

The background of the slide is a photograph of a park. A large tree trunk is in the center, with its branches spreading out. The leaves are green, with some showing signs of autumn. A path leads through the trees, and a grassy area is visible in the foreground and background. The sun is shining from the top left, creating a lens flare effect.

Under 5s Physical Activity Survey

Summary of Findings – 2024

Data, Intelligence & Insight Team and Early Years & Childcare Team



Physical activity is crucial for healthy development in the early years, impacting both physical and cognitive development and supporting positive mental health . To date, there has been very little data on physical activity in the early years (0-4 year olds). This 2024 survey was led by the [Healthy Early Years Award](#) team and based on questions used in the national [Active Lives Survey](#) for 5 to 16 year olds. Its aim is to better understand the current levels of physical activity of our youngest children (0-4 year olds) and to identify areas of work to support and promote positive attitudes and to establish good habits at the earliest opportunity. The data resulting from the survey will help inform and support the delivery of the [We Can Be Active Strategy](#) in the city.

The next Under 5s Physical Activity Survey is due to go out in 2025.



**HEALTHY EARLY
YEARS AWARD**
Southampton



Data caveats:

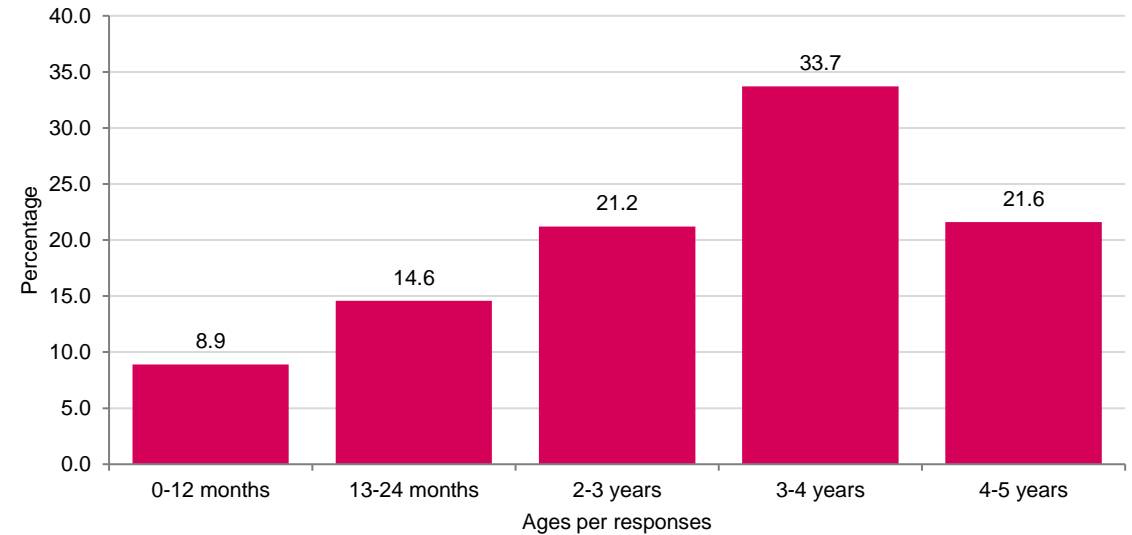
- This is experimental data. This survey was the first time the England Active Lives Survey questions have been used in Southampton for a different age group and the first time the survey was completed by parents via early years settings (rather than school-aged children through schools)
- The survey design collects 'combined' demographic data for families. Boxes are ticked for what gender and age group any children within that family belong to (not how many are in each). This limits analysis by age and sex, for example a family with 3 children with boy and girl ticked could include 2 boys and 1 girl or 1 boy and 2 girls. There is a similar issue with age. For this reason, analysis by sex and age group for questions is not possible and the number of responses varies between questions.
- The survey was sent out online to families with children under 5 years through Ofsted registered nurseries, pre-schools and childminders in Southampton between February and April 2024. It is not known if the sample is representative of the Southampton population.
- There were a total of 403 families responding to the survey, however not every question was answered. Some questions included selecting more than one answer of multiple choice options.
- There were a total of 54 additional 'free text' comments.



