# CREATING CONNECTIONS THROUGH PLAYFINAL REPORTJANUARY 2023

.



David O'Regan, PhD. David Gaul, PhD.









# CONTENTS

Contents	. 1
Executive Summary	. 2
Introduction	. 3
Methodology	. 3
Creating Connections Survey	. 3
Creating Connections Interviews	. 3
Activities and Progress	. 4
Promotion	. 4
The play programme	. 4
Findings	. 5
General survey results	. 5
Demographics	. 5
Engagement with exercise and sport	. 5
Social connectedness	. 6
Connections with family	. 6
Connections with friends	. 7
Levels of loneliness	. 8
Insights from Interviews and observations	. 9
Emerging from Covid-19	. 9
Interacting and socialising	. 9
Building friendships	10
Engaging young parents in sport	10
Discussion	11
1. Levels of social connectedness	11
2. Impact of programme on social connections	11
3. Information and Increased participation	11
Personal Assessment	11
Risks, Issues and Challenges	12
References	12
Appendix I: Certificate of participation	14
Appendix II: Flyer translated into Polish, Ukrainian, Romanian, and Lithuanian	15

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Creating Connections through Play examines the levels of social connectedness of parents of young children within Dublin 15 and the potential impact of a 10-week play programme for Mothers/Carers and Toddlers in terms of social connections and participation in sport.

This research took a pragmatic approach to data collection, using a play programme for parents and toddlers in Tyrrelstown Community Centre in order to administer a survey among parents of young children engaged in the programme (Weeks 1 and 10) and conduct ongoing semi structured interviews with these parents (Weeks 2-9). The in-person data collection work took place in two 10-week blocks (Block 1 April-June and Block 2 Sept-Nov): Block 1 was an exploratory pilot, and its outcomes informed the delivery of the refined programme in Block 2.

Analysis of both blocks of data revealed the social need to build new relationships among young parents in new estates in Dublin 15 as well as the barriers to engagement in sports: timing of programmes and lack of childcare. Comparison with analysis of Block 1 data highlighted further the significant needs of non-native Mothers/Carers in the area.

The second block of the research has confirmed the basic hypotheses of Creating Connections through Play:

- 1) Involvement in a play programme can build social connections among parents with young children, and
- 2) More and targeted information leads to increased participation in local sporting activities.

The interactive play programme had a significant impact on the social connections of participants in Block 2, with the group continuing together for Buggy Walking in the area. A secondary outcome of this research has been the development of an innovative interactive template for a parent and toddler play programme, which promotes much more social interaction than the typical Parent and Toddler group. Noteworthy also was participants' interest in setting up new group activities by applying for sport funding offered Fingal Local Sports Partnership (FLSP).

It is vital to build on the success of this group by providing further sporting opportunities to participants and their children and extending these to their neighbours in the area also. Furthermore, the innovative template for a parent and toddler play programme could be replicated around Dublin 15 and beyond if more coaches are trained to deliver it. Lastly, given their significant social needs, it may be necessary to target international migrants for sports programmes to support integration into the wider community.

# INTRODUCTION

Sport and physical activity have enormous power to bring people together and form strong bonds between participants and communities. However, parents of young children are likely to experience disruption to both their physical activity and socialization behaviours because of increased care responsibilities. This can lead to reduced levels of physical activity and low levels of social interaction, which can potentially lead to a further lack of opportunities to socialize and participate in physical activity.

The Creating Connections through Play research project aimed to:

- 1) Examine the levels of social connectedness of parents of young children within Dublin 15.
- 2) Investigate if involvement in a 10-week play programme builds social connections among parents of children.
- 3) Discover if information on local programmes increases physical activity participation by parents of children.

The research is investigating social connectedness, physical activity levels and awareness of community sport initiatives of parents of young children. Fingal Local Sports Partnership (FLSP) is partnering with Technological University Dublin to complete the research project.

