

Scottish Home Play Survey

Top Line Summary – June 2016

Background and Objectives

- Play Scotland wanted to discover more about play in and around the home, particularly looking at attitudes, behaviours and concerns of parents and the play behaviours of their children, 8-12 years old.

Method and Sample

- The respondents to this survey were parents or main careers of children aged 8-12 in Scotland
- Online method employed
- Sample size – 618 Adults across Scotland
- The sample was sourced through Play Scotland's wider membership network and included a supplement sample of C2DE respondents from the general population. As such, the results should be treated as an *indication* of the views of the wider population rather than fully representative of them.
- Weighted to Census data for Socio-economic group (ABC1 v C2DE)
- Sampling for the C2DE general population sample was conducted in partnership with Research Now
- Fieldwork dates – 18th March – 9th May 2016
- Margins of error for the results shown are $\pm 0.78\%$ to $\pm 3.94\%$

All work has been carried out in accordance with ISO 20252 guidelines, IQCS guidelines and the Market Research Society's Code of Conduct.



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Main Research Findings

Play Behaviour

- ⊗ Active play (84%), interactive digital play such as playing on computer games or surfing the web (81%) and passive digital play such as watching films or TV online (77%) were the most common types of children's play cited by parents as having been done by their child in the past week.
- ⊗ On average, parents mentioned just under seven (6.9) types of play that their child had done in the last week.
- ⊗ The majority of children spent 1 to 3 hours playing on a weekday (60%) and over 3 hours playing on a weekend day (70%). Just over a third (34%) believed their child played for over 5 hours on a weekend day, compared to just 6% of parents that believed that their child played for this long on a weekday.
- ⊗ Eighty-six percent of parents surveyed said that their child used YouTube each week. Just over a third (34%) believed that their child used it for between 1 and 3 hours each week, more than for any other time band.

Interaction Through Play

- ⊗ Whilst 72% of parents felt that their child had a parent as a play partner, only 8% felt that a parent was their child's main play partner.
- ⊗ Friends (88%) and siblings (74%) were the most commonly cited play partners, and also the most often mentioned main play partner (sibling 45%, friend 39%).
- ⊗ Active Play (56%) was the most frequent play activity the parents did with their child. Other common types of play parents undertook together with their children were: reading (51%), making things (50%), passive digital play (45%) and hanging out (45%).
- ⊗ Sixty-three percent of parents surveyed felt happy with the time they had available to play together with their child, with one in five (20%) feeling 'very happy'. Thirty-seven percent of parents surveyed were unhappy with the time they had available to play together with their child, with 6% 'very unhappy'. The time parents had available to play together with their child varied from week to week, with 28% stating that they had ten or more hours on a good week compared to only 4% on a bad week.
- ⊗ Initiation of play time together was usually equal between parent and child (61%), although it was more likely that a child would more often choose the activity (52%) than the parent (6%).
- ⊗ In order to find new ideas for how to play together with their child, 28% of the parents surveyed said they would conduct a general search online. A quarter (26%) did not know where to look and just under a third (30%) felt that they would not look for new ideas in the first place.

Barriers to Play

- ⊗ Parents were more likely to feel that there being no good places to play locally, it not being safe to play outside and bad weather (50%) are barriers to play. Just under one quarter (22%) of parents surveyed felt there were no barriers to their child playing.
- ⊗ Work commitments (60%) was the most commonly cited barrier to a parent playing together with their child. Housework was also mentioned by just under a third (31%) as a barrier to play together. Only 7% stated no barriers to play together

Inequalities

- ⊗ Inequalities across household socio-economic groups were visible within the data. Children from higher socio-economic backgrounds were more likely to play for longer on a weekend, take part in a greater variety of play activities, play together with a parent and to have 'positive' barriers to play such as extra-curricular activities and homework. Children from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to experience 'negative' barriers to play such as a lack of safe local spaces.
- ⊗ Parents from ABC1 households were more likely to strongly acknowledge the benefits of play.
- ⊗ Parents from C2DE households showed higher levels of concern about the dangers of online and outside play.

Barriers to playing together with their child

- Work commitments (60%) was the most commonly cited barrier to a parent playing together with their child. Housework was also mentioned by just under a third (31%) as a barrier to play together. Only 7% stated no barriers to play together.

