

# What activities do children with disability living in Victoria participate in?



## A very big 'Thank You'!

Between September 2009 and June 2010, we invited children with disability living in Victoria to take part in a survey to help us understand more about the activities they participate in.

We want to thank all the children and parents who contacted us to express their interest and those who took the time to complete our questionnaires. We understand they can take a long time to fill out and we really appreciate your effort and help.

In this newsletter, we will tell you what we learned from the information you gave us. We will not tell you about individual children, only about the children altogether. This means that your experience might be different from the whole group. We hope you find this information interesting.

Best wishes,  
Nora Shields and Annie Synnot

## Who took part in the study?

- **325 families** contacted us about the study.
- We sent out **555 questionnaires**: 274 questionnaires were sent out to families who contacted us and 281 questionnaires were sent out through schools and community organisations.
- **286 children** with disability and their families returned completed questionnaires.
- There were **177 boys and 109 girls**; the average age was **11.5 years** and ranged from 6 to 18 years.
- 166 children went to **public or private schools**, 104 children went to a **special school** and 16 children had either finished school, were home-schooled or went to more than one type of school.



## Where did the children live?

- The families in our study came from **all over Victoria**; 200 families lived in a **major city**, 71 families lived in a **regional area** and 9 families lived in **outer regional areas**.

## What type of disability did children have?

- 95 children had **multiple disabilities**, 77 children had a **physical disability**, 67 children had an **intellectual disability**, 22 children had a **hearing impairment**, 15 children had **Autism Spectrum Disorder** and 12 children had **vision impairment**.
- 78 children were described by their parent as having a **mild disability**, 157 children were described as having a **moderate disability** and 49 children as having a **severe disability**.
- 129 children also had **additional health conditions** (such as learning disabilities, communication disorders and epilepsy) that may have affected their ability to take part in activities.

## What type of activities did we ask children about?

The CAPE questionnaire that children filled out, asked about 55 activities. These were divided into 5 main groups:

- **Recreational activities:** for example, playing board games or watching TV
- **Physical activities:** for example, athletics or playing team sports
- **Social activities:** for example, talking on the phone or visiting friends and family
- **Skill-based activities:** for example, learning to dance or swimming
- **Self-improvement activities:** for example, doing homework or doing chores

## What were the 20 most common activities children did?

The table below lists the 20 most common activities that children participated in. The two columns to the right of the activity, list the total number of children that responded 'yes' to this activity and the percentage of children that responded 'yes' out of all children that gave a response to this activity.

Rank	Item	n=	%
1	Watching TV	283	99
2	Going shopping	271	95
3	Visiting friends or family	265	93
4	Playing computer games	261	91
5	Listening to music	257	90
6	Reading	246	86
7	Going to the movies	241	84
8	Doing chores	239	84
9	Talking on the phone	239	83
10	Going on a full-day outing	230	80

Rank	Item	n=	%
11	Making food	230	80
12	Going to a party	228	80
13	Doing homework	220	77
14	Playing with toys	219	76
15	Doing crafts	217	76
16	Playing board games	216	75
17	Going for a walk/hike	215	75
18	Playing games	214	75
19	Playing with pets	211	74
20	Going swimming	211	74

## What kind of activities were children doing?

- On average, children took part in a large number of activities: participating in 28 out of 55 possible activities.
- Children took part in a greater number of recreational activities (8 out of 12) and social activities (8 out of 10), than physical activities (4 out of 13), skill-based activities (2 out of 10) and self-improvement activities (5 out of 10).
- Children took part in more informal activities (25 out of 40) which do not need much planning than formal activities (3 out of 15) which might have instructors or set times to do the activity.

## What else did we learn about children's activities?

- Children took part in recreational activities about once a week, and in physical, skill-based, social and self-improvement activities about once a month.
- Children usually took part in activities with their family or relatives. They did most of their recreational and self-improvement activities at home and most of their physical, social and skill-based activities in their neighbourhood.
- Children 'very much' enjoyed the recreational, physical, social and skill-based activities that they took part in. They 'pretty much' enjoyed their self-improvement activities.
- Children said they would like to be doing most activities.

