



10th Annual
Research
Conference
2018



Streets Ahead: Findings on Outdoor Play from the Growing Up in Ireland Study

Dr Suzanne Egan & Dr Jennifer Pope
Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick

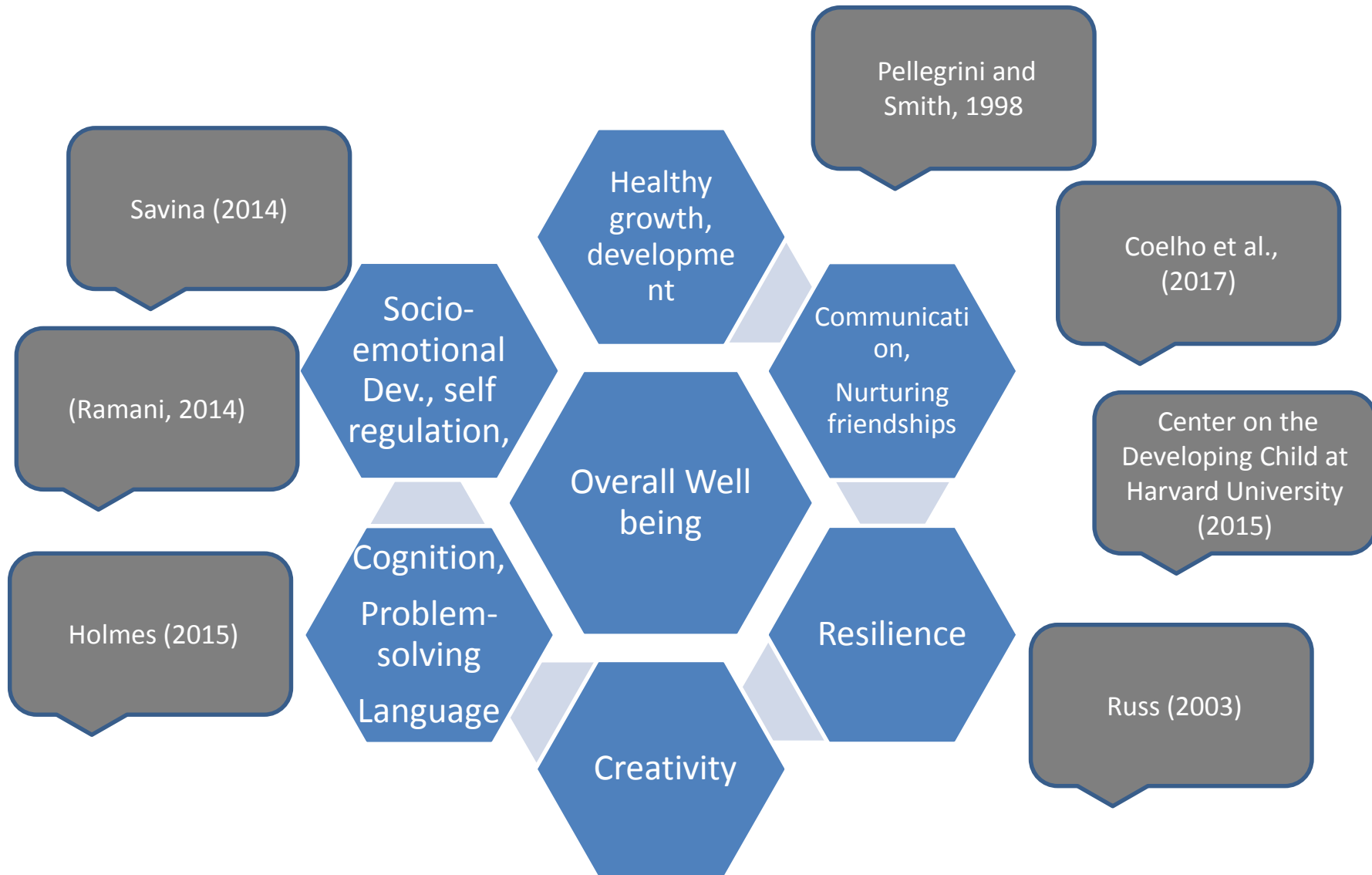


Department of Psychology
&
Department of Reflective Pedagogy
& Early Childhood Studies



An Roinn Leanaí
agus Gnóthaí Óige
Department of Children
and Youth Affairs

Play is important...





Outdoor play

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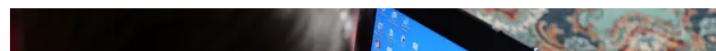
Opinion Sport Culture Lifestyle More

Education Media Society Law Scotland Wales Northern Ireland



Call for action to end children's 'battery-hen existence' in summer holidays

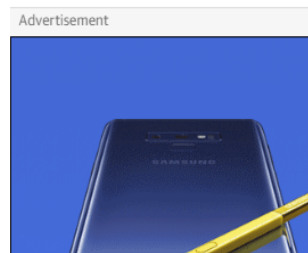
Children's commissioner says GPs should offer 'play on prescription' to combat obesity and poor mental health



THE CHECKUP

Let Kids Play

Doctors should prescribe playtime for young children, the American Academy of Pediatrics says.



The Power of Play: A Pediatric Role in Enhancing Development in Young Children

Michael Yogman, MD, FAAP; Andrew Garner, MD, PhD, FAAP; Jeffrey Hutchinson, MD, FAAP; Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, PhD; Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, PhD; COMMITTEE ON PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF CHILD AND FAMILY HEALTH, COUNCIL ON COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA

Develop a variety of skill sets to optimize their development. Research demonstrates that developmentally appropriate play with parents and peers is a singular opportunity to enhance emotional, cognitive, language, and self-regulation skills, executive function and a prosocial brain. Furthermore, play supports the formation of the safe, stable, and nurturing relationships with all caregivers that children need to thrive.

