction:

Table 4 reports high positive endorsement of the item of perceived overall satisfaction of the program. *Figure 4* which reveals that 95% of the participants felt their needs and expectations were fulfilled by the Curious Communities program in Week 9. The dialogue collected from interviews with the participants relating to overall satisfaction was analysed using word clouds (*Figure 5 & 6*). The most common words to arise when referring to their overall perception of the program were: fun, messy, adventure, exciting and freedom. Similarly, the words used most frequently to describe the benefits of the program were: happiness and fun. Other positive words which arose were: trust, wellbeing, interaction, and creativity. When asked to offer recommendations for the future, the participants found it difficult to provide any constructive feedback and in turn responded in the following manner: “I have all positive feedback, I love everything about their events... It is worthwhile, I think the turnout shows that” (Ashley – Interviewee 2); “What they offer is vital, it is crucial to their development...It makes a really big difference in their personalities and health” (Maddy – Interviewee 3); “Being that it is free, it is absolutely vital for a low socioeconomic area to have somewhere for the kids to come and play, and socialise” (Chelsea – Interviewee 5); and “I see so much value in what we are doing here, I see how much the kids are growing from it” (Teaghan – Interviewee 9). Thus, it becomes clear that the Curious Communities program was highly valued by the community of Logan and would continue to have a positive impact on the development of participants should it persist into the future.

Table 4: Survey results of participants overall satisfaction level with Curious Communities’ program

Question Posed: How satisfied are you with your play experience at the Curious Communities sessions

Week	Average Rating (1-5)
3	4.75
6	4.73
9	4.75

5 – strongly agree, 4 – agree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 2 – disagree, 1 – strongly disagree

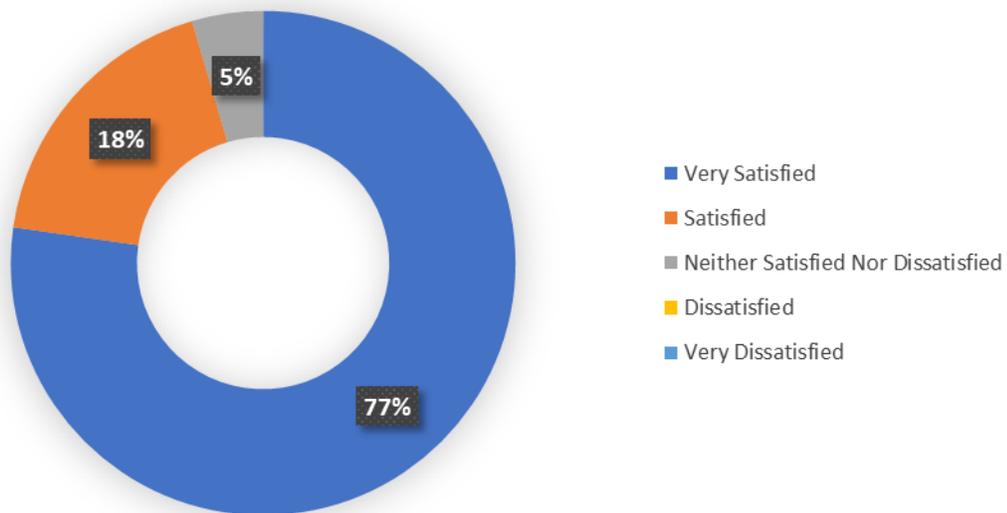


Figure 4: Survey results from final week of program relating to overall satisfaction level with Curious Communities’ program



Figure 5: Word Cloud of participants overall perceptions of Curious Communities' program



Figure 6: Word Cloud of participants perceptions of the benefits gained from Curious Communities' program

Discussion Points:

- Community-based physical activity initiatives have the potential to enhance the overall wellbeing and development of children by providing a supportive environment for adoption of positive behaviours (Brand et al., 2014).
- The aim of this project was to examine the effectiveness of the physical activity intervention implemented by Curious Communities in a low socioeconomic area. Overall, the perception among the parents who completed the survey and participated in the semi-structured interviews found the program to have a positive impact on their children, with the strongest perceived impacts in the domain of increased physical activity. The parents described the program favourably and rates overall satisfaction with it very highly. These results bode well for the program, as favourable responses such as these suggest parents see value in participation for their children.
- A particularly noteworthy finding are the positive perceptions of the impact of the program on social connectedness. It is clear among the parents who participated in the evaluation saw value in the programs in terms of building community. This highlights the fact physical activity-based programs can be used for not only health promotion, but also community development. This is dual benefit of Curious Communities.
- Notwithstanding the positive results, there are several design and measurement limitations with the evaluation that need to be addressed in future research. First and foremost, the low response rate. While this is uncommon for study designs like this one, making generalisations of these findings to all program participants should be avoided. Two, reliance solely on parental perceptions is a limitation. Parents, particularly those

who responded to the invite, may have a favourable bias toward the program. For outcomes such as physical activity, supplementation with objective measurement of behaviour would enhance the findings and address the problem of potential bias. Closely related to this point, future evaluations should be administered by independent investigators, who do not have a direct relationship with the program or its administrators. Again, this would minimize potential biases that could influence data collection. Finally, the absence of a control group means that the direct effect of the intervention cannot be ascertained from these results.

Conclusion

Physical activity is vital for development during a child's early years, yet 80% of Australian children do not meet the current recommendations. Not only does this have detrimental effects on their physical health, but low physical activity levels are also likely to impair social, emotional, and cognitive functioning. Childhood is a crucial stage for development and adoption of poor health-related behaviours throughout this period are likely to lead to further negative impacts during adolescence and adulthood, highlighting the need for community action during these formative years. The current available research has revealed the benefits of being physically active and having strong social skills, yet the link between increased participation in community-based physical activity and improvements in sense of social connection and communication confidence have not been thoroughly explored until now. High quality community implemented programs, such as Curious Communities, can be important part of increasing participation in

physical activity whilst additionally fostering an environment which encourages prosocial interactions leading to improved social connectedness and confidence communicating with others. This is important for child development as it influences their overall wellbeing as well as their ability to engage in formal education and effectively participate in society as adults. Community-led programs such as Curious Communities can provide the current and future generations with the best opportunity for healthy development. While the initial program evaluation results are very positive, further research is required to evaluate the efficacy of the program.

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