

University of Chester

**This work has been submitted to ChesterRep – the University of Chester’s
online research repository**

<http://chesterrep.openrepository.com>

Author(s): Rebecca Manning; Catherine Perry

Title: Sure Start Dino parent satisfaction survey

Date: February 2005

Originally published in:

Example citation: Manning, R., & Parry, C. (2005). *Sure Start Dino parent satisfaction survey*. Chester: University College Chester

Version of item: Published version

Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10034/7917>

Sure Start Dino
Parent satisfaction survey

Rebecca Manning
Catherine Perry

February 2005

ISBN: 1-902275-44-6

Acknowledgements

There are a number of people who we would like to thank for their help with this survey:

- the parents and carers who completed and returned questionnaires;
- all of the members of the Sure Start team who helped to design the questionnaires and co-ordinate the survey.

The survey was carried out as part of the local evaluation of the Sure Start Dino programme and was funded by NCH (the Accountable Body for Sure Start Dino).

Table of contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	i
Table of contents	ii
List of tables	iv
List of figures	v
Executive summary	vi
Chapter 1	Background
1.1	Background 1
1.2	Monitoring and evaluation 2
1.3	Aim and objectives 2
Chapter 2	Study design and methodology
2.1	Introduction 3
2.2	The population sampled 3
2.3	Design of the questionnaire 3
2.4	Distribution of questionnaires 4
Chapter 3	Results
3.1	Introduction 6
3.2	Socio-demographic information 7
3.3	Number of children in households surveyed and their ages 8
3.4	Knowledge and use of Sure Start Dino services 10
3.5	Community services 10
3.5.1	Disability and service use 13
3.5.2	Single parent status and service use 13
3.5.3	The number of children respondents have in their household and service use 14
3.5.4	Age of respondents and service use 15
3.6	Use of and satisfaction with community services 16
3.6.1	Use of and satisfaction with services in group 1 17
3.6.2	Use of and satisfaction with services in group 2 20
3.6.3	Use of and satisfaction with services in group 3 21
3.6.4	Use of and satisfaction with services in group 4 23

3.6.5	Use of and satisfaction with services in group 5	25
3.7	Services in the home	26
3.8	Drop in/advice service	26
3.9	Overall satisfaction	27
3.10	Further comments made by respondents	28
3.10.1	Service satisfaction	28
3.10.2	Knowledge of and information about Sure Start services	30
3.10.3	Future delivery and use of Sure Start services	30
Chapter 4	Discussion	
4.1	The design of the survey and the sample	32
4.2	Awareness of services	33
4.3	Use of services	34
4.4	Satisfaction	36
4.5	Conclusion	37
References		39
Appendices		
Appendix 1	The questionnaire and prize draw entry leaflet	40
Appendix 2	Participant information sheet	41
Appendix 3	Details of telephone calls made	42
Appendix 4	Frequency of use of services	43
Appendix 5	Satisfaction with services	44
Appendix 6	Descriptions of Sure Start Dino services	45
Appendix 7	Comments made by respondents	46

List of tables

Table		Page
2.4.1	Timetable for the administration of the questionnaires	5
3.3.1	The number of children in the respondents' households	9
3.5.2.1	Single parent status and number of services used	14
3.5.3.1	Number of children in respondents' households and number of services used	15
3.5.4.1	The number of services used by each of the age groups	15
3.6.1	Community-based services used by a small number of respondents	17

List of figures

Figure		Page
3.2.1	Age of respondents on their last birthday	8
3.3.1	Ages of children in respondents' households	9
3.5.1	Percentage (number) of respondents using each community service	11
3.5.2	The total number of community services used by the respondents	12
3.6.1.1	Use of services in group 1	18
3.6.1.2	Level of satisfaction reported by respondents using services in group 1	19
3.6.2.1	Use of services in group 2	20
3.6.2.2	Level of satisfaction reported by respondents using services in group 2	21
3.6.3.1	Use of services in group 3	22
3.6.3.2	Level of satisfaction reported by respondents using services in group 3	23
3.6.4.1	Use of services in group 4	24
3.6.4.2	Level of satisfaction reported by respondents using services in group 4	25
3.9.1	Overall level of satisfaction with Sure Start Dino services	27

Executive summary

Introduction

Sure Start is a government initiative introduced in April 1999 with the aim of meeting the needs of families with children aged 0-4 years who are living in areas of high socio-economic deprivation. There are currently 524 Sure Start local programmes in England serving over 300,000 children and their families. Sure Start Dino, a fifth round programme established in 2002, is one of five Sure Start programmes currently operating in Halton. It is a statutory requirement of the Sure Start Unit that monitoring and evaluation of Sure Start services is carried out, and the Centre for Public Health Research, University College Chester, was commissioned to carry out this survey of parent satisfaction with Sure Start Dino services.

Study design and methodology

The overall aim of the study was:

- to establish levels of satisfaction with services amongst parents or carers of children aged 0-4 years in the Sure Start Dino area during the last year.

A survey approach was used with a postal questionnaire that was sent to all families eligible to use Sure Start Dino services. This ensured that it was not only those parents and carers who were registered with Sure Start Dino who received questionnaires, but also those parents and carers who were entitled to use the services but did not. The questionnaire was devised in collaboration with the Sure Start Dino team.

Results

Nine hundred questionnaires were sent out to 'eligible families' in the Sure Start Dino area. In total, 107 questionnaires were completed: 80 questionnaires were returned in the post and 27 questionnaires were completed over the telephone. There were 101 valid responses used in the analysis giving a response rate of 11%.

The majority of respondents were female (97%) and aged between 25 and 34 years old (63%). Thirty of the respondents (30%) classified themselves as single parents and 6% of respondents stated that they had a disability.

The majority of respondents knew that there were Sure Start Dino services available in their area and all of the 17 community services were used by at least one respondent. Those services that were used by the highest number of respondents included: Dino Dots and Tots, 51% (51 out of 101); the Child Safety Equipment service, 46% (46 out of 101); and Day Trips and Events, 40% (40 out of 101). Those services that were used by the lowest number of respondents included: Messy/Busy Kids, 5% (5 out of 101); Cook and Taste, 4% (4 out of 101); Speech and Language, 4% (4 out of 101); and Special Needs Support, 3% (3 out of 101). Nine people (9%) had used Sure Start services at home and 25 respondents (25%) stated that they had used the drop in/advice service.

For all of the services, the majority of respondents indicated that they had used them more than once and that they had found them useful/helpful or very useful/helpful. Eighty three respondents (82%) answered the question regarding overall levels of satisfaction with the Sure Start Dino services that they had received. Of these, 81 respondents (98%) stated that overall they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied', and two respondents (2%) were 'dissatisfied' with Sure Start Dino services.

Those completing the questionnaire were given the opportunity to comment further upon any aspect of Sure Start Dino services. Fifty six (55%) out of the 101 respondents made additional comments which included: positive and negative comments about the services, service accessibility and usage; comments concerning knowledge and information about the services and how to encourage use; and suggestions for future delivery and intended future use of services.

Discussion

Although the overall response rate (11%) to this survey was low, it did access a sample of families eligible to receive Sure Start Dino services and has provided a picture of the use of, and satisfaction with, the services offered at Sure Start Dino. The findings have indicated a high overall level of satisfaction with services, as well as a high level of satisfaction with the individual services. There was some indication that the services were less frequently used by those parents and carers who have a disability and by single parents. It was also highlighted that access to services may be restricted if parents and carers had to make provision to care for older children and in the cases of those parents and carers in employment. Despite the provision of a newsletter and service timetable on registration and quarterly newsletters and service timetables to all registered families, a proportion of respondents (44%) indicated that they would like more information about Sure Start Dino services.

When considering the future development of Sure Start Dino services, it would be useful to explore the following:

- the reasons for satisfaction with services, in order to incorporate success;
- the reasons for dissatisfaction with some of the services;
- the small numbers of parents and carers accessing some of the services, particularly those services where specific delivery targets are applicable;
- the role that lack of knowledge and access to information may have in the non-use of services;
- different ways of providing information about services;
- ways of engaging single parents;
- the plausibility in terms of cost-effectiveness and time, of the provision of additional services for those parents and carers who have a disability;
- the plausibility in terms of cost-effectiveness and time, of the provision of additional services for those parents and carers who are unable to access services due to work commitment.

Chapter 1

Background

1.1 Background

Sure Start is a government initiative which was introduced in April 1999 with the aim of meeting the needs of families with children aged 0-4 years who are living in areas of high socio-economic deprivation. There are currently 524 Sure Start local programmes in England serving over 300,000 children and their families (The NESS Research Team, 2004), with an estimated budget of over £500 million per year (Glass, 2003). Sure Start local programmes are central to the UK Government's policy for combating the adverse effects of poverty and disadvantage on children and their families (The NESS Research Team, 2004) and the Sure Start initiative aims to reach a third of all children under four who are living in poverty in England (Kenny, 2002).

The Sure Start programme has four long-term objectives:

- improving social and emotional development;
- improving health;
- improving learning;
- strengthening families and communities.

Sure Start Dino is one of five Sure Start programmes currently operating in Halton. It is a fifth round programme which was established in 2002, for which the NCH children's charity is the Accountable Body. Sure Start Dino is based at the Brookvale Children's Centre, and serves the wards of Brookvale, Murdishaw and Windmill Hill.

1.2 Monitoring and evaluation

It is a statutory requirement of the Sure Start Unit that monitoring and evaluation of Sure Start services is carried out. The Centre for Public Health Research, University College Chester, was commissioned to carry out this survey of parent satisfaction with Sure Start Dino services.

1.3 Aim and objectives

The aim of the survey was:

- to establish levels of satisfaction with services amongst parents or carers of children aged 0-4 years in the Sure Start Dino area during the last year.

The objectives were:

- to explore levels of knowledge about Sure Start;
- to explore the number of users of each service;
- to explore the satisfaction levels of service users, and obtain comments about the services;
- to obtain demographic information about the respondents and their families, including those parents and children with disabilities;
- to inform the future development of services;
- to raise the profile of services;
- to fulfil national requirements for reporting levels of satisfaction with Sure Start services.

Chapter 2

Study design and methodology

2.1 Introduction

A survey approach was used in order to investigate users' satisfaction with Sure Start Dino services. Data were collected using a postal questionnaire that was sent to all eligible families in the Sure Start Dino area. Approval from the Local Research Ethics Committee and the Primary Care Trust Research Governance Group was obtained before the work commenced.

