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Introduction

The report outlines the findings of the 2007 Customer Satisfaction Survey for the Summer Playzones. The research was conducted during September by giving out customer satisfaction surveys on site at the Playzone, as well as supplementing this by selecting 100 random customers from the Gladstone MRM bookings database. Surveys were sent via post to the customers with an incentive for an early return in the form of a free prize draw. Pre-paid envelopes were also provided. Customers were given 2 weeks to complete and return the questionnaires in order to be entered into the prize draw. The research was conducted to provide the Children's Services Manager with valuable information regarding customer satisfaction for the services provided, with the intention to improve and develop the service further. The survey results offer both quantitative and qualitative data. This report is a continuation of previous analysis of the Playzone service.

Executive Summary

Research Objectives

- To identify customer satisfaction for the 2007 Playzone.
- To identify current demand for the Playzone service. To ensure that appropriate action is taken so that future service provisions meet the expectations of the customer.
- To assess the procedures involved in the organisation and running of the Playzone in order to achieve a higher standard of service for future years.
 - To make comparisons with previous years and identify strengths and weaknesses.

Methodology and Sample

A quantitative approach was deemed the most suitable methodology to meet the research objectives. Certain qualitative customer feedback has been included in the report as appropriate. A total of 100 questionnaires were posted out to Playzone customers as well as the ones given out on site, which resulted in a total of 85 surveys returned. The estimated response rate is therefore 28.3%, assuming that 200 surveys were given out at site. This is similar to last year's rate of 27%.

Customer profile

The most populated age was 7 and 8 year olds (21% each). In 2006 the most common age bracket was 5-6 year olds (38.4%). The least populated was the 11 year olds (2.5%), this is consistent with 2006. The following table shows the number and percentage of children attending the playzone of each of the ages between 5 and 11 years, which the playzone covered.

Age	Number of Attendees	%
5	83	15.03623
6	117	21.19565
7	118	21.37681
8	118	21.37681
9	52	9.42029
10	50	9.057971
11	14	2.536232
total	552	100

Site and session profile

The Strathmore site in Hitchin was the most populated site, with 91.25% of its places being taken. The sites have been changed since 2006 so they were not comparable. Knebworth was the least populated site (53.2%).

The most popular preferred start time from last year's survey was 9.30am, with the preferred finish time being 3.30pm. This question was not included in the survey this year due to consistent results in previous years.

12.9% of the sample population experienced problems whilst on the Playzone, of which 36.4% were very satisfied with the way it was dealt with by staff, and 81.9% were very or fairly satisfied. 9.1% were neither satisfied or dissatisfied or fairly dissatisfied and 9.1% were very dissatisfied.

Methods of booking/payment

For the 2007 bookings an electronic method of booking had to be used through a company called Gladstone. 2006 was the first year using this new system, and as a result there were some teething problems in using the system, but the system worked more smoothly in 2007 and customers found it to be more efficient, for example confirmation letters were sent out next day, every day.

The telephone booking system was found to be the most popular way of booking with approximately 76% of customer using that method. This would be an increase of 10% from last year. Approximately 23% of customers booked by post, a fall of 3%. There were however a minority of customers who booked either face to face at the council offices, or on the day at site. However, due to the fact that we did not ask how customers booked in the survey this year, these numbers could not be established. E-booking is not available as yet for playzone, although the brochure is available on the internet.

Overall satisfaction

Overall, the level of satisfaction was high, particularly the overall service provided (88.3% rated it very good or good), overall value for money (67%), and overall booking procedure (64.7%).

These results are particularly pleasing for this year as the level of satisfaction with the actual Playzone sessions continue to rise as does the satisfaction with the booking procedure and the booking/payment methods.

Summary

The aim of the report is to

- Identify Customer satisfaction for the 2007 Playzone
- Identify current demand for the Playzone service thus ensuring that future service provision meets the expectation of our Customers
- Assess the procedures involved in the Organisation and in the running of the Playzone in order to achieve a higher standard of service in the future
- Make comparisons with previous years identifying strengths and weaknesses and areas of improvement from last year.

In order to reach those objectives the analysis has been broken down into sections. The summary shall consider each section in turn highlight appropriate key aspects in association with the above research objectives. The numerical analysis of the Customer Satisfaction Survey to support the summary can be found in the appendix.

