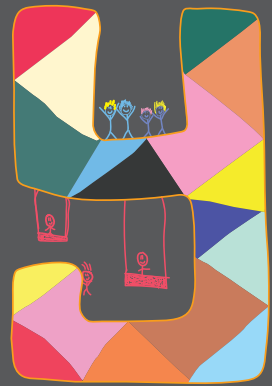
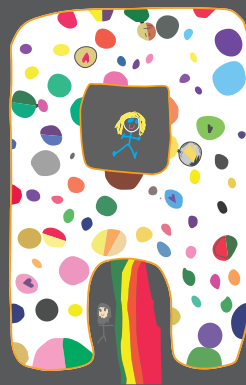




Maribyrnong  
CITY COUNCIL

# PASSPORT TO



Passport to Play  
Project Report 2023



Here is the land, here is the sky. Here are my friends and here am I!

We thank the people of the Kulin Nation for the land on which we play and learn.

Hands up, hands down, we're on Kulin Nation ground.

#### Acknowledgement

Council is proud to represent a municipality filled with important and significant Aboriginal history. It acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Kulin Nation, and acknowledges the rich culture and considerable contributions Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have made and continue to make to this City.

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## Introduction

A growing body of research, both International and Australian, demonstrates the importance of play, which has underpinned and guided the Passport to Play Project from its conception (Zosh et al., 2017).

We wanted to hear from the youngest members of our community as to their thoughts and perspectives about what, where and who they like to play with. We planned to develop a resource for children in our community to celebrate no-cost, everyday play, but knew that this resource had to happen in consultation with play experts in play, children. The project ran from March 2022 – March 2023, with community consultations taking place between April to October 2022.

It was important for the team to consider equity and inclusion throughout the project; we were constantly learning and adapting in an ongoing process. We were keen for the participants involved to reflect the diverse communities of Maribyrnong. It was co-designed and informed by children, for children.

The project team worked with the Maribyrnong Disability Planner and Maribyrnong Senior Policy Officer in order to ensure the resource met principles of good practice for engaging all abilities community members and to ensure gender equity guidelines had been adhered to.

A child-friendly diversity and equity checklist was developed to assist with discussions with the Children's Leadership Group (see Appendix 1).

Bicultural workers within the Early Years team assisted throughout the project to translate and converse in different community languages, and non-verbal communication through drawings and social play assisted to ease the flow of information.

The resource was discussed and presented to the [Wurrundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation](#), who offered important insights and encouraging words of support.

Strong efforts were made to ensure a wide breadth of play types, ideas and views were represented in the resource developed, in discussion with experts in the field. The resource was presented to peak body [Play Australia](#), who also gave their positive feedback and support.

The children who chose to be involved in this project could withdraw at any time, and participated with the permission of their families and educational settings.

To respectfully protect children's identity and privacy we have not included names or identifying elements in descriptions, drawings or photographs. Names of educational settings have been used with permission from these partnership organisations.

## Why we did the project

### The importance of play

Play is a fundamental part of child development and leads to increased health and wellbeing, social cohesion, learning and development and community connection (Yogman et al., 2018). It allows children to explore their imagination, socially connect, learn independence, and discover the world on their own terms. Playing outside also improves fitness, and reduces anxiety and stress (Umstatted Meyer et al., 2019).

Play can add joy to life, supercharge learning, and connect people to others and the world around them. Play is important for children and is beneficial for people of all ages across our community (Hassinger-Das et al., 2021).

### COVID-19 Pandemic recovery

A lack of play opportunities, socialising and connection during pandemic years has had a big impact on children and families (Russel & Stenning, 2020; McKinty & Hazleton, 2022).

This project aimed to actively target this deficit to enhance play and connection across our community. We also aimed to build on the positive elements that emerged for some children during the pandemic – increased play in natural spaces, such as stick forts at the park, and local street play, such as chalk drawings on pavement.

### Children's right to play

Children's right to play is enshrined under the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and embodied in Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013) which states that the child has a right to leisure, play, and participation in cultural and artistic activities.

In Maribyrnong we have a responsibility to provide children of all ages the freedom, time and space to play.

The Passport to Play Project aimed to strengthen community connections and actively acknowledge children's agency (Malone, 2016).

The project gives children an avenue to participate in decision making which is a key element of the Child Safe Standards, the Local Government Act, and the Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter (UNICEF, 2018) (of which Maribyrnong is a signatory). The project also linked in with our Strategy for Children, Young People and Families 2030 (City of Maribyrnong, 2020) through the domains of:

- Being healthy
- Learning
- Participating
- Positive sense of culture and identity.

Data and information collected through the project was planned to inform future strategies and decisions for the Early Years team and other areas of Council.

As children are experts of their play, and as valued members of our community, they have the right to be given opportunities to provide their feedback. Therefore, this project started with three core questions:

- Where children liked to play?
- What they liked to play?
- Who children like to play with?

## Context of Children in Maribyrnong

The City of Maribyrnong is a Local Government Area in the inner west of metropolitan Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

Approximately 11,000 children from birth to 11 years live in the City of Maribyrnong, with an average of 1,300 new births each year since 2016 (ABS, 2021). 57.2% of households in Maribyrnong have children.

While many of the children in Maribyrnong are developmentally on track, the Australian Early Development Census shows that between 2018 and 2021 there were significant increases in developmental vulnerability of 5-year-old children in the neighbourhoods of Footscray, Braybrook, Maidstone and Braybrook, particularly in the Physical and Emotional domains (Australian Early Development Census, 2021).

The City of Maribyrnong is a highly diverse area. Over 30% of children have a language background other than English and 4.5% of children were born in another country.

Vietnamese is the second most spoken language, followed by Cantonese, Mandarin, Greek, Spanish, Italian, Arabic, Macedonia, Tagalog and Hindi (ABS, 2021).

1.2% of children in the area identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. 6.4% of children are identified as having special needs, with a further 11% of children identified by teachers as requiring further assessment. (Australian Early Development Census, 2021).

There is a range of socio-economic disadvantaged and advantage across the municipality (SEIFA, 2016).

Drawings of six characters by different children, one holding a balloon.



## Who was involved?

Role	Member/s
Project Leads	Three Council early years staff
Council Project Working Group	12 members from Council
Children's Leadership Group	12 members, aged 5-11-years-old, with two lead teachers
Project Participants	404 children from birth to 12-years-old with accompanying adults (such as educators, family and community members)
Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Consultant	Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation
Consultants	Local community organisations and services
Consultant	Play Australia
Academic Advisor	Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne

The participants involved in the Passport to Play Project came from all over the City of Maribyrnong, spanning diverse socio-economic backgrounds, cultural identities, abilities, genders and ages.

Project leaders reached out to every Primary School, Early Childhood Education Centre and Playgroup to take part in consultations, with 17 of these participating.

Additional consultations with children and their families were held through libraries, sports and recreation centres, as well as community programs, festivals and events.

Consultations with children took place between April and October 2022.

In March, 12 students from Footscray Primary School formed a core leadership and co-design group and have been involved in every aspect of the project.

"She likes mirrors, crinkly paper and books, music and colours. She plays with mum, anyone with a beard, and the dog."

Parent talking about their 4 month old child.



"I like running on the grass and dressing up as a dragon."  
3 year old child.

### Council Project Working Group

An internal Project Working Group was a key driver for the project. This group was made up of representatives from a range of Council departments including Media and Communications, Community Engagement, Diversity and Inclusion, Arts and Culture, Community Learning and Libraries, the Maribyrnong Aquatic Centre, City Design, Festivals and Recreation and Open Space.

This group met quarterly to provide feedback and ideas about the Passport to Play Project and resource, as well as discussing how information, themes and data might be useful to cross-council areas.

Children's drawing of three people playing with a ball.



### Academic support

The Passport to Play Project was generously supported by Dr Sarah Young from the Melbourne Graduate School of Education and the University of Melbourne, who guided the team as an Academic Advisor, to ensure rigor and due process was adhered to in the planning, scope and data collection of the project.

The team also connected with representatives from the Early Years Department at Victoria University, who shared an understanding on the importance of play for learning and development and are running teacher training sessions on loose-parts play in the local community.

## How we did it

### Children's Leadership Group

#### The Group

Footscray Primary School came on board to partner with us in forming a Children's Leadership Group. The Children's Leadership Group consisted of 12 children of varied gender and cultural background aged from 5 years to 11 years and was supported by two leading teachers.