2.2 The population sampled

The target population incorporated all families eligible to use Sure Start Dino services. In this instance, the 'eligible families' were those families with children aged 0-4 years living in the Sure Start Dino catchment area. This ensured that it was not only those parents and carers who were registered with Sure Start Dino who received questionnaires, but also those parents and carers who were entitled to use the services but did not, and so were not registered.

2.3 Design of the questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix 1) was devised in collaboration with the Sure Start Dino team and in the light of previous Sure Start parent satisfaction questionnaires developed by the Centre for Public Health Research (CPHR). The following areas were covered:

- demographic information: the number and ages of children in each household; whether the respondent considered themselves to be a single parent; age and gender of the respondent; if the respondent or any of their children under the age of four had a disability;
- awareness of services;
- level of use of services;
- level of satisfaction with individual services;

-
- overall level of satisfaction.

Respondents were also invited to make comments regarding Sure Start Dino services.

2.4 Distribution of questionnaires

Using information obtained from the Child Health Database the Sure Start Dino team were able to produce a mailing list consisting of all the 'eligible families' in their area. The questionnaire packs were distributed by post, addressed to the "Parents of (name of child)". Each pack comprised a questionnaire (Appendix 1), a prize draw leaflet (Appendix 1), a participant information sheet (Appendix 2), and a pre-paid return envelope (for return to the CPHR).

The following steps were taken in an attempt to increase the response rate for the survey:

- parents and carers could obtain assistance with completing the questionnaire by ringing Sure Start Dino should they so wish;
- the questionnaire was available in large print;
- a pre-paid envelope was enclosed with the questionnaire;
- the deadline for the return of completed questionnaires was extended and fliers were distributed around local GP surgeries, shops, sports centres and nurseries informing parents and carers of this and that they could obtain another questionnaire if the first one had been misplaced;
- the researcher telephoned parents and carers for whom telephone numbers were held to encourage them to complete the questionnaire;
- those parents and carers who completed the questionnaire and returned it with the prize draw leaflet were entered into a free prize draw with five prizes of £25 worth of supermarket vouchers.

The prize draw leaflet also gave respondents the opportunity to ask for further information about Sure Start Dino services or to request an appointment to see a member of the Sure Start team.

On receipt of each completed questionnaire and prize draw leaflet, the leaflet was detached from the questionnaire to ensure that responses could not be identified with specific individuals. Each questionnaire was allocated a participant number and the data were entered into a Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) database. The prize draw leaflets were returned to Sure Start Dino where the draw was conducted, with winners being notified by letter.

Table 2.4.1 illustrates the timetable for the distribution and handling of the questionnaires.

Table 2.4.1 Timetable for the administration of the questionnaires

Task	Date carried out
Mailing of questionnaires	17.09.04
Distribution of fliers	w/c* 04.10.04
Telephone calls to non-respondents	w/c* 11.10.04
Extended closing date	13.10.04
Prize Draw	15.10.04

* Week commencing

Chapter 3

Results

3.1 Introduction

Nine hundred questionnaires were sent out to 'eligible families' in the Sure Start Dino area. In total, 107 questionnaires were returned. Of these, 80 questionnaires were returned in the post, and 27 questionnaires were completed over the telephone.

In order to obtain the telephone questionnaires, two weeks after the postal distribution the telephone numbers for all those families registered with Sure Start Dino who had not returned their questionnaire were obtained. A total of 341 telephone calls were made. One hundred and eighty three calls were successful, that is they were answered by either a person or a machine, allowing participation to be encouraged. One hundred and thirty one calls were unsuccessful, with 77 calls (59%) being made to dead telephone lines, and 11 calls (7%) being made to incorrect or duplicate numbers. Further details about the telephone calls made may be found in Appendix 3.

Six of the questionnaires were excluded from the analysis for the following reasons:

- one questionnaire was returned uncompleted and had been ripped up;
- one questionnaire was returned as the addressee no longer lived at the given address;
- two of the respondents were omitted as there were no children cared for/living in the household;
- two questionnaires were returned after the closing date.

The 101 remaining valid responses that were used in the analysis gave a response rate of 11%.

All of the respondents did not reply to all of the questions. For those questions looking at frequency of use of services if the response 'never' was entered, then the response 'not applicable' was entered when asked about 'satisfaction with service'. In the case of those questions where no response was given 'no response' was recorded on the SPSS database. The total number of individuals responding to each question may be found in Appendices 4 and 5.

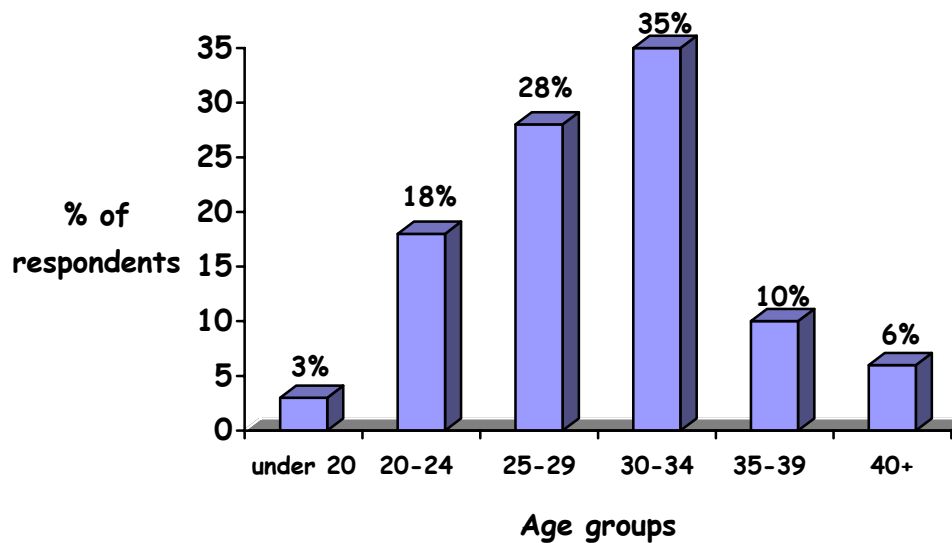
Figures used in this Chapter have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3.2 Socio-demographic information

The majority of those responding to the questionnaire were female (97%, 98 out of 101), with the remaining three respondents being male (3%). Thirty of the respondents were single parents (30%), and one respondent was a grandmother (1%). All of the respondents who stated that they were single parents were female. Six of the respondents (6%) also stated that they had a disability, with one of these respondents being male.

Figure 3.2.1 illustrates the ages of those individuals who responded to the questionnaire, broken down into 6 age categories: under 20, 20-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, and 40 and over.

Figure 3.2.1 Age of respondents on their last birthday

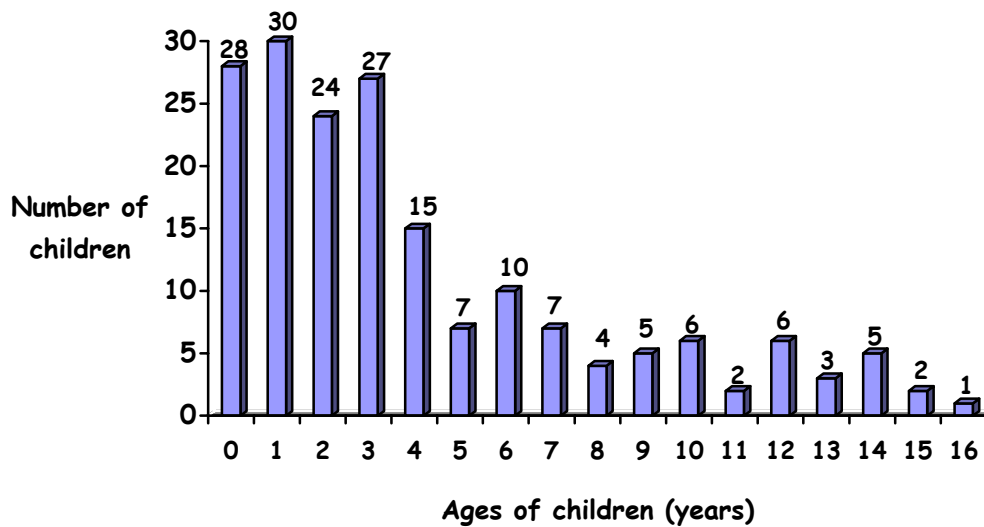


It can be seen that the majority of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 34 years old (63%, 64 out of 101). Twenty one percent (21 out of 101) of the respondents were aged 24 and below, and 16% (16 out of 101) of the respondents were aged 35 or above.

3.3 Number of children in households surveyed and their ages

Respondents were asked to give details of the number of children in their household, and the children's ages. One respondent did not record the ages of his/her children, but the remaining 100 did so. The children reported upon were aged between 0 and 16. Figure 3.3.1 illustrates the number of children in each age category.

Figure 3.3.1 Ages of children in respondents' households



From the bar chart it can be seen that a total of 182 children were recorded, 124 (68%) of whom were aged four or under. This age group of 0-4 years is the target age group at which Sure Start aims its services. Two of the respondents (2%) reported that they cared for a child who had a disability. One of the respondents was female and the other respondent was male, neither of whom were single parents.

Table 3.3.1 provides details on the number of children in the households of those responding to the questionnaire.

Table 3.3.1 The number of children in the respondents' households

Number of children	Number of responses	% of responses
Unable to ascertain	1	1
1	48	47
2	33	33
3	13	13
4	2	2
More than 4 children	4	4
TOTAL	101	100

It can be seen that 80% of the respondents (81 out of 101) had one or two children, with 19% (19 out of 101) having three or more children.

3.4 Knowledge and use of Sure Start Dino services

The majority of respondents (96%, 97 out of 101) knew that there were Sure Start Dino services available in their area. For the four respondents who stated that they did not know about Sure Start Dino services, two respondents did not record any responses, one respondent stated that s/he had never used the services, and one respondent had used one service.

The prize draw leaflet provided an opportunity for the respondents to ask for further information about Sure Start Dino services, and also arrange for an appointment to see a member of the Sure Start team. Ninety respondents completed the prize draw leaflet, of which 44% (40 out of 90) asked for further information. Two respondents (2%) asked for arrangements to be made for them to meet a member of the Sure Start team.

