

STREETGAMES & PLATYPUS RESEARCH

FAMILIES INSIGHT STUDY



PURPOSE

In March 2019 StreetGames commissioned Platypus Research to help us gather new insight to help StreetGames and community organisations to support families to become more physically active. To unpick this we wanted to understand:

- The complexities of family life;
- what engages families, i.e. the key drivers for wanting to take part in different initiatives/activities as a family;
- what the perceived and real barriers to becoming more active actually are.

RESEARCH APPROACH

A 3 phase research approach was undertaken which allowed us to fully explore the lives of families, what they are currently doing and crucially what they'd like to be doing more of:

DESK RESEARCH



Establishing general 'rules' of best practice for family engagement, support & activation

ONLINE FORUM



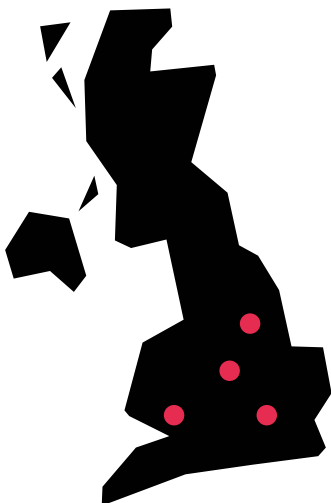
Feedback on their lives and activities via photos, video and written journals, allowing us to gather a picture of real, 'day-to-day' lives

FACE-TO-FACE



Detailed exploration of what families would ideally like to do/be doing more of and the barriers currently preventing this from happening

WHERE



We recruited 24 families who currently weren't very active as a family, i.e. the children may already be active through school and extra curricular sports provision, but aren't necessarily experiencing these same levels of activity with their parent(s)/as a family.

- All of the families recruited were from lower socio-economic groups DE (NS-SEC 6-8)
- A mix of ethnicity and disability
- Families recruited had children aged 5-7 or 8-11 (with an even mix of boys/girls across each location)

LOCATIONS


BARNSELY


HARROW


LEICESTER


CARDIFF & MERTHYR

CURRENT ACTIVITY LEVELS

Generally, because of their busy lives most parents feel that they are already active.



However, when we look at what being active actually means to parents, it's more closely associated with their 'day-to-day' routines, i.e. work and household chores. Activity levels differ according to the structure of their family and are impacted by work patterns, transport, number of children, single/dual parenting. Few were taking part regularly in sport/exercise.



“We have to look for free things to do together like gardening or going to the park.”

Schools (currently) provide the main opportunities for children to get active.

This is normally through 'time-tabled' PE lessons, although some do attend after school clubs & are active at home. After school and holiday clubs aren't an easy option for most due to cost and logistics of getting children to-and-from the activity...all of which is even harder if there are children of different ages.



“The kids are pretty active and play football, handball & basketball...but I know I could do more and we could be more active together, but it costs too much money ”



The reality is that most families are 'stuck' in the same cycle of activities due to a culmination of different factors.



All desire Quality time together, but this isn't always easy to achieve. Walking is the 'entry-level' activity most commonly done together as a family.



“We get fed up of always doing the same thing ”

KEY BARRIERS

Local provision differs by area, with more rural areas having less choice.

Parks represent a great free activity for families and may also involve a kickabout or bike ride. Sense of nothing for older children to do, which is why gaming & social media is so popular for High School age and beyond.



All of the families talk of local provision i.e. community/youth centres closing down over recent years. Raising awareness of local opportunities is key.

'Mindset' is crucial

Whilst most could see why being more active as a family would bring positive benefits to their family, some will need more convincing and guidance to help educate them on how this can improve their day-to-day experiences (both physically & mentally)..



Swimming is something that most families would like to do more of, but there are currently too many barriers.



Perhaps one of the biggest challenges is the child-parent ratio, which makes it impossible for many to access their local pool. There is also confusion on costs, some talk of 'free' sessions for families during the school holidays but others were unaware. Can also be logistically challenging (especially for single parents and those with very young children). Some resistance during colder/winter months and Body confidence (Parents) are also barriers.