Customer profile

Of the 300 questionnaires sent out, 85 were returned forming the sample population. The sample only included those who attended the Playzone rather than a random sample taken from the database, and only included one questionnaire per household even though one or more children may have attended from that address. It is essential to note that the sample population is a representation of the 'general' population that attended the Playzone, bearing in mind the findings from Figure 3 of the appendix, which indicates that the numbers of customers who filled in the survey from each site were not representative of the actual attendance.

When considering age groups, all were well represented except for the 11 year old group with only 2.5% in comparison with 5-6 yrs (36.2%), 7-8yrs (42.8%), 9-10yrs (18.5%). There was a 4.8% fall in the 11 year old age group with the 5-6 yrs showing a 0.2% fall, the 7-8 yrs a 10.5% rise and the 9-10 yrs showing a 1.1% fall from 2006. Strathmore was the most well attended site for both the 5-7 year olds and the 8-11 year olds.

Data on ethnic origin was not collected this year, however last year 86.6% of the sample population were classified as having White British Ethnicity, a fall of 3% from 2005 with the next highest percentage ethnicity being mixed white and black Caribbean.

10.6% of those who returned a questionnaire stated that the child attending the Playzone required extra support, for example if they had a disability, this is a decrease of 13% from 2006, however this could be due to the changing of the wording of the questionnaire from the previous year, the question formerly asked specifically if the child had a disability, and only around 40% of those actually required further support.

Playzone sites

There were 8 sites operating a Playzone service this year, with four town sites having a playzone for two consecutive weeks, and four rural sites having a team for one week. One team spent two weeks at Tannery Drift in Royston and two at St Marys in Baldock, and another team spent two weeks at Norton St Nicholas in Letchworth and two weeks at Strathmore in Hitchin. These sites were all OFSTED registered. Further to this the third team spent one week each at Knebworth, Codicote, Ashwell and Pirton. These were not eligible to be OFSTED registered because the playzone only ran at these sites for one week.

The site with the highest percentage of places filled was Strathmore, Hitchin (91.25% of places filled). This shows a change from 2006 when St Andrews, Hitchin was the most populated, however St Andrews was not one of the sites this year, and it is consistent that the Hitchin location was the most popular one. Knebworth was the least populated (44%); This is a change from 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006 when Pirton was the least popular site. It should be remembered however that these figures were obtained from overall uptakes, whereas in past years they were taken from the sample, ie the returned satisfaction surveys.

The enjoyment rating for the Playzone this year was excellent with 88.3% stating they 'Loved it' or 'Quite liked it', which is the highest combined enjoyment rating since 2000 and is the second highest recorded figure since 1997.

When considering the overall rating for Playzones since 1997, 'Loved it' has always been the most popular rating which indicates that the service we provide is well received by our customers. In 2005 however, 'Loved It' recorded the highest ever return of 65.9% compared to the second highest return of 64.7% in 2003 and an increase of 9% on 2004 an excellent achievement. There has also this year been the lowest ever recorded figures for 'quite disliked it' and 'hated it'. 'Hated it' recorded a nil return, for the second time ever (also occurred last year) since the surveys were started in 1997.

Rating of Playzone Facilities

This section considers the Playzone service as a whole and the individual rating for each section. The number of categories in the survey was streamlined this year, so customers were only asked about 8 categories, compared to many more in previous years. No categories received any ratings of very poor, while the categories of overall value for money, staff, and overall service provided received minimal ratings for poor (all <3.5%). The brochure category was rated as poor by some customers both this year and last year, so this could be an area to look at for improvement. Further comments in the appendix give further information as to why the respondents marked the elements as poor.

On the whole all the sections were rated by the majority of the sample population as 'Very Good' or 'Good'. The areas that fared particularly well were overall value for money, staff and venue.

Some particular points that were praised in the comments on the questionnaires were

- Staff were very good and tried hard to accommodate children when they were bored.
- Staff gave 1-to-1 attention when necessary
- It was reassuring that the parent was phoned prior to the scheme to find out about her son's ADHD in case he required extra support.
- It is the best and cheapest form of holiday club in the area.

The following points were commented on in previous years and were commented on again this year, indicating that improvements still need to be made

- Staff seemed very young
- Seemed to watch a lot of television and videos
- Longer hours to accommodate working hours
- Registration
- More challenging activities for the older children
- Signs to show people where to go on the first day

As these comments have been raised for 2 consecutive years these could be considered by the Children's services Team for the 2008 Playzone sessions.