Children's Leadership Group Members							
Year level	Foundation (5 yrs)	Year 1 (6 yrs)	Year 2 (7 yrs)	Year 3 (8 yrs)	Year 4 (9-10 yrs)	Year 5 (11 yrs)	Staff (Adults)
# of people	2	2	2	2	2	2	2



Photo of the Children's Leadership Group drawing on paper taken from above.

Importantly, this group of children co-designed the entire Passport to Play Project: making decisions about what sort of questions to ask in consultations, discussing and defining the importance of play and their rights as child citizens, what information should be in the final resource and what it should look like.

The children steered the resource to being interactive – that the user should be able to write and draw all through it, personalising the resource for their particular context.

They also created the artwork for the project’s hero image:



Photo of child’s hands drawing as part of the Passport to Play Project consultations.

## The meetings

When/Where	Aim	Highlight
1. 29 March at Footscray PS	Introduce project. Discussion on What is play? Why is it important? What is the best way to ask other children about their play?	The children had insightful and meaningful opinions on play and its value, e.g. “Play is a way to connect with people. You can do it anywhere and any way.” “It makes me feel happy.”
2. 5 April at Footscray PS	Share information and discuss your rights as children and your right to play. Practice play consultation questions.	Children interviewed each other on where, how, when and with whom they like to play as a way to test questions. They discussed and shared their own play preferences.
3. 17 May at Footscray PS	Share data and information from first few Play Consultations. Look at maps of Maribyrnong and where they like to play.	The children enjoyed hearing about the responses from other children in the consultations. They loved seeing their P.L.A.Y letters as the graphic for the first time.
4. 7 June at the Maribyrnong City Council Town Hall	Learning about leadership and the impact of the work in a wider context.	Students took public transport. Meeting held in the grand Reception Room. Children wrote messages about the value of play to the Mayor, enjoyed a catered lunch and toured the Council Chambers.
5. 9 August at Footscray PS	Discussion and brainstorming the content and look of the resource.	The children had great ideas including: have ideas for playing, have drawings from children of different ages, make it like a real passport but more colourful, have a ‘Top 5’, include an Acknowledgement of Country.
6. 16 August at Bulldogs Community Children’s Centre	Facilitate a play consultation with children from kindergarten group.	Group walked to centre. The children introduced themselves, then worked with small groups of younger children to draw and talk about their play preferences.
7. 16 November at Footscray PS	Present draft resource plan and get children’s feedback and reflections. Discuss the Equity Checklist.	The children gave plenty of detailed feedback on the resource, including ensuring that every page had somewhere for the reader to write or draw in.
8. 30 November at Cruikshank’s Park	Outdoor play session led by 3yr old children from Gowrie Clare Court Early Learning Centre. Followed by Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation consultation session held outdoors.	Chartered bus to park. The children all had a wonderful time rolling down hills, jumping rocks in the creek and spotting frog eggs and birds.  Consultation with Senior Family Member Thane Garvey-Gunnaway explored the importance of the land, animals and the ongoing connection to Country, and shared stories of play.

The Children’s Leadership Group also hosted the project resource launch event at Braybrook Library in February 2023, alongside guest speakers and the Mayor of the City of Maribyrnong.



## Play consultations

Passport to Play wanted to find out what, where and with whom children liked to play in the City of Maribyrnong. The focus was on what children currently like to play in their everyday life, rather than dreams of what could be in the future.

The consults consisted of a facilitator visiting sites and discussing play preferences with children and typically went for 1 hour in total. The target age for project consultation was birth to 12 years.

Some conversations also happened with families and other community members who were present at the consultations. School, centres and sites were able to choose who participated in the consultation to accommodate their timetables, availability and context, however it was communicated that the group should be representative of the diversity in their setting. Group size ranged from 4 to 50 children, with an average of 15.

### Consultation session structure (these altered slightly in different contexts):

1. Group conversation: introduce people and project, general discussion about play, invite children to share their play preferences. Pictures, symbols and examples of places and types of play shown if needed.
2. Participants were then encouraged to write/draw on their own piece of paper, and to respond to the questions: What do you like to play? Where do you like to play? Who do you like to play with?
3. Participants showed their drawing and talked about their preferences with the facilitator/s or educator/s, who assisted in writing down their responses. Where children did not draw or write, responses from discussions were written on a survey.

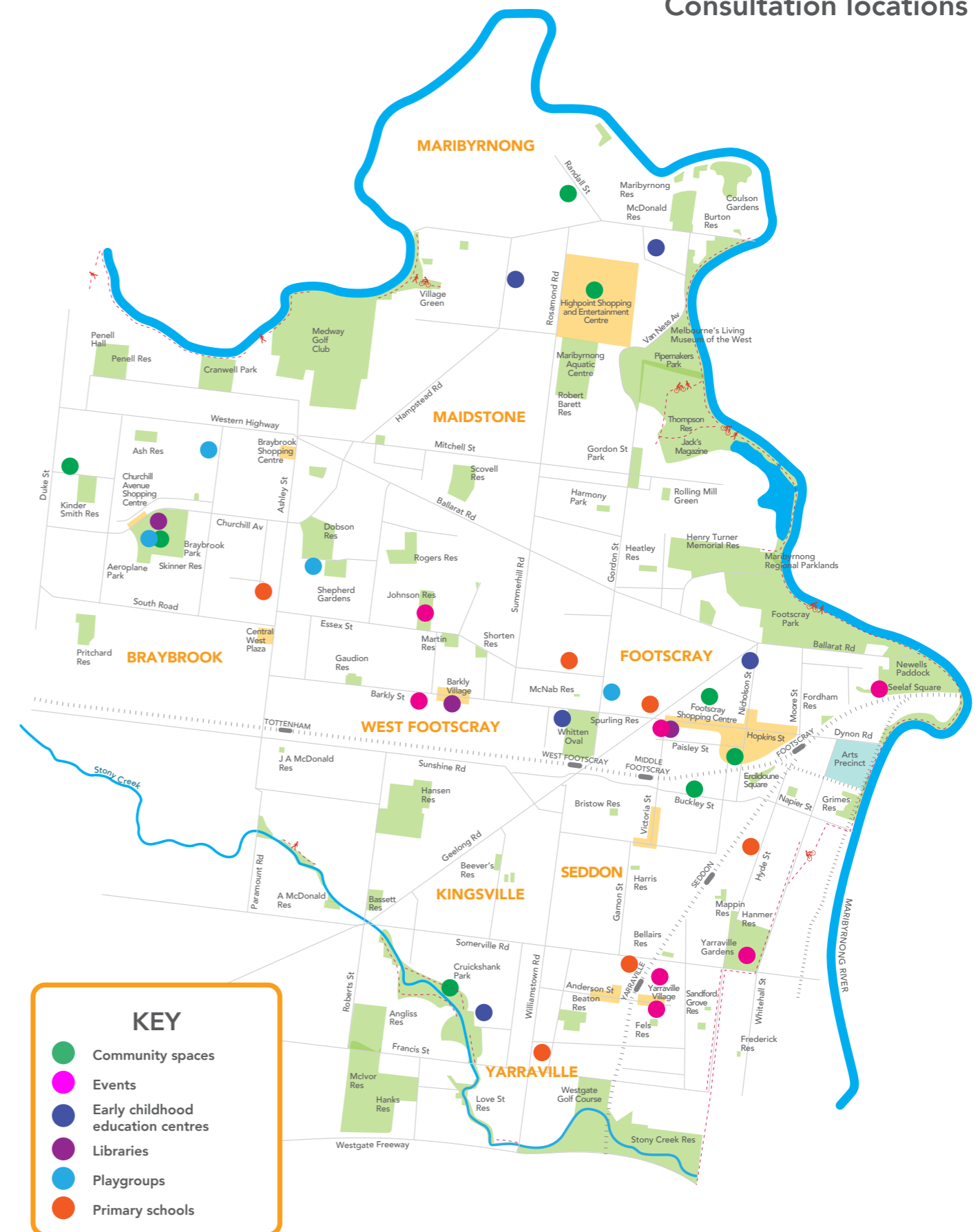
4. Photographs of each participant's drawing or survey response was taken as a record and to log responses and data. Children could take the original drawing home with them to share with families.

The consults happened in a range of spaces – indoors in classrooms, outside during play times and in various community settings, always with permission and educational staff present. In the case of very young or non-verbal children, a family member, teacher or carer would describe that child's play preferences.

The consults were relaxed and conversational and held in spaces where children were familiar.

