



Little Saplings Evaluation 2022



**The
Evaluator**
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PENDLE HILL
LANDSCAPE
PARTNERSHIP



Introduction and Aims

Introduction

Little Saplings is a project run by Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership (PHLP) to promote outdoor muddy play to children from 18 months to five years old. It runs for 90 minutes four times a month in two locations: Victoria Park in Barrowford and Spring Wood in Whalley.

Little Saplings offers a variety of child-led outdoor activities for children to participate and engage in in an independent way. They are freely able to explore the activities they enjoy in a safe space.



Some of the activities are:

- Mud kitchen – a variety of pots, pans and containers designed for children to roleplay if they want or make a big mess!
- Minibeast hunting – with trowels, magnifying glasses and buckets, children are encouraged to dig up and find ‘minibeasts’ which they can then hold and learn about.
- Hanging pots – Pots and pans hanging from trees that children can go wild and bang and clatter about!
- Colouring – themed colouring pictures that children can quietly engage with whilst still experience the outdoors
- Instructor led activity – such as potting seeds, children used felt and glue to make a flower to put in their plant pot and then learned how to plant seeds.
- Story-time around a fire – Children can sit around a fire and toast marshmallows (or brioche) whilst listening to a story.



Aims

The aims of this evaluation are to:

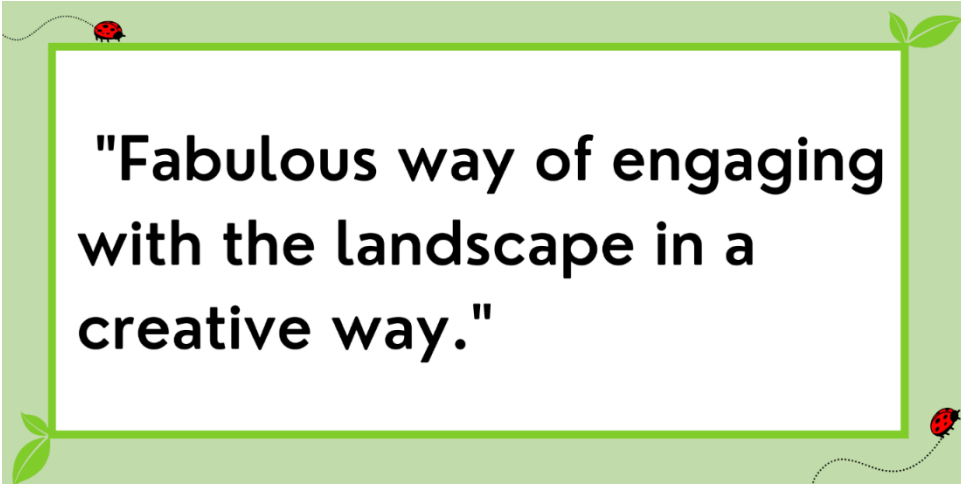
- Identify the demographics of the people attending and compare the results to people who are not attending in order to carry out a gap analysis and find out ‘Who is Missing?’

- Understand the motivations of those attending, again compared to those not attending in order to identify barriers and areas for improvement or change.
- Provide factual and practical ideas to improve Little Saplings and where that can be used – whether in marketing, planning or simply to grow the programme or make it as effective as possible.
- Create a bank of quotes which can be used to explain the programme and experience in participants own words.
- Compare data to the previous evaluation in 2019 to see what has changed

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation was conducted in the following ways:

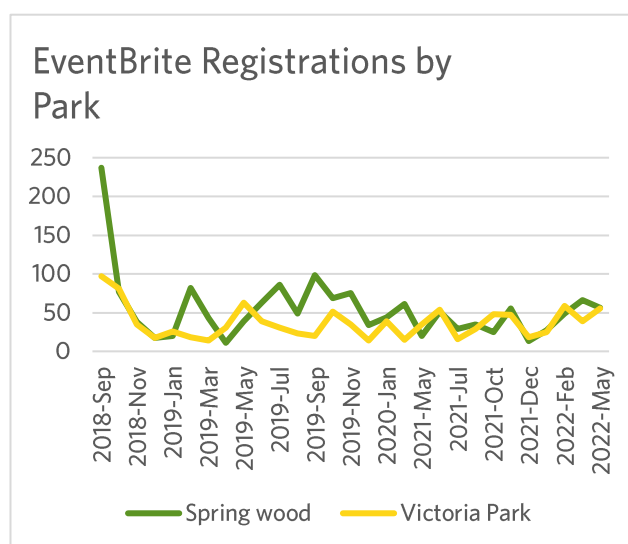
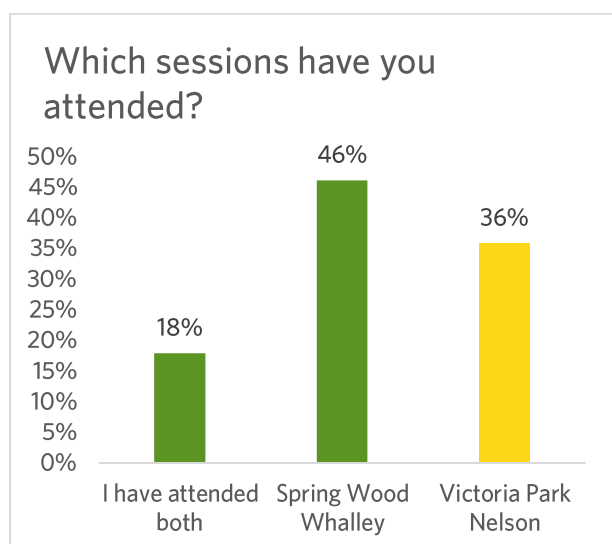
- A team meeting to discuss Little Saplings aims and survey design
- An online survey was designed and distributed to current and former participants which returned 39 responses, this survey was then analysed and forms the base of the whole evaluation
- Analysed EventBrite Registration information to gain additional quantitative data
- Desk research into comparison statistics, for example: audience demographics
- Attended one session as a parent taking part with a two-year-old
- Conducted six one-to-one interviews with participants on June 22nd to gain qualitative answers



"Fabulous way of engaging with the landscape in a creative way."

Audience

We conducted a survey with parents/guardians who had attended Little Saplings either currently or in the past. We received 39 responses from this survey which we have analysed below. We also looked at the registration information from EventBrite to gain a clearer picture of who the participants of Little Saplings are.

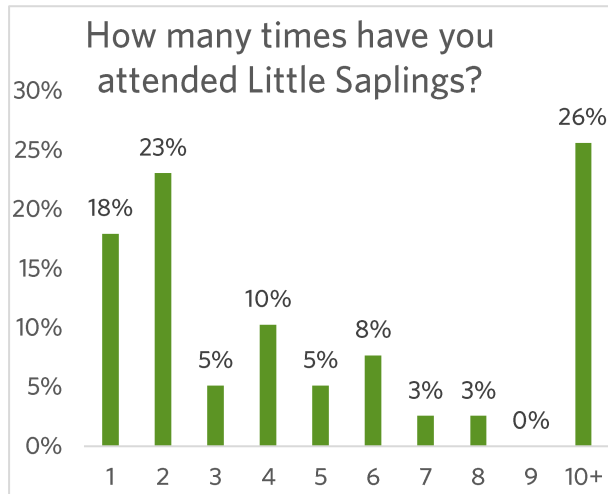


There is a good mix of people attending the different sessions, with a big increase in participants who have attended both (18% in 2022, compared to 8% in 2019). This shows that the sessions have increased reach further than local participants, as people are willing to travel to attend both sessions.

Spring Wood is still the more popular session. This may not just be due to location, but rather the timing, as Spring Wood takes place in the morning (10:00-11:30) and Victoria Park takes place in the afternoon (1:30-15:00). Perhaps parents are not as likely to attend the afternoon session due to clashes with toddler naptimes or school pick-up for siblings.

When looking at Eventbrite it is clear that in 2019 Spring Wood was much more popular, but now in 2022 Victoria Park is holding its own and both have very similar levels of attendances.





A quarter of the people who attend have attended more than 10 times! In fact, it is the most popular answer, which shows that the audience is a loyal audience.