Play is not frivolous: it enhances brain structure and function and promotes executive function (ie, the process of learning, rather than the content), which allow us to pursue goals and ignore distractions.

When play and safe, stable, nurturing relationships are missing in a child's life, toxic stress can disrupt the development of executive function and the

abstract

FREE

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Dr Yogman prepared the first draft of this report and took the lead in reconciling the numerous edits, contributions, and suggestions from the other authors; Drs Garner, Hutchinson, Hirsh-Pasek, and Golinkoff made significant contributions to the manuscript by revising multiple drafts and responding to all reviewer concerns; and all authors



Outdoor play

- Opportunities to move more freely
- Significantly more active outdoors than indoors (Engelen et al., 2015)
- Explore and engage with natural materials and resources (Fjortoft, 2001)
- Parents identified playing outside with friends/neighbours as the most successful method to increase the amount of physical activity their child gets (Safefood, 2017)



Outdoor play

- Activities vary in how much social interaction and cooperation is required with other children:
 - reciprocal role-taking
 - detection of play signals,
 - turn taking (Pellegrini, 1987)
- And in how cognitively demanding they are:
 - remembering rules
 - keeping score
 - knowing the next step to be completed (Veiga et al., 2017)





A Growing Evidence Base...

Frost (2012)
A changing
culture of play

Gill (2014)

Bento & Dias
(2017)

Barnardos
(2014)

Carol Duffy-
Early Childhood
Ireland

Kiernan &
Devine (2010)

Tremblay et al.
(2015)
Position Paper

Waller (2010)
SIGs

UK Children's
Commissioner
(2018)

O'Malley (2014)

ESRI (2013)

Lynch et al.
(2018) outdoors
for all

McPherson et
al. (2013)

Kilkelly, Lynch et
al. (2016)

Smyth, E.
(2016).

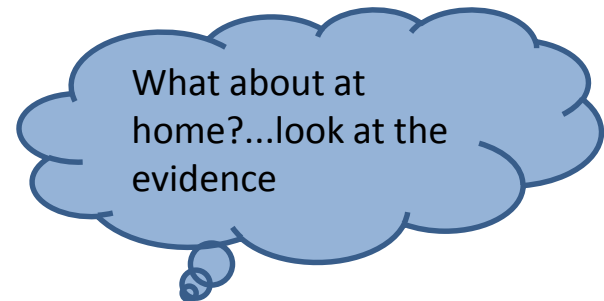


Importance of the Outdoor Environments in ECCE related Policy & Legislation...



STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS.

CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) REGULATIONS 2016



The Right to play outdoors...

- Lynch (2017) argues there is a lack of policy in Ireland to support engagement with outdoors in children and lack of data to guide policy
- Little evidence of GUI data being used to examine '*play itself, separate to sport, exercise and leisure*' (Lynch, 2017)





Research questions

- What types of outdoor play do Irish children most frequently engage in?
- What effect does outdoor play have on development?
- How does the neighbourhood environment affect levels of outdoor play?

Growing Up in Ireland Study



- The Growing up in Ireland study is a longitudinal, nationally representative study of young children in Ireland.
- 11,100 infants at 9 months old (Sept, 08- March, 09)
- Wave 3 and Wave 4 data aged 5 and 7/8



Methodology



- **Wave 3 of data – Age 5**
- 9001 families
- Response of the primary caregiver to a series of questions



- **Wave 4 of data – Age 7/8**
- 5,308 families
- A postal survey
- Response of the primary caregiver to a series of questions



Measures Age 5

- Outdoor play: How often...
 - Plays chasing
 - Plays with a ball
 - Rides a bike, tricycle or scooter
 - Climbs on trees, climbing frames, wall bars, etc
 - Skates



Measures Age 7

- Outdoor play: How often...
 - Plays games that involve a lot of running around, like football
 - Plays games that involve some activity like trampolining
 - Rides a bike, tricycle or scooter