### Over 400 children were consulted through 35 separate sessions:

- 6 consults at Primary Schools, including a Special Development School.
- 6 consults at Early Childhood Education Centres.
- 5 consults at playgroups, including supported playgroups.
- 1 consult with the Junior Rangers program – outdoors as part of an environmental planting session.
- 1 consult at the local Toy Library.
- 5 consults at Maribyrnong City Libraries – Alongside programs such as Story Time, Rhyme Time, Lego Club and Craft Club.
- Presence at 11 other community spaces and events, both indoors and outdoors, such as the West Footscray Festival of Colours, Yarraville Festival, Children's Week celebrations and outreach in local shopping areas.



## What did we do with the information?

Information from the consults were logged in Excel tables noting the number and age of participants, site location, and responses to the three questions.

All categories in the data tables came directly from responses from children. Some children responded with more than one category in questions – in this case all responses were logged. When reviewing children’s drawings from consults, both the images and any scribed notes were used.

*playgroup  
21/7/22*

**Passport to Play - Consultation Session Outline**

School, ECL or group:  
 First name (optional):  
 Age: *4yrs*  
 Gender (optional):

We are collecting information about how children in Maribyrnong like to play in their local neighbourhoods. Children are the experts in play, so we are here to ask you some questions and get your input. We are also working with children at Footscray Primary School to help design and lead the project. We will be using this information to create a resource with a map and play suggestions that we can give out to children and families in the community.

*likes  
to  
draw*

Draw a picture and/or write some words about these questions.

**Questions**

What do you like to play? *active*  
*all the new things*    *kitchen utensils - pretend to cook*  
*walking, talking*    *trades look at them in real world*

Where do you like to play? *drawn with pencils*  
*park - playground*    *slides & swings*    *ride a peddle bike*  
*home*

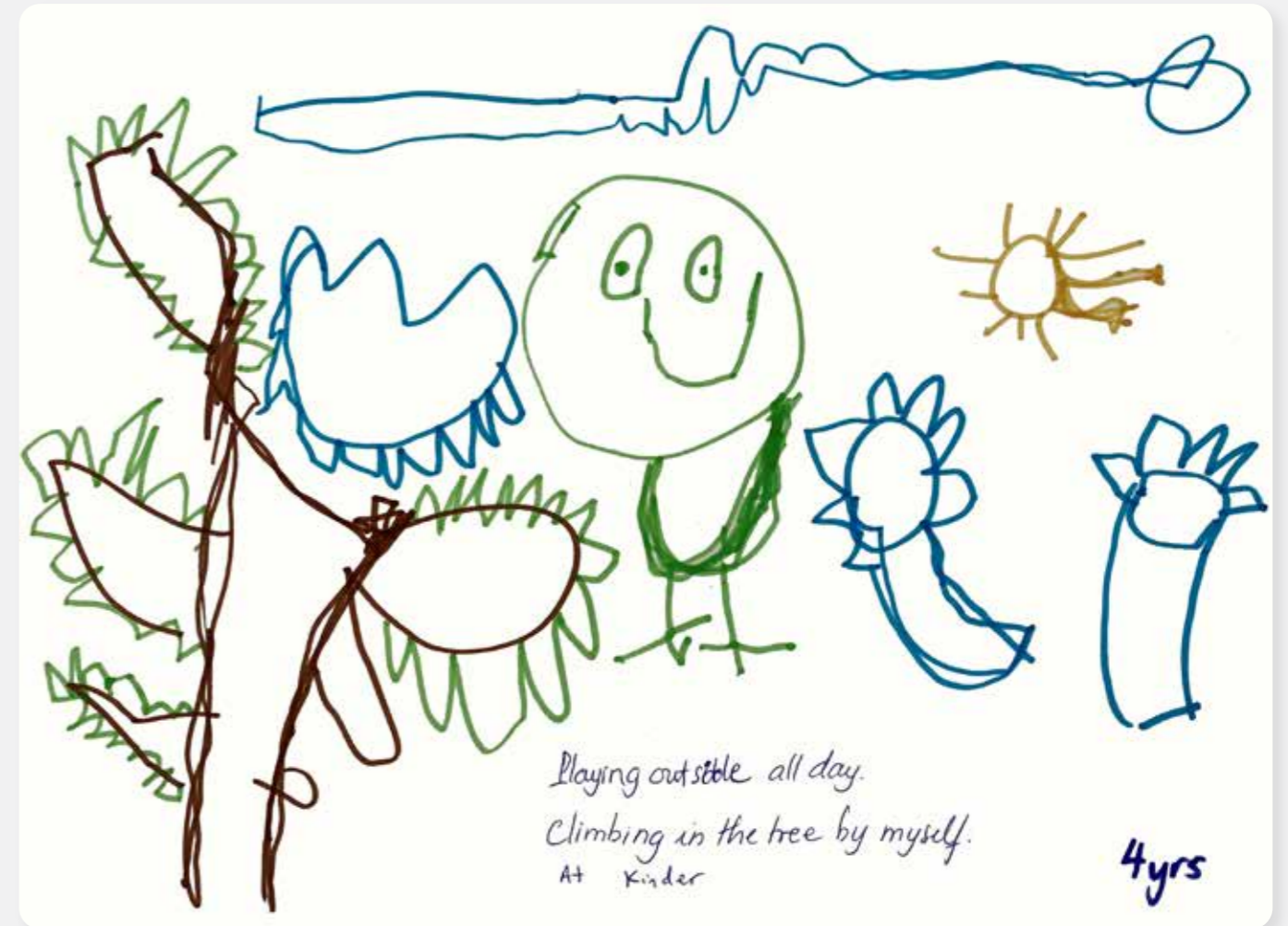
When time of day do you like to play?  
*all day*

Who do you like to play with?  
*mum & family friends*  
*friends at playgroup or at the park*

### Example of consult survey

This response was listed in the data tables as:

- What:** Pretend play, drawing, toys, bikes, swings and slides
- Where:** At home inside and park playground equipment
- Who:** Family and friends



### Example of consult drawing

This response was listed in the data tables as:

- What:** Climbing and nature play
- Where:** Outside at kindergarten/school + natural space
- Who:** Alone

As the data built, both the breadth of responses and repetition of responses were noted. The data from the responses were reviewed to find themes and patterns. Data was also compared across age-groups for similarities and differences.

Groups were defined as Infants and Toddlers: birth to 2 years, Pre-school: 3-4 years, Lower Primary: 5-8 years, Upper Primary: 9-12 years.



## What did the children of the City of Maribyrnong tell us about play?

### Children's values and messages around play

Some children discussed more general thoughts and opinions on the value and importance of play. This was particularly led by the Children's Leadership Group, but also came up in a number of other consults. The responses were insightful and echo much of the findings in formal research into the benefits of play for health, wellbeing, learning and development (Yogman et al., 2018).

Children noted that play was important because it helped them make friends, was good exercise, good for mental health and stress reduction, and that adults can play too.

They recognised that they were learning while they played and wanted to ensure they had freedom and time to play. Examples of statements include:

**"We play for care and we play for fun."**  
7 years.

**"When you've had a bad day, play helps you express yourself."** 11 years.

**"Play is active, fun and you want to do it."**  
8 years.



Words spiralling in a circle around a child's drawing of a sun with a title of 'Play is important because..'

We collated the responses from all of the children who participated in play consultations. Here is a breakdown of the numbers in relation to both age group and type of setting.