This is the final report on both blocks of the project in 2022.

# METHODOLOGY

This research takes a pragmatic approach to data collection, using a play programme for parents and toddlers in Tyrrelstown Community Centre in order to administer:

- 1) A survey among parents of young children engaged in a play programme (Weeks 1 and 10),
- 2) Ongoing semi structured interviews with parents (Weeks 2-9).

The in-person data collection work took place in two 10-week blocks (Block 1 April-June and Block 2 Sept-November): Block 1 was an exploratory pilot, and its outcomes informed the delivery of the refined programme in Block 2.

# CREATING CONNECTIONS SURVEY

The 5-minute survey included five questions on sport: physical activity (M1), awareness of local sports facilities, hindrances to engagement with sport, preferred activities and type of sports engaged in over the last year. The last two questions were adapted them from the USA Adult Physical Activity Questions on the National Health Interview Survey: 1975-2012, as an addition to the survey questions in Block 1.

Both surveys included the 6-factor Lubben Social Network Scale (LSNS-6), a brief self-report measure of social engagement including family and friends (Lubben et al. 2006) and the 8-factor UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS-8) (Hays and Dimatteo 1987), a self-evaluation tool on loneliness. The responses to these questions were intended to measure the impact of involvement in the 10-week play programme on social connectedness between parents of young children.

# CREATING CONNECTIONS INTERVIEWS

The qualitative semi-structured interviews of approximately 10 minutes were used to fill in any gaps in the survey data as well as to provide triangulation. Questions at interview included:

- 1. How did you find out about this group? What made you decide to come along?
- 2. What are the benefits of sport in your opinion? How has involvement in sports affected the development of your friendships?
- 3. How has engagement in this class affected your social connections now? What created that impact in your opinion?
- 4. What other kinds of sports/activities would you be interested in doing? What factors influence your choice of activity?

# ACTIVITIES AND PROGRESS

In the first block of the research, as in the second block, there were 16 attendees with children at a Parent & Toddler exercise group for 10 weeks. Block 2 ran from September to November 2022 in Tyrrelstown Community Centre, Dublin 15. Weekly attendance ranged from 3-11 adults with up to 3-15 children. In the first few weeks, 15 participants completed a survey on physical activity and social connections, while eight completed the end survey. In addition, a WhatsApp group was set up to keep participants informed and encouraged to participate. Unlike the group in Block 1, attendance remained high to the end, with ten Mothers/Carers and 14 toddlers receiving their certificate of participation (See Appendix I) on the final day, as you can see in Figure 1. (There were even medals for the children!)



Figure 1 Participants in Creating Connections through Play Block 2

# PROMOTION

In Block 1, Fingal Local Sports Partnership (FLSP) distributed 2,000 flyers in Tyrrelstown to advertise the programme two weeks before starting. However, this initial flyer contained no reference to exercise, and there was no contact number or registration link on the flyer. As a result, most participants came through a Play and Stay group in Tyrrelstown Community Centre, led by a Romanian woman.

For Block 2, in addition to local posters in five different languages (See Appendix II), FLSP used social media to promote the classes: contacting Dublin 15 parenting pages on Facebook, for example. As a result, 22 parent/carers signed up, with 7 attending in week 1. These numbers quickly rose to 11 regular attendees, with attendance ranging from 5-12 adults, with 5-16 children each week, including triplets and multiple children with mothers or childminders.

In contrast to block 1, the second group consisted mainly of native Irish Mothers/Carers with a handful of non-native Irish from Romania and one participant from Sudan. This may be due to using social media for promotion and the tendency to invite your own friends and neighbours. Most participants came from one nearby estate – Hollywoodrath, just minutes' drive or a short walk from Tyrrelstown Community Centre.