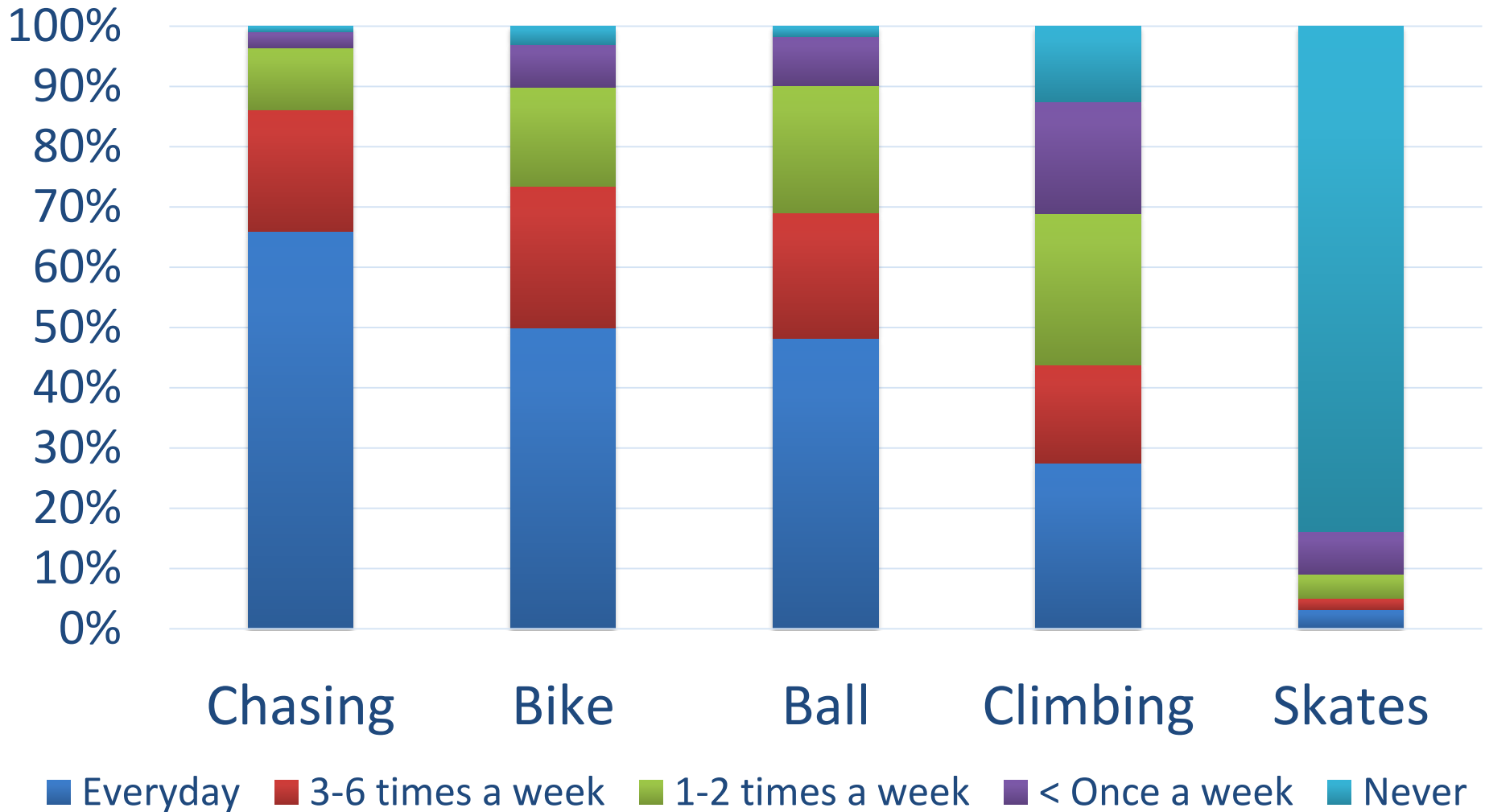


Research questions

- **What types of outdoor play do Irish children most frequency engage in?**
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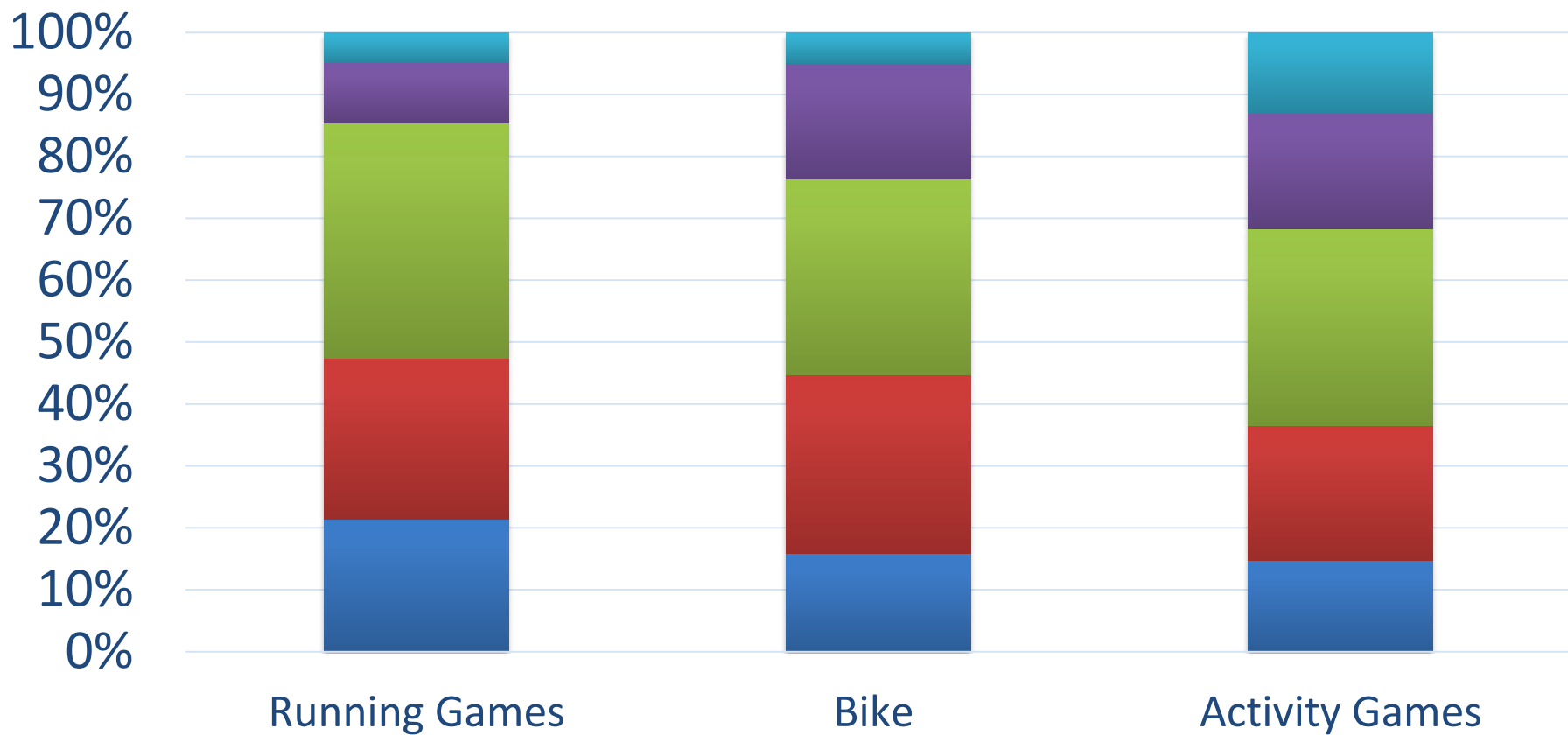
Results