People definitely enjoy coming to Little Saplings and considering that the activities take place twice a month this means that some people have been attending for at least 5 months. Some have even been attending for multiple years with different children!

Over the past year, Spring Wood has had 851 child registrations, and 588 at Victoria Park. That's 1439 children attending for 90 minutes at a time which comes to a total of 2158.5 hours of outdoor play!

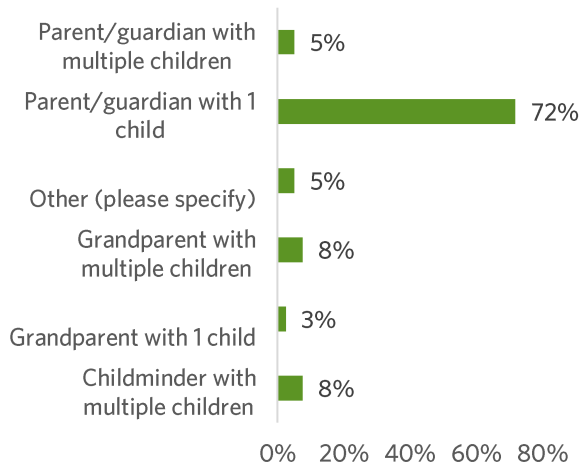
In just one year Little Saplings has seen

2158.5
hours of outdoor play!

"We got to spend some quality time in a different setting with my nephew/grandson and watched him gain more confidence in exploring different activities and getting more sturdy on his feet navigating the wooded areas"

From the online survey we know that most adults attending Little Saplings are parents with a single child. Since Little Saplings takes place on a weekday, parents who are lone caregivers (due to partner possibly working on the day) may find it helpful to have an organised activity to take their child to. One parent told us, **"It has allowed me to spend my day off work with my daughter having some focused play time."**

Who is attending?



It is interesting that Little Saplings is predominantly attended by parents with a single child. Could it be these are new parents who want to learn how to be confident exploring the outdoors with their first child in a safe environment, or is this valuable 1-1 time with a younger sibling whilst the elder is at school?

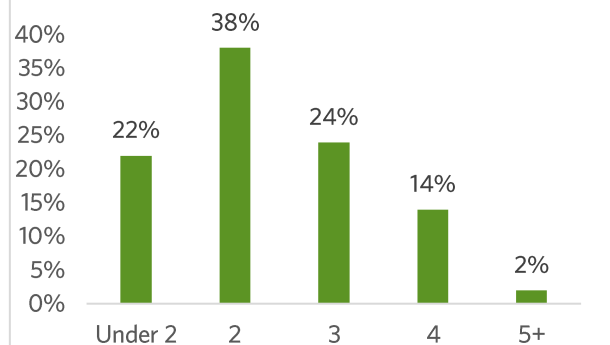
It may also be worth considering that the child-led nature of Little Saplings, as well as it being in an outdoor space may be difficult for parents with multiple children to manage.

Children aged two are the most prevalent attenders (38%).

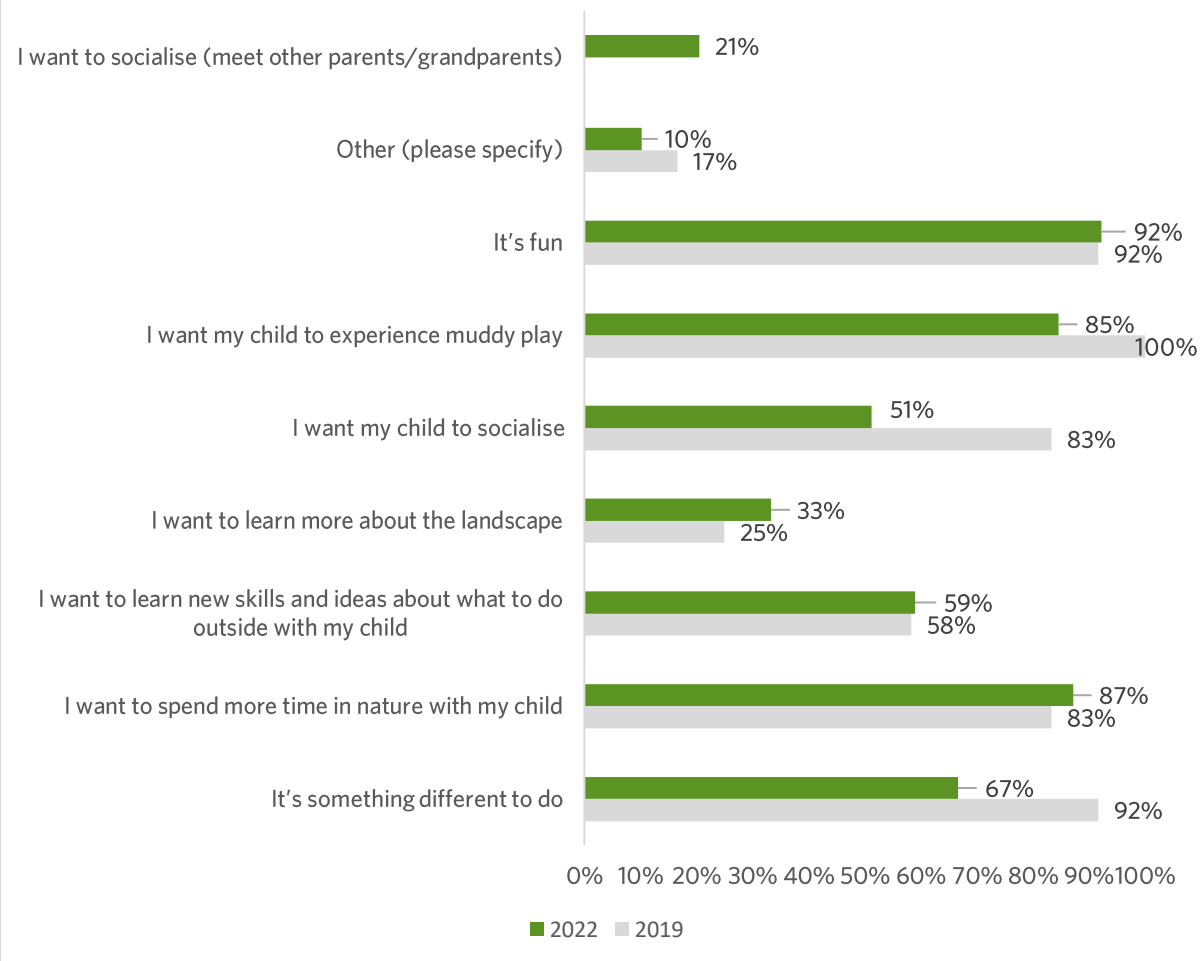
This is interesting to note for future advertising and could indicate that the skill level and engagement required to participate with Little Saplings is most apt for two-year-olds.

This age-range may also be the most prevalent as older children may be at school or at nursery (free childcare hours for nursery begin at age 3).

How old is your child?



What are your reasons for attending? (you may choose more than one)



The 'Other - please specify' answers from 2022 survey:

- She is child who loves to play and explore outdoors.
- It's free
- Children have shown an interest in plants and mini beasts and this gives opportunity to follow that .
- It's was [sic] also on our doorstep before we moved out of the area

The top reasons for attending in 2022 are that it's fun, and that parents/guardians want to spend more time with their children, especially in a muddy environment.