Sessions

This section concentrates on the general uptake of the Playzone sessions taken from the reports generated from the manual booking sheets.

The overall uptake for Playzone 2007 was 83.5%. This is taking into account that it was necessary to restrict capacities at some sites, namely Knebworth, Codicote, Pirton, Tannery Drift and St Marys, due to staff shortages. These sites operated under a capacity of 50 places per session instead of the originally planned 60. This was a 10.5% increase from last year, however the restricted capacity could be partly responsible for this. The sites with the highest percentage uptake were Strathmore in Hitchin and Ashwell, with overall uptakes of 91.25% and 86.8% respectively. The lowest uptakes were to be found at Knebworth and Codicote, with uptakes of 53.2% and 60.8% respectively, based on the capacity of 50.

Service Provision

Customers were not asked, as they were in previous years, how they rated the playzone in comparison to a childminding service, however they were asked what arrangements they would make if the playzone were not available, one of the options being to use a childminder.

Most parents would either arrange other activities or ask family and friends for help if Playzone was not available (52.9% and 41.2% respectively). 36.5% would take time off work, and 8.2% would use a childminder. This shows that customers do not generally see playzone as an alternative to a childminder. When considering the results from previous years, finding other activities still remains the most populated response, other ratings continue to fluctuate from year to year offering no apparent trend.

Customer Services

The Customer Service section looks at the methods of marketing, booking and payment and at how satisfied customers were with the overall booking service.

The most common way of customers finding out about the playzone was from brochures from school (65.9%) with the second most common being direct mail (23.5%). Furthermore these were also the highest rated ways in which customers would like to find out about the playzone (60% and 49.4% respectively).

This year the question was not asked as to how customers would prefer to book, but in past years the majority of the sample population would prefer to book by phone, with a 2% decrease from 2005 to 2006 (48%), post (19.5%, a decline of 5% from 2005 to 2006) and in person (7.3%) Interestingly, 22% would have chosen to use the Internet to book and pay for a Playzone which represented a rise of 9% from 2005 to 2006.

The question was also not asked as to how satisfied customers were with the time it took to receive a confirmation letter. However, this year all confirmation letters were printed out and sent to customers the day after they booked, so this was an improvement on last year when they were printed out every few days. Customers were generally happy with the booking service overall, 20% rated it very good, 37% rated it good, and 5 % rated it fair. No customers rated it poor or very poor.

Further support for Children

Playzone provides an accessible service to all and recognises that some of our customers may require additional support whilst attending our sessions. Extra support was offered/made available to children with learning, physical and behavioural difficulties. 10.6% of customers stated that their children required additional support while at the playzone, a fall of 9.4% from last year's figure.

For those children that did receive extra support 36.5% felt the support was very good with 16.5% rating it as good. There was a nil response for those who felt the support was poor or very poor.

Appendix

Booking Procedure

Figure 1

Shows how parents found out about playzone

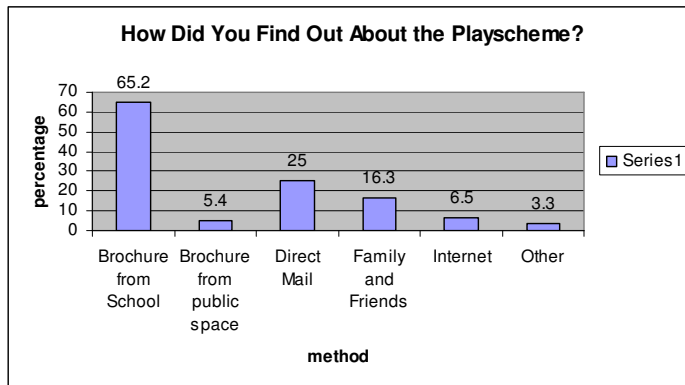
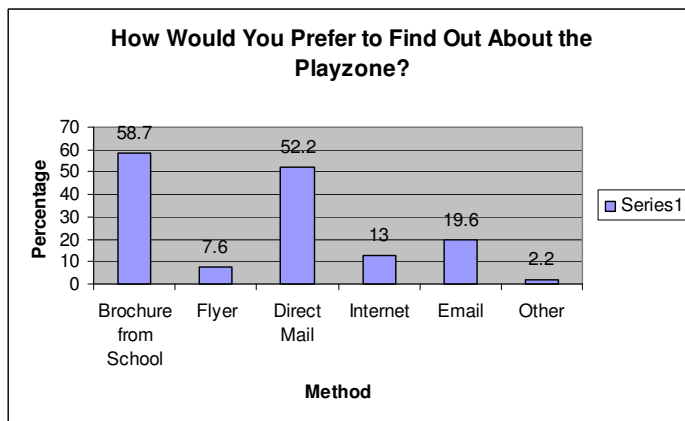


