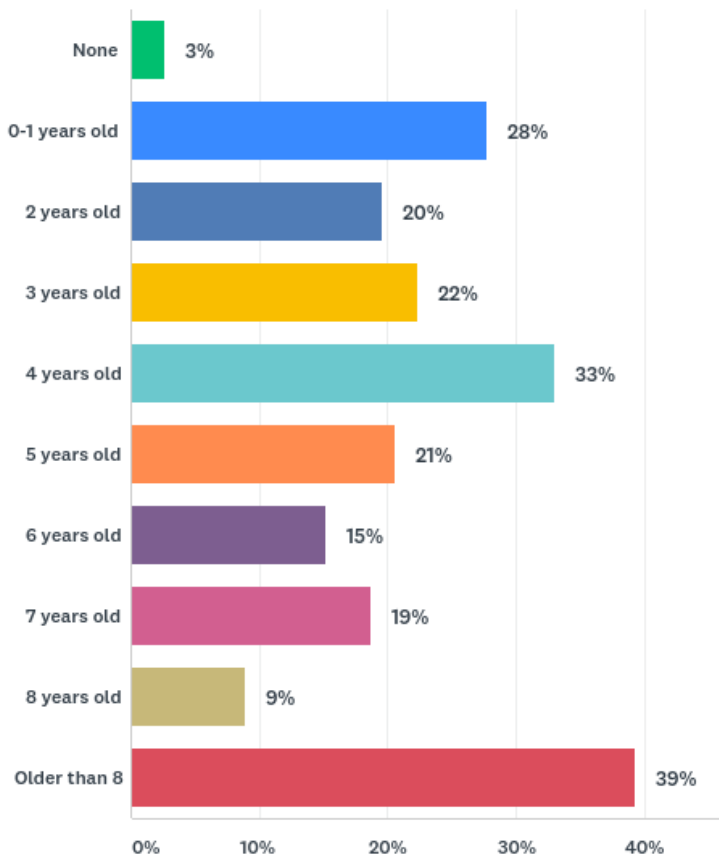


Early Learning Alliance Network Parks Survey

The Alliance distributed the 2017 survey on parks programs to better understand the early childhood offerings from the Parks Department. The survey was distributed through the Early Learning Alliance Network and its partners. Overall, 111 individuals completed the survey.



The majority of respondents reported living in Fishers, with approximately 34% of respondents representing other areas in Hamilton County (including Carmel, Noblesville, and Westfield). Respondents represented individuals with children of varying ages, and households with no children.

Of the respondents 1% visited Fishers parks daily, 33% weekly, 31% monthly, 20% 1-4 times per year, 10% 5-10 times per year, and 5% not at all. Respondents with at least one five year old in the house reported visiting the Fishers parks most frequently (weekly), while respondents with at least one child between 0-1 and 4 years old reported visiting the parks monthly. However, the majority of respondents with 2 year olds in their house reported visiting the park weekly and or daily.

The overall quality of Fishers parks earned 4.5 stars. The overall physical conditions of the Fishers parks earned a 4.4 stars from respondents. The overall quality and physical condition of the parks was rated highest by respondents with children ages 0-3 in the household.

Overall respondents of children ages 0-8 reported participating in one or more of the programs offered by the Fishers Parks and Recreation Department.

Overall the quality of those programs was rated highest by respondents with children age 6 and/or 8 in the household. Respondents with children ages 0-1, 3, and 5 were the second highest raters if Parks programs.