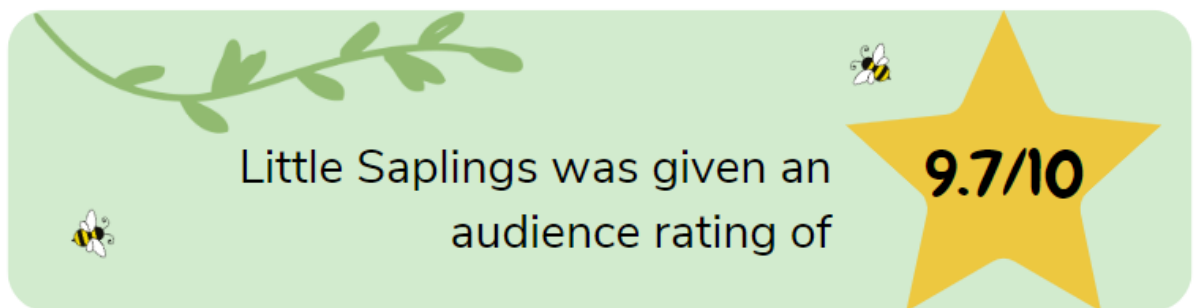
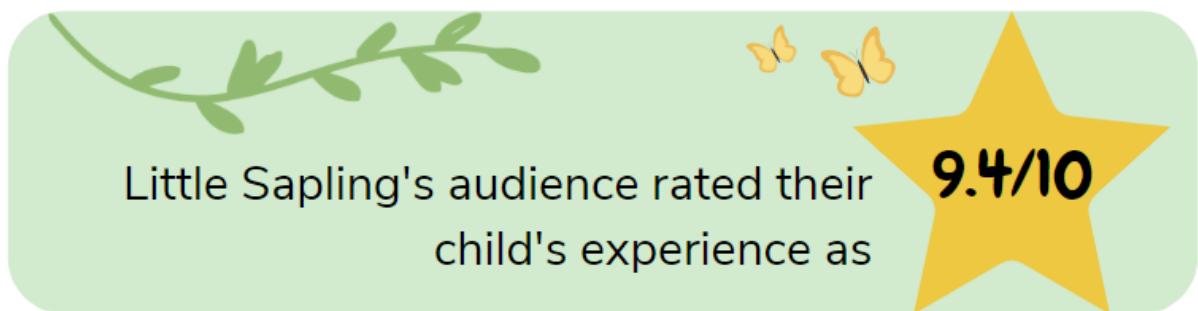
In comparison to the 2019 survey, we have seen that there has been a big decline in audiences attending Little Saplings in order to allow their child to socialise. This could be due to an increase in wariness in socialising post-pandemic. Or it could just be that socialising is on people's minds less rather than more and people have not thought about it as a motivation.

There has been an increase in more 'nature' related reasons for attending such as "I want to learn more about the landscape" and "I want to spend more time in nature with my child".

One participant described Little Saplings as "The sessions hope to inspire families to get outside and reconnect with nature, plus learn different activities that they can recreate with their family in the future." Which indicates that families are connecting to the natural aspect, maybe even more so than the playtime aspect.

Something different to do has fallen in terms of an answer since 2019, as forest schools have become increasingly more familiar perhaps?

Participants overwhelmingly enjoy attending Little Saplings, scoring it a 9.4 out of 10 for their child's experience, and a 9.7/10 overall!



Connected to nature

We looked into how connected to nature people were.

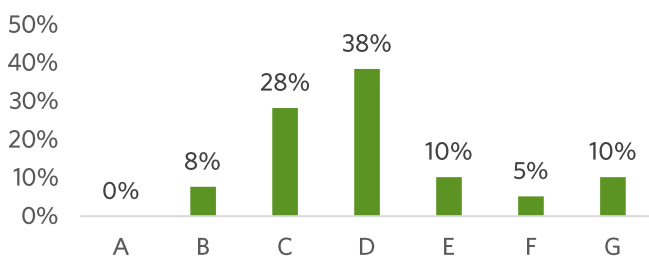
The Inclusion to Nature Scale (INS) measures how people perceive their relationship to nature, option A shows that people feel entirely disconnected to nature and option G is where people feel wholly connected to nature.

The majority of people who attend Little Saplings feel halfway connected. None of the people who attend feel entirely disconnected from nature. 36% of people selected option B and C which is somewhat disconnected to nature, this means that Little Saplings is reaching people who might otherwise be unable to spend time outdoors with their children and are possibly people who are unlikely to engage in outdoor activities.

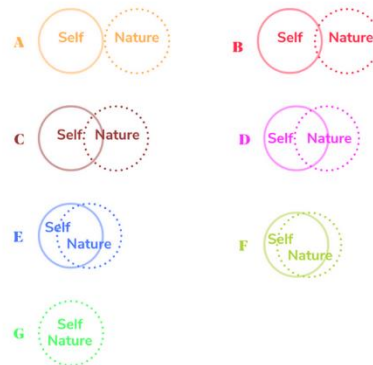
This means that the combination of advertising, overall feel and location and cost (free) is making people feel able to try something new for them - and then they keep coming!

"Lots of fun experiencing raw nature, a pleasant experience come rain or shine"

Please have a look at this image and tick which letter represents you best:



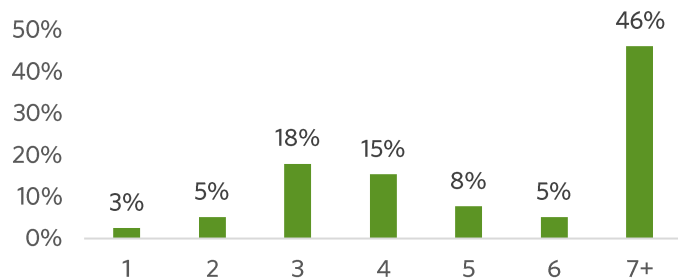
The Inclusion in Nature Scale (INS) - Which image represents you best?



"It has meant we get out and connect to nature. The set up is such that the child leads the way and is free to explore and play as he wishes."

Regularly spending time in nature

How many times per week are you able to walk/play outside (for more than 10 minutes) with your child?



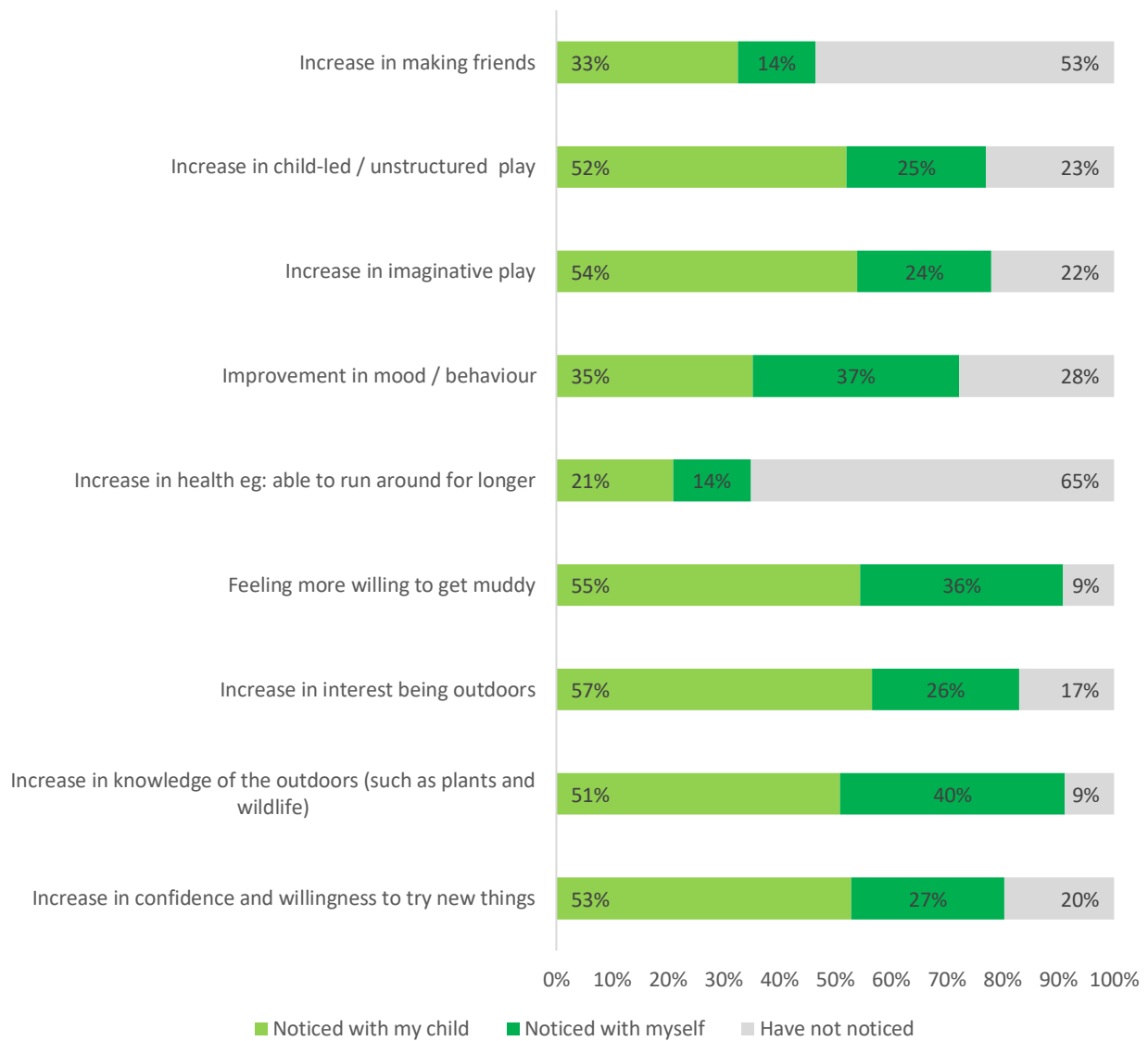
We asked people how often they were able to walk/play outside and although the most common answer was every day, more than half of all respondents were not able to spend at least ten minutes outside every day. One quarter of people managed to play on three days or less per week. This is way down on what is recommended. For example, "One hour per day is the recommendation of the [UK's Wildlife Trusts](#), who have called for every child in the UK to spend one hour outside in nature, every day, as part of the school curriculum."¹