Total number of children consulted		404
<b>Numbers by Type of Setting</b>		
Total children consulted in Primary Schools		107
Total children consulted in Early Learning Centres		120
Total children consulted in Playgroups		29
Total children consulted in Community Settings		148
<b>Numbers by Age Group</b>		
Total children birth-2 years		83
Total children 3-4 years		157
Total children 5-8 years		99
Total children 9-12 years		65

When looking at all of the combined responses from all of the children consulted, across all age groups, the following information was drawn out:

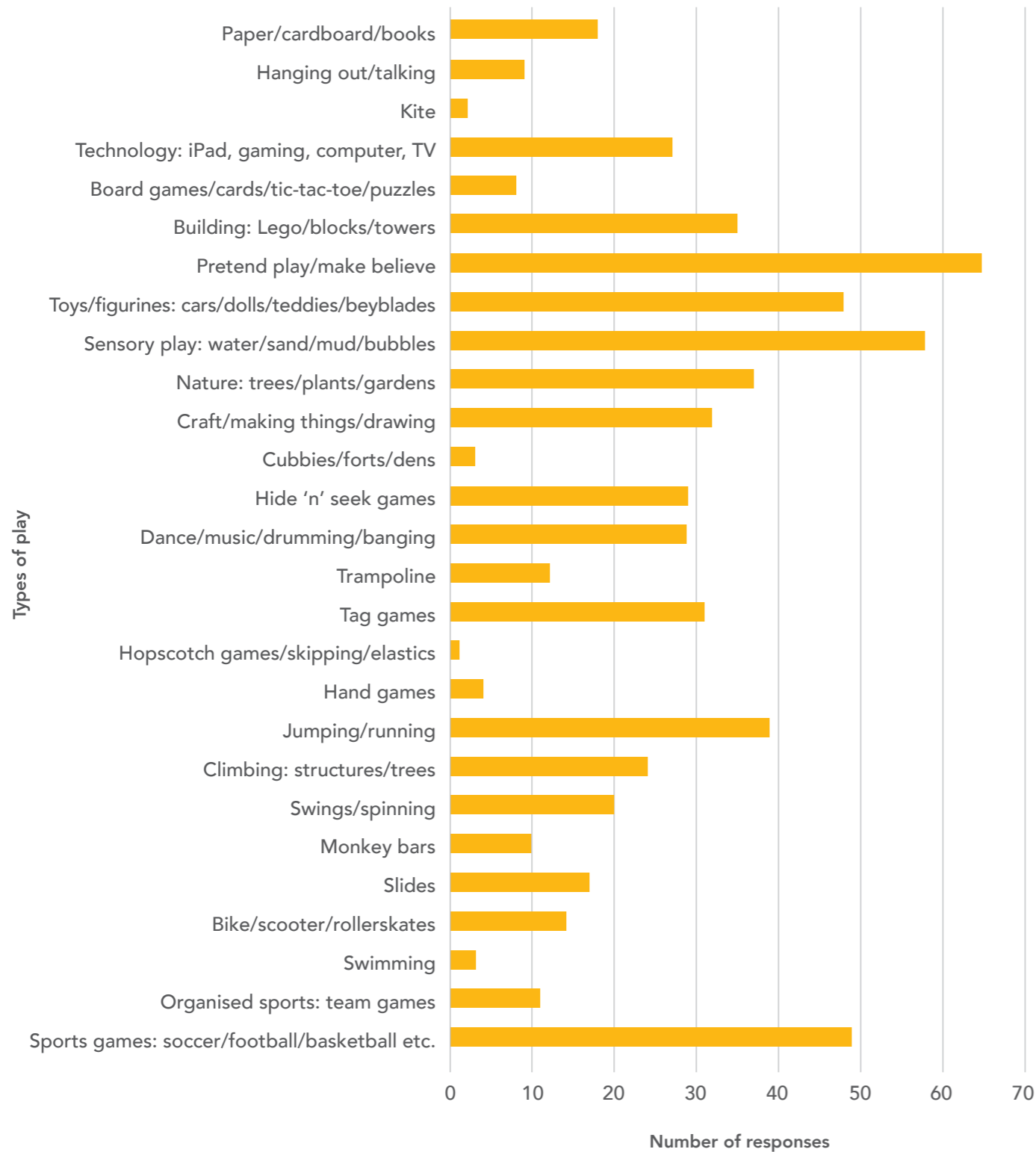
### What children like to play

Children described playing across varied and broad play types, such as active play, sensory play, pretend play, social play, creative play, games and construction.

Pretend play was the most common type of play enjoyed by children with 65 responses, followed by sensory play (such as sand, mud, sound exploration – play that focusses on sensory exploration) at 58 responses. Sport games (49) and general running and jumping (39) were also common. Children liked to play with toys (48), but also with natural materials (37).

Overall, there were 27 responses of children who preferred playing digitally, on computers or devices. Building (35) and making or drawing (32) were also common responses.

### What do you like to play? All child responses - birth to 12 years



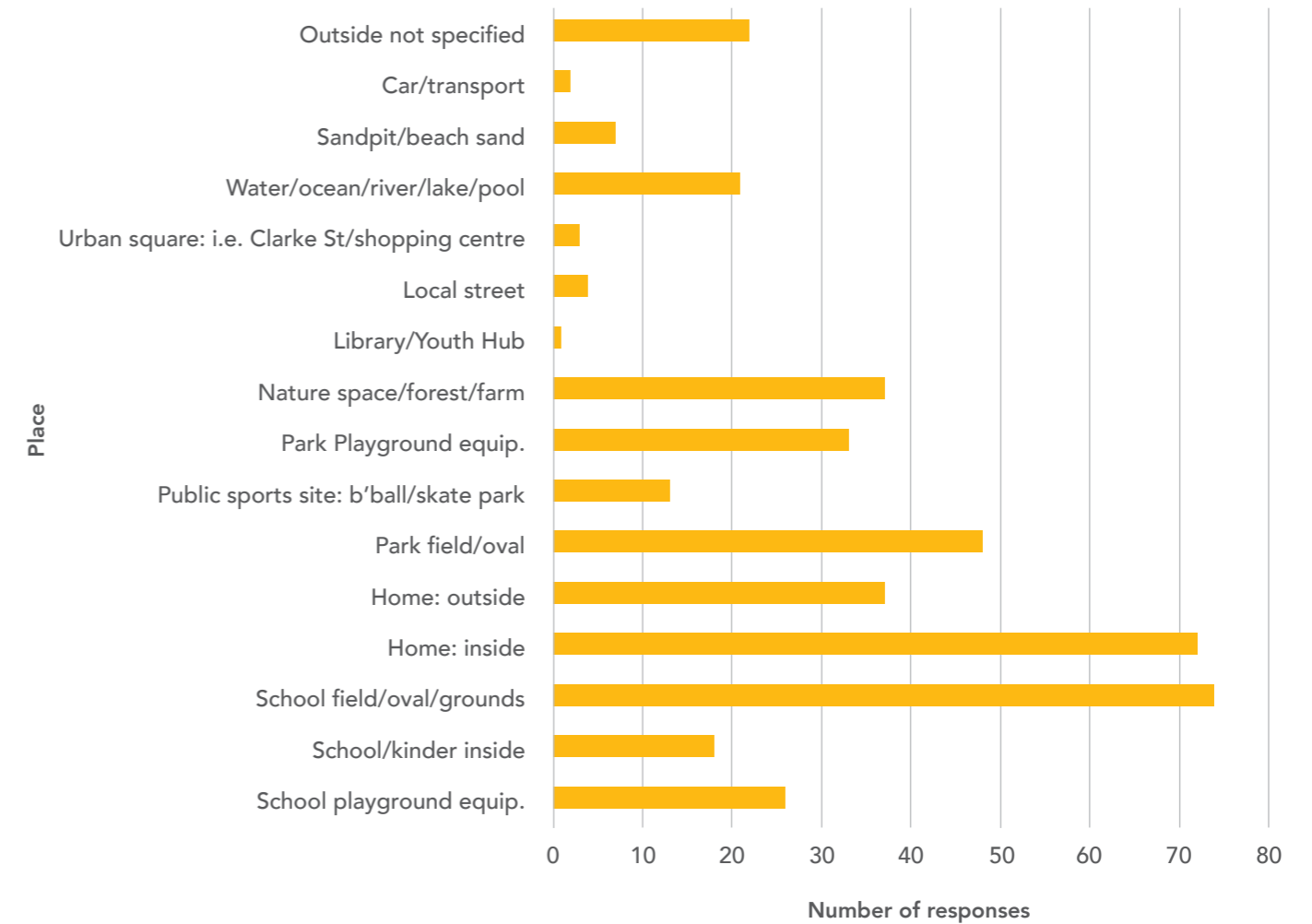
### Where children like to play

The most common places that children liked to play were outside on school ovals and grounds (74), followed by inside their home (72) and open space at public parks (48).

Playing in nature spaces (37) and outside at home (37) were also popular. Playground equipment was less popular, with 26 responses preferring equipment at a school/centre and 33 responses for equipment at a local park or reserve.

21 responses from children liked spaces with water – beaches, creeks, lakes, pools. Only 4 responses from children spoke of playing on their local street.