Of the multiple-choice options for sex; 'boy', 'girl', 'don't know' and 'prefer not to say', 476 options were selected by the families could be split out as:



Percentage of children under 5yrs where mentioned by age group, 2024



Source: Southampton City Council Under 5s physical activity survey

Of all the 528 age groups selected for children within the families, 3-4 years were the most common ages (34%), followed by 22% of ages 4-5 years*

93%

of parents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I know how to get involved and improve my skills in lots of different types of physical activity"

94%

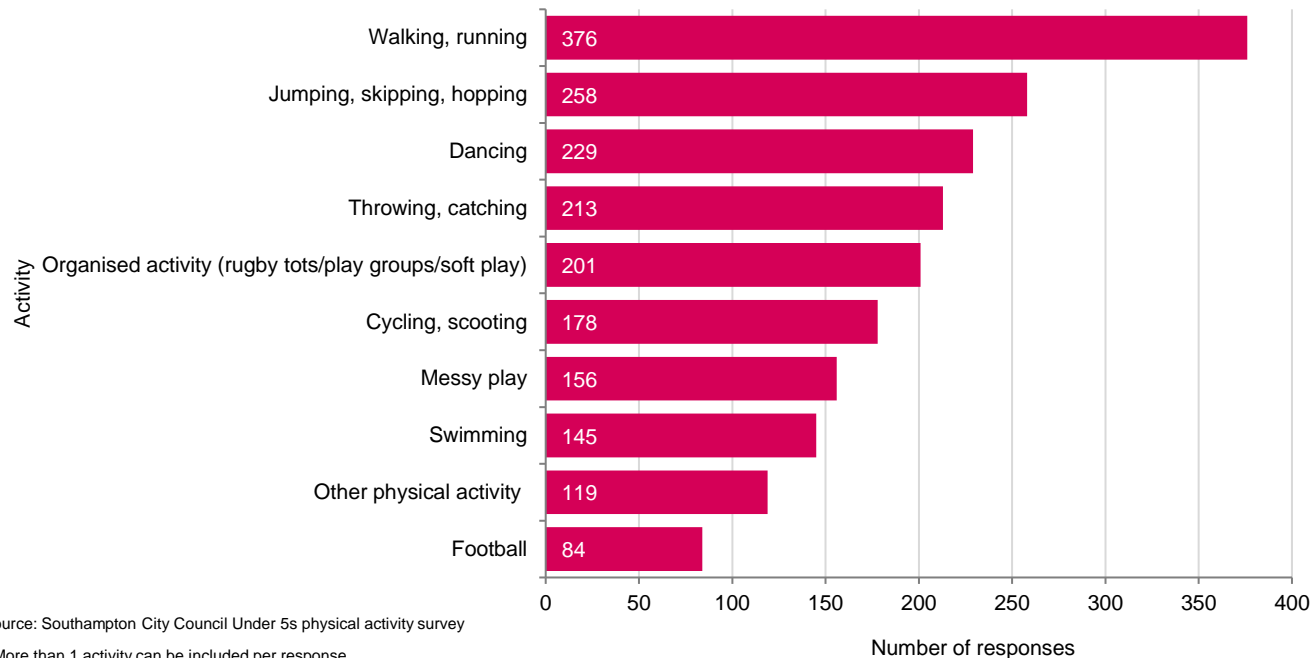
of parents were extremely confident they understood why it is important for them and their child/children to be physically active

47%

of parents were aware of the recommended guidance for levels of activity in the early years

* Please refer to the data caveats

Number of activities children have engaged with over the past week, 2024



Source: Southampton City Council Under 5s physical activity survey

* More than 1 activity can be included per response

Of all the 1,959 activities included in 403 responses, children have engaged with walking and running as the most common activity over the past week, followed by jumping, skipping and hopping.

Total activity minutes per day	Percentage (of 403 families)
0-30	4%
31-60	20%
61-100	30%
101-180	46%



Use of swimming pool in a week	Percentage (of 403 families)
Daily	0%
Once/twice weekly	33%
Once/twice monthly	24%
Rarely/never	43%



Children using beaches, riverside, woodlands or hills to play and be physically active:

47%

Once or twice a week

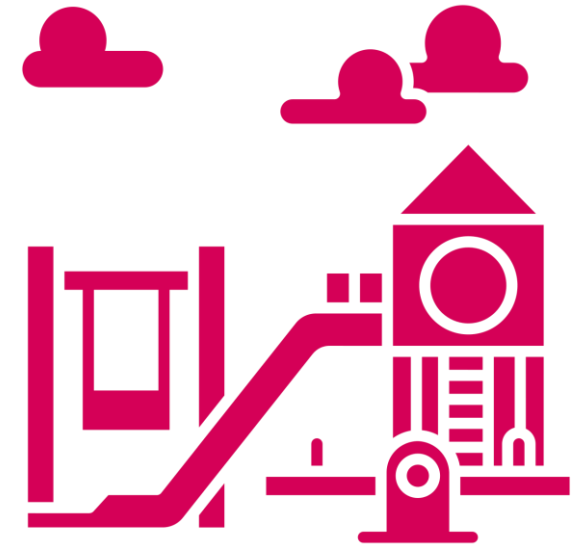
37%

Once or twice a month
of 403 parent responses



74%

of 403 parents stated their child/children uses park facilities or public playgrounds to play and be physically active once or twice in a typical week