We can see that only half of attendees get to experience the outdoors with their child every day. Little Saplings is vital in meeting that criteria at least once in the week, if not every day. But the skills and confidence learned at Little Saplings may spill over to other days. It's also empowering parents and guardians to be able to explore the outdoors with their child without the guidance of Little Saplings. **"Instead of wandering around the woods aimlessly it has given us some structure and fun. And ideas for when it's just the family out for a walk."**

"I'm a very anxious person but have always loved the outdoors and grew up playing outside whatever the weather. I want my little one to enjoy the outdoors like I do but to be more confident. I feel like little sapling has been the perfect place to start this process and I feel very lucky to have been able to attend 2 sessions already. It has also helped my mental health and taught me more ways to enjoy playing outside with my son in a way that he also enjoys"

¹ <https://www.countryliving.com/uk/wildlife/countryside/a29712170/wildlife-trusts-children-nature/>

What changes have you noticed?



For children, the three most common things that have been noticed:

1. Increase in interest being outdoors (57%)
2. Feeling more willing to get muddy (55%)
3. Increase in imaginative play (54%)

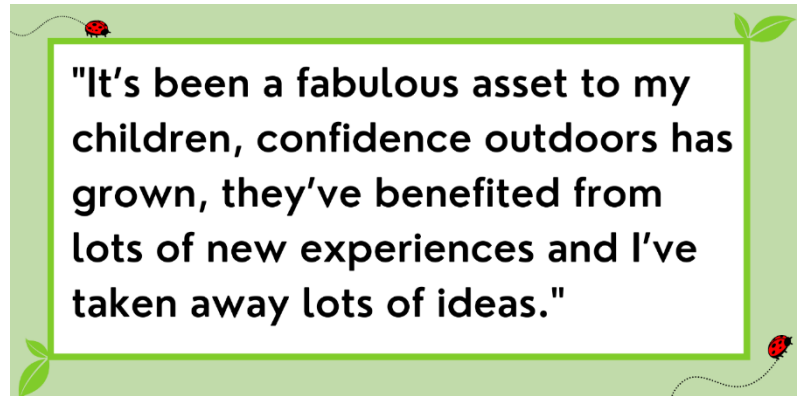
These are brilliant results as it clearly shows that Little Saplings aims are being reached. More than half of children are gaining valuable experience playing outdoors in the mud, and are now more likely to recreate these activities.

The options most noticed by caregivers

1. Increase in knowledge of the outdoors (40%)
2. Improvement in mood / behaviour (37%)
3. Feeling more willing to get muddy (36%)

The options which were noticed the least were:

- 65% did not notice an increase in health
- 53% did not notice an increase in making friends



It is fantastic that there have been clear changes in the children with regards to their willingness to explore and play outside, especially with the muddiness that entails. The mud-kitchen is a key activity for this, especially as it also encompasses imaginative roleplay.

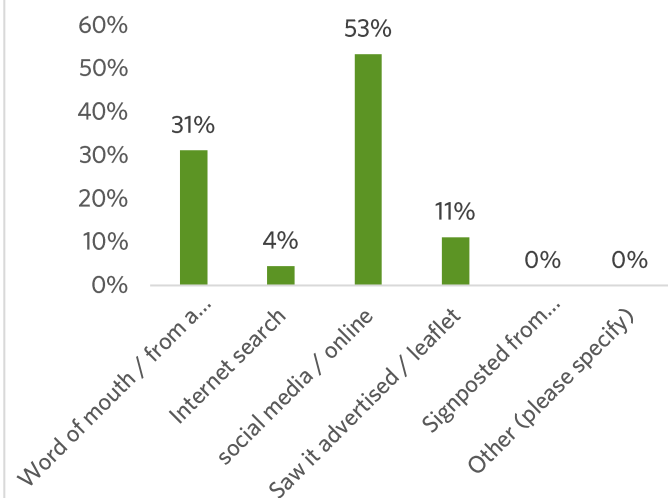
For caregivers, there have been benefits as well, especially when it comes to knowledge of the outdoors - Alison's expertise here has been crucial as she explains about 'minibeasts'

"Alison is really lovely and a great facilitator. I find her knowledgeable about so many things and interesting to learn more."

"It has given [child] the opportunity to develop her interest in mini beast hunting which she thoroughly enjoys. Alison helps her find other mini beasts she's unable to dig for herself and teaches her about them."

Socialising is also something that is changing, and this may become particularly apparent as a result of Covid on our youngest members of society, who have spent much of their short lives in extra-ordinary times. It is still heartening to see that the lowest mentioned changes, still affected 47% of those taking part. (14% noticed an increase in making friends with themselves, and 33% with noticed their children making friends).

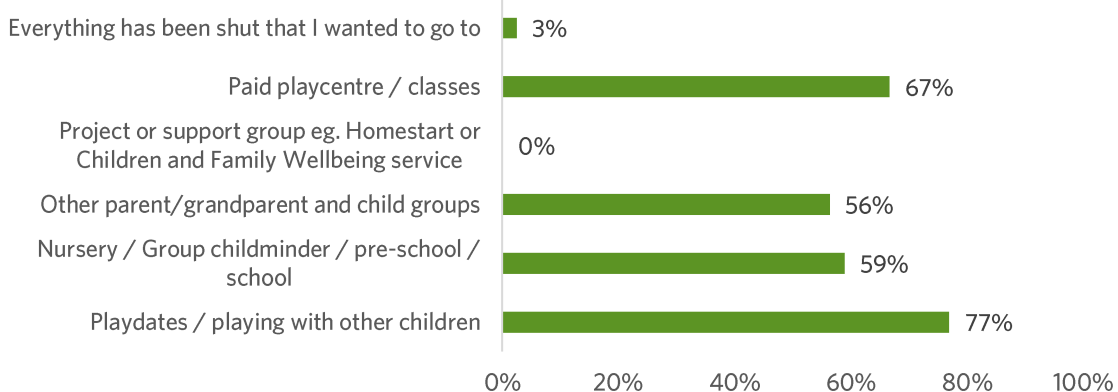
How did you find out about Little Saplings?



More than half of participants found Little Saplings through social media, and online, this is possibly through Facebook groups and word of mouth.

For future sessions it may be beneficial to do more with social media and online advertising to increase numbers. This could mean posting more or sponsoring posts to a targeted audience (parents of toddler and young children in the local area).

What else does your child attend?