5 year old outdoor play



Results

7 year old outdoor play



■ Everyday
 ■ 3-6 times per week
 ■ 1-2 times per week
 ■ < Once a week
 ■ Never



Research questions

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- **What effect does outdoor play have on development?**
- How does the neighbourhood environment affect levels of outdoor play?

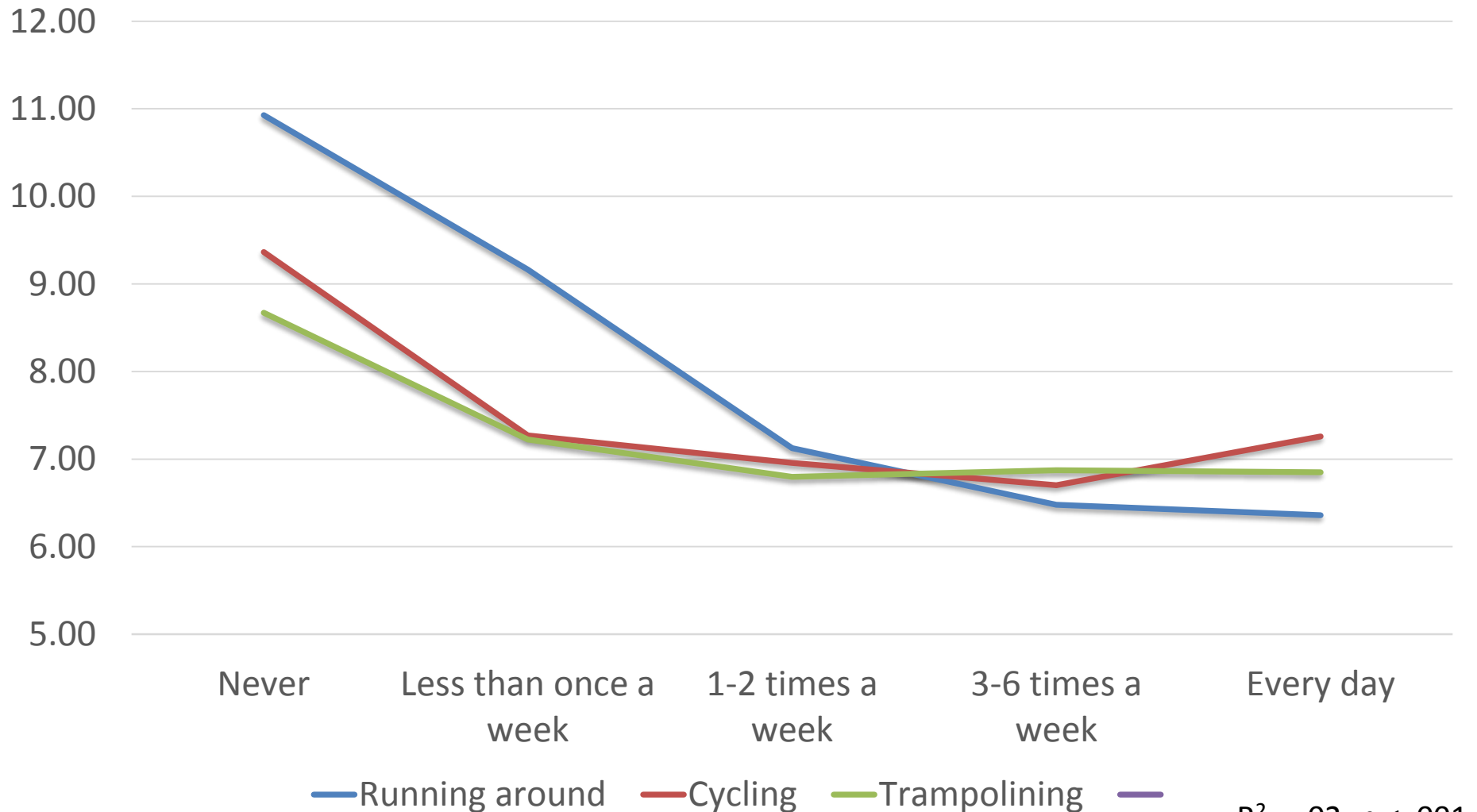


Socio-Emotional Measures - Age 7

- **Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)** – brief behavioural screening questionnaire widely used by researchers and clinicians
 - Emotional
 - Conduct
 - Hyperactivity
 - Peer Problems (above give a combined score of Total Difficulties)
 - Prosocial
- **Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) Rating Scales** – widely used rating scale to provide a picture of social skills
 - Assertion
 - Responsibility
 - Empathy
 - Self Control