# THE PLAY PROGRAMME

In the first block of the research, the coach, Gita Ramanauskaite, focussed on the children and the development of their Fundamental Movement Skills (Lubans et al., 2010) so that parents could chat to the researcher about sports and social connection. However, these children were so young (18-36 months), that they were not ready to participate in a group play session. As the programme evolved, it became more about the mothers/carers playing with their children under Gita's guidance: she also started to explain the benefits of practicing fundamental movement skills for child development,

By the start of the second group in September, the programme template was set. Starting with short welcome, introducing each mother/carer and child by name, the session got going with gentle stretches and yoga for mothers/carers with the children copying them. Rather than noisy background music, specific songs were used for certain exercises: for example, 'Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes' practiced naming and counting body parts. Then there were a series of games with balls, bean bags, going over and under obstacles and climbing through tunnels. The session closed with relaxing under the big parachute to the tune of 'What a Wonderful World' before the final clean up.

A coffee break for mothers/carers allowed the children to continue playing with the coach while participants reflected in interviews on their experience with sport and social connection – including the programme they were currently engaged in. An unexpected highlight was the launch of an investment package of €6.1m by Sport Ireland during one of the sessions, announcing funding for a wide range of sport and physical activity measures across Ireland through the Local Sports Partnership Network,

Cara, and Sport Ireland. This got some participants thinking about how they could promote sport in their area, even as the children play on happily amid the visitors.

# FINDINGS

This report outlines the findings from both blocks of the study. It presents survey results along with insights from the interviews and field notes of weekly observations from both 10-week blocks.

# GENERAL SURVEY RESULTS

For the second block of data collection, 15 participants completed an initial survey on sport and social connections, (one of which was a duplicate) with eight completing the same survey after the 10-week programme. This was an improvement on the first group, where 15 completed the survey, but only three completed the end survey. However, since the number of surveys is small, this analysis uses descriptive rather than inferential statistics.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

The age profile for participants was similar in both research groups. All 14 survey respondents in Block 2 were female: one was aged 18-24, seven were aged 25-34, five were aged 35-44, and one was 45-54 years of age. This parallels closely the profile of the 14 respondents in the first group: 14 were female and one was male, one was aged 18-24, seven were aged 25-34 and seven were aged 35-44.

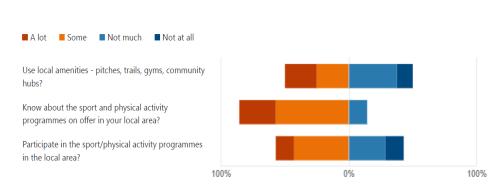
However, in Block 2, English was the first language of 11 participants, with two Romanian and one Arabic speaker. As a result, it was possible to conduct eight good interviews with participants in the second block of data collection. This contrasts with the first group in which Romanian was the first language of eight participants, while two spoke Polish, a further two spoke Lithuanian, one spoke Polish, another one spoke Hindi and there was one unidentified.

# ENGAGEMENT WITH EXERCISE AND SPORT

On average, respondents in the first group exercised on 3.77 days per week for a total of 30 minutes or more of physical activity, enough to raise their breathing rate. Respondents in the second group exercised on 2.87 days per week, which fell slightly to 2.71 in the end survey. In all surveys, the most significant hindrances to participation in sport were the timing of programmes, the lack of childcare and the lack of leisure time.

At the start of the second group in September, 50% of participants did not use local sports amenities, were not aware of local sports programmes, and did not participate much or at all. However, by the time of the end survey, 86% of the group were aware of local amenities and sports programmes and participation had risen to 57%. This is a significant increase, suggesting that information on local programmes may increase physical activity participation by parents of children, in line with the third project aim.

Two additional questions were posed to the second group. In terms of regular physical activities, by far the most common in the start and end surveys was walking (n=13/6<sup>1</sup>) followed by jogging (n=4/3), cycling and swimming (n=3/2). Regarding participation in popular sports in the last year, the individual sport of swimming was the most common activity (n= 5/4).





<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The first number refers to the initial survey, and the second number refers to the end survey.

### SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

The Lubben Social Network Scale (LSNS-6) is a brief self-report measure of social engagement including family and friends (Lubben et al., 2006). For the LSNS-6, scoring ranges between 0 and 30, with a higher score indicating more social engagement. The average total score for the second cohort was 16.5/30 before the play programme and 15.5 afterwards, surprisingly. Comparing only those who had completed the survey both times still showed a decline: from 17.1 to 16.3, although this could be due to the absence of those with families of 9+ members among end survey respondents. The score for the first group was considerably lower: 13.7/30, indicating poorer social connections, as might be expected for a group of immigrants.

### CONNECTIONS WITH FAMILY

Most respondents felt more connected to family than friends on the Lubben Social Network Scale (LSNS-6) in both Blocks 1 and 2. For the second group, the average score was 9.2/15 for the three family questions in the initial survey and 8.3/15 on the end

survey. Nearly 93% saw or heard from 3-9+ relatives at least once a month in the initial survey, and over 87% saw 3-8 relatives monthly in the end survey. This is much higher than the 76% who saw or heard from 3-8 family members at least once a month in the first group.

In the initial survey for the second group, over 69% felt they could talk with 3-9+ family members about private matters, and 83% felt they could call on their relatives in an emergency. However, according to the end survey, only 43% felt they could talk to 3 or 4 relatives about private matters, although 100% felt they could ask 3-8 family members for help in an emergency. In both surveys, there was one respondent who left unanswered the questions on family members they could talk to or call upon in an emergency.

In Block 1, only 35% of the first group felt they could ask three or more family members for emergency help, while 41% felt they could talk with three or more family members about private matters.

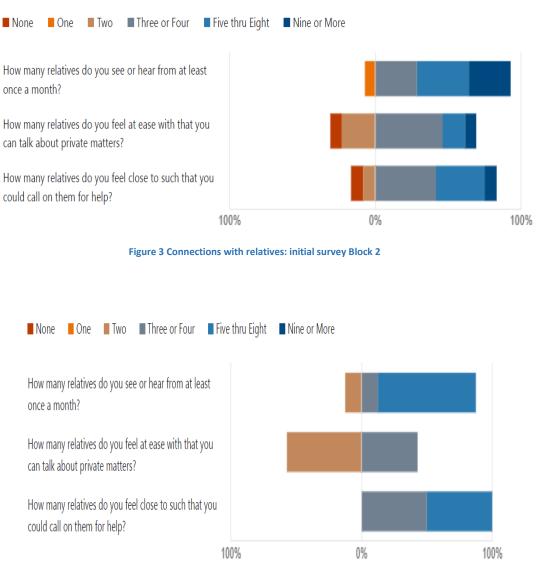


Figure 4 Connections with relatives: end survey Block 2

### CONNECTIONS WITH FRIENDS

Regarding friends, the average score on the Lubben Network Scale was lower: 7.3/15 for the three friendship items, falling slightly to 7.1/15 in the end survey, even though 100% felt they had 2-9 friends whom they saw or heard from at least monthly by that point. The average score for the first group was 6.5/15.

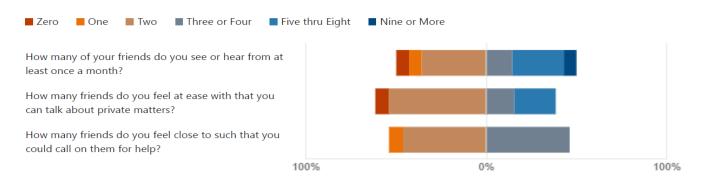
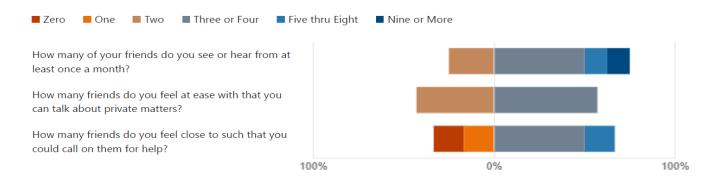


Figure 5 Connections with friends: initial survey Block 2.