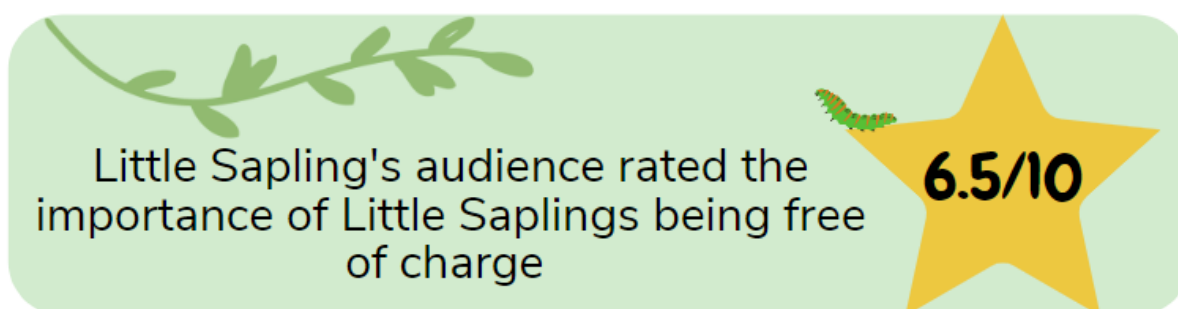


77% of children go on playdates with other children. It is interesting that 67% of children are also attending paid activities as it can be inferred that 34% of children are not attending paid activities. Could this be because the cost of the activity is a barrier for attending?

Little Saplings having no cost could be removing one potential barrier for children to attend.

“Gave me the opportunity with the class being free and me on part time wage to participate”

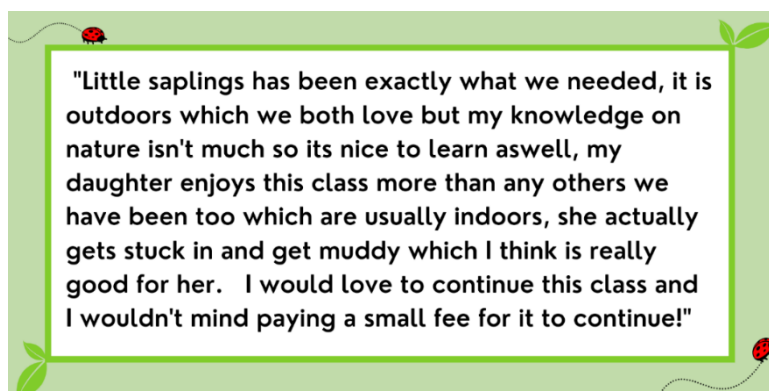
Free at the point of access



Little Sapling's audience rated the importance of Little Saplings being free of charge

We asked how important it was that Little Saplings was free of charge on a sliding scale with 1 being least important, and 10 being most important. The result was an average 6.5/10, of which 6 participants rated this as a 10/10 (most important).

This means that most people feel it is very important that Little Saplings is free. Considering that Pendle is considered one of the most deprived areas in the country, families may not have a lot of excess income to spend on recreational activities. Little Saplings is possibly reaching some of those families who would not be able to afford alternative forest schools. Especially in the current cost of living crisis with rising fuel costs, a lot of families are feeling it necessary to evaluate which activities they can afford to attend. If Little Saplings had a cost, it would be a definite barrier to access to families who need it the most.



"Little saplings has been exactly what we needed, it is outdoors which we both love but my knowledge on nature isn't much so its nice to learn aswell, my daughter enjoys this class more than any others we have been too which are usually indoors, she actually gets stuck in and get muddy which I think is really good for her. I would love to continue this class and I wouldn't mind paying a small fee for it to continue!"

"Forest schools are expensive - prohibitively so. Alison's amazing, even I have learnt something - we learnt about puffball mushrooms. We'd do this even if it was paid, although subsidised"

How many other activities does your child take part in per week?

No of Activities	No of Children
1	3
2	14
3	17
4	5

All of the children who attend Little Saplings also attend at least one other social activity in a week, on average, they attend 1.5 other sessions in a week, (an average 25.5 total activities per week divided by the number of children (39)). Little Saplings is making up about half of children's activities away from home.

Would you be likely to revisit the park you attended today?

0 - Will not visit again

10 - Definitely visit again

9.2

"Little Saplings has been so beneficial for us both. It has provided social interactions for us and a friendly warm atmosphere in which we can spend some quality time together."

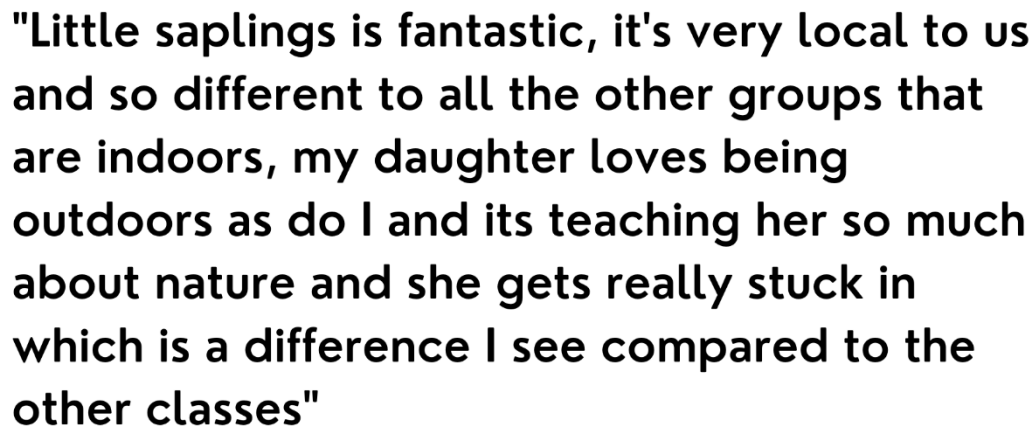
Audiences have said they are very likely to revisit the park they attended today. We did not check whether this was the first time they had attended said park; however, it is very encouraging that they clearly feel that they will continue to go out into nature. Hopefully some of the audience feel increased confidence in attending the park. Some barriers to attending a park can be that people don't know they

exist, or aren't sure on how to travel there, so it could be that people are being introduced to new areas to explore with their children.

Observation

We visited a session in Victoria Park to observe and interview participants. They were resoundingly positive regarding Little Saplings as a whole. One family stuck out to us; a mother attending with four children, three young boys and one baby asleep in a pram. She was slowly making her way around the area as the children played and interacted with the environment. This family has been coming a long time and the children were familiar with Alison and comfortable exploring. When asking what their favourite part of Little Saplings was the mother explained how much she enjoyed the learning element of Little Saplings, she said the children gained knowledge of trees, animals, and habitats, and she enjoyed the freedom where her children could also go off and explore. **"They need it."** When asked the same question, one boisterous lad responded his favourite thing about Little Saplings was to **"Fight with sticks!"** before jumping off a tree trunk and disappearing into the bushes.

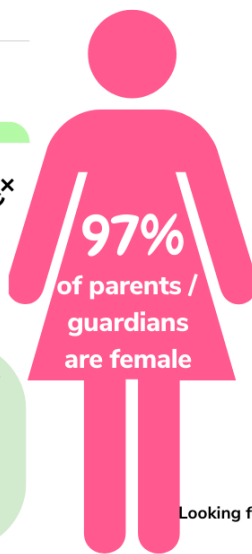
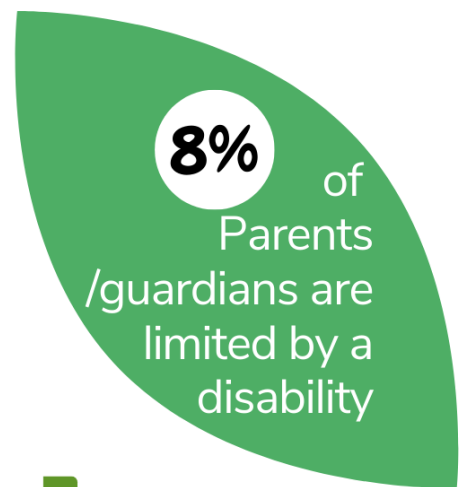
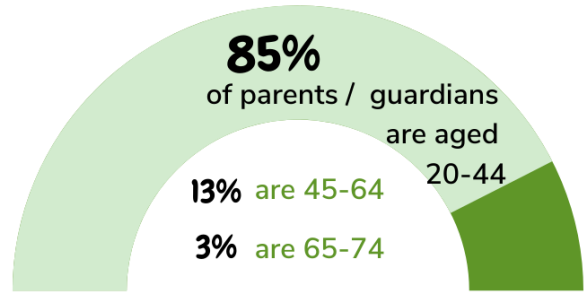
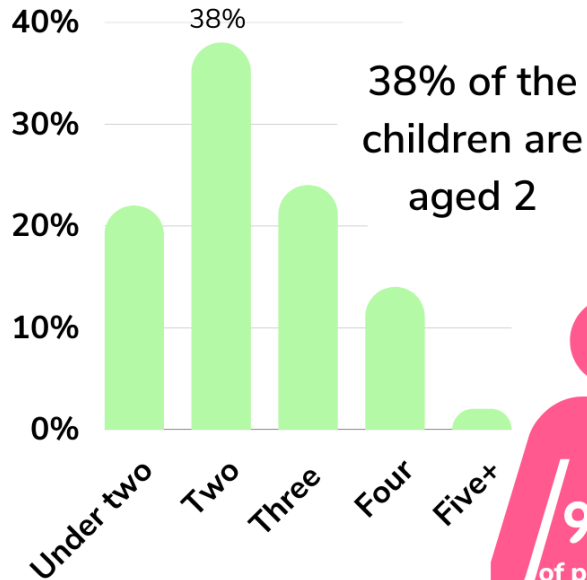
The mother went on to tell me that she's not a particularly outdoorsy person and being unable to drive that Little Saplings is the only outdoor activity her children can reasonably access. She also liked the EventBrite pre-booking element because **"it forces you to come outside in all weathers because you've booked"**