Attitudes and concerns

- The parents we sampled were very positive about the benefits of play for their child, with 83% agreeing 'very strongly' that play makes their child physically healthier. The sample was similarly positive about play being good for a child's sense of well-being (83%), helping their child be more active (82%) and helping them become more confident (79%). Improving sociability (77%) and being educational (75%) were also commonly agreed with 'strongly'.
- Whilst the benefits of online play were also widely recognised, there was less strength of feeling towards this. Thirty-one percent agreed 'strongly' that online play helped their child become more confident with technology, with a further 51% agreeing 'slightly'. Eighteen percent agreed 'strongly' that online websites and games have an educational benefit, with a further 60% agreeing 'slightly'. Twenty-three percent agreed 'strongly' that their child develops new skills through online play, a further 47% agreed 'slightly' with this remark.
- Only 6% of parents surveyed agreed 'strongly' that they get stuck for new things to do when playing together with their child, 27% agreed slightly.
- Stranger danger (23% 'extremely' concerned, 29% 'quite' concerned) and a child getting bullied outside the home (23% 'extremely' concerned, 22% 'quite' concerned) were the main concerns regarding outside play.
- Level of concern were higher for online play than outside play. Access to inappropriate material (48% 'extremely' concerned, 27% 'quite' concerned), strangers talking to a child (47% 'extremely' concerned, 23% 'quite' concerned), strangers seeing a child's online profile (41% 'extremely' concerned, 25% 'quite' concerned) and cyber-bullying (41% 'extremely' concerned, 22% 'quite' concerned) were the most strongly felt concerns.

Use of Mobile Apps and YouTube

- Almost nine in ten (89%) parents surveyed said that their child plays on mobile apps.
- Use of YouTube was very high, with 86% of parents saying their children used it each week to some extent.
- Fifty-four percent of those surveyed stated that they or another adult are always the one who downloads apps for their child to play with; a further 16% said that it was normally them or another adult who downloaded their child's apps. Nineteen percent of parents stated that their child normally downloads their own apps and only 2% said that it was always the case that the child downloads their own apps.
- Whilst almost three quarters (73%) of parents said that they did play together with their child through mobile apps, 65% did this only occasionally.

Technical Appendix

Methodology:

- ✦ The data was collected by online survey.
- ✦ The target group for this research study was parents of children aged 8-12 in Scotland.
- ✦ The sampling frame used for this study was Play Scotland's wider membership network and a randomised sample of C2DE parents.
- ✦ The target sample size was 300-400, and the final achieved sample size was 618. The reason for the increased sample size was a higher than expected response rate.
- ✦ Fieldwork was undertaken between 18th March – 9th May 2016.
- ✦ Respondents were selected using a census method in which everyone on the Play Scotland membership database was invited.
- ✦ All persons on the sampling frame were invited to participate in the study. Respondents to paper and internet self-completion studies are self-selecting and complete the survey without the assistance of a trained interviewer. This means that sampling cannot be strictly controlled and, in some cases, this can lead to the findings being skewed towards the views of those motivated to respond to the survey.
- ✦ For those invited through Play Scotland's network, an incentive of £100 Amazon voucher prize draw was used to encourage a positive response to the survey. Those invited through Research Now were paid approximately £1-2 for their responses.
- ✦ *Self completion validation* – Data gathered using self-completion methodologies are validated using the following techniques:
 - ✦ Where a self-completion survey is returned anonymously there is not any opportunity for validation. However, all questionnaires returned undergo rigorous editing and quality checks and any thought to be invalid are removed from further processing.
 - ✦ Sampling of additional C2DE respondents for this project was sub-contracted to Research Now.
 - ✦ All research projects undertaken by Progressive comply fully with the requirements of ISO 20252

Data Processing and Analysis:

- ✦ The final data set was weighted to reflect the Scottish population in regard to SEG (ABC1 v C2DE). The sample base remained the same.
- ✦ Random Sample - The overall sample size of 618 provides a dataset with a margin of error of between $\pm 0.78\%$ and $\pm 3.94\%$, calculated at the 95% confidence level (market research industry standard).
- ✦ Our data processing department undertakes a number of quality checks on the data to ensure its validity and integrity. For CAWI Questionnaires these checks include:
 - ✦ Responses are checked for duplicates, where unidentified responses have been permitted.
 - ✦ All responses are checked for completeness and sense.
 - ✦ Depending on the requirements of the survey, and using our analysis package, SNAP, data is either imported from email responses received in a dedicated email inbox or stored directly on our dedicated server
 - ✦ A computer edit of the data was carried out prior to analysis, involving both range and inter-field checks. Any further inconsistencies identified at this stage were investigated by reference back to the raw data on the questionnaire.
 - ✦ Where "other" type questions are used, the responses to these were checked against the parent question for possible up-coding.
 - ✦ Responses to open-ended questions were spell and sense checked. Where required these responses were grouped using a code-frame used in analysis.

ISBN: 978-0-9930625-1-3

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