Figure 2

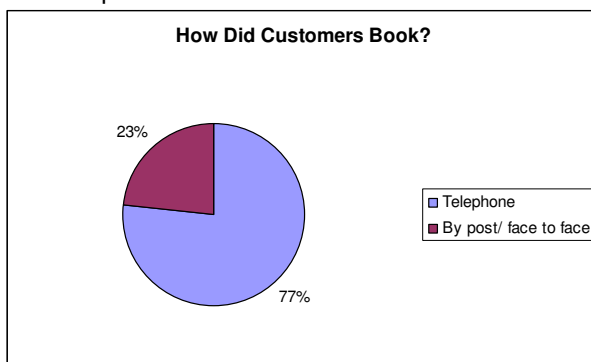
Shows how customers would prefer to find out about the playzone



There is high correlation between these two graphs indicating that customers are finding out about the playzone in the way that they would prefer to, the only exception being that 19.6% of customers would like to find out about the playschemes via email, a service we do not currently offer.

Figure 3

Shows how customers booked. Note that due to not asking how customers booked in the surveys these figures are estimates and it was not possible to differentiate between postal booking or customers coming to visit the council offices in person, however it was a very small minority of customers who came in person.



Playzone Attendance

Figure 4

Shows what site customers attended. These figures are taken from the results of the satisfaction survey, and it is interesting to compare them to the actual uptake figures, as it shows that a

disproportionately large number of the customers that filled out the satisfaction survey were from the Royston and Baldock sites, whereas the actual uptakes were a lot more even.

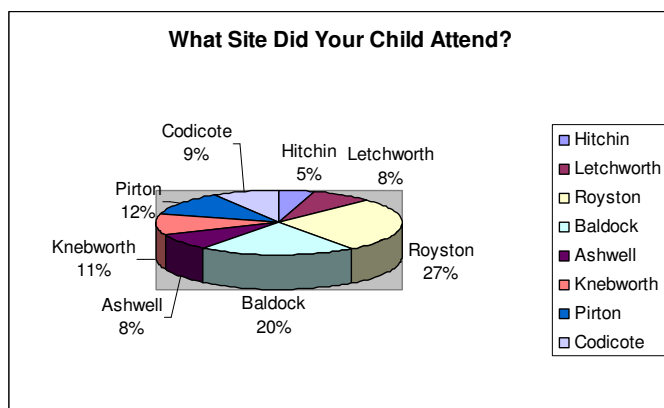


Figure 5

Shows the actual final uptakes for all the sites.

Playzone Uptake- final

Royston- Tannery Drift

week one

	Max	Uptake	%
AM 5-7	200	124	62
AM 8-11	100	96	96
PM 5-7	200	122	61
PM 8-11	100	98	98

week two

AM 5-7	200	151	75.5
AM 8-11	100	95	95
PM 5-7	200	150	75
PM 8-11	100	96	96

Letchworth- St Nicholas

week one

AM 5-7	200	136	68
AM 8-11	100	94	94
PM 5-7	200	133	66.5
PM 8-11	100	95	95

week two

AM 5-7	200	169	84.5
AM 8-11	100	95	95
PM 5-7	200	175	87.5
PM 8-11	100	97	97

Knebworth

week one

AM 5-7	200	96	48
AM 8-11	100	39	39
PM 5-7	200	96	48
PM 8-11	100	35	35

Codicote

week two

AM 5-7	200	94	47
AM 8-11	100	64	64
PM 5-7	200	82	41
PM 8-11	100	64	64

2496

Baldock- St Marys

week one

	Max	Uptake	%
AM 5-7	200	128	64
AM 8-11	100	71	71
PM 5-7	200	138	69
PM 8-11	100	72	72