In the initial survey in group 2, 50% had 3-9+ friends whom they saw or heard from at least once a month, with 38.5% feeling at ease discussing private matters with 3-8 friends, while over 46% had with 3-4 friends they felt they could call on in an emergency. In the end survey, 75% had 3-9+ friends whom they saw or heard from at least monthly, with over 53% able to discuss the personal matters with 3-4 people; and 77% felt close enough to call on 3-8 friends in an emergency. Three respondents did not answer this question.





However, the comparison of the two graphics in figures 5 and 6 clearly illustrates an increased circle of friendships, suggesting that the lower LNS-6 score in this case may be due to the two respondents who felt that one or no-one to call on in emergencies, as can be seen in Figure 6.

By contrast, in first group, only 21% had 3-9 friends they saw or heard from at least one a month, 31% felt at ease discussing private matters with three or four friends, while just 42% felt they could call on three or four friends in an emergency, as figure 7 reveals.

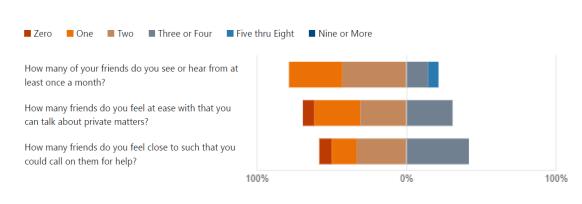


Figure 7 Connections with friends: survey Block 1.

# LEVELS OF LONELINESS

The 8-factor UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS-8) (Hays & Dimatteo, 1987) is a self-evaluation tool on loneliness: the total score ranges from 8 to 32 points, with higher scores suggesting a higher degree of loneliness. On the ULS-8 for the second group, the average score on the initial survey was 16.3/32 and this rose to 16.75/32 in the end survey, indicating a slightly higher level of loneliness among respondents at the end of the programme. In Block 1, the average score was 19.5/32 for the first group, indicating higher levels of loneliness than the second group in general.

However, recent research has shown that the ULS-6, which excludes the 2 reverse-scored items from the ULS-8, has stronger psychometric properties than the ULS-8, correlating more closely with a direct measure of loneliness (Xu et al., 2018), with an overall Cronbach  $\alpha$  for the ULS-6 of 0.878, confirming several previous studies. By excluding these two items, the resulting scores were 10.1/24 for the initial survey and 10.87/24 for the end survey indicating much lower levels of loneliness overall in the second group, while an average score of 14.2/24 in the first block of data collection highlights the noticeably higher levels of loneliness among this group, which was composed entirely of international immigrants.

In the first block of data collection, particularly high scores were seen for two items: 'People are around me but not with me' at 2.75/4 on average, and 'I feel left out' at 2.5/4 on average. Over 30% of respondents often felt that people were around but not with them, while over 15% often felt left out. Figure 8 shows the preponderance of negative feelings in this group.

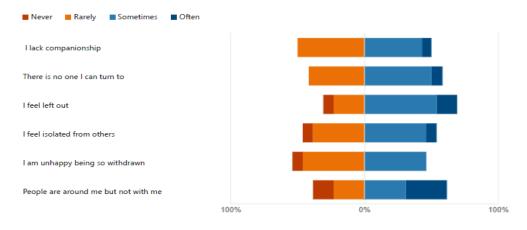


Figure 8 ULS-6 scores of self-reported loneliness in Block 1.

By contrast, levels of loneliness were found to be considerably lower in the second block of data collection generally as can be seen below in Figure 9, even if the loneliness level is somewhat higher in the end survey, perhaps due primarily to one respondent who often felt withdrawn and felt that people were around but not with her.