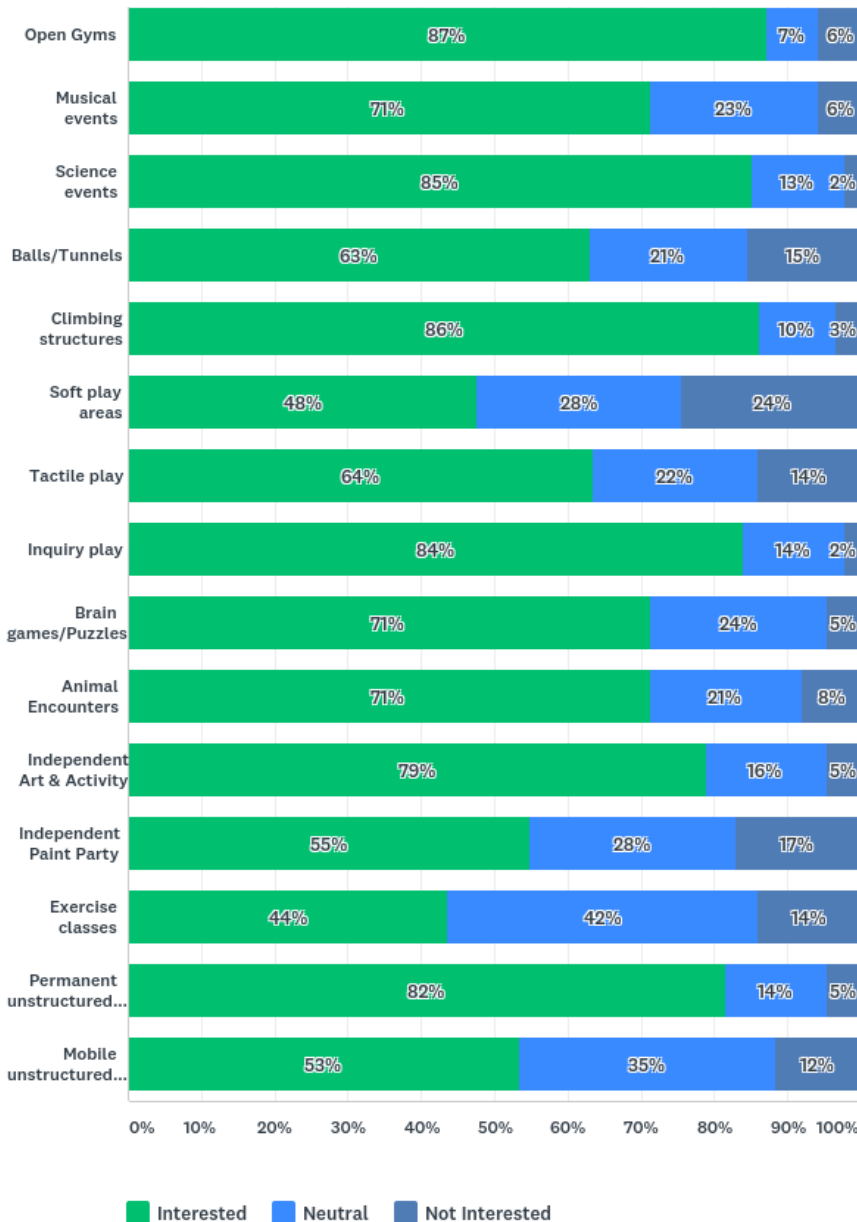
Parents of children ages 0-1 suggest their needs can be better served by providing day time programs also include parent activities so that children can play independently, more inclusive time frames for working parents, more indoor physical play activities, attention to age ranges (e.g., 13 year olds aren't playing around 2 year olds), and more indoor play options for winter months.

“We temporarily lived in Chicago and loved their parks department! They offered so many affordable classes. They offered a 45 minute drop off sports class for 3-6yo and it was awesome! They played games and learned skills while I got a little break!”

Parents of 2-4 year olds suggested more play structures designed specifically for younger children within current playgrounds, more offerings on different days (e.g., with part time preschool often running 2 or 3 days a week if programs are only offered on Tuesday/Thursday some families are automatically not included), and weekend programs for parents that work full time.

Parents of 5-8 year olds suggested additional playgrounds and splash pads, more programs that immerse kids in nature and the outdoors in warmer weather and more activities that bring the outdoors inside for kids to explore during winter months, and indoor play spaces that are designed for different age groups in the same, safe place.

Specific to activities for winter months, parents suggested public play dates indoors with snacks and drinks available for purchase, more art and science activities, music programs in door targeted towards kids, more indoor play spaces that are for physical play, animal encounters, scavenger hunts around the community, and inquiry-based learning and loose parts play opportunities. Overall interest in possible indoor programs is show in the chart to the left.