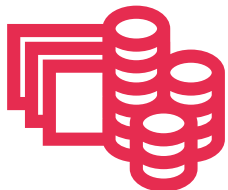
“ We go swimming once a month and the kids cycle sometimes but we don't do much else and could all be doing more ”

Time is a significant barrier.

Life is busy and finding time to be active (together) is an issue for some families. Life can often feel like they are on a 'hamster wheel', constantly battling to maintain a tight schedule of taking the kids to school and picking them up on time, especially if they are different ages and at different schools. All whilst working long hours to keep the money coming in.



“ The logistics of juggling three children of different ages and finding something that they would all enjoy and finding time to do things between school and bedtime is a challenge. Sometimes life just gets in the way ”



Of all of the barriers preventing families becoming more active, money is perhaps the main one to overcome.

Generally, if working at all, these adults are employed in low-pay roles and if not working they are claiming benefits. They are typically responsible for their children 24-7, as paid childcare is not an option, so have to find work that fits in around school hours.

Very little disposable income to spend on family activities (and individual activities for their children). Parents often have to weigh up the benefits of family activities vs basic necessities.



“ We have to look for free things to do together like gardening or going to the park.”

“ Not really happy as we don't get to do as much as I would like as a family. Money and cost are the biggest challenges ”

HOWEVER, IRRESPECTIVE OF FAMILY TYPE, LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OR LOCATION, OPPORTUNITIES DO EXIST TO GET FAMILIES MORE ACTIVE, AS MOST WANT TO SPEND MORE QUALITY TIME TOGETHER WITH THEIR CHILDREN AND BE MORE HEALTHY...

Family engagement programmes can help all families, especially those from lower social grades:



Have increased self esteem



Learn new skills



Improve their mental and physical health

To develop a successful programme with long term family engagement, the factors below must be considered...

Cost/financial implications	Environment – 'known'/'familiar' = less intimidating	Local
Equipment needed	Be mindful of challenging home environments	ENGAGE...not just INVOLVE
Show positive benefits of involvement (adults & children)	Be sensitive of cultural issues and stigma within communities	Communicate well (to ALL)

MAKING IT EASY + MAKING IT POSSIBLE = LONG TERM ENGAGEMENT



IMPROVING THE 'HERE & NOW' WILL MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

FAMILY WALKS



*Organised for families to meet up
Social benefits (Parents & kids)
Learning/educational element
Nature/animals*

PARKS/OPEN SPACES



*Provision to cater for ALL ages
'Go-Ape' type provision
A 'safer' space – more community
policing needed
Organised family activities, i.e. Family Sports
Days / It's A Knockout style competitions*

SWIMMING



*Clearer communication of FAMILY swim
sessions: When/How much?
FREE or minimal charge
Monthly pass
Extra lifeguards on duty or in the pool
Changing room assistant*

BIKE RIDES



*Organised for families to meet up
Cycle paths/trails
Safe space (no traffic) to allow children of all
ages and abilities to take part
Opportunity to hire bikes at the location
(overcomes logistical challenges)
FREE or minimal charge*

The local community is important to these families, help them to put their local area at the heart of the activity:

- Allotment
- Cooking
- Family 'games' days
- Board games
- Improve social links (Parents & children)
- Restore pride in the local area, via community initiatives
- Active sessions in a safe, friendly environment
- Outdoor/old school games

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN

PRICE

*Clearly communicate if
any cost is involved

Consider a 'PASS'
type idea*

SOCIAL FOOD

*Food is central to these
families and what they
do, so try and
incorporate this*

LANGUAGE

*how the idea is
marketed is crucial,
concentrate on the
family/fun side of
activities...nothing too
scary or daunting*

LEAD

*These families need
help & inspiration, rather
than being responsible
to manage /run things
themselves*