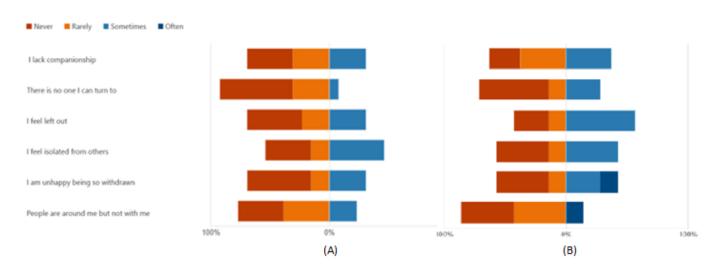


Figure 9 ULS-6 scores of self-reported loneliness: initial (A) & end (B) survey in Block 2.

# INSIGHTS FROM INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS

In Block 2, close reading and thematic analysis of interviews with eight individual participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021) yielded some interesting insights alongside observational field notes. These interviews have been lightly edited and anonymised to protect participants' identities. These are presented in the following themes:

- 1. Emerging from Covid-19
- 2. Interacting and socialising
- 3. Building friendships
- 4. Engaging young parents in sport

### EMERGING FROM COVID-19

Several participants remarked that their children were 'Covid babies', who had missed out on a significant stage in socialisation because of the isolation of lockdown. For them, the Parent and Toddler exercise group was a much-needed space for their little ones to socialise with children of their own age. They were delighted to see how the children started to engage with one another in this safe environment where their mother/carer was also involved in play.

Last week was the first time. I couldn't believe how much in one class she came on. So yeah, it was amazing. Normally I would have said she's really shy, very clingy. As you can see here, it's her second time and she doesn't even know I'm here! - D.

For others, it was also an opportunity for them to start emerging from the isolation imposed by the pandemic, on top of the isolation resulting from leaving the world of work to care for their very young children. As one participant wrote in a Thank You card: 'You really helped me come out of my shell'. -M.

# INTERACTING AND SOCIALISING

Most participants had come along to the group as the result of an invitation from a neighbour or finding out about the group from friends at the local playground where they met when their children were playing. Two participants had been alerted to the group by their local public health nurse at a child's check-up.

I'm happy to interact with other Mums with children around the same age and kind of chatting about different milestones and stuff that you wouldn't get to chat to people about. -R. Many participants commented on how interactive the group was right from the start, with the opening introductions helping them to learn each other's names and start conversations. As a facilitated class, this was markedly different from the average Parent & Toddler group, where interactions were not promoted, and parents and children were left to their own devices.

Within a few weeks, the group was planning for small birthday celebrations as five little ones turned two – singing 'Happy Birthday' and sharing cake all round. At the end of 10 weeks, they were planning to join a Buggy Walking group in Mulhuddart together the following week, even offering a lift to a young Romanian mother and child who had no transport.

Parents/carers truly appreciated Gita's coaching - she has really created a lovely, engaging format for this age group and their parents/carers. Her approach encouraged interaction and engagement between everybody. By the end of the programme, there was an obvious group bond, and many of them intended to go to any group Gita might facilitate! This small group is likely to continue to engage with FLSP for the coming years to avail of all kinds of sporting opportunities as a result of this significant, positive experience.

# **BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS**

When it came to friendship, many of them had experience of building friendships through participation in sport. Some still had close friendships from playing team sports in childhood and adolescence.

One older childminder had joined a running club during lockdown, starting with 'From couch to 5k'. She loved the camaraderie and friendships she found going out on runs two or three times a week. After 18 months, she was about to run the Dublin Marathon a week early, with the support of club mates, who were planning to run sections of the course with her!

I know you can have loads of friends which are not really my friends. We know and we'd be like, hi, how are you? When you're in downtime, like really trying, hard times? Yeah, just not very many. -D. One participant had a little group of neighbours who went walking together, and her husband has started a casual five-a-side on the green in Hollywoodrath, where lots of newcomers were moving in. She realised that they were laying foundations for what could become true friendships over time. Several participants commented in this vein, perhaps shedding light on why some survey respondents found it difficult to answer the questions on sharing private matters or looking for help in an emergency.