Results

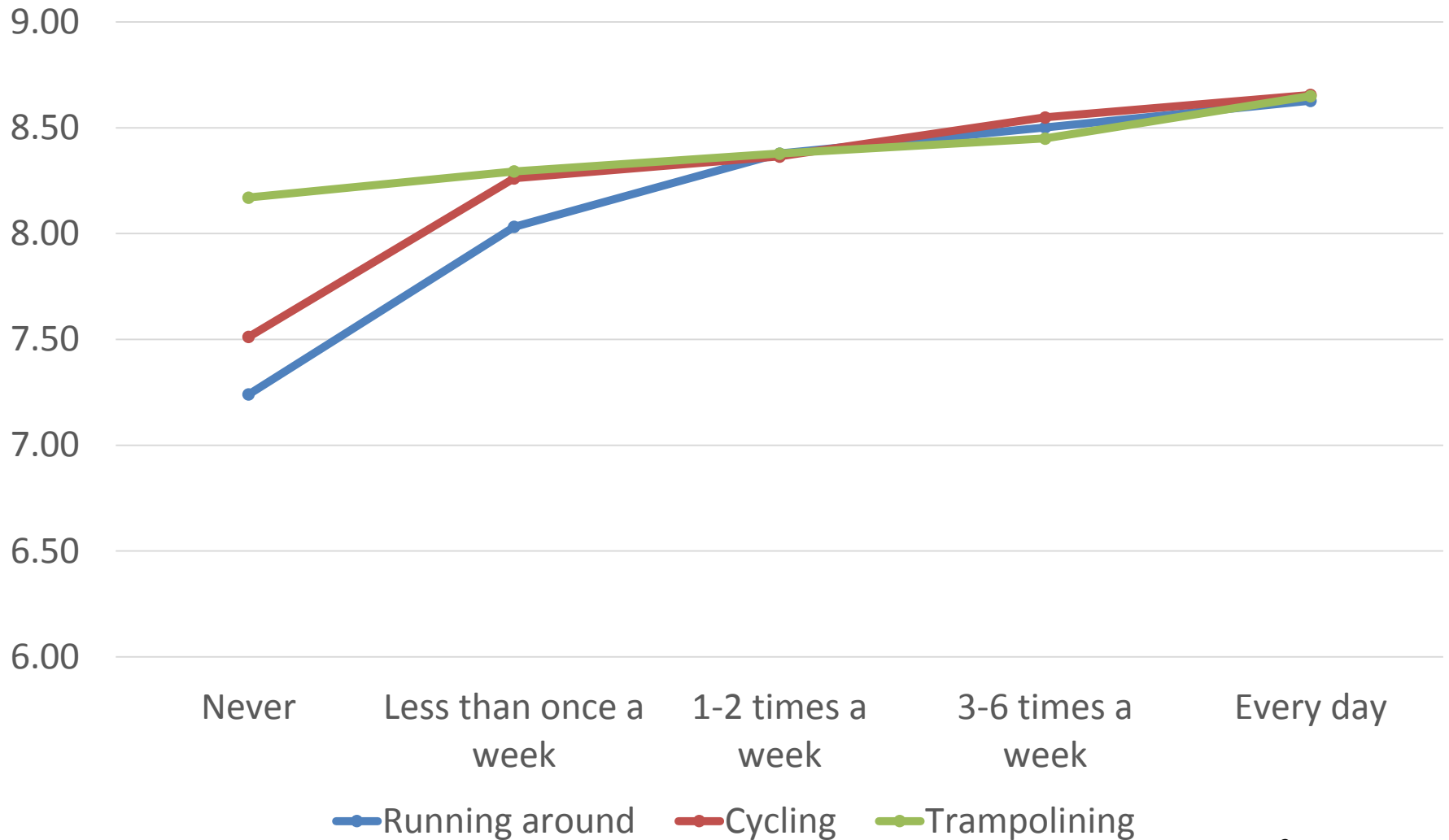
SDQ Total Difficulties Score by frequency of activity age 7



$R^2 = .02, p < .001$

Results

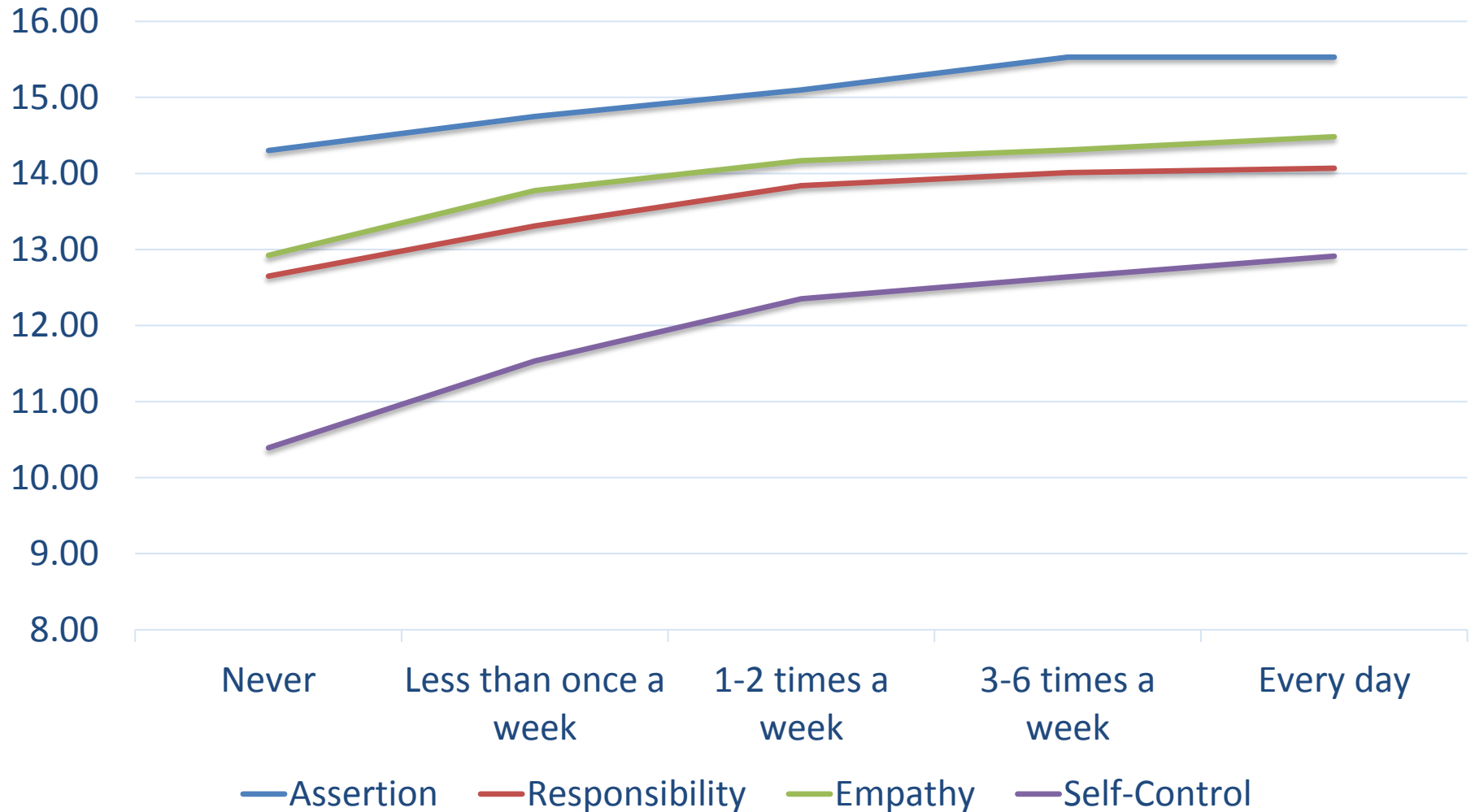
SDQ Prosocial Score by frequency of activity age 7