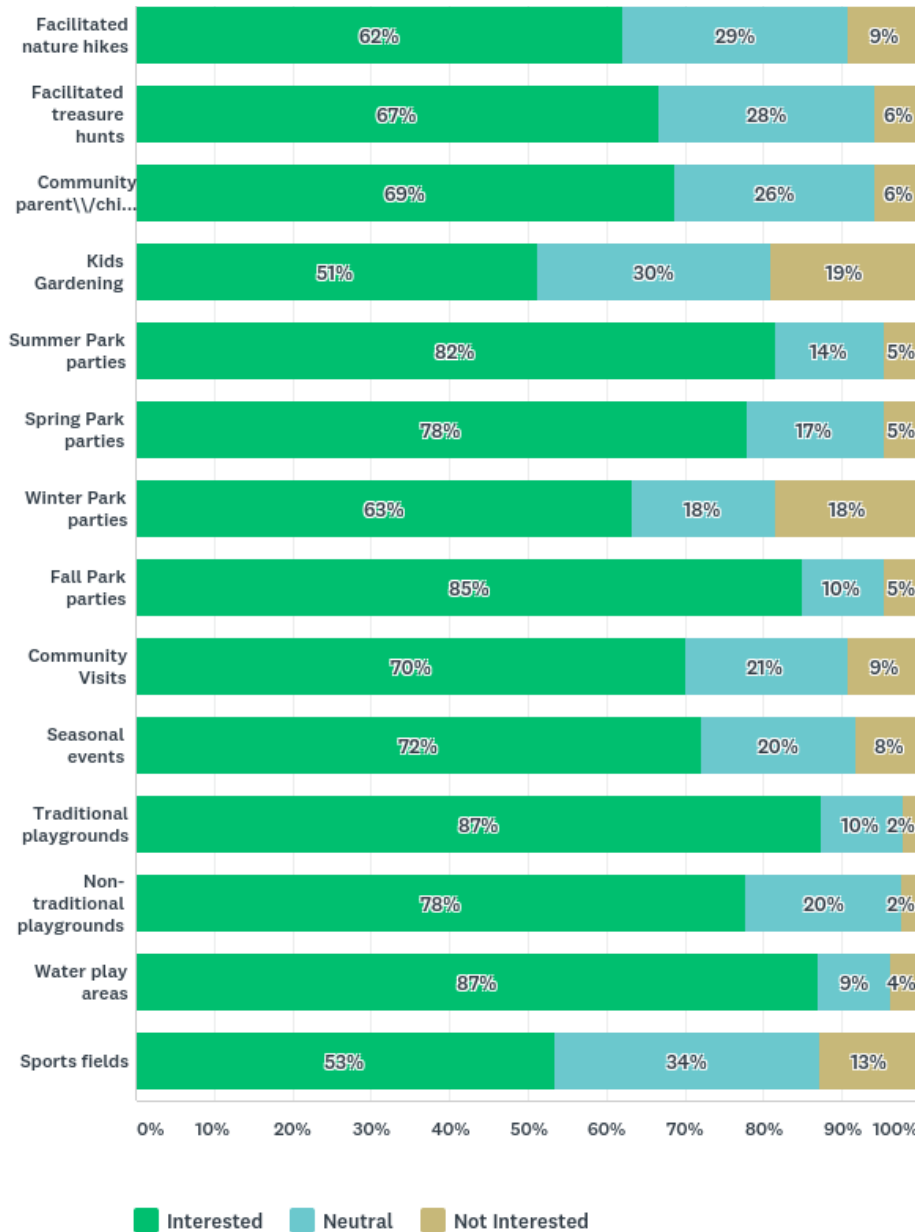
“I believe the Parks Department should stick with what they do best and grow upon that. Your outdoor stuff and activities are great and could be better! They are too packed for families with kids and need more to do to help with the crowds. It concerns me that you are asking about indoor stuff because you should stick with what makes you special! THE OUTDOORS! Families need that and we need you to help us all love the outdoors. There are plenty of other places that do a great job indoors so let them do that and you help our kids love to "PLAY" to love the MUD and more! Parents tend to not do much with their child outdoors and they tend to not play with them as much. Your programs allow families to play and to enjoy the outdoors! Grow with that and Fishers will benefit from this!

Participants noted that specific to **indoor activities** they were most interested in open gyms, climbing structures, science events, inquiry play, and independent arts and activities (see the chart for percentage scores in each category). Several participants noted that the size of events needs to be more limited for young children so that they can learn, engage, and explore without being overstimulated and/or afraid. Ideas that were offered among participants for additional programs included school break camps, safety programs, culture events for children to explore Fishers, a community camp out for little kids and parents, star gazing, and offerings that are inclusive of individuals with sensory and/or special needs. On a more broad level, participants in the community were most interested in seeing the Parks Department provide additional walking and biking trails, smaller community parks, additional larger community parks, and a community center serving both adults and children.

The following table provides an overview of time slots and preferences for program times for children of specific ages.

	0-1 years	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 years	6 years	7 years	8 years
9	[Shaded]							
10	1st	1st	1st	1st	1st	4th	4th	4th
11	2nd	4th	[Shaded]		3rd	[Shaded]		
12	[Shaded]							
1	[Shaded]							
2	[Shaded]							
3	[Shaded]							
4	4th	[Shaded]	2nd	2nd	2nd	1st	3rd	2nd

5	3rd	2nd	3rd	4th	4th	2nd	2nd	1st
6	5th	3rd	4th	3rd		3rd	1st	3rd



"We need a place in our community to gather. There really isn't any place to gather. I see [local vineyard] and the people that gather with children and dogs and wonder how we can replicate that as a city."

Regarding outdoor play, participants were most interested in Summer and Fall parks parties, traditional playgrounds, water play areas, parent/child hikes/scavenger hunts/or treasure hunts. As shown in the chart to the left, the interest levels by participants varied.

The survey proved helpful to the Early Learning Alliance Network in thinking about how we are able to contribute to the strengthening and quality of programs that support our youngest residents to be active learners, thinkers, doers, observers, and connectors.

The Early Learning Alliance Network is a not for profit organization that is fueled by a shared passion for purposeful, transparent, and high quality early learning experiences for all children in Hamilton County, Indiana ages birth through age eight. We are composed of educators, leaders, advocates, parents, and professionals who see a need to collaboratively facilitate our community efforts to ignite high quality early learning.

- We provide a mechanism to stay informed about early learning and get information on local resources.
- We collect and share data to empower the community to make decisions, be proactive, and respond purposefully to the needs of all early learners.
- We provide professional development, family/parent education, and convene our community in efforts to accelerate achievement of our mission.