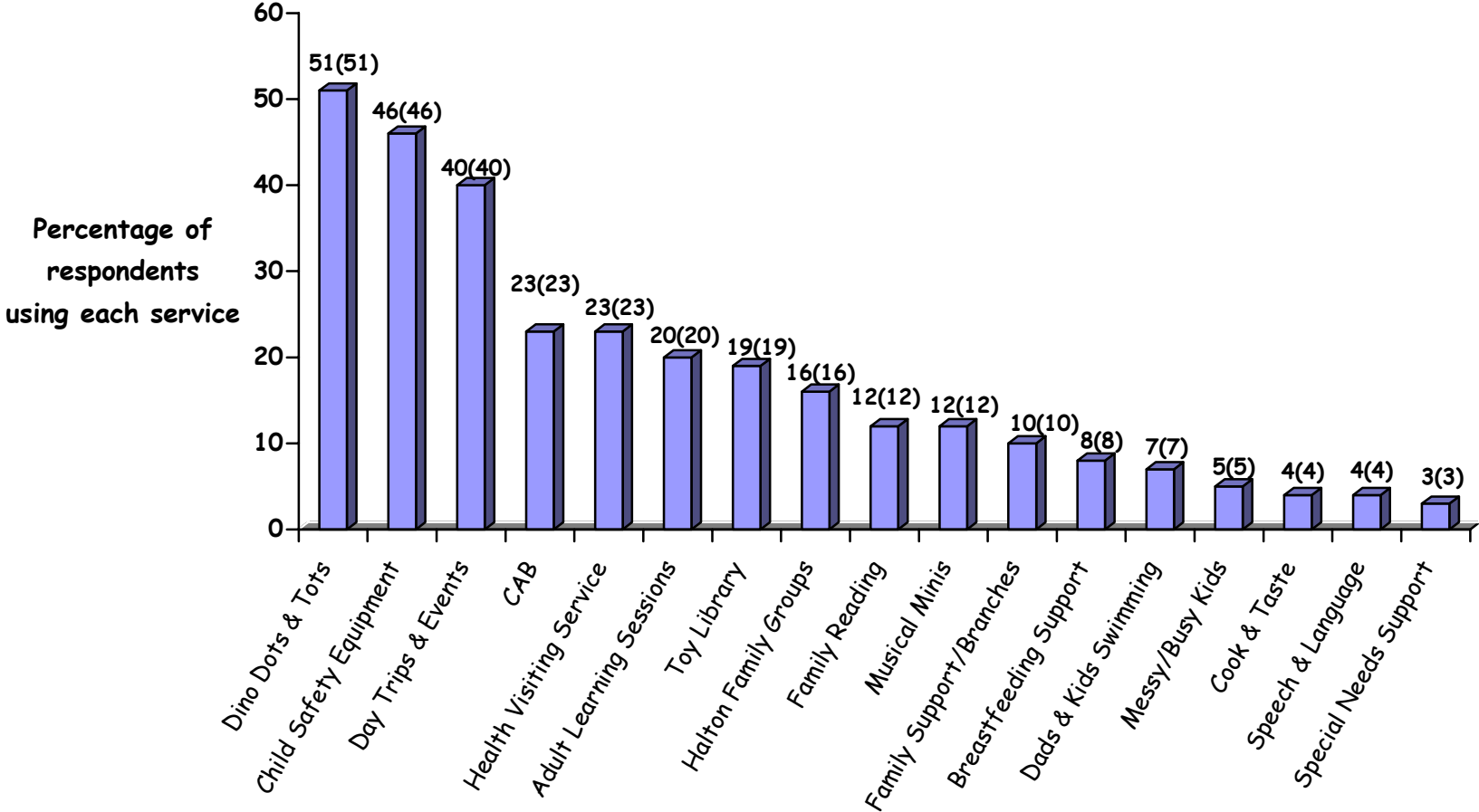
Respondents were questioned about three areas of service use:

- community services - respondents were asked whether they had used the 17 Sure Start Dino services available in the community and how satisfied they were with these services;
- services in the home;
- an informal drop-in/telephone service where parents/carers may access Sure Start staff for advice or to talk.

3.5 Community services

All of the 17 community services (see Appendices 4 and 5) were used by at least one respondent. Figure 3.5.1 illustrates the percentage of respondents who had used each of the 17 community services. These have been ranked in descending order.

Figure 3.5.1 Percentage (number) of respondents using each community service



Those services that were used by the highest number of respondents included:

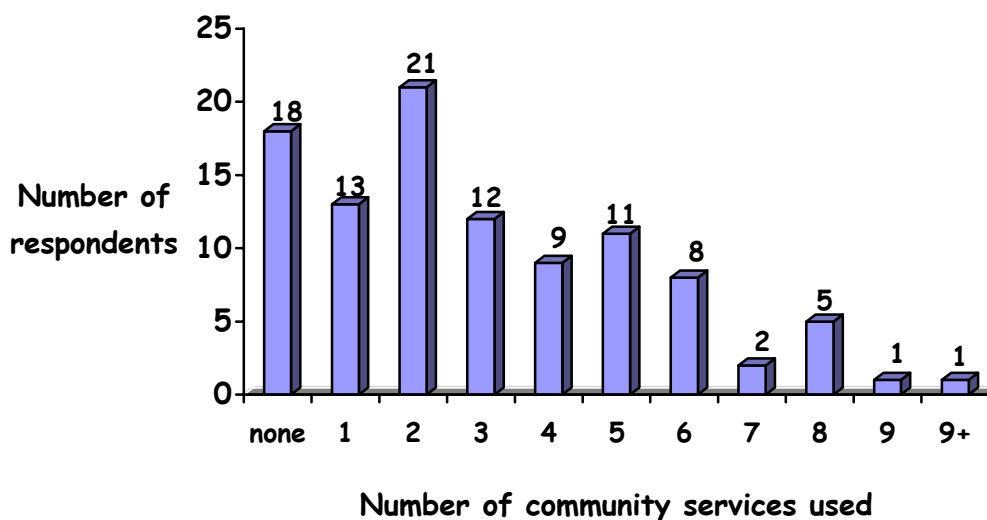
- Dino Dots and Tots, 51% (51 out of 101);
- the Child Safety Equipment service, 46% (46 out of 101);
- Day Trips and Events, 40% (40 out of 101).

Those services that were used by the lowest number of respondents included:

- Messy/Busy Kids, 5% (5 out of 101);
- Cook and Taste, 4% (4 out of 101);
- Speech and Language, 4% (4 out of 101),
- Special Needs Support, 3% (3 out of 101).

Figure 3.5.2 shows the number of different community services used by each of the families.

Figure 3.5.2. The total number of community services used by the respondents



It is apparent from Figure 3.5.2 that 55 respondents (54%) used between one and four services, 27 respondents (27%) used between five and nine services and one respondent (1%) used more than nine services. Fifteen respondents (15%) stated that they had 'never' used any of the 17 services, and three respondents (3%) did not give responses to indicate their use of any of the 17 services. One of the

respondents stated that it was not possible to use the services as her older child was disabled, and therefore accessing services was problematic.

The data were explored to see whether service use may be affected by:

- disability of the parent or carer;
- disability of any children living in the household;
- single parent status;
- the number of children respondents had in their household;
- age of respondent.

3.5.1 Disability and service use

Of the six respondents who stated that they had a disability, two had never used any of the services, and two had used only one service. Two of these six respondents also stated that they were dissatisfied with the overall service. These were the only two respondents in the entire survey who reported overall dissatisfaction.

Service use did not appear to be affected in the cases of the two respondents who reported that they lived with or cared for a disabled child, when compared to those parents and carers who did not. One exception was the instance referred to above of the mother with an older disabled child who found access problematic.

3.5.2 Single parent status and service use

Table 3.5.2.1 displays the number of services used by those who did and did not classify themselves as single parents. The percentage in brackets is calculated out of a total of 30 for those who stated they were single parents and out of 71 for those who stated they were not single parents. For example, eight of the 30 respondents who stated they were single parents did not use any services, which equals 27%.

Table 3.5.2.1 Single parent status and number of services used

Number of services used	Single Parent			
	Yes		No	
	No.	%	No.	%
No services	8	27	10	14
1-4 services	15	50	40	56
5-8 services	5	17	21	29
9 and above services	2	7	-	-

It can be seen that there was a similar proportion of single parents and non single parents who used between one and four services. The table also shows that single parents were more likely than those respondents who stated that they were not single parents to use no services at all, or nine or more services.

3.5.3 The number of children respondents have in their household and service use

The percentage figures displayed in Table 3.5.3.1 are calculated from the total number of respondents for each number of children. For example, eight of the 13 parents/carers who stated that they had three children used between one and four services, which equals 61%.

It was evident that those respondents who stated that they had one child or more than four children were less likely to use the services. For example, 11 respondents (23%) with one child in their household stated that they had never used the services, and three of the six respondents with more than four children (50%) had never used the services. It was also evident that one respondent with two children (3%) and one respondent with three children (8%) reported using nine or more services.

Table 3.5.3.1 Number of children in respondents' households and number of

services used

Number of children	Number of services used							
	None		1-4		5-8		9+	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Unable to ascertain	-	-	1	100	-	-	-	-
1	11	23	26	54	11	23	-	-
2	4	12	18	55	10	30	1	3
3	-	-	8	61	4	31	1	8
4+	3	50	2	33	1	17	-	-

3.5.4 Age of respondents and service use

Table 3.5.4.1 The number of services used by each of the age groups

Age	Number of services			
	No services	1 to 4 services	5 to 8 services	9 and above services
Below 20	1	1	1	0
20-24	4	12	2	0
25-29	4	11	11	2
30-34	6	22	8	0
35-39	3	5	2	0
40 and above	0	4	2	0

It can be seen in Table 3.5.4.1 that the two respondents who stated that they used nine or more services were in the 25-29 year old age group. The six respondents in the 40 years old and above category used between one and eight services. In the remaining five age categories there were respondents who stated that they had not used the services.

3.6 Use of and satisfaction with community services

The 17 community-based services that were offered to parents and carers in the Sure Start Dino area were organised into five categories for the purpose of this questionnaire, according to the nature of each service. A brief description of the services may be found in Appendix 6. These categories are outlined below:

Group 1 Support for families

CAB

Halton Family Groups

Cook and Taste

Family Support/Branches

Special Needs Support

Group 2 Early Learning

Dino Dots & Tots

Toy Library

Musical Minis

Messy/Busy Kids

Family Reading

Group 3 Kids Activities/Safety

Dads and Kids Swimming

Child Safety Equipment

Day Trips and Events

Group 4 Childcare/Parenting

Health Visiting Service

Breastfeeding Support

Speech and Language

Group 5 Adult Support

Adult Learning Sessions

Care needs to be taken when examining the results due to the low number of respondents who used some of the services as displayed in Figure 3.5.1. In particular, the services displayed in Table 3.6.1 were used by small numbers of respondents (less than 10).