$R^2 = .03, p < .001$

Results

SSIS scores by 'running around' frequency Age 7





Research questions

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- **How does the neighbourhood environment affect levels of outdoor play?**

Neighbourhood Measures - Age 5

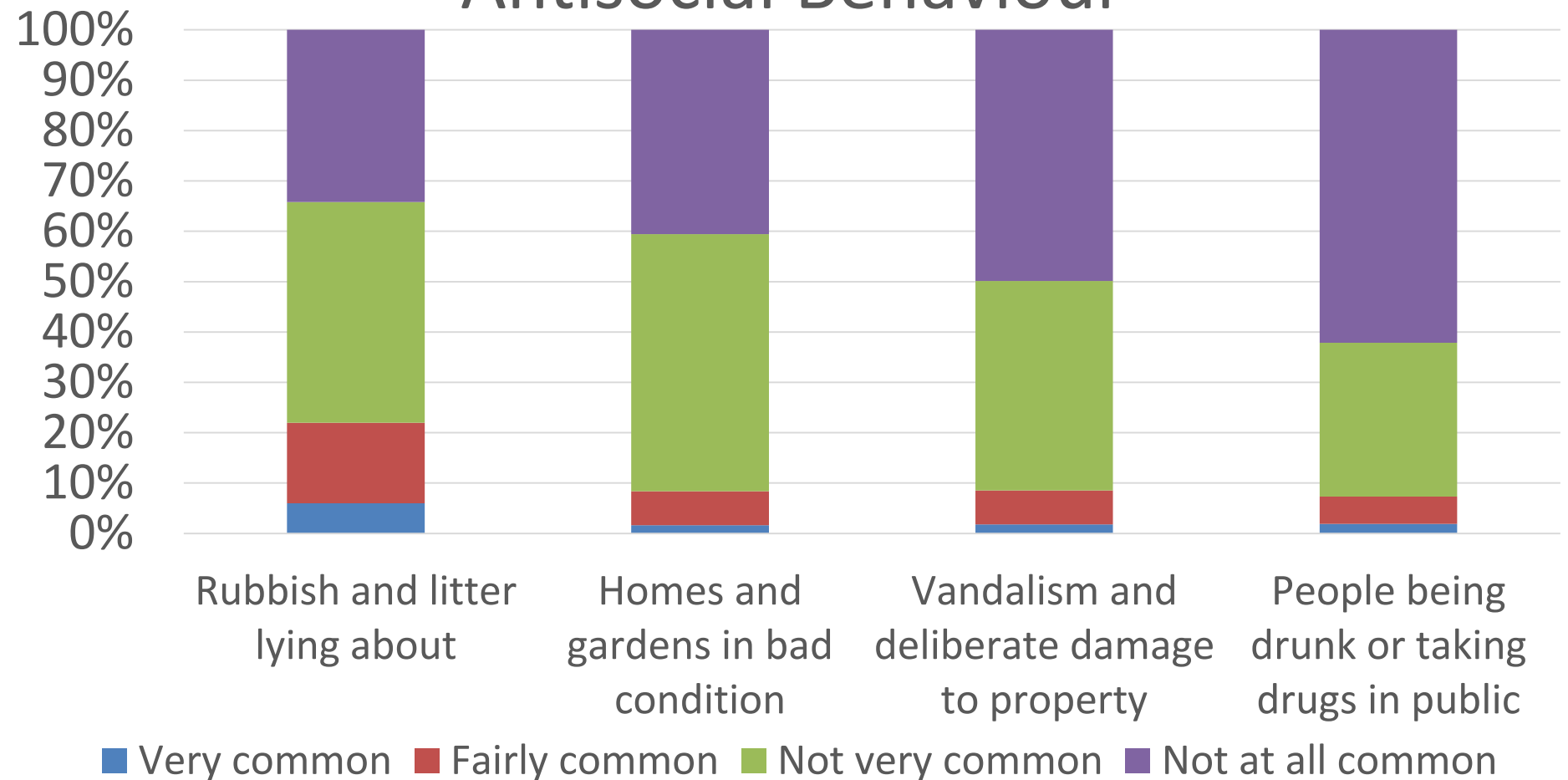
- Neighbourhood Environment
 - Overall safety
 - Safety for child to play outside during the day
 - Parks, playgrounds, traffic, paths, lighting
 - Antisocial behaviours

What are the neighbourhoods like?