week two

AM 5-7	200	147	73.5
AM 8-11	100	95	95
PM 5-7	200	133	66.5
PM 8-11	100	94	94

Hitchin- Strathmore

week one

AM 5-7	200	171	85.5
AM 8-11	100	100	100
PM 5-7	200	165	82.5
PM 8-11	100	98	98

week two

AM 5-7	200	186	93
AM 8-11	100	100	100
PM 5-7	200	175	87.5
PM 8-11	100	100	100

1200 **1095**

Ashwell

week one

AM 5-7	200	163	81.5
AM 8-11	100	100	100
PM 5-7	200	159	79.5
PM 8-11	100	99	99

Pirton

week two

AM 5-7	200	100	50
AM 8-11	100	76	76
PM 5-7	200	101	50.5
PM 8-11	100	78	78

3944

OVERALL MAX TOTAL 7200 6440

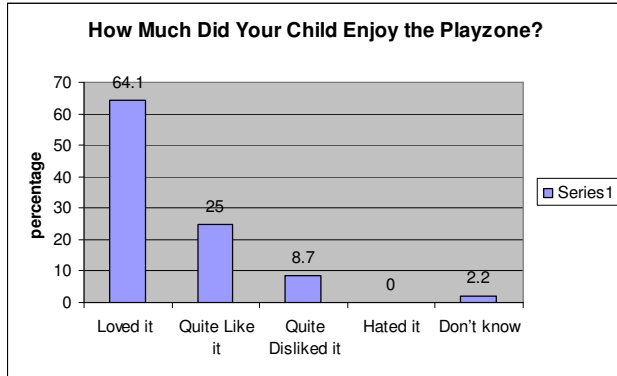
% 89.44

TOTAL WITH RESTRICTED NUMBERS

MAX 6400
 TOTAL 6440
 % 100.625

Playzone Facilities

Figure 6 shows how children rated the playzone



Of the customers who stated that they quite disliked the playzone, these were the responses as to why:

- Young child orientated, not much for older children to do
- Found boring as not a range of equipment suitable for an eleven year old
- Found it quite boring as there were no toys for 11 year olds.
- Not very old child friendly
- The activities were not planned as years previous in advance and my older son was bored. He said the leaders sat around chatting most of the time.
- Would have preferred more workshops and structured activities. Would have liked more involvement from play leaders. Felt the play leaders did not engage with the younger children to prevent fighting. No rules explained at the beginning of the week.
- Too many children and seemed unorganised, staff too young. No control.
- I think the reason was that she is out growing it.

Figure 7

Percentage Rating of Different Aspects of Playzone					Very
	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Venue	39.1	27.2	5.4	0	0
Overall Value for Money	50	16.3	6.5	3.3	0
Overall Bookings					
Procedure	32.6	31.5	8.7	0	0
Registration	38	30.4	5.4	0	0
Staff	51.1	51.1	1.1	1.1	0
Brochure	19.6	19.6	12	3.3	0
Bookings	26.1	26.1	40.2	0	0
Overall Service Provided	38	38	31.5	1.1	0

Of customers who stated that an aspect was poor, these are the reasons given.

- too expensive for what they do
- Some activities not covered
- Would like booking confirmation on email so I can contact playzone nearer the start time by when I will have lost the brochure!
- Value for money - Children bored on the day, no workshops and I object strongly to the use of the TV and DVD through out the day. Staff- Lack of engagement noticeable on the day lack of proper follow up when a child was injured, no prevention of inappropriate behaviour and language. Brochure- no

indication that workshops would not be a main feature of the of the week.

Brochure- Poorly rated as it was only a sheet given out on the last day of school. If a friend had not told me about it it would have been overlooked. More direct marketing needed.

The sheet which gives confirmation of bookings is really user unfriendly, It was last year too!

In 2006 each session had a theme- i liked the theory of this but in 2007 it felt much more like a dumping ground and of no educational value to my child. I did not like the Friday party theme it was not necessary.

Customers were also given the opportunity to suggest how the playzone service could be improved. These are the suggestions that were made, categorised into positive comments and suggestions for improvement.

