THE **PLAY EVERYWHERE** CHALLENGE

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Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With funding support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and Target, KaBOOM! ran the Play Everywhere Challenge (the Challenge), a national competition that granted $1 million to be distributed across fifty projects around the country to create innovative, easily accessible play spaces for kids and families and, thereby, increase the access to everyday play in their communities. Over 1,000 applications were received for the Challenge. A group of Blue Ribbon panelists supported KaBOOM! in selecting fifty grantees during a two-stage selection process. Grant awards varied by grantees and their proposed play space. Out of the fifty grantees awarded the Challenge grant, forty-nine completed the build-out of their play space in 2017.

RWJF and Target jointly hired McClanahan Associates, Inc. (MAI), to conduct an evaluation of the Challenge. Given that MAI was engaged during the Challenge's first year of implementation, our research intended to gather data that will inform future iterations of the Challenge. Specifically, we aimed to:

- identify *successes* and *challenges* in the Challenge process and grantee play space builds
- document *perceptions of short-term outcomes* (e.g., user perceptions of whether the Challenge increased play in their communities, whether the play space was sustainable, and whether grantees had plans for scaling), and
- learn *how communities are experiencing the play spaces* through the Challenge.

This work is important because it will help others learn how to spark play in their communities; discover what is possible with small play implementation grants; better understand challenges associated with play space build-outs; and help other organizations learn how to implement a large-scale, play-based grant process. This research stops short of proving that the Challege was successful or not. Also, there were challenges in gaining play space user survey participation. Future evaluative work should seek to answer how successful the Challenge was, as well as evaluate the success rate of consecutive cohort grants. This future work should also aim to gather more robust data from play space users to gain deeper insight into their perceptions of the play spaces.

For this study, MAI designed a mixed-methods evaluation, which was conducted over twelve months to answer the following research questions:

1) *What were the implementation challenges and successes of the Challenge?*
2) *What short-term outcomes are associated with the Challenge?*
3) *How are communities experiencing the play spaces built through the Challenge?*

DATA SOURCES

This evaluation of the Challenge is mixed-methods, meaning that both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered and analyzed to answer the study's key research questions. These data sources (see Introduction section for full detail) were:

1) **Program Document Review.**

2) **Key Informant Interviews With Challenge Stakeholders.**
3) **Blue Ribbon Panel Online Survey.**
4) **Grantee Online Survey.**
5) **Play Space User Online Survey.**
6) **Play Literature Search and Review.**

In total, our study included survey results from eighteen panelists and forty-two grantees, and interviews with nine stakeholders associated with the Challenge. We also surveyed 224 play space users.

HIGH-LEVEL FINDINGS

About Judging. All Blue Ribbon Panel survey participants felt the amount of time given to judge the applications was adequate, and agreed that the judging and grantee recommendation process was completed according to the timeline that was shared with them when they agreed to judge. Although Blue Ribbon panelists agreed that they had a clear sense of the criteria they were expected to use to select grantees, panelists also varied in terms of how much weight they gave to certain judging criteria. For example, there were strong connections between the panelists' professional work experiences and preference for related ranking criteria. Overall, though, panelists reported a preference for applicants who: *focused on distributing opportunities for play more equitably across a city* (100 percent of panelists agreed); proposed *inviting* play spaces (88 percent of panelists considered this "very important"); were *creative in revamping dead time/space into easy opportunities of play* (82 percent of panelists agreed); and included all three elements of *scale*, *ease*, and *equity* in their plans. Although it remains unclear how the panelists were valuing the six guiding principles and three components of playability, or how they assessed the elements of scale, ease, and equity, the aforementioned findings show a strong alignment of the panelists' priorities in selecting grantees and suggest that they were viewing the applications with a similar lens. Panelists saw potential for minor improvements to the judging materials, the judging process, the coordination of grantees, and communication related to final grantee selections and play space outcomes.

About Grantees. Grantees felt supported throughout the application process, and many reported having improved their play space designs based on their experiences during the process. Grantees reported challenges related to completing the build on time. They also reported needing some supports they did not receive, which were related to counteracting issues that arose during the build-out process. Many grantees reported that they did not take full advantage of some technical assistance offered to them.