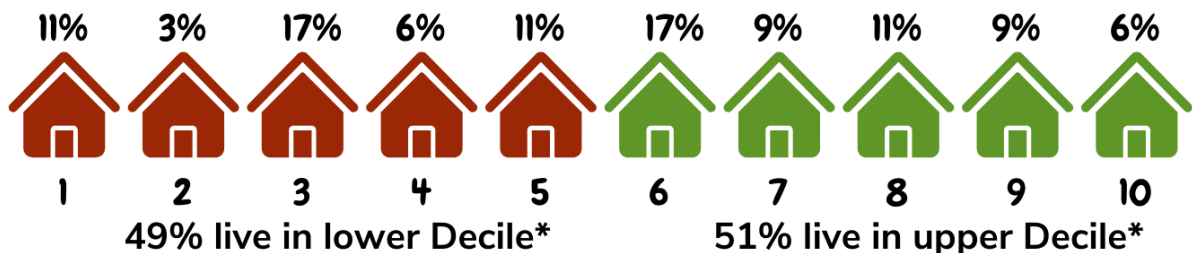
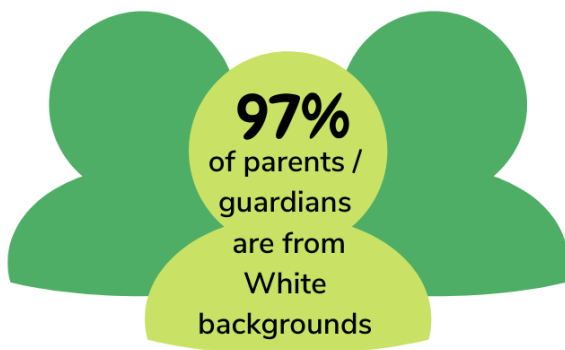
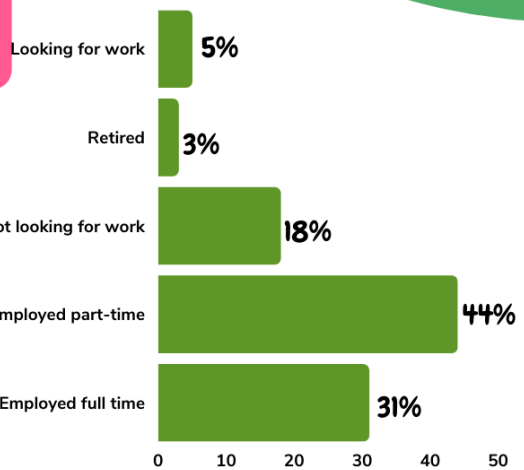
"Little saplings is fantastic, it's very local to us and so different to all the other groups that are indoors, my daughter loves being outdoors as do I and its teaching her so much about nature and she gets really stuck in which is a difference I see compared to the other classes"

Demographics

WHO IS ATTENDING LITTLE SAPLINGS?



"Being able to attend the sessions means the children in my care get to have the opportunities to grow outdoors too."
-Survey Response



*Based from the Indices of Multiple Deprivation

This information comes from 39 respondents on the online survey.

Little Saplings works with the range of ages expected. 85% of the parents/guardians who are attending Little Saplings are aged 20-44. This is to be expected as 77% of adults attending are parents.

Little Saplings is not as diverse as would be expected in terms of ethnicity. 97% of the participants are from White backgrounds. This may not be fully representative of the full attendance as it may be that audiences from minority ethnic backgrounds did not wish to complete the survey. As part of our observation, we noted a family from an ethnic minority background said she had meant to complete the survey but didn't have the time to.

Nature activities being predominantly attended by White British individuals is a frequent occurrence; a study by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs suggested that despite people from minority ethnic backgrounds valuing the natural environment, they feel excluded and hyper-visible in what they see as an "exclusively English environment".²

Little Saplings is mostly reaching women. 97% of parents/guardians were women. This is surprising considering that in the UK, 50-60% fathers are increasingly undertaking solo-care of their children³. Could it be that fathers are not attending Little Saplings for other reasons, such as being unaware of it happening? (Especially if Little Saplings advertising is shared by mum's groups for example).

Only 8% of the audience are disabled. In the UK roughly 20% of people have a disability so Little Saplings is not attracting a representative audience in this instance. This could be down to the average age of people attending as people tend to be more likely to have a disability as they get older, and Little Sapling's audience is mainly made of parents aged 20-44 but it may indicate that more could be done to reach out to disabled potential participants. Participants may possibly be concerned about their capacity to stand for 90 minutes or get close to the ground to engage with the digging/colouring. The website does have valuable accessibility information, but this isn't always noticeable depending on how the participant accesses the registration page.

Know before you go

Mobility

Suitable for people with limited mobility, level paths and easy access. Please contact organiser if you have any questions.

Wheelchair and pram access

Suitable for wheelchair users and prams. Please contact organiser if you have any questions.

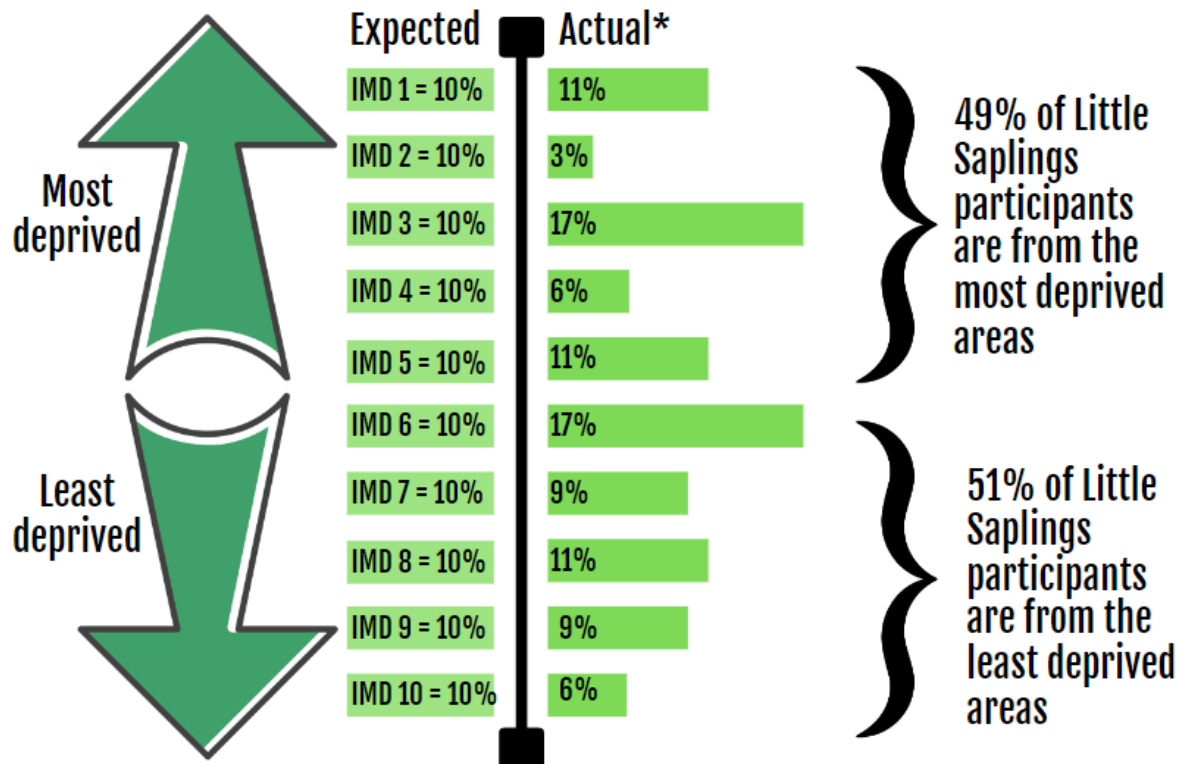
Figure 1 Accessibility data found on <https://www.pendlehillproject.com/little-saplings>