Suggestions:

More activities going on at once
an hour later finish

More resources for inside

More variety of equipment, longer at site

More range of equipment

More equipment and different types

Meridian is a better site

extending the scheme for 4 weeks

back to 4 weeks

run for longer

More activities and activities mentioned in brochure were not available

more availability, two weeks in one location is not long enough

More weeks in Royston

Registration sometimes started a few mins late

More challenging activities for the older children would make the day even better. More toilets available

more equipment for the range of children

Make the days more structured

More range of equipment for the children

Run the play scheme for a longer period of time

More equipment

More variety, different activities

Increase the age bracket so 4 year old's could join and provide a wider variety of structured activities.

More variety of equipment and structure for the child.

Variety

Trips

For the full 6 weeks.

Start time at 9:00 am. Lasting longer than a week in villages i.e. 2 weeks at Knebworth and 2 weeks at Codicote.

Activities should be planned for children, they need to be organised. Then they will join in. The age groups should be split in 2. They do not need TV or videos they can do that at home at no cost. I dont mean they should be forced to join in but encouraged.

This year was not successful, previous years were and why change a programme that clearly worked?

Ensure that the staff are motivated and engage with the child on the day, improve their response to injury.

Arrange more workshops i.e. dance, drama, sports and art and craft. Make it value for money.

Only improvement would be more publicity earlier so that holiday arrangements can be made earlier.

be on for more weeks in holidays

Employ mature- in control staff and show children SAFE fun!

More Please! The children were disappointed that it was only for a week in the village.

Wider advertising- we didn't here of it until the last week.

Children enjoyed organised events in previous years. Hardly any this year. Not much craft to bring home, left to own devices, kids just played in the playground. Previous years certificates awarded which promoted good behaviour and encouraged persistence in activities. Parents liked to know activity

Have a day out or go swimming.

It would be better if it started at 9:00am instead of 9:45am

Other parents and I would like the play scheme to start earlier i.e. 9:00am because most of us have to work and for it to be run later 5:00pm. but overall we were very happy with play scheme, my daughter loved it and went last year also. We will be using the scheme again next year, the staff were friendly

Have more i.e. two weeks each venue

Have it for more than two weeks in Royston and during more holidays

Longer hours would be better for working parents, possibly breakfast club option.

Needs more than 2 weeks in the 6 week summer holiday.

I did wonder why there wasn't playzone at St Andrews school in Hitchin as there has been one there in previous years

Do more than two weeks, Have some computer games (play station)

Perhaps advertise earlier to help with holiday cover planning.

Structure

As we use this every year for child care it would be useful to know 6 months in advance which week it would be held at each venue, or if it is on the same week every year. A second week at Knebworth would be useful and extend the hours.

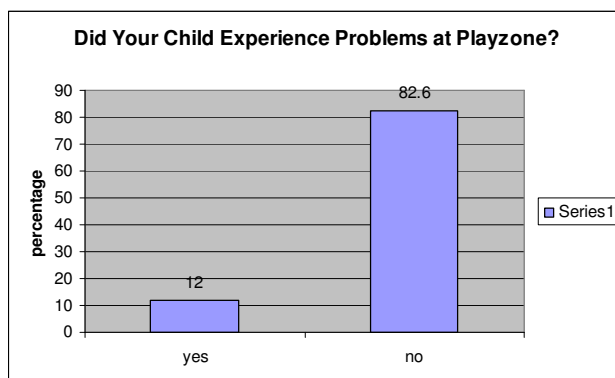
Positive:

- Loved it, wished it was for longer than 2 weeks
- My daughter loved every aspect
- Children were very happy with playscheme and staff members
- The theme days were the days my children enjoyed the most
- No changes, really excellent
- All great!
- None, it was brilliant
- My son really enjoyed his days spent at playzone and it enabled him to play with other children- which is important to him as he is an only child.
- Nothing I think you've done a great job!

Support From Staff at Playzone

The Playzone tries to accommodate all children and ask that parents/guardians identify at the time of booking if their child will require additional support. Where the need was identified extra details were taken regarding the level of support required, if the child had any language difficulties and what type of activity they liked/disliked to enable them to get the most out of their sessions using the 'All about Me' forms.