About Short-Term Outcomes. Some short-term outcomes that are associated with the Challenge include surveyed grantees reporting that their own personal perceptions of play or playability have expanded through their participation in the Challenge. Grantees also reported community-level impacts, including: strong agreement that the Challenge helped elevate play in their city or community; that the Challenge funding helped spread ideas, policies, and other interventions to encourage play in their city or community; and that an increased number of communities now have a formal play agenda (this went from 29 percent of communities with a formal play agenda to 46 percent, or a 17 percent increase). Sixty-three percent of surveyed grantees reported that they do, or will have, a community organization/local business serve as project host, responsible for the play space's long-term upkeep. Fifty-six percent of surveyed grantees have plans to build or expand their play space in the future.

Eighty-two percent of surveyed play space users reported that they get the sense that their city encourages people to play, and an equal percentage think the Challenge helped increase play in their city/community. Furthermore, the vast majority of play space users (86 percent) reported that they plan on returning to their play space at some later point in time.

About Play Space User Experiences. Overall, play space users reported having very positive experiences. About 43 percent of the survey participants had visited their play space five times or more, suggesting play space users were purposely returning to the play space. Only 18 percent were visiting the play space for the first time when they participated in the survey. A large majority had first heard of the play space either via social media (71 percent) or word of mouth (66 percent). A majority of survey respondents reported that their play space was accessible (easy to get to, fit easily into their day/routine allowing them to play on the way to somewhere else) and was easy to use while there.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our study findings allowed us to make some key recommendations for process improvements to future grant competitions like the Challenge. Recommendations related to the application process recognized the intensity of the application process and the limited uptake of application technical assistance. Judging recommendations related to the influence of expertise on judging, the timing and time requirement of the judging process, the decision-making process, and the follow-up with judges beyond judging. Build-out recommendations included lengthening the build-out timeframe. Technical assistance recommendations related to accessibility/viability and content. Reporting recommendations related to collecting better outcomes data to assess play space effectiveness.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This evaluation was designed to accomplish two goals: evaluate the implementation of the Challenge in order to provide formative feedback to its funders, KaBOOM!, and other stakeholders, and 2) to document early outcomes of the Challenge. As such, this study focused on the experiences of the Challenge's stakeholders: the Blue Ribbon Panel, the grantees, and the play space users in the first cohort of the initiative. While the research provides important insights into the Challenge's implementation, we were less successful in capturing and documenting the experiences of play space users and assessing longer-term outcomes of the Challenge.

Grantees offered valuable feedback emphasizing the importance of more longitudinal, qualitative fieldwork that evaluates customized outcomes determined by individual sites. Moving forward, it would be beneficial to continue studying Cohort One grantees to learn more about play space user experiences and longer-term outcomes, including sustainability and scaling. Key research questions may include:

1) How well are play spaces attracting play space users? Who is experiencing the play spaces?
2) What short and long-term impacts are play space users experiencing?
3) Are play spaces being sustained?
4) Have play spaces been scaled locally? What factors support sustaining and scaling play spaces?

Play space users. One thing that was difficult to determine during our study was how well play spaces were attracting users and how much traffic play spaces were experiencing. It is unclear whether sites were experiencing a lull in play space usage or whether play space users were uninclined to participate in an online survey. The next phase of research would benefit from tracking play space usage during systematic observational periods across either all sites or a sampling of sites (based on region, type of play space, type of grantee, etc…) using a newly developed tool to be used during a systematic data collection process that would be relevant to all play spaces.

Short and long-term impacts. A handful of grantees explained there were some short-term disruptions near their site and taking a more longitudinal view would provide a more accurate picture of how play space users are experiencing the site. A more longitudinal look at play spaces could also eliminate any false impression of high usage that may happen closer to the play space opening. Furthermore, it would be interesting to track participants over time to see if repeat usage has stronger impacts or if impacts plateau, and if so, in what types of sites this happens. Play space users could be asked via survey or in-person (during observational periods) how many times they have visited the play space and play space outcomes could be examined with user frequency in mind. Critical to this research is the grantee suggestion to use homegrown or customized outcomes as opposed to outcomes that are uniform (and inappropriate) across all sites. Equally important, grantees suggested data would be most appropriately gathered qualitatively to learn deeply how play space users are experiencing the play spaces. Site interviews with play space users could yield this data.

Play space sustainability. We learned through phase one of this research that play spaces will require up-keep, with some grantees reporting more concrete plans than others. As sites begin to require maintenance, it would be timely to observe if up-keep is regularly occurring to sustain the play spaces. Grantee interviews are a potential back-up option to learn more about maintenance activity if observations are not possible.