Table 3.6.1 Community-based services used by a small number of respondents

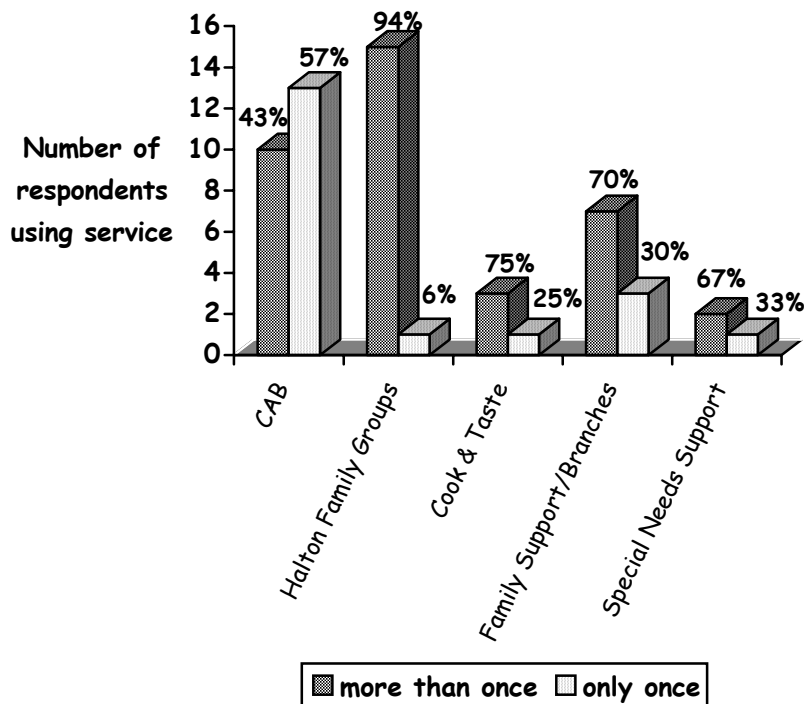
Group	Services	Number of respondents
1	Cook and Taste	4
	Special Needs Support	3
2	Messy/Busy Kids	5
3	Dads and Kids Swimming	7
4	Speech and Language	4
	Breastfeeding Support	8

When looking at the use of, and satisfaction with, each of the community services, the percentage figures given have been calculated from the total number of respondents using each service.

3.6.1 Use of and satisfaction with services in group 1

Group 1 includes those services in the 'support for families' section of the questionnaire. Figure 3.6.1.1 illustrates the patterns of use for each of the five services.

Figure 3.6.1.1 Use of services in group 1

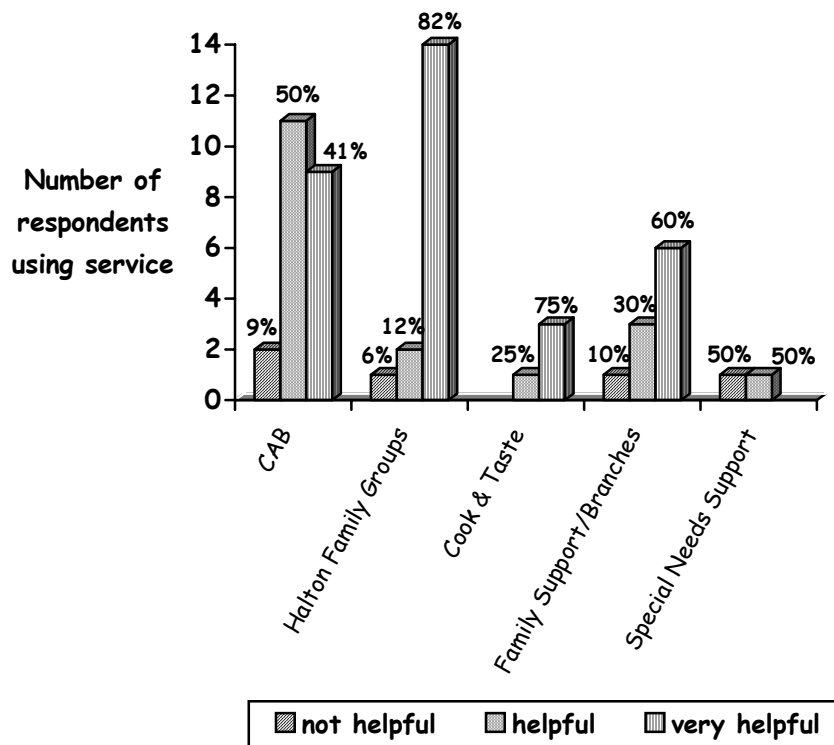


The following patterns were observed:

- Halton Family Groups, Cook and Taste, Family Support/Branches and the Special Needs Support service all had a greater percentage of respondents who had used the services on more than one occasion when compared to the number of respondents who had used the services only once. For example, 94% (15 out of 16) of those attending Halton Family Groups did so on more than one occasion when compared to 6% (1 out of 16) who attended only once. This demonstrates that once engaged the respondents re-visited the services;
- the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) had a greater percentage of respondents who used the service only once (57%, 13 out of 23) when compared to those respondents who had used the service more than once (43%, 10 out of 23). This may be attributed to the nature of this service in that it is often used as a 'one-off' service to assist with a particular, discrete issue or problem.

It was apparent that overall levels of satisfaction were high. Figure 3.6.1.2 illustrates the levels of satisfaction reported.

Figure 3.6.1.2. Level of satisfaction reported by respondents using services in group 1



In the case of the Special Needs Support service, although three respondents had stated they had used they had used the service, only two respondents had given their level of satisfaction.

In four of the five services some respondents had stated that the services were 'not helpful':

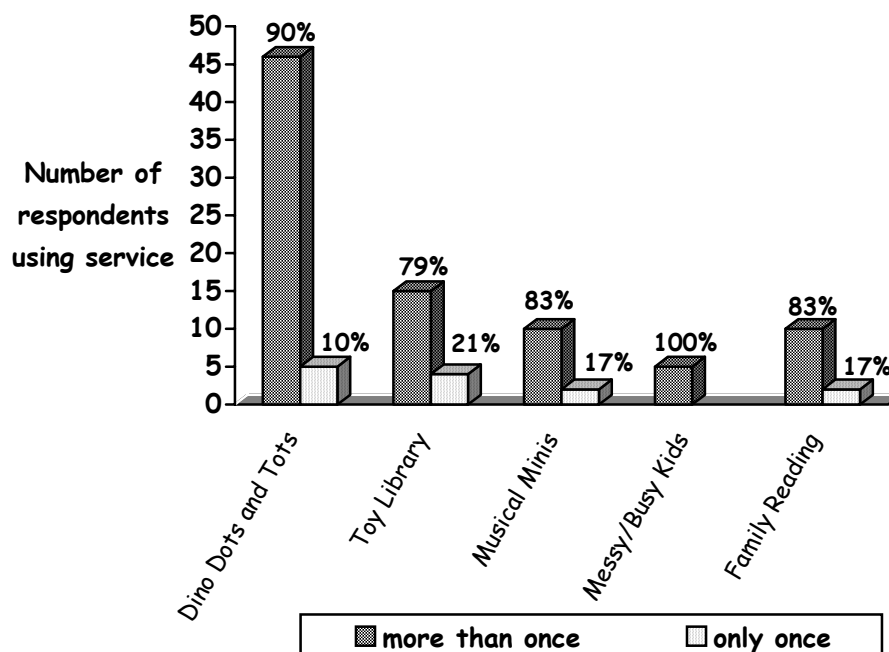
- the CAB had two respondents (9%);
- Halton Family Groups, Family Support/Branches, and the Special Needs Support service each had one respondent who had found the services 'not useful'. This represented 6%, 10% and 50% respectively of those using the services.

None of the respondents using the Special Needs Support service (3 people) considered it to be 'very helpful'.

3.6.2 Use of and satisfaction with services in group 2

Group 2 includes 'early learning' services. Figure 3.6.2.1 illustrates the patterns of use of the services.

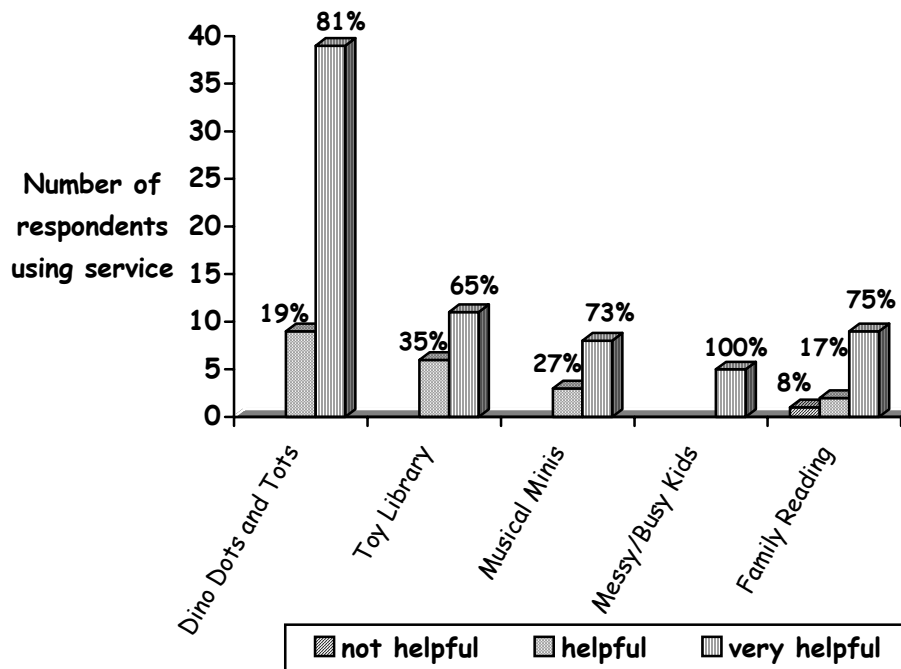
Figure 3.6.2.1 Use of services in group 2



The following patterns were evident:

- all of the five services had a higher percentage of respondents who had used the services on more than once occasion when compared to those respondents who had used the services only once. For example, 90% (46 out of 51) of those respondents who used the Dino Dots and Tots service did so more than once, when compared to 10% (5 out of 51) who used the service only once;
- all of the respondents (100%, 5 out of 5) who used the Messy/Busy Kid's service used the service more than once.