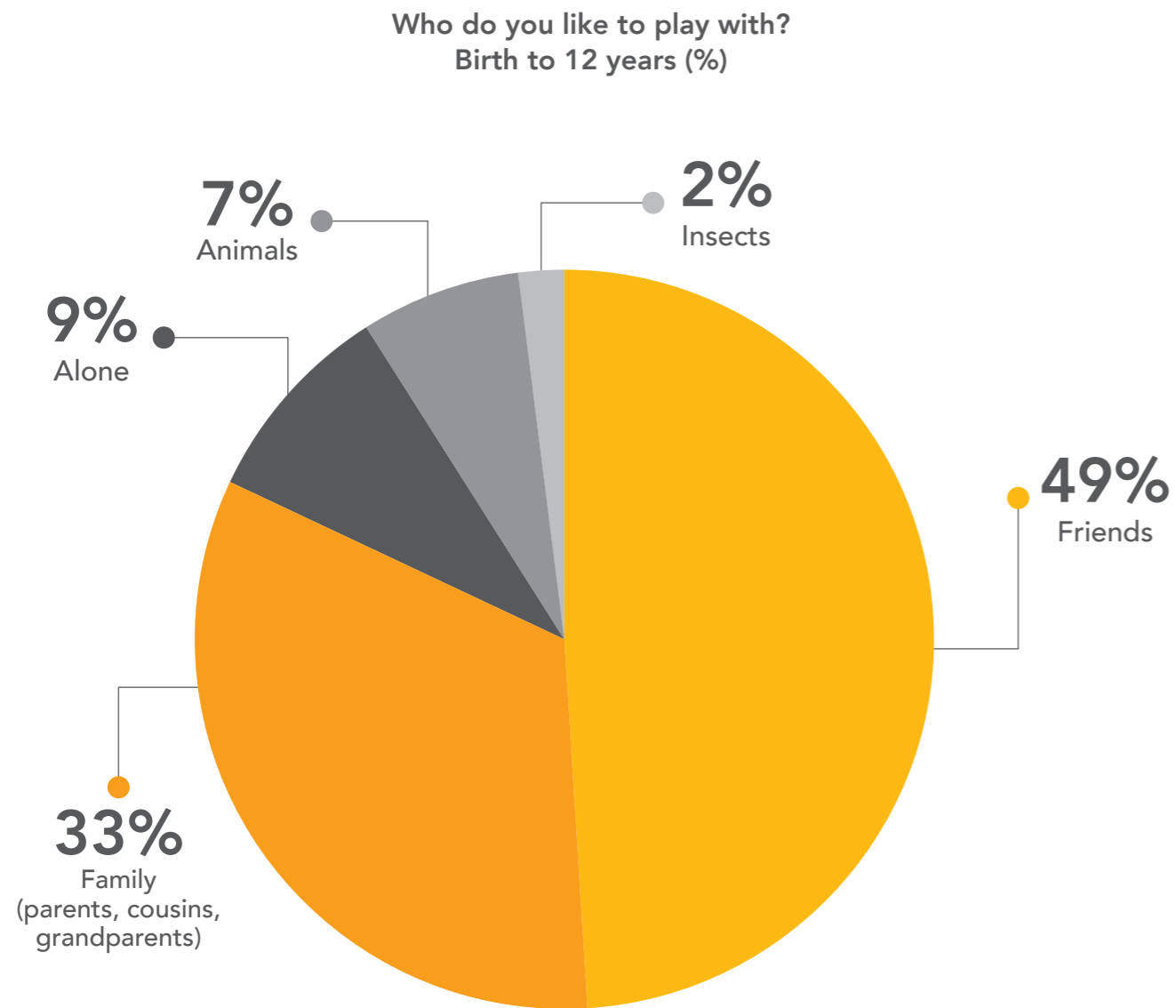
### Where do you like to play? All child responses - birth to 12 years



"I like to play Lava Monster with my friends, outside at school."  
Child, 7 years old.

### Who children like to play with

Children preferred to play most with their friends (49%) followed by family members (33%). Almost 1 in 10 children really enjoyed playing on their own (9%) or with different animals and insects (9%).



### Differences in play

We wanted to look at the play preferences for different age groups to look for patterns, similarities or differences amongst different cohorts. We converted the data into percentages for each age group in order to compare them.

What children like to play at different stages in their life:

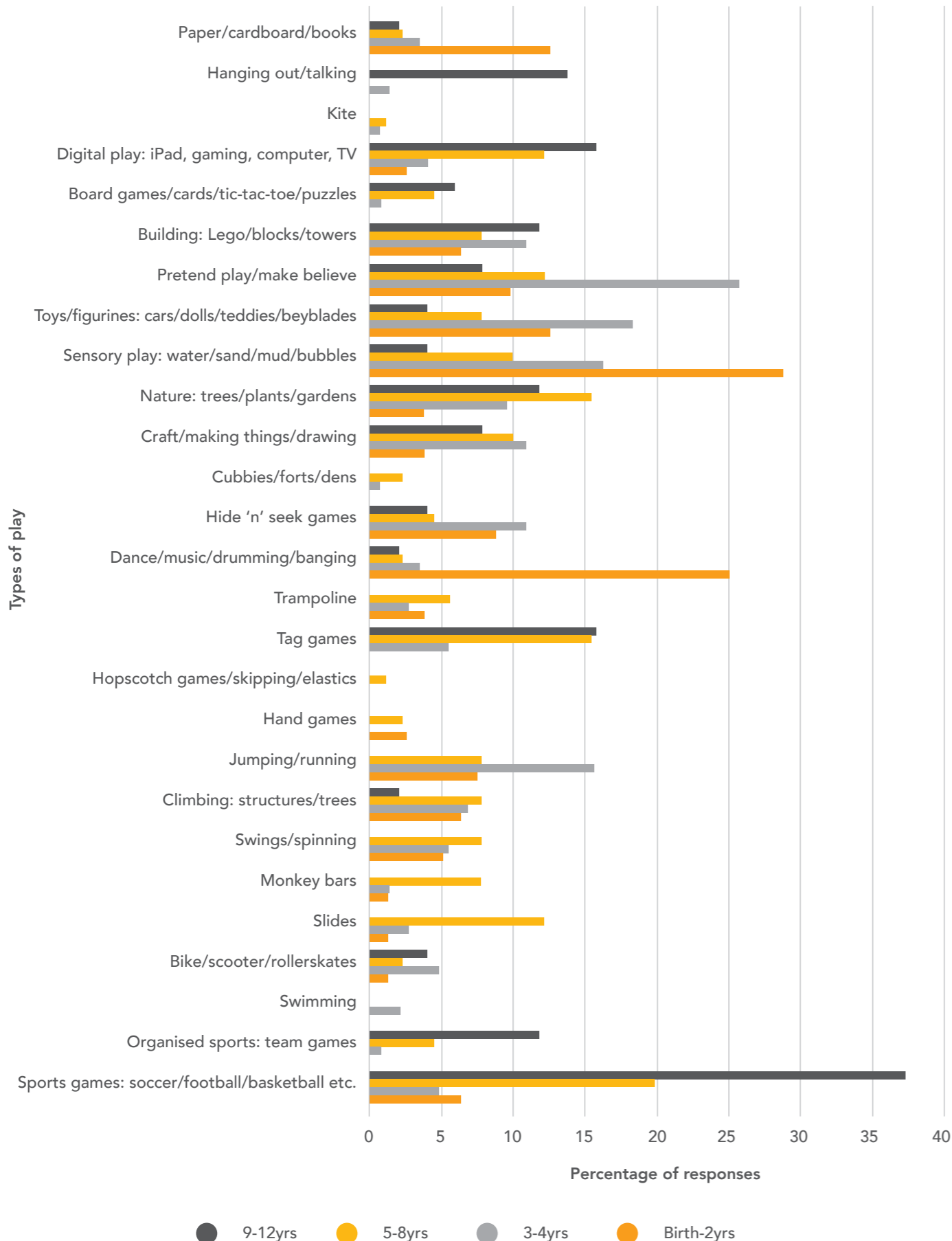
- Birth to 2 year old children were most engaged in general sensory exploration (28.7%) and enjoyed music, dancing and sound making (25%). They also like playing with books and paper (12.5%).
- Preschool children 3-4 years enjoy a range of play activities. The most common responses were describing pretend play (25.7%), followed by playing with toys (18.2%), sensory play (16.2%) and jumping/running around (15.5%). Games with set rules or structures were less commonly described.
- Lower Primary children 5-8 years described the greatest variety of play activities, with over 7% of responses across 14 different categories. This age range plays on equipment more than other age groups – including slides, swings and climbing frames.
- Children in Upper Primary 9-12 years had less breadth of play activities, with a much higher percentage enjoying both team sports and sport games (48%), simply hanging out/talking (13.7%), active social games like tag (15.7%) and playing on technology (15.7%). 11.7% of this age group liked nature play, and 11.7% enjoyed building things. This age group did not commonly prefer playing on playground equipment.