For some participants, particularly those new to the area or new to country, this Parent and Toddler exercise programme was especially meaningful. Perhaps that is why these individuals continued to participate while some more socially integrated individuals stopped attending: they had a greater felt need to develop friendships. However, as one international mother recently moved into the area reflected: *It's nice, easy, and really, people here are really lovely*. -S.

# ENGAGING YOUNG PARENTS IN SPORT

However, getting back into a team sport after a long period away due to pregnancy and parenting would a daunting prospect when you are new in an area, and you know nobody on the local teams. How welcome would an unfit newcomer be in a competitive sport?

Many suggestions were made on how to support young parents to engage with sport and physical activities.

- 1. Timing: Try to hold classes or groups in the morning, when many young parents are at home.
- 2. Childcare: If possible, try to provide some childcare support during classes.
- Cost: Offer free or low-cost classes in activities such as gymnastics or yoga. One mother found a yoga class for €50 per session; another realised it would cost €40 per session if she did gymnastics with her children.
- 4. Variety: Offer new minority team sports, like korfball or volleyball, where no one has much experience, everyone can have a go and competition is not so important. There was also interest in athletics and walking groups.
- Definitely, sports connect people, if you're into that, like I am into people, and I'm into sports. -S.
- 5. Emphasise the social connections which sport can create, and all the benefits associated with that.

At the start of the programme, one mother was very interested in starting a facilitated forest-based play group for toddlers to start exploring nature more. When information and application forms for FLSP grants were brought to the group, she took a form, as did two other mothers. Perhaps these ideas could lead to innovative ways of engaging young parents in physical activities.

The Creating Connections through Play research project aimed to:

- 1) Examine the levels of social connectedness of parents of young children within Dublin 15.
- 2) Investigate if involvement in a 10-week play programme builds social connections among parents of children.
- 3) Discover if information on local programmes increases physical activity participation by parents of children.

# 1. LEVELS OF SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

Findings in this research suggest that levels of social connectedness of young parents are dependent on proximity to family. The most connected individuals had 9+ family members they saw or heard from once a month; interestingly these individuals did not continue with the group (n=5). In the second group of mostly native Irish, nearly 93% saw or heard from 3-9+ relatives at least once a month in the initial survey, much higher than the 76% who saw or heard from 3-8 family members at least once a month in the first group of international origin in Block 1.

Secondly, the number of friendships too seemed to be linked with proximity to place of origin with 50% having 3-9 close friends they saw or heard from initially in the group in Block 2, compared to 21% in the first group. Unfortunately, it was not possible to measure any impact of the first play programme, because only three people remained to the end.

# 2. IMPACT OF PROGRAMME ON SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

The interactive play programme had a significant impact on the social connections of participants, with the group continuing together for Buggy Walking in the area. Indeed, a secondary outcome of this research has been the development of an innovative interactive template for a parent and toddler play programme, which promotes much more social interaction than the typical Parent and Toddler group.

At the end of the play programme in the second block of research there was a noticeable increase in the number of friendships. In the end survey, 75% had 3-9+ friends whom they saw or heard from at least monthly (up from 50%), with over 53% able to discuss the personal matters with 3-4 people (up from 38.5%); and 77% felt close enough to call on 3-8 friends in an emergency (up from 46%). The qualitative data confirmed this, with many referring to how much they loved the welcoming interactive atmosphere in the group was and expressing the hope that they could continue to meet up and do more together.

### 3. INFORMATION AND INCREASED PARTICIPATION

At the start of the second programme, 50% of participants did not use local sports amenities, were not aware of local sports programmes, and did not participate much or at all. However, by the time of the end survey, 86% of the group were aware of local amenities and sports programmes and participation had risen to 57%. This is a significant increase, suggesting that information on local programmes may lead to increased physical activity and participation in sport by parents of children.