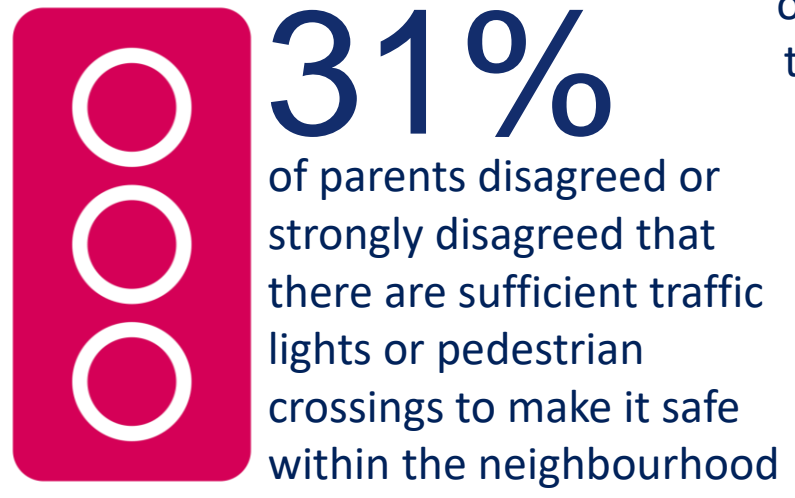
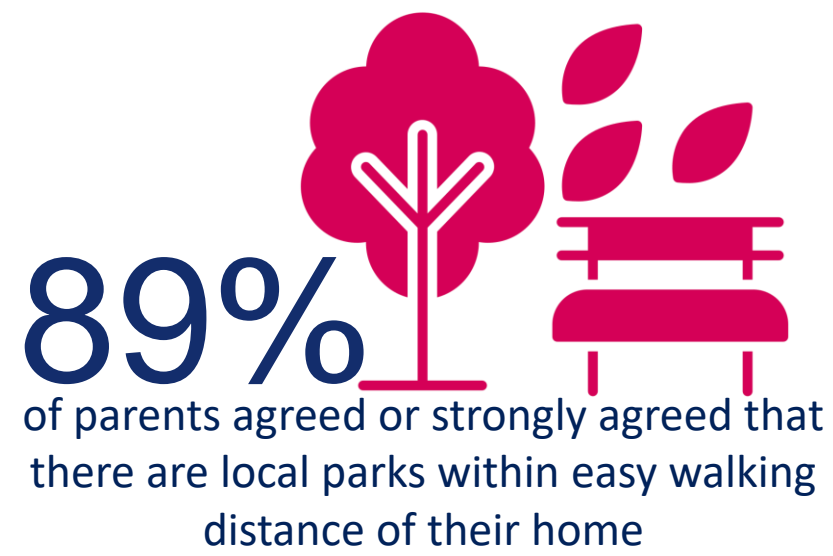
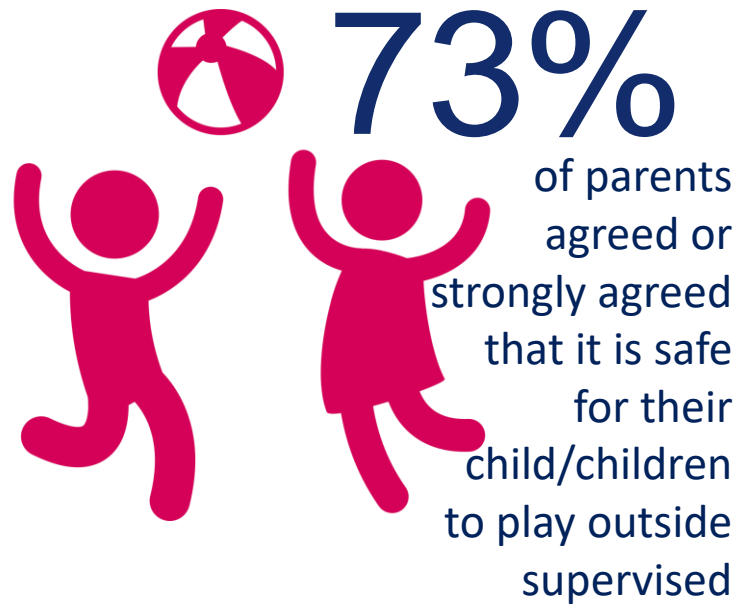