Children's drawings of two people jumping on a trampoline and a figure with outstretched arms next to a painting easel.



### What do you like to play? Age group preferences



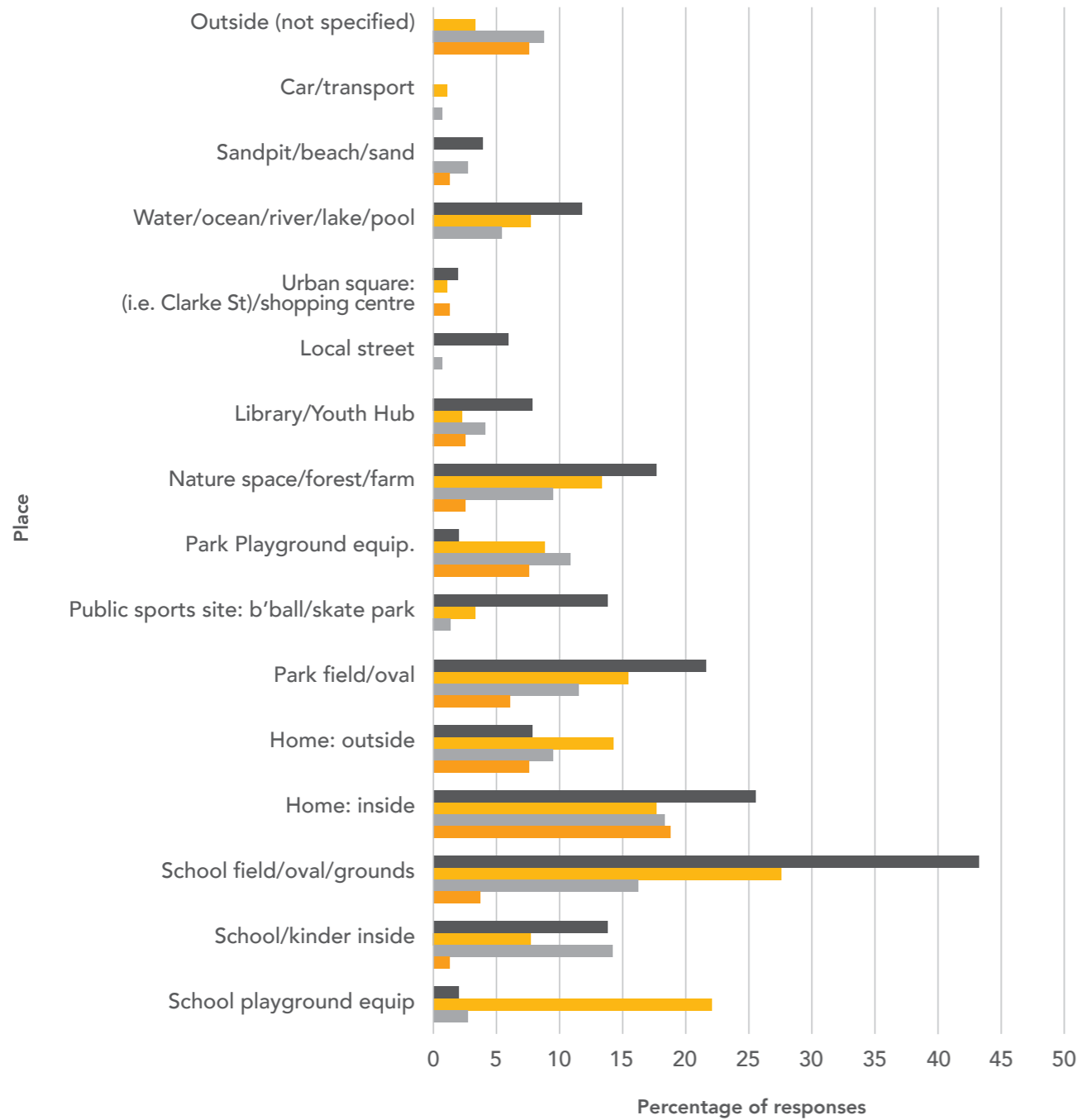
### Where children like to play in relation to their age group:

- Infants and toddlers like playing inside at home (18.6%) but also love to be outside – when combining at outside at home with public outdoor spaces (18.8%).
- Children in Upper Primary 9-12 years were the group who described playing on their local street the most (5.9%). They most enjoy playing on school and public fields (64%), or inside at home (25.5%).
- Preschool children 3-4 years liked to play in many different places, both inside and outside, on equipment, in nature, at home, in public spaces and at Early Years Education Centres.
- Lower Primary children 5-8 years enjoy playing on school playground equipment more than any other group (22%) and most commonly enjoy playing on the school fields/grounds (43%), along with a range of other spaces and places at home, in nature and in the community.



Page of drawings from the Passport to Play resource showing children running, hiding and playing outside.

### Where do you like to play? Age group preferences



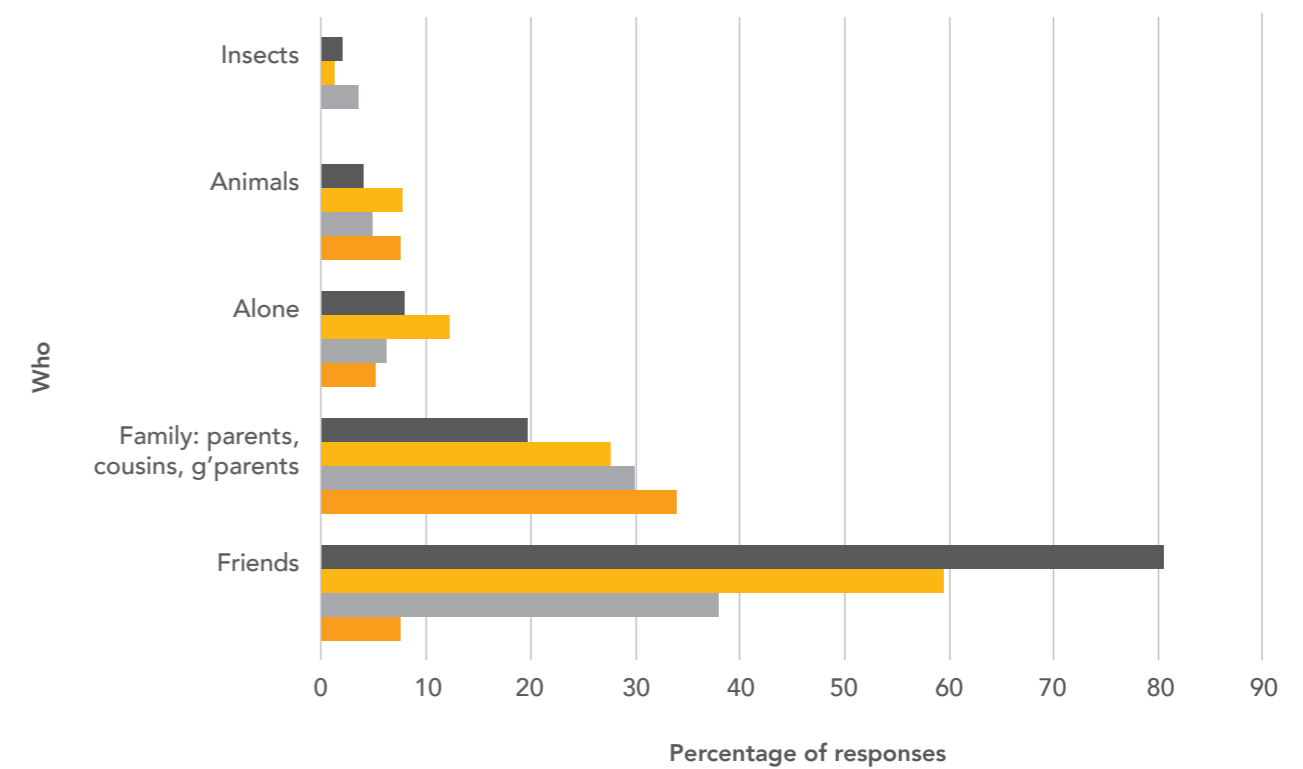
● 9-12yrs ● 5-8yrs ● 3-4yrs ● Birth-2yrs

"I play with my Grandpa and my baby sister."  
Child, 5 years old.