² https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2022/jul/06/uk-minority-ethnic-walking-groups-tearing-down-barriers?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

³ fatherhoodinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Cash-or-carry-Executive-Summary-PDF-3.pdf

It may be beneficial to ensure all routes to registering have clear accessibility information, as well as pictures/videos of both locations so people with accessibility concerns can research ahead of time.

Participant Postcodes



*Based on data from 39 matched postcodes, matched to the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation

We mapped participants postcodes against the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. In the current English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD2019) seven domains of deprivation are considered and weighted as follows, Income. (22.5%), Employment. (22.5%), Education. (13.5%), Health. (13.5%), Crime. (9.3%), Barriers to Housing and Services. (9.3%), Living Environment. (9.3%). These domains each have multiple components. For example, the Barriers to Housing and Services considers seven components including levels of household overcrowding, homelessness, housing affordability, and the distance by road to four types of key amenity (post office, primary school, supermarket, and GP surgery). Ultimately the lower the IMD number the more issues that person (in this case household as we have used postcodes) will have as barriers. You would usually expect to have 50% of people from the lowest deciles and 50% from the highest so the fact the Little Saplings has reached 49% in the lower Decile and 51% in the upper, so that is very representative. Little Saplings has also reached 11% of people from IMD 1 which is the most deprived, and statistically one of the hardest demographics to reach.

Recommendations for Little Saplings

- Consider different or additional times or days to increase the range of audience as some parents may not be able to attend on Wednesdays.
- Make attracting a more diverse audience a priority – 77% of Pendle is White British but the Little Saplings audience was 97% White British. 97% of parents/grandparents who attended were also women. Targeted advertising could be done to try targeting this missed audience or look at different methods of advertising.
- Encourage socialising between parents and children, possibly through group activities?
- Increase the availability of accessibility information – both on Pendlehillproject.com and EventBrite
- Promote replicable activities within the sessions, teaching parents/guardians how to repeat similar activities themselves

We asked if there was anything Little Saplings could do better:

Maybe some weekend family events

Maybe more info on bugs, trees etc,

Just have more of them

At the time my little one didn't walk so think does suit walkers better as pram was getting stuck in mud

Concluding Thought

Little Saplings is clearly well-enjoyed by parents/guardians and children and has established a very loyal audience who return for months and even years. **“It's something to look forward to x”**

It is providing a valuable outdoor activity like a forest school, but without the financial barrier which can be difficult for lower-income families to overcome. **“We don't have a garden, so it was fantastic to get to spend time outside, getting to use the resources such as pans, containers, trowels and magnifying glasses. My child loved seeing the worms and millipedes and spending time in the mud kitchen.”**

Children are gaining valuable experiences, learning about the natural world they live in, and are developing confidence and independent play skills. **“More love for nature and learning.”**

Parents and guardians are also gaining confidence and knowledge, allowing them to replicate the activities themselves whilst also getting to spend time playing with their children.

We heard a lot of love for Little Saplings, one parent said it was a **"A must do activity."** and another said, **"After missing so much due to lockdown its been wonderful to have these sessions outdoors"**. Little Saplings has clearly made a positive impact on families, we spoke to one little boy, whose grandmother told us had confidence and language concerns before he started attending. We asked him what he liked best about Little Saplings, he gave a big smile, pointed and told us he was **"Gonna dig!"**

About The Evaluator

The Evaluator is a creative evaluation company who specialises in visual evaluation, and is committed to making evaluation enjoyable for participants, easy for staff and professionals to take part in. All of the work of The Evaluator is underpinned by easy to read, visual reports. The Evaluator says, 'We'll figure it out for you!'

This report was written by Laura Poon, project officer at The Evaluator and Kirsty Rose Parker, director of The Evaluator.

The Evaluator was founded by Kirsty, an experienced project manager and evaluator, who previously specialised in arts, regeneration, and wellbeing projects. Kirsty has an educational background in Maths and Economics, which covered many statistical topics, leading to an MA Hons in Economics from the University of Edinburgh.

Kirsty has 16 years of charitable project management experience including working with artists and audiences, and 9 years' experience of arts development. She is trained in negotiation, motivational interviewing and 'social return on investment' and is passionate about helping organisations to run the most effective programmes they can.

Laura has a diploma in creative writing and a strong background in data reporting, loves to create graphs and specialises in writing case studies. Laura has an eye for detail, is a very trustworthy data-inputter and is committed to helping organisations figure out what their figures mean.

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Appendix:

Audience Quotes

- Little saplings is fantastic, it's very local to us and so different to all the other groups that are indoors, my daughter loves being outdoors as do I and its teaching her so much about nature and she gets really stuck in which is a difference I see compared to the other classes
- It's a fantastic group. Alison and her team do a super job of providing various activities and making everyone feel included and involved. It's such a great service for parents and children.
- Lots of outdoor fun and adventures for children and parents. Excellent, stimulating, creative and loved every minute.
- Lots of fun experiencing raw nature, a pleasant experience come rain or shine
- It is amazing. You follow a fun structure and learn so much.
- Nature session in the woods
- Magical! This group has been an absolute god send to myself and my son.
- A really fun experience in the fresh air, lots to do and really unique to other groups we have been too
- I always describe it as going to play in the woods in mud and hunting for bugs
- Outdoor fun, playing and learning activities for little ones.
- Outdoor semi structured play. The time flies as there's so much to see and do but it's all at a lovely relaxed pace
- Inclusive outdoor fun,
- A great well organised outdoor activity. The children are involved, engrossed, have new experiences and best of all really enjoy it.
- An hour and a half of fun in the woods. Bug hunting, messy play, themes and stories
- Outdoor play
- Outside play in a park, playing in a muddy kitchen, exploring bugs, trees, leaves and then getting to spend time with other children.
- A wonderful session for children to explore engage and experience the outdoor environment
- Brilliant nature group getting children outdoors with amazing staff who great interactive with the children
- I am a grandparent but would recommend as a fun interactive session with your grandchildren which mine really enjoyed
- Brilliant, fun, structured outdoor learning
- Forest area outside free play with plenty of activities set up for children to do, mini beast hunting, story and snack on the fire pit 🍷 lots of muddy outside fun
- Fabulous way of engaging with the landscape in a creative way.

- A lovely opportunity for children to explore the woods and learn to interact with other children. Good structured activities with flexibility for children to do their own exploring and learning.
- A fantastic nature group for young children that gets them engaged in outdoor activities, gives them some fresh air and allows them to explore outdoors
- Fun activities in a safe outdoor/ woodland setting, with an overall theme linked to a book.
- Outdoor play and lots of activities. Leader is enthusiastic and friendly as are the parents and other carers. Both adults and children get involved
- Great group, really recommend, friendly leader, brilliant varied activities for the little ones. Both my boys have loved it
- A really relaxing playground in the woods. Lots of exciting activities all around a theme. My child really loves the fire!
- Excellent outdoor activity, well organised and easy to follow
- It's a wonderful, relaxed session where there are plenty of opportunities for natural play outdoors. The activities are fantastic and all of the staff are so friendly and encouraging. We absolutely loved our first session.
- A wonderful woodland session with a fireside story at the end
- Fun, relaxed, interesting
- Outside adventure fun for both parent and child
- Guided outdoor learning through play
- Brilliant, an excellent way to introduce a child to nature in a safe and fun environment. I highly recommend Alison and Little Saplings in the past!
- Fun outside. Learning about nature for children and adults
- It's a lovely group which lets the children get more involved with nature

What has taking part meant to you and your child(ren)?