22%

of additional comments discussed poor quality parks (n=12 out of a total of 54 comments)

15%

of additional comments discussed wanting more parks (n=8 out of a total of 54 comments)





Parent engages in physical activity with their child:

26%
All the time

56%
Frequently



59%
of parent said their child enjoys being active all of the time



Parent feels confident when they are physically active with their child:

44%
All the time

38%
Frequently

15%

of additional comments stated pavements were not accessible and worries of dangerous driving (n=8 out of a total of 54 comments)

7%

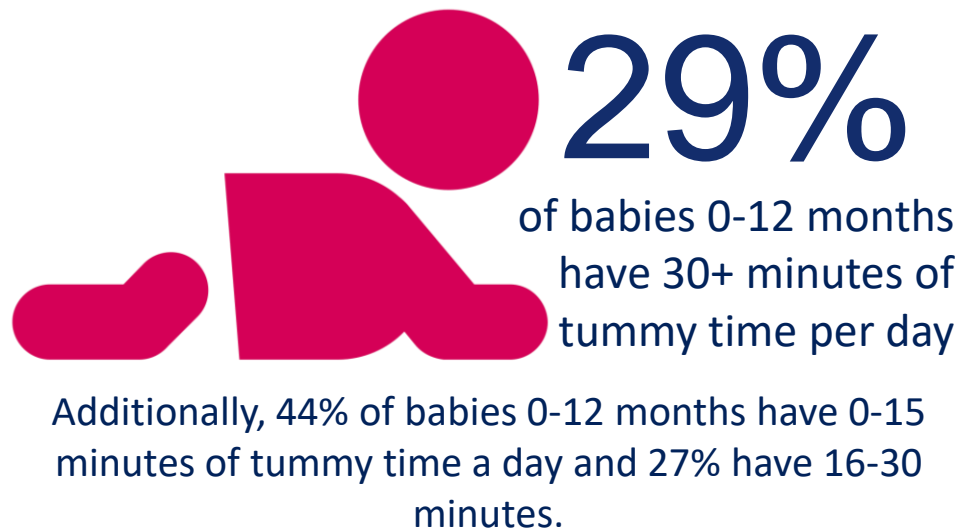
of additional comments stated timing issues and lack of availability for working parents (n=4 out of a total of 54 comments)

6%

of additional comments states lack of free or cheaper activities available (n=3 out of a total of 54 comments)



The recommended guidance of tummy time is 30 minutes a day ([UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines](#))



The combined demographics issue by age, along with no option for no tummy time may also affect the percentage accuracy for tummy time. The tummy time percentage is based on the known responses to the tummy time question (62).



There were a total of 54 additional comments to the survey.

Themes included:

- Mentioned child or parent disability that affects physical activity
- Issues with the survey, unable to quantify physical activity
- Answers would be different if completing the survey in the winter compared to summer
- Need more parks and poor quality of existing parks
- Not enough activities that are low cost or free
- Pavements are not accessible and dangerous driving
- Issues with activity times for working parents
- Issues with public transport
- Concerns about dogs/wildlife
- Not enough physical activity groups
- Enjoying the parks available
- Positive the survey is going out
- Children enjoying physical activity



<https://data.southampton.gov.uk/>

Southampton Data Observatory contains a large range of data, intelligence and insight on a range of topics:

- [Children and Young People](#)
- [Physical activity](#)
- [Healthy weight](#)

Further information is available here:

- [Southampton Healthy Early Years Award](#)
- [Children and Young People's Strategy](#)
- [UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines](#)
- [We Can Be Active Strategy](#)

KEY FACTS

ESTIMATED POPULATION	NUMBER OF DWELLINGS	NUMBER OF BUSINESSES	UNEMPLOYMENT
260,111 HCC 2020-BASED SAPF	109,900 VOA 2021	8,785 ONS UK BUSINESS 2021	7,300 (5.1%) ONS APS SEPTEMBER 2021
MALE LIFE EXPECTANCY	FEMALE LIFE EXPECTANCY	LIVE BIRTHS PER YEAR	DEATHS PER YEAR
78.3 ONS 2018-20 (POOLED)	82.5 ONS 2018-20 (POOLED)	2,791 ONS 2020	2,011 NHS DIGITAL PCMD 2020

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