### Who children like to play in relation to their age group:

- Children across all age groups prefer playing alone (5 – 7.8%) and with animals (between 4 – 7.5%). The greatest difference is playing with friends; 80.4% of 9-12 years decreasing each group to 7.5% for birth to 2 years. All age groups reported enjoying playing with family members, but it was less common as they got older, with 33.7% in the birth to 2 years group, down to 19.6% for 9-12 years.

### Who do you like to play with? Age group preferences



● 9-12yrs ● 5-8yrs ● 3-4yrs ● Birth-2yrs



## What we learnt from listening to children

To develop the final resource for the project, all of the drawings, comments, surveys and data were reviewed. These are the themes that stood out as important and valued by the children involved.

### Pretend to be other

Children enjoy pretending to be other characters, from make believe to trying on real roles and characters from their lives. They pretend play in all sort of spaces; on playgrounds, along the street on their way somewhere, at the creek or in a forest.

### Action and active

Many children love to be active and move their bodies. They are also constantly adjusting their spatial awareness and building muscle and coordination as they grow. They enjoy many things like running, jumping, climbing, spinning and dancing.

### Build and make

Children like to create things. They build from blocks and construct using Lego. They draw and paint and stick things together. They experiment and explore all sorts of materials.

### Hide and seek

Children enjoy an element of risk when they play and find independence and resilience through play. Hide and seek games were commonly described, from tiny babies playing peek-a-boo, all the way to teenagers playing hide and seek in the shopping centre.

### Nature play

Children are drawn to nature, as a space to play in but also as materials to play with. From a very young age they intrinsically value green spaces, open spaces, land, sky and water. They are connected to their environment.

### Connection to others

Through play, children connect to others, make friends and learn to socialise. They communicate and learn to cooperate. Children like to play with friends, as well as cousins, siblings, parents and grandparents. Playing with other people is important.

### Connection to self

Children also value being on their own and discovering their own interests and likes. When you are alone you can develop imagination and wonder, as well as build your interests and identity. Children can play on their own at home or out and about.

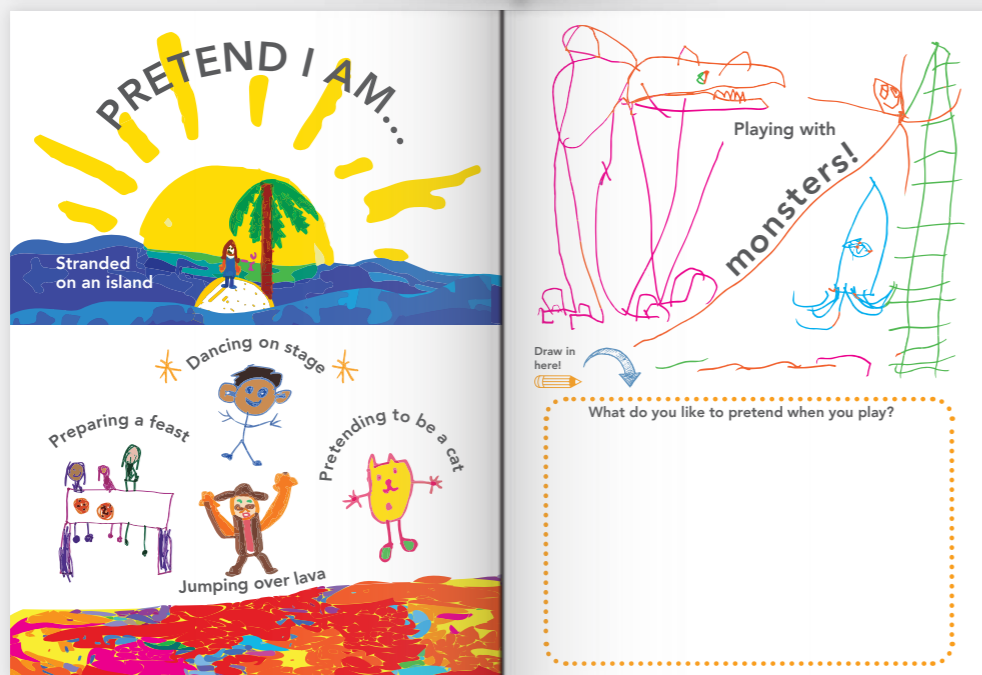
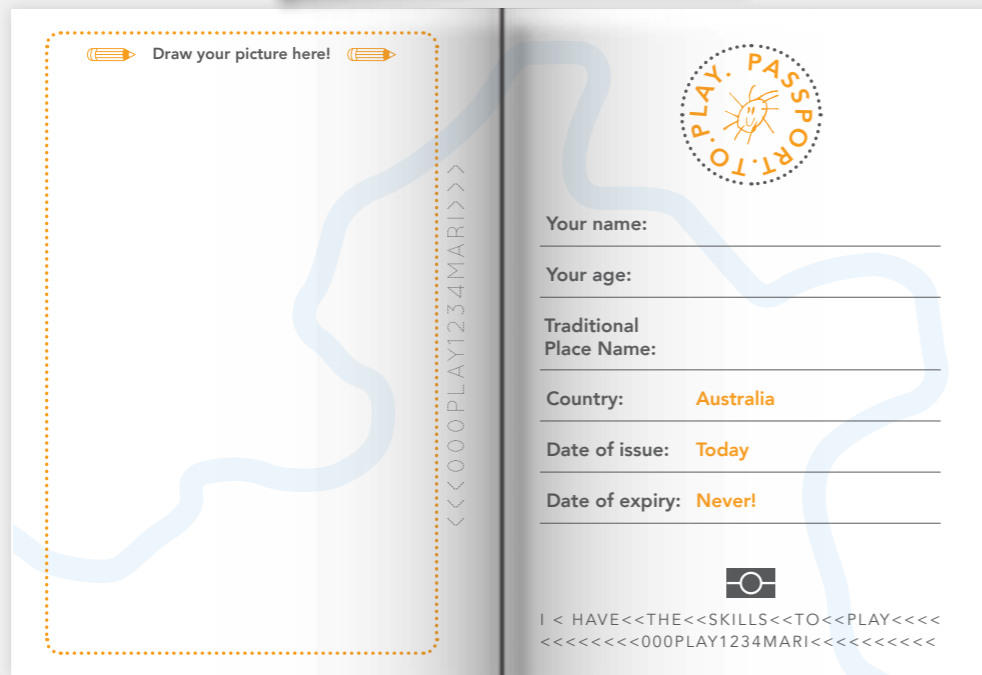
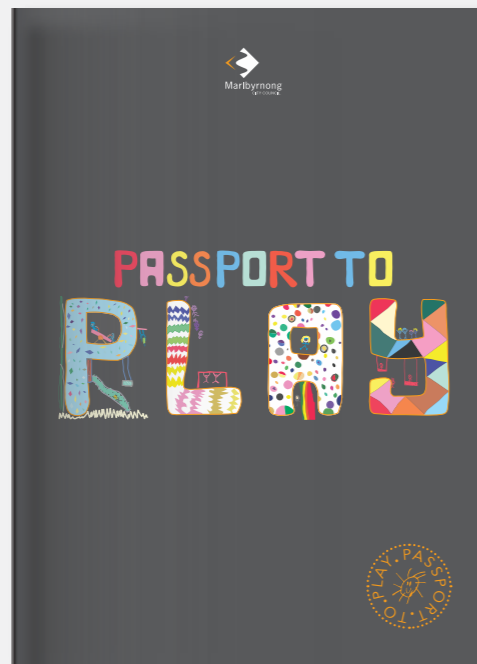
### Connection to animals

Children view animals and insects as part of their world and gain value in playing with other creatures and watching the natural world. Communicating and playing with animals can build empathy and be soothing. Children also incorporate animals into other types of play, for example, in stories, drawings and pretend play.



Photos of children drawing and playing.





## The resource: A Passport to Play

A physical resource was planned from the beginning of the project, although the exact format was developed as the project progressed in consultation with the Children's Leadership Group.

Originally it was envisaged more as a book of maps of the local area with play ideas and spaces marked.

Over many consultations and conversations with the Children's Leadership Group, we decided to create a little booklet, like a passport, which recognised children as experts in play, and also gave validity and permission for that play.

Space was included in each of the pages for the holders of the passport to personalise and put themselves into – drawing themselves, writing and drawing about their own favourite things to play, places to go and who they like to play with. In this way, the resource will continue to inspire conversations, thoughts and value about play in Maribyrnong – with families, amongst children, and in education and community settings.

After many versions, trials and testing, the finished Passport to Play is a co-designed memento and resource, empowering children to have agency and encourage simple, no cost play across the municipality. All of the words, artworks and images in the resource have come from the children involved in the project.