Figure 3.6.2.2 Level of satisfaction reported by respondents using services in group 2



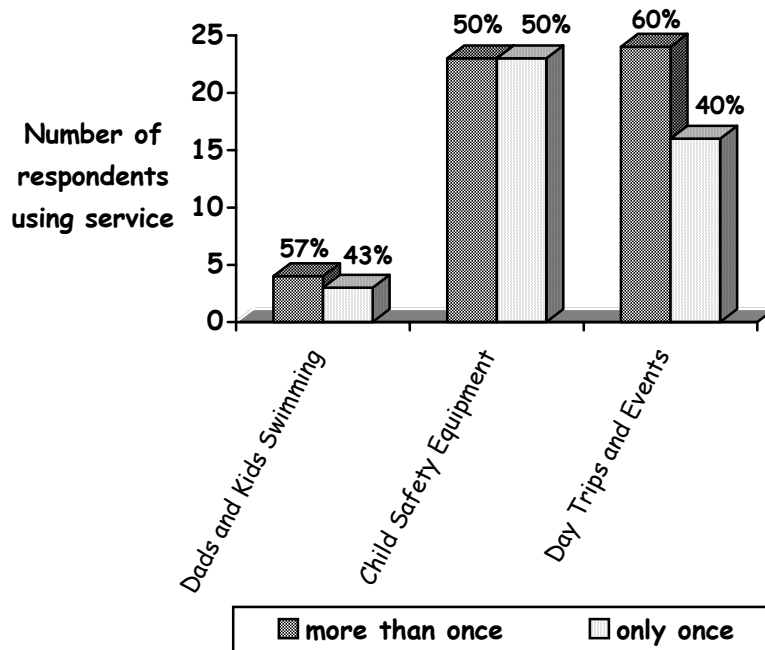
When looking at levels of satisfaction with the services in group 2 (Figure 3.6.2.2), the following patterns emerged:

- the Family Reading service was reported by one respondent (8%) to be 'not helpful';
- all of the services had a higher percentage of respondents who found the services to be 'very helpful', when compared to the number of respondents who found the services to be 'helpful'. For example, 75% (9 out of 12) of the respondents found the Family Reading service to be 'very helpful' when compared to 17% (2 out of 12) who found it to be 'helpful'.

3.6.3 Use of and satisfaction with services in group 3

Group 3 includes the 'kid's activities/safety' services. Figure 3.6.3.1 illustrates the patterns of use of the services.

Figure 3.6.3.1 Use of services in group 3

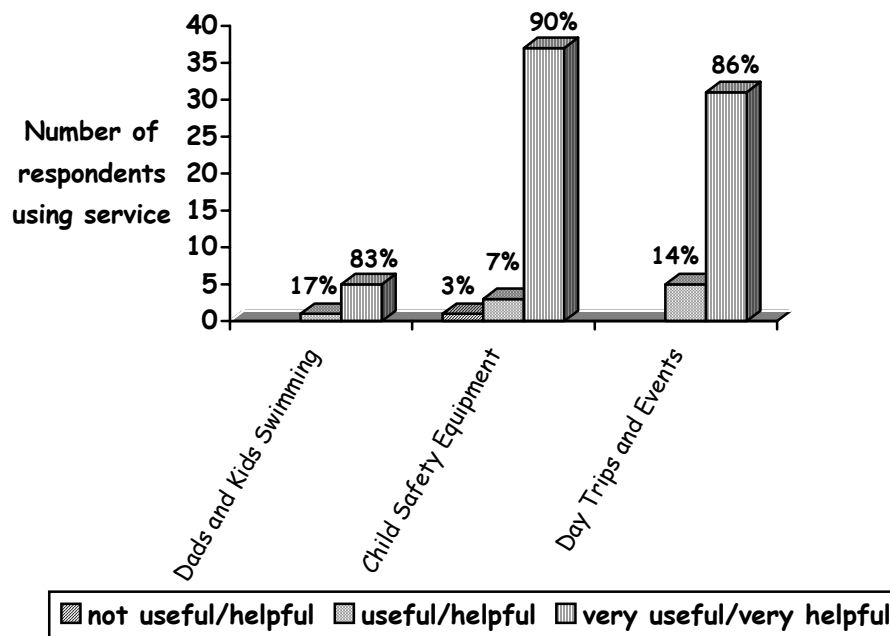


The following patterns were evident when looking at the number of respondents using the three 'kid's activities/safety' services:

- the Child Safety Equipment service had an equal percentage of respondents who had used the service more than once (50%, 23 out of 46) and only once (50%, 23 out of 46);
- the Dads and Kids Swimming, and Day Trips and Events had a higher percentage of respondents who had used the services more than once (57%, 4 out of 7; and 60%, 24 out of 40 respectively) when compared to the percentage of respondents who had used the services only once (43%, 3 out of 7; and 40%, 16 out of 40 respectively).

In the case of the Child Safety Equipment service, respondents were asked how 'useful' the service was rather than how 'helpful'.

Figure 3.6.3.2 Level of satisfaction reported by respondents using services in group 3

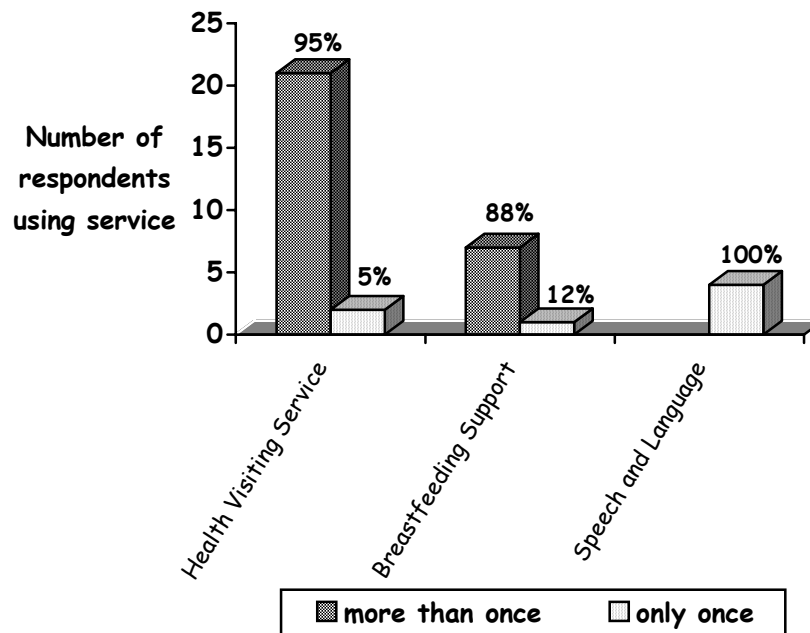


It is evident from Figure 3.6.3.2 that overall there was a high level of satisfaction with the services in group 3, with all of the services having a greater percentage of respondents stating that the service was 'very useful/very helpful' when compared to those respondents who stated the services were 'useful/helpful'. For example, 90% (37 out of 41) of the respondents who used the Child Safety Equipment service found the service to be 'very useful', when compared to 7% (3 out of 41) who found the service to be 'useful'. In the case of the Child Safety Equipment service, only 41 people gave responses, 1 of whom (3%) found the service to be 'not useful'.

3.6.4 Use of and satisfaction with services in group 4

This group included those services in the 'childcare/parenting' section of the questionnaire.

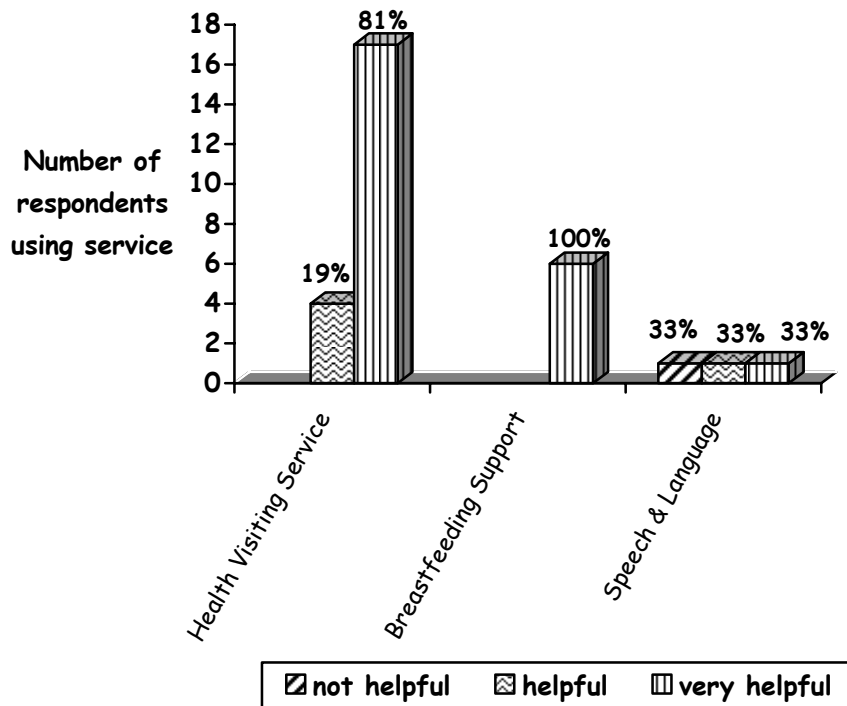
Figure 3.6.4.1 Use of services in group 4



The following patterns were identified when looking at Figure 3.6.4.1:

- of those respondents who stated that they had used the Speech and Language service all 4 (100%), had done so only once;
- respondents using the Health Visiting Service and the Breastfeeding Support service were very likely to use the services on more than one occasion. For example, 88% (7 out of 8) of those respondents who used the Breastfeeding Support service did so more than once, when compared to 12% (1 out of 8) of the respondents who had used the service only once.

Figure 3.6.4.2 Level of satisfaction reported by respondents using services in group 4



It was evident upon exploring levels of satisfaction with the services in group 4 (Figure 3.6.4.2) that the Health Visiting Service and the Breastfeeding Support service were viewed very positively, with 81% (17 out of 21) and 100% (6 out of 6 respondents who answered this question) respectively, of those using the services finding them 'very helpful'. In the case of the Speech and Language service, only three people gave responses, of which 1 person (33%) found the service to be 'not helpful', 1 person (33%) found the service to be, 'helpful', and 1 person (33%) found the service to be 'very helpful'

3.6.5 Use of and satisfaction with services in group 5

It was evident that 70% (14 out of 20) of the respondents using the Adult Learning sessions had done so more than once, and 30% (6 out of 20) stated that they had used the service only once.