## What influenced children's participation?

We also looked at whether characteristics of the child, their family and their environment made a difference to the number of activities a child took part in.



- Younger children and children who were described as having a mild level of disability tended to take part in more activities overall.
- Boys and children whose families had more socio-economic opportunities were more likely to take part in more physical activities.
- Children who were described as having a mild level of disability tended to take part in more social activities.
- Girls and children whose families had more socio-economic opportunities were more likely to take part in more skill-based activities.
- Children who were described as having a mild level of disability tended to take part in more self-improvement activities.

## What activities would children most like to do?

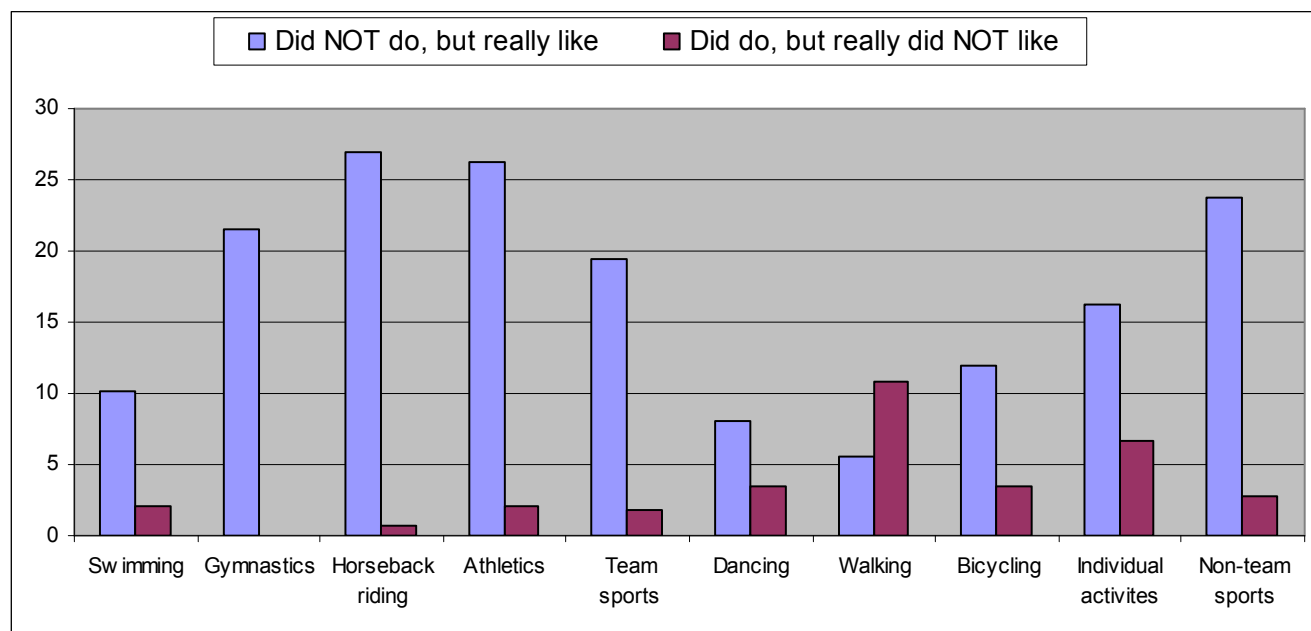
Rank	Item	%
1	Play computer games	80
2	Go to the movies	79
3	Watch TV	79
4	Go to a party	75
5	Listen to music	73
6	Go on a full-day outing	71
7	Visit friends or family	70
8	Play games	66
9	Swim	64
10	Go to a live event	64



## Were children doing their preferred physical activities?

We wanted to know how many children were doing physical activities that they said they would really love to do and how many children were doing activities that they said they would not like to do at all.

- Very few children were doing physical activities that they did not like.
- However, many children were not doing physical activities they said they would really like to do such as gymnastics, horseback riding and athletics.



Note: Percentage is on the y-axis

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