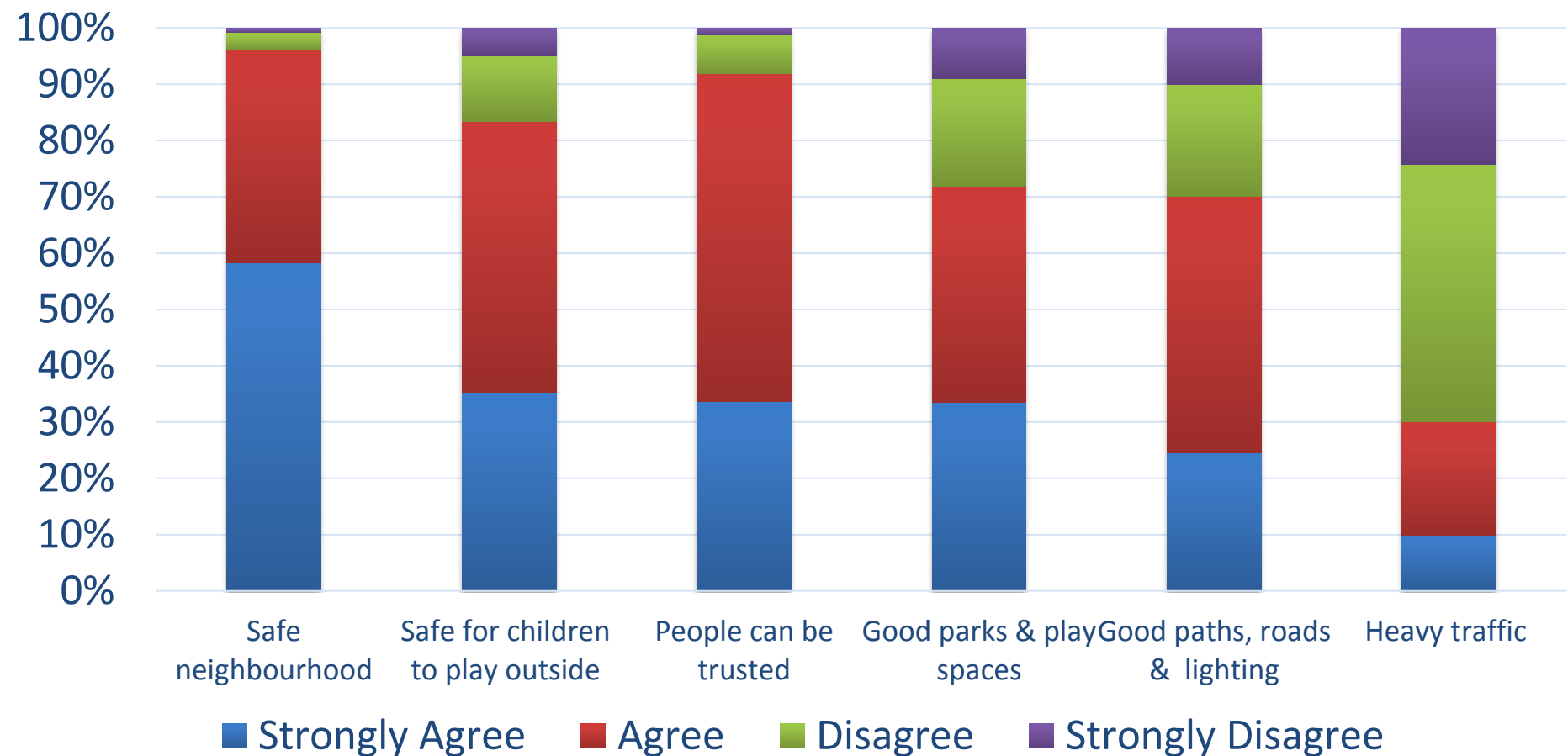
Results

Neighbourhood Environment - Antisocial Behaviour



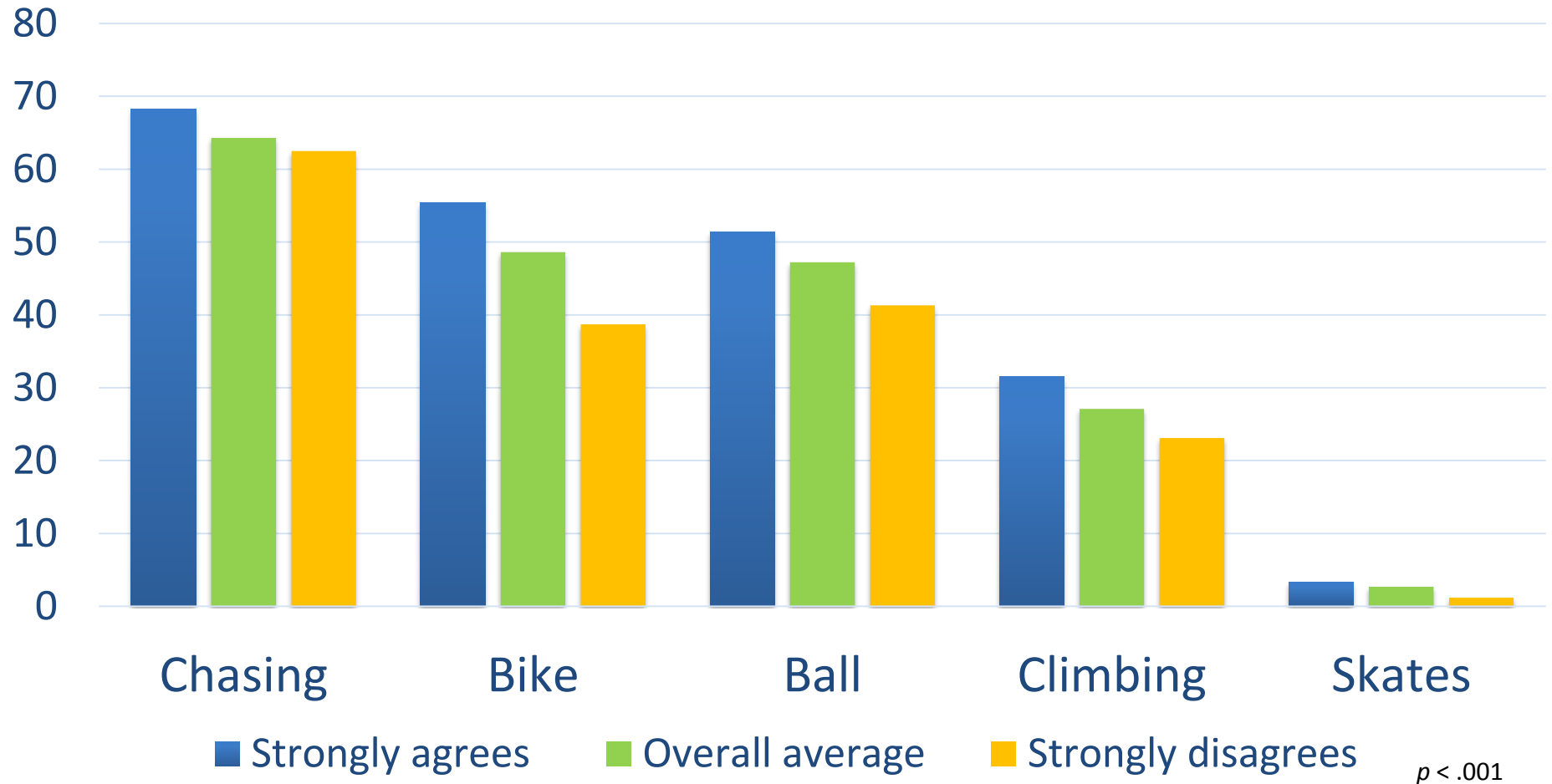
Results

Neighbourhood Environment – Safety and play spaces



Results

Percentage engaged in daily activities - 'It is safe for children to play outside during the day'





Neighbourhood Environment & Outdoor Play

- Parent's perceived safety of the neighbourhood for outdoor play is associated with reported levels of outdoor play (Egan & Pope, 2018)
- Consistent with previous international research
- Neighbourhood environment is associated with children's sedentary behaviour outside school hours (Veitch et al., 2011)
- Greater parental satisfaction with nearby play spaces associated with less screen time (Veitch et al., 2011) and more hours of outdoor play (Tolbert Kimbro et al., 2011)



Conclusions

- Young Children in Ireland have the right to play outdoors
- Outdoor play has a positive role to play in many aspects of development, including socio-emotional development
- But neighbourhood safety (or perceived neighbourhood safety) is a barrier to outdoor play
- Parents, ECCE & primary teachers, afterschool, local communities and policy makers need to consider how outdoor play can be encouraged and facilitated



Conclusions

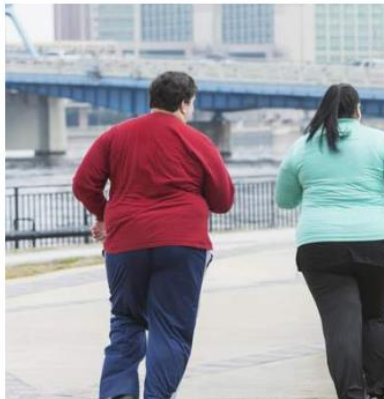
How our unequal society makes it harder for us to live long and healthy lives

It's not just smoking, drinking and failing to do any exercise that shortens lives – the communities we live in also affect our ability to make healthy choices

jo Bibby | 3 days ago | 1 comment



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A Playful City - turning Dublin into Ireland's first city of play

Updated / Wednesday, 11 Oct 2017 17:14



Outdoor Play and Social Inclusion: Public Playspace Audit RECORD FORM

Playspace Information

Location: _____

Date of Assessment (dd/mm/yyyy): _____

Time of Assessment: _____

Weather on the day of Assessment: _____

Observer (Name and Discipline): _____

Lynch, Moore & Prellwitz, 2017



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A Hop, Skip and a Jump to School!

By: DR. SUZANNE EGAN AND DR. JENNIFER POPE | Tuesday 19 June 2017

g, Games, Health, outdoor play, play, Primary School, Running



Children's Research Network

NETWORK | KNOWLEDGE | ACTIVITY

Outdoor Play and Participation Research Group



Thank You!

- Supported by MIC Seed Funding
- Thanks to all that families that so generously continue to contribute to the Growing Up in Ireland Study (www.growingup.ie)
- GUI Data is archived by the Irish Social Science Data Archive in UCD (www.ucd.ie/issda)