The levels of satisfaction with the Adult Learning sessions indicated that 84% (16 out of 19) of the respondents found the service 'very useful', and 16% of the respondents (3 out of 19) found the service 'useful'.

3.7 Services in the home

Nine people (9%) had used Sure Start services at home, with 89 people (88%) stating that they had not. Three people (3%) did not respond to this question.

One of the six parents who stated that they had a disability used the service, and none of the respondents who stated that they cared for a disabled child used the home service. Those who used the service varied in the number of children that they had living in their households. Two respondents cared for one child; three respondents cared for two children; three respondents cared for three children, and one respondent cared for six children.

When looking at levels of satisfaction with this service, five respondents found the service to be 'very helpful', and three found it to be 'helpful'. One respondent did not provide a response even though s/he had used the service.

3.8 Drop in/advice service

Twenty four of the respondents (24%) stated that they had used the drop in/advice service 'sometimes', with one respondent (1%) having used the service 'often'. The service had never been used by 72 of the respondents (71%), and a further four (4%) gave no response.

It was evident that 25 of the 94 parents and carers (26%) with three children or less had used the drop in service, however, none of the 6 parents with four or more children had used the drop in service.

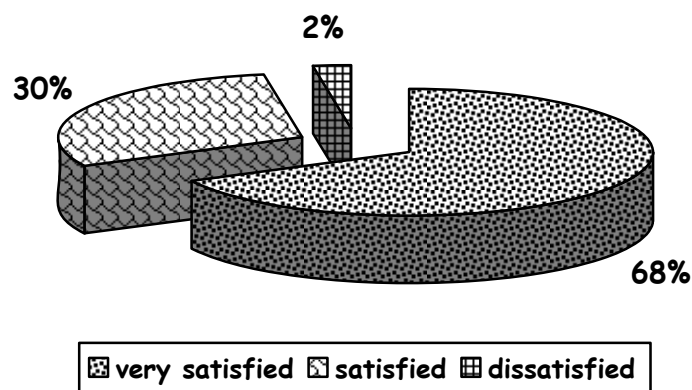
There was also an indication that respondents who had a disability, or lived with or cared for a child with a disability, were less likely to use the drop in/advice service:

- 2 out of 2 parents and carers who lived with or cared for a child with a disability had never used the service. This compared to 99 respondents who did not live with or care for a child with a disability, of which 25 (25%) had used the service;
- 6 out of 6 parents and carers with a disability had never accessed the service. This compared to 95 respondents who did not have a disability, of which 25 (26%) had used the service.

3.9 Overall satisfaction

Eighty three respondents (82%) answered the question regarding overall levels of satisfaction with the Sure Start Dino services that they had received. Of these, 81 respondents (98%) stated that overall they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied', and two respondents (2%) were 'dissatisfied' with Sure Start Dino services. The responses given are illustrated in percentages in Figure 3.9.1.

Figure 3.9.1 Overall level of satisfaction with Sure Start Dino services



3.10 Further comments made by respondents

Those completing the questionnaire were given the opportunity to comment further upon any aspect of Sure Start Dino services. Fifty six (55%) out of the 101 respondents made additional comments. As questionnaires were anonymous comments are labelled with a participant number.

Upon exploring the comments, a number of themes emerged:

- service satisfaction - positive and negative comments about the services, service accessibility and usage;
- knowledge and information - about the services and how to encourage use;
- future delivery and use of Sure Start services - recommendations for future delivery and intended future use of services.

On some occasions, the parents and carers made comments that covered more than one area. Appendix 7 contains all of the verbatim responses that were given by the parents and carers.

3.10.1 Service satisfaction

Responses were given by 36 people (64%) about accessibility and use of services.

Favourable comments were made regarding levels of satisfaction with the services used. For example, one respondent commented:

'I have been more than satisfied with the services I have used. They offer an excellent service and the staff are both friendly and approachable.' (P1).

Comments were also made about the Sure Start staff who were involved in providing services:

'The regular staff that I've got to know are very helpful, polite and pleasant, nothing's ever too much trouble.' (P2).

Also emerging from this theme was the idea that using the services worked to increase confidence levels in the parents or carers. One respondent stated:

'I am very happy with Sure Start. It has provided me with support and gave me confidence to go out in the community and meet new friends and people in the same circumstances as me. It is also good to know that there is help if I need it.' (P30).

Moreover, it was highlighted by one of the respondents that the services helped to improve the social skills and development of the children:

'Since my son has been involved with Sure Start, his speech has improved a lot, also he is learning to share his toys, he loves playing with the helpers. Sure Start is getting him ready for big school.' (P27).

There were a number of comments made about the accessibility of the services that were provided. It was highlighted by seven people that their access to the services was affected by their full-time employment:

'Being a working mum I find it hard to get to some of the events organised.' (P47).

One person also stated that it was difficult to use the services as she also cared for one of her children who had a disability:

'It's a bit difficult [to use the services] because my eldest daughter's disabled especially when it's the holidays it's difficult taking them both really.' (P99).

Other issues that arose concerned the suitability of some of the services for the age groups at which they were directed, in addition to the venue in which the service was held. One person commented:

'I feel that at the Dots and Tots group babies under 1 year are not catered for. They don't seem to put any baby/early learning toys for them out and if they do it's one or two when asked. The group is geared around toddlers or fully walking children. All activities are also geared around [the] older age and I and other mums with

children around 4-6 months are left feeling left out/spare part.'(P39).

Three of the respondents also commented that they had contacted Sure Start Dino and requested a call back which had not been honoured. One person stated:

'I wanted to go on a computer course and they said they'd get back to me and I haven't heard nothing or about crèches. I would like to take part in things but don't know where to start.'(P44).

3.10.2 Knowledge of and information about Sure Start services

Eleven of the people who gave additional responses commented about their knowledge of Sure Start Dino services and the information they had about the services that were available.

Six people stated that they wanted more up to date information so that they might access appropriate services. One person commented:

'I don't use any of the services at the moment, I just need some information about them really.'(P98).

One respondent also stated that she did not feel that she had been informed about Sure Start early enough to be able to access some of the services:

'I did not know about Sure Start until my child was nearly one and a half and I would have liked to have been involved from when he was younger, e.g., for the breastfeeding support.'(P36).

Two people requested information that was appropriate to the age of their children. One person had not heard of Sure Start Dino and asked for further details, and one person did not know if she was entitled to access the services.

3.10.3 Future delivery and use of Sure Start services

Five people commented upon the future delivery of the services offered. This included the times at which particular sessions were held. For example, two of the parents/carers suggested evening and Saturday sessions to accommodate those

who may work. One person suggested the merging of Sure Start Dino and Sure Start Jolly Giraffe services, and a final person asked for the 'family fun with books' group to be reinstated.

Five people also commented that they would be using more Sure Start Dino services in the future. One person stated:

'Dino is a great idea and I intend to use this service a lot more in the future.' (P61).

Chapter 4

Discussion

4.1 The design of the survey and the sample

This satisfaction survey has provided a picture of the use of, and satisfaction with, the services offered at Sure Start Dino. Using the Child Health Database for the sample ensured that families not registered with Sure Start Dino, but who are eligible for services, were also included.

The overall response rate (11%) is low and needs to be considered when reviewing the results of the study. Non-response is important as it reduces the effective sample size and data may be biased when non-responders disproportionately possess or lack characteristics of relevance to the study (Bowling, 2002; Roberts et al, 1996). Methods to increase response rates were considered during the planning and execution of this survey. Inducements are generally thought to increase response rates (Bowling, 2002), and the opportunity to participate in a prize draw was offered to all participants. A total of 90 of the 101 respondents (89%) returned their prize draw slips, which means that the remaining 11 (11%) individuals replied without inducement. Telephone calls were made to non-respondents for whom telephone numbers were held and this yielded 27 questionnaire completions. A number of calls (77) were made to dead telephone lines, which suggests that in some cases contact information was incorrect and individuals may not have received their questionnaire.

Although there are limitations to this study, it did access a sample of families eligible to receive Sure Start Dino services, and the anonymous nature of the questionnaire may have encouraged individuals to give their opinions honestly.

4.2 Awareness of services

Awareness of Sure Start Dino services was high amongst respondents with 96% stating that they knew about the services. However, many of the respondents perceived that they needed further information: 44% (40 out of 90) of those completing a prize draw leaflet asked for additional information, whilst 2% (2 out of 90) asked to see a member of the Sure Start Dino team. It is not known what proportion of the respondents were registered with Sure Start Dino, although it is probable that many were. Sure Start Dino send out registration packs with information, leaflets and timetables to all newly registered families, and in addition quarterly newsletters with a timetable are sent out to registered families and are placed in local public places. It is therefore striking that such a high percentage of users requested further information. The provision of information was also highlighted in the comments made by some of the respondents who stated that they felt further information would increase their knowledge of specific services, and encourage them to access appropriate services. In addition, it was suggested that information about the services was vital in order that they may be accessed at appropriate stages in a child's development. For example, one respondent commented that she had started using the services when her child was one and a half but would have liked to have accessed them earlier. This indicates an opportunity for Sure Start Dino to promote the services to those parents who feel that they do not know enough about them. Furthermore, it might be worthwhile considering whether there are other ways, besides the newsletters, of providing the eligible population with information about services.

One of the aims of the satisfaction survey was to raise the profile of Sure Start Dino. There was evidence from the comments made by respondents that this had occurred. In addition, if Sure Start Dino responds to requests for further information this will further raise their profile.

4.3 Use of services

All of the 17 community services were used by at least one respondent. The majority of respondents used between one and four community services. It was also evident that 76% of the services (13 out of 17) had a greater percentage of respondents using the services on more than one occasion than using the services only once. This demonstrates that the services were able to retain the service users.

The community services used by the highest number of respondents were Dino Dots and Tots, the Child Safety Equipment service, and Day Trips and Events. Those community services that were used by the lowest number of respondents were Cook and Taste, Special Needs Support, Speech and Language, and Messy/Busy Kids. However, when exploring the poor uptake of some of the services the specialist nature of some of these services should be considered. In addition, the need to publicise some services more widely and the possible lack of knowledge of services in the community need to be taken into account.