The Passport to Play resource aims to promote the joy, health, well-being, cultural understanding, learning and development that children and families find through play.

Following a launch event at the Braybrook Library on 22 February 2023, copies of the resource were distributed to children and families across the City of Maribyrnong, to schools, early childhood education centres and playgroups.

A short video formed part of promotional displays in all of the local libraries and recreation centers, along with hard copies of the resource for children to take home.

It was also promoted online, on social media and with physical posters in maternal and child health centres and community spaces.

The booklet is available for free for any child in Maribyrnong, with 7000 copies printed in the initial run. In addition, information and images are housed on the council website, including a downloadable PDF version of the resource.



## What does this mean for Maribyrnong?

This project highlighted the importance of co-design in projects with the community, in particular with children and young people.

Building relationships and networks with families and educational centres will improve the flow of communication between Council and the community.

Passport to Play demonstrated the wonderful impact and responses that came from children of different age groups. Primary School aged children are not currently represented in Council, as projects often focus on the early years, or youth populations.

The project built important relationships with the traditional owners of the land, the Wurrundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nations, which will hopefully grow and continue over time.

Of course, there were limitations in the data collected: it represents a brief snapshot in time with relatively short conversations with children. On another day, or in another context, children may have different play preferences.

The consults also took place mostly in cooler months, which may have altered children's responses to where and what they like to play in comparison to warmer seasons.

However, the project does give us an overview of the thoughts, opinions and preferences from a broad range of children.

The data and the themes raised in the Passport to Play Project by the children has and will inform a range of Council strategies and planning processes, for example the Walking Strategy, The Gender Equity Assessment Process, and the Maribyrnong Play Strategy.

It is hoped the information will also be a useful reference for Active Maribyrnong, Recreation and Open Space, as well as planning and urban design into the future.

## What next? What else do we need to find out?

The Passport to Play resource will be reviewed in 2024 to assess its take up within the community and collate feedback from children and adults.

There are longer term plans to create a digital version of the resource that is responsive to changes and more sustainable over time.

While it was not in the scope for this project, conversations with adults present during play consultations gave us valuable information and feedback (see Appendix 2). We thank these other community members who spoke to us and shared their stories and perspectives.

It would be very interesting to further the research of responses from adults in Maribyrnong about their memories and experiences of play as children, and to compare this to the responses given by the children in this project.

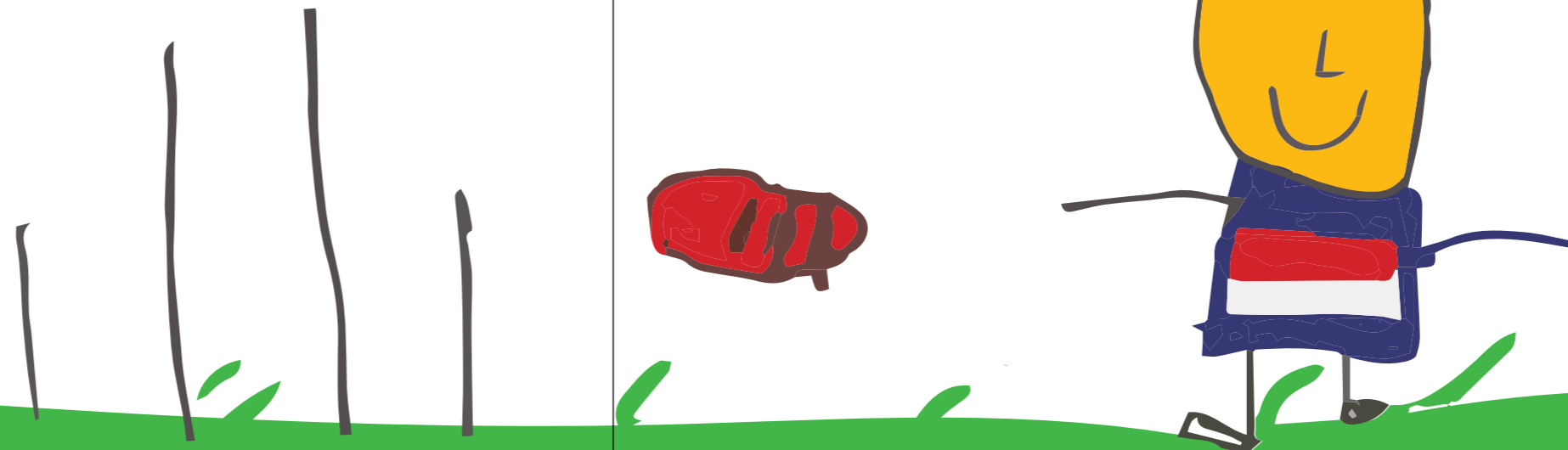
As stated earlier, this project focussed on the current play preferences of children in the community.

It would be valuable to begin to dream into the future and think about how we can improve the provision of play for all children and the wider community.

Involving children and community in future strategies and planning to improve play spaces and conditions is highly recommended. In particular, the continued development of accessible play spaces in the City of Maribyrnong would improve and impact the lives of many children and families.

A co-design approach that involves children and families would be something to strive for.

Child's drawing of a person playing football wearing a Bulldogs team jersey.



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## Appendix

### APPENDIX 1: Gender, Equity and Inclusion Checklist: Play is for everybody!

This list is to be used by adults and children in the 'Passport to Play' project to discuss and ensure our resource is as equitable as possible.

Does the resource exclude anyone based on their culture, language, ability, gender or socio-economic status? Does it feel welcoming to all children and families?

#### Acknowledgments

- Have we acknowledged and credited the people, places and organisations involved in this project, both children and adults?
- Have we acknowledged the Aboriginal lands and people?

#### Child voice and agency

- Does the resource highlight children's own voices, ideas and perspectives?
- Have we used and incorporated the information from consults into our resource?
- Are we promoting a diverse range of play themes, suggestions and ideas? E.g. not just sport, or swings...

#### Use of Language

- Have we used a range of gender pronouns - he, she, they?
- Are the words we use welcoming and open? E.g. "Try this" instead of "you should"

#### Use of Pictures

- Have people in photographs given their permission to be used in this resource?
- Do pictures or photographs give identifying information about specific children?
- Do the drawings included show a range of styles by children of different ages?
- Do drawings, symbols and design elements help people understand the resource?
- Do the drawings and images depicts a range of play and options for children, e.g. children playing regardless of their gender and activities such as sports for boys and dolls for girls?

#### Accessibility

- Could someone use this resource if they did not speak English?
- Have words been translated into languages in our community?
- Are the play ideas and suggestions open to people from all cultural backgrounds?
- Does this resource include ideas and information for neurodiversity and people with diverse abilities?
- Can someone access this resource if they are (D)deaf? Vision impaired?
- Where can we find the resource – is it easy to find in print and online?

#### Gender

- Do the pictures or words we use perpetuate stereotypes? E.g. only boys play footy, girls play cooking
- Does this resource feel welcoming to LGBTQI people?
- If families are pictured or talked about, are there rainbow families included?

#### Age

- Can children of different ages get something from the resource? Is it relevant to different aged children?
- Can an adult also understand the resource? Does the resource tell adults about why play is important?

#### Cost

- Does it cost money to access this resource?

#### NOTES:

Any other thoughts or ideas?  
While we may not achieve 100% of these items, we strive to do the best we can.



**APPENDIX 2:**  
**Family and community member input**

Wherever possible, consultation facilitators also asked adults present to reflect on their own childhood and memories of play.

From conversations it was clear that children from previous generations were much more likely to roam in their local neighbourhoods without adult supervision and often played with neighbourhood children on local streets.

*"The neighbourhood kids would play together. We'd ring the bell of houses in the street and run away."* said a 32 year old father.

Parents also described feeling more connected to their communities when they were children, especially if they grew up elsewhere.

A 30 year old mother said, *"In India we played in every corner of the village. The local festivals. We had picnics and did running races. We played without supervision."*

Older adults often spoke of higher risk play. One 83 year old woman described *"sliding down hills on pieces of tin. Playing footy with wrapped up paper. There was no pressure on us"*.

When reflecting on how children play today, many adults were concerned with the use of technology, being over scheduled, as well as apprehension over safety while their children played. *"Traffic was less but other things still happened. But we didn't know about it. People weren't frightened like they are now,"* said an adult in their 40's.



Child's drawing of a soccer game.



Chalk wall at a festival for children's drawings and comments about play.





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