Furthermore, the unexpected launch of Sport Ireland funding during one of the sessions led to much interest in and discussion about further sporting opportunities for parents of young children. When some FLSP grant application forms were brought to the group, they were all snapped up. This suggests that providing information in this way could lead to much more significant types of engagement and volunteering in relation to sport and physical activities in Dublin 15.

### PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

It was encouraging to see how well the second block of the research was organised and how well the participants responded to the programme. Gita Ramanauskaite<sup>2</sup> was an outstanding coach to this group of mothers/carers and young children, providing an interactive and encouraging atmosphere where relationships could blossom.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> https://bodymindaligned.ie/

Chloe Farrell, Development Officer with FLSP, did an excellent job in promoting the programme multilingually, managing group communication, producing certificates, and providing all the information the group needed. She was impressed with the social connections created with the FLSP also, and looked forward to interacting with these children and their families until they were in their teens. In many ways, by engaging parents with their toddlers, the play programme laid a foundation for involvement with sports and physical activity throughout life.

**Final Report** 

In Block 2 analysis, some useful insights were gained into the social need of young parents to build friendships and re-engage with sports in new estates in Dublin 1, and comparison highlighted further the significant needs of non-native mothers/carers in the area described in Block 1.

The second block of the research has also confirmed the basic hypotheses of Creating Connections through Play:

- 1) Involvement in a play programme can build social connections among parents with young children, and
- 2) More and targeted information leads to increased participation in local sporting activities.

An unintended, but fortuitous outcome has been the development of an innovative interactive template for a parent and toddler play programme, which promotes much more social interaction than the typical Parent and Toddler group. Noteworthy also was participants' interest in setting up new group activities by applying for FLSP funding.

# RISKS, ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

- 1) It is vital to build on the success of this group, by providing further sporting opportunities to group members and their children and extending these to their neighbours in the area also.
- 2) The new Parent and Toddler play model had a significant impact on the social connections of participants. It is worth replicating around Dublin 15 and beyond if more coaches are trained to deliver it.
- 3) It may be necessary to provide targeted programmes for international migrants, given their significant social needs, in order to promote greater integration into the local community.
- 4) In the future, this Play and Toddler programme could be included in the First Five programmes for children 0-5, under the auspices of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth so that it could be offered across the country.

So, if any of any young Mums in this area are feeling isolated, I'd say join, join, join something. Join something because it's so important and sometimes it takes an hour every day. And you know it is wonderful just for your mental health, for everything, to get out and chat with other people.

-*С*.

- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *18*(3), 328–352. https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238
- Hays, R. D., & Dimatteo, M. R. (1987). A Short-Form Measure of Loneliness. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 51(1), 69–81. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa5101\_6
- Lubans, D. R., Morgan, P. J., Cliff, D. P., Barnett, L. M., & Okely, A. D. (2010). Fundamental movement skills in children and adolescents: Review of associated health benefits. *Sports Medicine*, *40*(12), 1019–1035. https://doi.org/10.2165/11536850-00000000-00000
- Lubben, J., Blozik, E., Gillmann, G., Iliffe, S., Von, W., Kruse, R., Beck, J. C., & Stuck, A. E. (2006). *Performance of an Abbreviated Version of the Lubben Social Network Scale Among Three European Community-Dwelling Older Adult Populations* (Vol. 46, Issue 4). https://academic.oup.com/gerontologist/article/46/4/503/623897
- Xu, S., Qiu, D., Hahne, J., Zhao, M., & Hu, M. (2018). Psychometric properties of the short-form UCLA Loneliness Scale (ULS-8) among Chinese adolescents. *Medicine (United States)*, *97*(38). https://doi.org/10.1097/MD.00000000012373



# APPENDIX II: FLYER TRANSLATED INTO POLISH, UKRAINIAN, ROMANIAN, AND LITHUANIAN



**Final Report**