There were certain family characteristics that were explored in order to investigate whether they may affect the use of services. For example, the number of children in the respondents' households; whether the respondent had stated they were a single parent; the disability status of the respondents; the disability status of any children that the respondents lived with or cared for; and the number of children that they lived with.

More than half of the respondents (51%) who used the community services had more than one child, and those with four or more children were shown to be least likely to use the community services. It may therefore be useful to further explore how to engage those parents with one child, and more than four children and encourage increased use of services. In addition, it may be necessary to take into consideration that some of the parents and carers could need to put provision

in place to ensure any additional children are cared for whilst they attend the Sure Start Dino services. This is an issue that was illustrated in some of the comments made by the respondents, including the respondent who stated that accessing services was difficult as she had an older disabled child. Having to make provision for other children may deter parents and carers from accessing the Sure Start Dino services.

Single parents were more likely not to use any of the services than those parents who did not classify themselves as single. However, it was also evident that those single parents who did use the services were more likely to use nine or more services than those respondents who did not classify themselves as single. Further investigation may therefore be useful to explore how to engage single parents, as the evidence may suggest that once engaged single parents remain as such and make use of the services offered.

It was indicated in the survey that the use of services may be affected by the disability status of the parent or carer. In the case of those parents or carers who stated that they had a disability, the following issues were observed:

- 33% (2 out of 6) of the disabled parents and carers had never used the community services, whilst 33% (2 out of 6) had used only one service;
- the home service was used by one out of the six parents and carers who stated that they had a disability;
- the drop in/advice service was not accessed by those parents/carers who stated that they had a disability, compared to 26% of parents and carers who stated that they did not have a disability.

Although the numbers in this survey were small, it may be beneficial to investigate further why those parents and carers with a disability do not access services and what measures may be put in place to encourage disabled parents and carers to utilise the services that are available.

The low take up of the drop in/advice service may be due to parents and carers accessing the community services where they have contact with the Sure Start team to ask questions and obtain information. Therefore they may not feel the need to access this particular service. Parents and carers may also be unaware that the service is available.

It was also highlighted by a number of respondents that access to the services may be hindered by employment status. Those parents and carers who worked on a full time basis commented upon the possibility of the provision of additional services in the evenings or weekends. In addition, one of the respondents commented upon the possibility of conducting sessions that combined Sure Start Jolly Giraffe and Sure Start Dino services.

Three parents/carers commented that they had requested a telephone call from Sure Start Dino regarding particular services, which had not been honoured. This may impact upon service uptake and overall satisfaction with Sure Start Dino services.

4.4 Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction with Sure Start services was high, with 98% of the parents and carers (81 out of 83 respondents who answered this question) stating that they were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied'. Satisfaction levels were also high for individual services. This was reinforced by the number of generally positive comments that were made about the services. It is not possible, however, to determine the levels of satisfaction with services for the 89% of the eligible population who did not respond to the survey. Nor is it possible to ascertain why this large proportion did not complete the questionnaire despite the steps that were taken to encourage their return.

Seven out of the 17 community services, although found to be predominantly 'very helpful/very useful' or 'helpful/useful' by the respondents, were also given responses of 'not helpful/useful'. The Child Safety Equipment service (1 person) was found to be 'not useful', whilst the CAB (2 people), Halton Family Groups (1 person), Family Support/Branches (1 person), Special Needs service (1 person) and Speech and Language service (1 person) were all found to be 'not helpful'. When reviewing these responses, however, it is necessary to take into consideration the small numbers of respondents. Investigating exceptions such as these, however, may provide information that is useful in the configuration of future services.

4.5 Conclusion

The findings have indicated a high overall level of satisfaction with Sure Start Dino services, as well as a high level of satisfaction with the individual services. There was some indication that the services were less frequently used by those parents and carers who have a disability and by single parents. It was also highlighted that access to services may be restricted if parents and carers had to make provision to care for older children and in the cases of those parents and carers in employment. Despite the provision of a newsletter and service timetable on registration and quarterly newsletters and service timetables to all registered families, a proportion of respondents (44%) indicated that they would like more information about Sure Start Dino services.

When considering the future development of Sure Start Dino services, it would be useful to explore the following:

- the reasons for satisfaction with services, in order to incorporate success;
- the reasons for dissatisfaction with some of the services;
- the small numbers of parents and carers accessing some of the services, particularly in relation to those services where specific delivery targets are applicable;

-
- the role that lack of knowledge and access to information may have in the non-use of services - this may include qualitative interviews with service providers regarding their views on accessing and promoting services;
 - different ways of providing information about services;
 - ways of engaging single parents;
 - the plausibility in terms of cost-effectiveness and time, of the provision of additional services for those parents and carers who have a disability;
 - the plausibility in terms of cost-effectiveness and time, of the provision of additional services for those parents and carers who are unable to access services due to work commitment.

References

- Bowling, A. (2002). *Research Methods in Health. Investigating Health and Health Services*. (2nd edition). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Glass, N. (2003). *Sure Start five years on: The early years of an early years programme*. Retrieved March 11, 2004, from http://www.city.ac.uk/barts/events/archive/2003/06_jun/presentation.htm
- Kenny, G. (2002). Children's nursing and inter-professional collaboration: challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 11, 306-313.
- The NESS Research Team (2004). The National Evaluation of Sure Start Local Programmes in England. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 9(1), 2-8.
- Roberts, H., Bali, B. and Rushton, L. (1996). Non-respondents to a lifestyle survey: A study using telephone interviews. *Journal of the Institute of Health Education*, 34(2), 57-61.

Appendix 1

The questionnaire* and prize draw entry leaflet

* Questionnaire was made into an A3 leaflet

(Questionnaire and prize draw entry leaflet to be inserted)

Appendix 2
Participant information sheet

Sure Start Dino, Runcorn: User Satisfaction Survey

Information for Participants

The Sure Start Programme aims to provide support to families with children under 4 years old. It is very important to find out if Sure Start is successful. We are inviting you to take part in this survey so we can find out if local families are getting the support they need. We are also interested in your ideas about how local families could be supported in a better way.

Why do we need to do the research?

We need to do this research to find out if Sure Start is meeting the needs of local families. This will help Sure Start to improve its services and tell us if any new services are needed.

Why are you being asked to take part?

You are being asked to take part because you live in the local area and have a child who is 4 years old or younger.

Who is organising the study?

The study is being organised by the Centre for Public Health Research at University College Chester.

What does it involve?

Taking part in this survey involves filling in a questionnaire, which asks questions about local services and how well they meet the needs of families. This will take about 10 minutes of your time. No one will know what you have said because your name will not be on the completed form used for the analysis. If you want to enter the prize draw you may give your details on the prize draw slip. This slip will be separated from your questionnaire before we read it. We will not use your name in the report.

Your rights

You can choose not to take part in the survey. If you choose not to take part you will still be entitled to use Sure Start or other services and be involved in the operation of Sure Start.

If you would like more information about the research before you decide whether or not you would be willing to take part, please contact:

Rebecca Manning at the Centre for Public Health Research, University College Chester, on 01244 375444 (extension 2059).

Thank you very much for your help with this survey

Appendix 3
Details of telephone calls made

341 telephone numbers of non-respondents were obtained.

Details of telephone call	Number of telephone calls
Line dead	77
Questionnaires completed over the telephone	27
Phone back	13
Send in the post	6
Did not want to complete	34
Already completed	8
Ringling out	25
Anonymous call bar	5
Wrong/duplicate number	14
Unable to leave a message call back later (mobiles)	10
Not available	9
Not convenient	5
Remove number from database	2
Message left	106
TOTAL	341

Unsuccessful calls incorporated the following outcomes: line dead; anonymous call bar; wrong/duplicate number; unable to leave message call back later (mobiles).

Successful calls incorporated the following outcomes: questionnaires completed over the telephone; phone back; send in the post; did not want to complete; already completed; not available; not convenient; remove number from the database; message left.

Appendix 4
Frequency of use of services

Community Service	% of respondents using the service at least once	Number	more than		only once		never		no response	
			% of respondents	Number	% of respondents	Number	% of respondents	Number	% of respondents	Number
CAB	23	10	10	13	13	70	69	8	8	
Halton Family Groups	16	15	15	1	1	75	74	10	10	
Cook and Taste Family Support/Branches	4	3	3	1	1	90	89	7	7	
Special Needs Support	10	7	7	3	3	85	84	6	6	
Dino Dots and Tots	3	2	2	1	1	92	91	6	6	
Toy Library	51	46	45	5	5	46	45	4	4	
Musical Minis	19	15	15	4	4	76	75	6	6	
Messy/Busy Kids	12	10	10	2	2	83	82	6	6	
Family Reading	5	5	5	0	0	90	89	6	6	
Dads and Kids Swimming	12	10	10	2	2	81	80	8	8	
Child Safety Equipment	7	4	4	3	3	83	82	11	11	
Day Trips and Events	46	23	23	23	2	49	48	6	6	
Health Visitor Service	40	24	24	46	3	56	55	5	5	
Breastfeeding Support	23	21	21	2	2	72	71	6	6	
Speech and Language	8	7	7	1	1	86	85	7	7	
Adult Learning Sessions	4	4	4	0	0	89	88	8	8	
	20	14	14	6	6	74	73	7	7	

Appendix 5
Satisfaction with services

Community Service	% of respondents using the service at least once	very useful/helpful		useful/helpful		not useful/helpful		No response		n/a	
		Number	% of respondents	Number	% of respondents	Numbers	% of respondents	Numbers	% of respondents	Numbers	% of respondents
CAB Halton Family Groups	23	9	9	11	11	2	2	9	9	70	69
Cook and Taste Family Support/ Branches	16	14	14	2	2	1	1	9	9	75	74
Special Needs Support	4	3	3	1	1	0	0	7	7	90	89
Dino Dots and Tots	10	6	6	3	3	1	1	7	7	84	83
Toy Library	3	0	0	1	1	1	1	6	6	93	92
Musical Minis	51	39	39	9	9	0	0	7	7	46	45
Messy/ Busy Kids	19	11	11	6	6	0	0	7	7	77	76
Family Reading	12	8	8	3	3	0	0	7	7	83	82
Dads and Kids	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	6	6	90	89
Swimming	12	9	9	2	2	1	1	8	8	81	80
Child Safety Equipment	7	5	5	1	1	0	0	13	13	82	81
Day Trips and Events	46	37	37	3	3	1	1	11	11	49	48
Health Visitor	40	31	31	5	5	0	0	9	9	56	55
Breast-feeding Support	23	17	17	4	4	0	0	8	8	72	71
	8	6	6	0	0	0	0	8	8	87	86

Speech and Language Adult Learning Sessions	4	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	9	89	88
	20	16	16	3	3	0	0	8	8	74	73

Appendix 6

Descriptions of Sure Start Dino services

Adult Learning sessions - Cover a wide range of training/vocational activities, for example, arts and crafts; IT; careers in child care; help with job applications.