Figure 8



For customers who responded yes, these are the reasons that were given:

One child hit her child nearly every day

Personal injury

Problems with another child teasing Jamie

sunburn from not wearing a hat

Bullying

As above

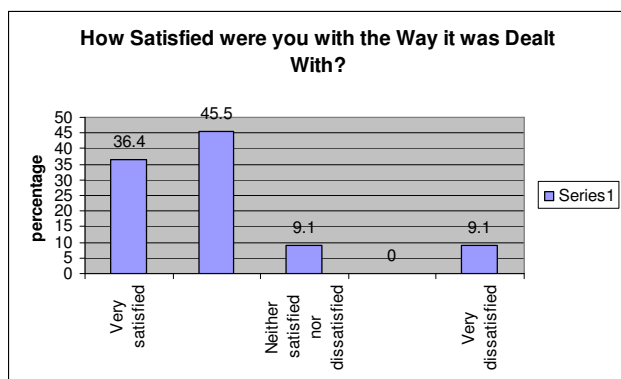
8 Year old daughter punched in the face by a child with special needs, this was not reported to adult collecting the child, concern about the lack of supervision and lack of reporting of significant incident.

She wet herself and she got hurt.

As usual as in school swimming lessons everywhere there was some child with obvious sociability problems who resorted to punching my daughter. It was dealt with by a pleasant lady but I'm not sure that the staff are specialised to deal with it.

Figure 9

This graph shows that 81.9% of customers were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the way problems were dealt with by staff.



These are the comments made by parents about the way staff assisted children

Natalia V Good

Staff were very good they tried very hard to accomodate my sons even with they were bored excellent staff and support my daughter has already asked to attend next year brilliant the kids loved it, they are now going to the baldock playzone but it is a bit frther to drive, staff were friendly
very good

My son is autistic and received 1- 1 attention when he was in a mood one morning.

Well done to all the staff they were all very helpful and hope the scheme will continue.

I found the staff extremely supportive and caring. David my grandson looked forward to attending playzone everyday (4 weeks) He found it great fun and made lots of friends. A big thank you. Patricia Sansom

All staff were helpful and interacted well with children.

staff all seemed excellent

When they hurt themselves, care and attention were given and relayed back to parents when picked up child, very good to know.

My eldest child has been diagnosed with ADHD. It was reasuring to be phoned to ask if he would need support and find out about him. I do not know if he required any extra support whilst at PlayZone, he loved going there and came home happy and confident.

This was a great playscheme and loved the fact was in the school he attends, it meant that it was a familiar surrounding for him and that people he knew from school would be there.

Our children have been going to the playzone for years. It is the best and cheapest form of holiday club in this area and means it is one less week to take off from work.

Figure 10

Shows how many children required extra support at playzone, for example if they had a disability.

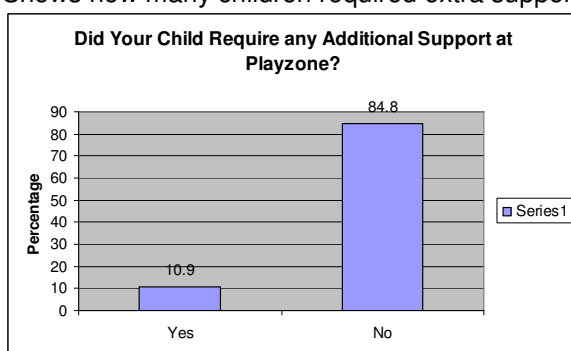
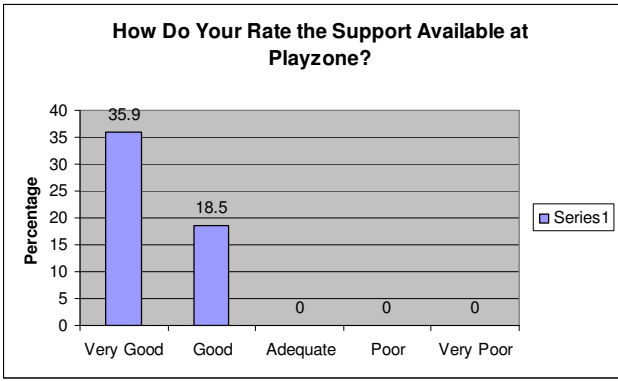


Figure 11

Figure 9 and 10 show that although most parents did not feel that their child required additional support at playzone, they considered the support that was available to be good or very good.



Alternatives to Playzone

Figure 12

This graph shows what alternative arrangements parents would make if Playzone were not available.