- Little Saplings has been exactly what we needed, it is outdoors which we both love but my knowledge on nature isn't much so it's nice to learn as well, my daughter enjoys this class more than any others we have been too which are usually indoors, she actually gets stuck in and gets muddy which I think is really good for her. I would love to continue this class and I wouldn't mind paying a small fee for it to continue!
- It has meant we get out and connect to nature. The set up is such that the child leads the way and is free to explore and play as he wishes.
- Time spent together having fun.
- Lovely to spend more time outdoors together
- Everything we adore our Wednesdays
- We've been very lucky to enjoy toddler nature sessions in our local wood that we love!
- This is our favourite group. A chance to thoroughly enjoy being outdoors with like-minded people.

- We enjoy being outdoors but it was nice to have different activities to do
- I really love the sessions and thing they are fantastic
- Learning new things we can do outdoors
- I'm a very anxious person but have always loved the outdoors and grew up playing outside whatever the weather. I want my little one to enjoy the outdoors like I do but to be more confident. I feel like little sapling has been the perfect place to start this process and I feel very lucky to have been able to attend 2 sessions already. It has also helped my mental health and taught me more ways to enjoy playing outside with my son in a way that he also enjoys
- Lots of oportunities to explore the outside together
- It's been a fabulous asset to my children, confidence outdoors has grown, they've benefited from lots of new experiences and I've taken away lots of ideas. Some of the things that we have taken part in would have been really difficult to set up myself and being able to attend the sessions means the children in my care get to have the opportunities to grow outdoors too.
- Instead of wandering around the woods aimlessly it has given us some structure and fun. And ideas for when it's just the family out for a walk.
- We don't have a garden, so it was fantastic to get to spend time outside, getting to use the resources such as pans, containers, trowels and magnifying glasses. My child loved seeing the worms and millipedes and spending time in the mud kitchen.
- After missing so much due to lockdown its been wonderful to have these sessions outdoors
- Gave me the opportunity with the class being free and me on part time wage to participate
- It's another fun thing we do together whilst I look after them - has also increased their awareness of my garden and looking for nature whilst on dog walks
- It's something to look forward to x
- It has given Orla the opportunity to develop her interest in mini beast hunting which she throughly enjoys. Alison helps her find other mini beasts she's unable to dig for herself and teaches her about them. She also loves painting the trees with mud. She hasn't had the opportunity to do these activities before.
- More love for nature and learning.
- A must do activity.
- It has allowed me to spend my day off work with my daughter having some focused play time. I also catch up with my friend who brings her son and it allows us time to connect with them and engage in outdoor activities. It has given me some ideas for engaging my child with the outdoors at home and we often now go out in our garden and do some of the activities..
- Child has enjoyed learning about animals and it's a nice thing to do together.
- It provides us with a break from the house, it occupies the children in enjoyable activities and uses up energy.
- We got to spend some quality time in a different setting with my nephew/grandson and watched him gain more confidence in exploring different activities and getting more sturdy on his feet navigating the wooded areas. He's

now gone onto full time pre school which the teacher is good and gets them outside a lot, but a shame we can't have that time with him as we really enjoyed it at little saplings. Probably we enjoyed it more than him!

- Special quality time together.
- Building confidence
- Enjoy different activities, she wouldn't normally do at home
- Little Saplings has been so beneficial for us both. It has provided social interactions for us and a friendly warm atmosphere in which we can spend some quality time together.
- It's been brilliant to get to know the area and people
- Access to things like the mud kitchen and the fire have been great -being able to take part in experiences that we haven't had before
- It's been so good, Archie really engaged and loved going to the sessions
- We always enjoyed it. We were lucky to have Victoria park at the end of our road. But each time we attended a little saplings session we explored differently and looked for different things. We loved it!
- Looking at nature through different eyes. Children love the activities
- As a childminder I love to let the children get involved in outdoor activities
-

Have you repeated any of the Little Saplings activities at home, or been inspired to seek out more activities like Little Saplings?

- We have been going into the woods more and feeling more comfortable which is nice
- Yes, we're always on the look out for any Forest School type activities
- Yes making Hanging Pine Cone bird feeders
- Prepared to get more muddy!
- Yes mud painting, mud kitchen activities, big hunting
- Yes
- Yes
- Yes! Lots of them.
- Not yet but will definitely be doing so
- We have planted other seeds and made bird feeders. I haven't found many outside sessions that are accessible as I always found forest school type sessions to be quite expensive
- Yes
- Yes, I have been trying to encourage my son to help in the garden, planting and tidying etc. we have also been bug hunting and I am trying to help him feel more comfortable with getting dirty!
- Yes
- Painting with mud Bear hunts Nature art Nature crowns
- Yes
- We have been back to Victoria Park to play in the same space, but haven't done any muddy play again. I'm definitely hoping to do something similar!

- Exploring for mini beasts, planting seeds and plants
- The cheerio bird feeder have done at home
- Not really apart from looking for insects / bugs whilst we are dog walking
- Yes, outdoor mud painting, digging own mud and bringing a flask of water,
- We have got Orla a mud kitchen at home as she enjoys the mud kitchen there. When we are out walking we look for mini beasts now as she has developed an interest in them.
- Yes. Going on a Bear Hunt and looking for wiggly worms.
- Yes
- Yes we have our own mini beast pots and magnifying glass... we also have started growing more plants as well as using old pots and pans to make our own mud kitchen.
- Yes, bug hunts, feeding birds, painting tree.
- Elder child constantly hunting minibuses!
- When we have my nephew we get him outdoors as much as possible as he really enjoys being outside. We use water & brushes and paint pictures on the driveway, make cereal bird hangers. Collect leaves for leaf rubbings etc
- Yes
- Cheerios on branches Making stickman Loving growing our own 'little saplings'
- No, as normally attends with grandparent
- We have been inspired to go on our own bug hunt in our backyard and found some ants. I am excited to see if there any activities in the future sessions that we could repeat ourselves.
- Yes
- Yes - painting with muddy water, planting
- Yes, we have done lots of bug finding at home
- Yes
- Not yet
- Yes. Planting. Painting trees digging for creatures. Bought super worm book. Children loved it.
- Yes

92% of participants have replicated some form of Little Saplings since going, the remaining 8% said not yet, but are planning to.

Is there anything Little Saplings could do better?

- No, its a fantastic class and I hope it continues after summer!
- Can't think of anything. You're doing a brilliant job
- Not at all. We think the Little Saplings sessions are spot on.
- Alison is really lovely and a great facilitator. I find her knowledgeable about so many things and interesting to learn more.
- Not at all, We would attend every week if we could

- I think you do a fabulous job and we love attending the sessions. Possibly clip boards to make mark making easier or a stamp as not many are writing.
- More events consistently
- Weekend sessions?
- Maybe some weekend family events
- No nothing it was great at the time my little one didn't walk so think does suit walkers better as pram was getting stuck in mud but can't wait to go back now he's walking think he will benefit so much more
Maybe more info on bugs,trees etc,hide them on the trail for children to find,parachute for group activity,sing as well as story at the end of each session,fire at every session.
- Can't think of anything. Activities are appropriate in terms of level, structure and amount. Staff and volunteers are lovely with the children. Equipment is fine.
- Can't think of anything...
- Just have more of them
- No, we absolutely love it, it's one of the best groups we've attended
- Can't think of anything. Thank you so much for the wonderful sessions!
- Have more sessions!
- It is fab as it is. I think if the group that attends becomes big the experience might not be quite the same
- Well organised, love it as it is
- No, we moved out of the area in September 2021 so I haven't been since then. But Lavinia and I always enjoyed our sessions - we started when she was still in her pram before she was fully walking (before covid!) loved every session - thank you for putting them on!