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) - Citizens advice offered in the home.

Dads and Kids Swimming - Free swimming sessions at the local pool.

Days Trips and Events - Fun days and family trips out to, for example, Gulliver's World and Chester Zoo.

Dino Dots and Tots - Groups for families and young children to take part in education play activities.

Family Support/Branches - A service providing family and parenting support via individual and group work.

Food First - Cook and Taste, Basic Food Hygiene courses and publicity events around healthy eating.

Fun with books - Support via groups for young children and families to help develop literacy skills.

Halton Family Groups - Four groups running to provide support to parents, and play and socialising opportunities for young children.

Health Visiting - Increased support for families with children in their first year of life.

HELPS (child safety equipment) - 'Cheap buy' safety equipment.

Messy/Busy Kids - Messy Kids is a creative group session for tots and Busy Kids is a physical group session for tots.

Midwifery - Increased ante-natal support.

Musical Minis - Musical group for tots.

Special Needs support - Sensory room sessions.

Speech and Language - Groups, one-to-one support, to help develop young children's speech and language.

Toy Library - Toys are loaned to families for a small charge.

Appendix 7
Comments made by respondents

Responses to question 11 "please use this space if there is anything else you would like to say about Sure Start Dino"

The names of members of the Sure Start team have been removed and replaced with 'member of the Sure Start team'.

Participant 1

"I have been more than satisfied with the services I have used. They offer an excellent service and the staff are both friendly and approachable. My only negative point would be that, I personally find the playgroup starts too early a later session would be more beneficial and convenient."

Participant 4

"The regular staff that I've got to know are very helpful, polite and pleasant, nothings ever too much trouble and I would like to see it continue. I always recommend the services to friends. Keep up the good work."

Participant 5

"This is a fantastic service, but could offer more things for working mothers e.g., evening play group."

Participant 6

"Due to working I am only off on a Thursday and find the services that are available on a Thursday for a 1 year old very limited."

Participant 11

"I have used some of the services on the Sure Start Dino, but would be interested to hear more about other groups throughout Sure Start that might be helpful to me and my son aged 13 months."

Participant 12

"Unfortunately I have not used any of the services but I now feel it is time to start looking at mum's and tots group."

Participant 15

"I would just like to say thanks to Sure Start Dino it is brilliant for children and parents."

Participant 16

"I would just like to say that you are all doing a very good job. Thanks."

Participant 20

"Not yet had chance to use the service yet due to my baby being in hospital. But I know people who have used it."

Participant 21

"When my son was born, I found it really hard to make new friends and my confidence was non existent due to post-natal depression. I began going to groups when my son was 1. Then Sure Start began and I met new mums like myself and I realised that other people were going through the same things as me. Although my son is at school now I still meet up with the friends that I made, and it really did help me through my worst times."

Participant 22

"I have only been going to Dino mum's and tots on Wednesday morning for about 6 months, but both me and my daughter enjoy it, and the staff are very good, and they always listen to you if I need to talk about anything."

Participant 23

"I've found Sure Start Dino to be useful for myself and my child. It's helped build my child's confidence and independence and even helped me with adult learning sessions."

Participant 24

"It's a fantastic group and the people there are very helpful."

Participant 25

"Play groups where four year old children can be accepted. They can be at nursery at this age especially if they are a September birthday."

Participant 26

"Excellent family groups. Has helped with my son's development a great deal. Always support available if needed for both children and parents."

Participant 27

"Since my son has been involved with Sure Start his speech has improved a lot, also he is learning to share his toys, he loves playing with the helpers. Sure Start is getting him ready for big school so thank you girls keep up the good work."

Participant 28

"I would love to attend the Dinosaurs but work 9-5pm Mon-Friday. I am really sorry to miss the music, reading and play groups as I'm sure my daughter would love them. Any chance of Saturday groups?"

Participant 29

"Staff are very helpful and friendly. Hope they will carry on the good work for years to come. Thank you."

Participant 30

"I am very happy with Sure Start. It has provided me with support and gave me confidence to go out in the community and meet new friends and people in the same circumstances as me. It is also good to know that there is help if I need it."

Participant 31

"If received more info probably use more."

Participant 34

"I think that Sure Start Dino is a very good organisation and makes life a little easier."

Participant 35

"I would like to thank Sure Start as they helped me through a difficult period and I had a lot of help and support from (member of the Sure Start team) as she came to visit me at home and got me going to groups. So I would like to say a big thank you to you Sure Start and especially (member of the Sure Start team)."

Participant 36

"Very impressed with Sure Start. Everyone involved in running the sessions etc have been lovely especially (two members of the Sure Start team) from Busy Kids and Dino Dots and Tots. All day trips have been excellent and enjoyable, and I

have made good friends with some other parents from groups. I did not know about Sure Start until my child was nearly 1 ½ and I would have liked to have been involved from when he was younger, e.g., for the breastfeeding support. The Adult Learning Sessions have been very useful and I would be interested in further courses. Also it is a good idea to give parents a chance to become involved with Sure Start, e.g., the parents forum and management committee. Keep up the good work!!!"

Participant 37

"Excellent idea to get people to meet, children to play together, learn new experiences and discuss things with others."

Participant 38

"The range of services offered by Dino are fantastic and allow children to experience a range of new and exciting activities. However, we would love to see the Family Fun with Books re-instated on a Friday morning at Murdishaw health centre."

Participant 39

"I feel that at the Dots and Tots group babies under 1 year are not catered for. They don't seem to put any baby/early learning toys for them out and if they do it's one or two when asked. The group is geared around toddlers or fully walking children. All activities are also geared around older age and I and other mums with children around 4-6 months are left feeling left out/spare part."

"Toy library. This also does not cater for small babies under nine months."

"I was told by a worker that if I enticed more mums with babies (dots) to come then more equipment would be put out at the dots and tots group."

Participant 40

"Sure Start Dino is an excellent group very helpful and enjoyable."

Participant 41

"I don't live that far away from the Brookvale Children's Centre. I think 3 ½ million is just a waste of money when they had a perfectly useful building. I once went in and asked for a safety gate for my daughter and because the lady who normally deals with it was not there they took my number and never got back to me. I am a registered Sure Start member yet never know what is available. I once rang up about musical minis and they took my number and said they would let me know when it started but they never did."

Participant 44

"I have never been but I am registered. I would like to take part but don't feel comfortable in groups of people I don't know. Plus they send me information for groups that my baby is too young for, she's only 11 months. I wanted to go on a computer course and they said they'd get back to me and I haven't heard nothing or about crèche's. I would like to take part in things but don't know where to start."

Participant 46

"Don't receive enough up to date information as to what is on offer for W/H (no further explanation was given by the respondent as to what this might stand for)."

Participant 47

"Being a working mum I find it hard to get to some of the events organised."

Participant 51

"I'm really grateful/happy that Sure Start Dino is in my area because if it wasn't for them I don't think my children would have learnt as much as they have or had the opportunities that have been given them."

Participant 53

"I went on a day trip to Chester Zoo and would be interested in any future day trips."

Participant 54

"Living in Norton (postcode WA7 6UE) I am never quite sure if this is in the Sure Start area or not. I did not apply for the grant as the Health Visitor seemed to think that I was out of the area, but I still get a newsletter, so I am not sure. Some clarification on this issue would be useful!"

Participant 59

"I think it would be a good idea for all the Sure Starts to let people attend each others groups - people would have more choice. I have friends in the Jolly Giraffe area and we can't go to groups together."

Participant 60

"I did not know that Dino Sure Start existed but would like to know more. I have not used any of the above services."

Participant 61

"Dino is a great idea and I intend to use this service a lot more in the future."

Participant 62

"I think Sure Start is a very good idea for the community and if I was not in full time employment I would definitely use some of the services."

Participant 63

"Very happy with the service."

Participant 64

"Sure Start Dino is a brilliant service. Some of the services I am definitely going to use in the future, like HELPS for some safety gates. Also I have been sent info on trips and events but never had the courage to go but I've started going to Dino tots and dots group so I might go to the next event or trip."

Participant 66

"I would like to know more about help with child care."

Participant 68

"I have only been using Sure Start for a week so I've only just got the information."

Participant 72

"I have been on many organised trips with Halton Family Groups. On the one occasion I wanted to go on a Sure Start trip I was very disappointed to discover I could only go on my own. My husband was working and Sure Start would not allow my Mum to accompany me, and I didn't know anyone else who was going. Many of the services listed I was unaware of. Don't get much info through the post."

Participant 73

"I feel as a working mother that there are no groups I can attend with my children, after my working hours are done. If there is then I do not see any advertising for these services. I think that it is a fantastic group, I would just love to take part in the many groups available but the times do not suit my working patterns."

Participant 78

"A few of my friends have talked about Sure Start. It's something I think I signed for when I was pregnant or when I'd had the baby, but it's not something I really know much about."

Participant 79

"I'm really pleased with them [the services] it gets the kids out."

Participant 83

"Services much better when run by staff rather than parents. At the playgroup there weren't enough toys and that was being run by just the parents and the children were all fighting over the toys."

Participant 86

"I work four days a week so I don't really have much time to use the services."

Participant 90

"I haven't really used many of the services to be honest with you. I'd like some more information about what they offer though."

Participant 92

"[the safety equipment] is excellent. Saved a lot of money and saved us going round the shops to get it. We got it all in one go."

Participant 94

"For the playgroup the room has gone smaller and it wasn't big enough for all the children so they have two sessions now. I used to go with my nephew and his mum but he's in the second group because he's two and my son is in the group that is on later. It was nice going with someone because you don't always feel like going on your own if you don't know anyone. The new time is also across the time my son has a sleep."

Participant 98

"I don't use any of the services at the moment, I just need some information about them really. I've heard you can buy cheap safety gates which would be good."

Participant 99

"It's a bit difficult [to use the services] because my eldest daughter's disabled especially when it's the holidays it's difficult taking them both really."

Participant 100

"My wife and I are both full time teachers. We would like to get the children involved in the local area. We would be interested particularly in anything available during half term and the holidays."

Participant 101

Child safety equipment - "tried to get in touch - were very unhelpful."