Play space scaling. Our survey touched on whether sites had plans to scale the play spaces but further research should examine this going forward, at a more relevant time when scaling would be occurring. One thing learned through phase one research is that certain cities supported the play spaces more than others. It would be interesting to examine what factors effect this support and if there are best practices in marketing and stabilizing the play space. Grantee or partner interviews would be the most appropriate method to gather this data.

This data, if gathered across all active play spaces, would provide nuance into how sites compare and contrast and how community context plays a factor, extending Gehl's work in their deep-dive sites. It also goes a step further by addressing grantee feedback in the evaluation process and offering approaches to counter those issues.

INTRODUCTION

At a very early age, play is what enables children to engage and interact with the world around them. Play is critical to healthy brain development, and through play, children are able to use their own creativity while developing their imagination, as well as cognitive, physical, and emotional strengths.[1] Play helps children achieve their highest potential and provides those essential, formative moments with friends and caregivers. Play fosters social skills, increases self-confidence, and establishes independence and the chance to live a healthier lifestyle.[2] All children deserve the right to play[3] and to experience the benefits that come with it. Unfortunately, despite evidence demonstrating the importance of play for both children and their caregivers, time for play has declined for some children, due to factors such as fewer safe playgrounds, parental time constraints, and decreased recess time at school. Given some of the barriers to play, especially for low-income youth, it is critical to find more opportunities for and solutions to making play a valued part of our communities.

The Play Everywhere Challenge was one such initiative that posits that play can take place in everyday spaces where families are already interacting, such as the grocery store, bus stops, or laundromats. The Play Everywhere Challenge aims to spark a "playability movement" that will increase parents' focus on play and encourage kids to play more while doing everyday tasks. The Challenge also seeks to bolster communities' recognition of the importance of play, increase the resources dedicated to it (including public and private funding more play solutions), and increase the accessibility of everyday play by transforming local infrastructure. The Play Everywhere infrastructure transformations created by this playability movement are designed to be *wondrous, challenging, convenient, inviting, shared*, and *unifying*, allowing users of all ages to be engaged while they attend to their everyday tasks and obligations. Table One[4] describes the six guiding principles associated with playability in more detail below.

[1] Ginsburg, K. R. (2007). "The importance of play in promoting healthy child development and maintaining strong parent-child bonds." *Pediatrics,* 119(1), 182-191.
[2] Ailwood, J. (2003). "Governing early childhood education through play." *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood,* 4(3), 286-299.
[3] Lester, S. and Russell, W. (2010). "Children's Right to Play: An Examination of the Importance of Play in the Lives of Children Worldwide." Working Papers in Early Childhood Development, No. 57. Bernard van Leer Foundation.
[4] Source: KaBOOM!'s Playability Initiative (2015).

TABLE 1. PLAY EVERYWHERE GUIDING PRINCIPLES		
Everyday Spaces Become PLAYces When They Are ...		
Wondrous		Create a space that feels new every time, enables exploration and discovery, and allows kids to use their imaginations.
Challenging		Incorporate a variety of activities for kids to stretch their minds and bodies.
Convenient		Make it easy for kids and families to play along the way.
Inviting		Permission to play is obvious and intuitive—giving kids and families the sense of comfort they need to play freely.
Shared		Turn play installations into social spaces, where kids, families, caregivers, and the broader community can comfortably come enjoy play together.
Unifying		Bring communities together through play by designing spaces that reflect the whole community and draw visitors from all walks of life.

With funding support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and Target, KaBOOM! ran the Play Everywhere Challenge (the Challenge), a national competition that granted $1 million to be distributed across fifty projects around the country to create innovative, easily accessible play spaces for kids and families and, thereby, increase the access to everyday play in their communities. Over 1,000 applications were received for the Challenge. A group of Blue Ribbon panelists supported KaBOOM! in selecting fifty grantees during a two-stage selection process. Grant awards varied by grantees and their proposed play space. Out of the fifty grantees awarded the Challenge grant, forty-nine completed the build-out of their play space in 2017.

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- identify *successes* and *challenges* in the Challenge process and grantee play space builds
- document *perceptions of short-term outcomes* (e.g., user perceptions of whether the Challenge increased play in their communities, whether the play space was sustainable, and whether grantees had plans for scaling), and
- learn *how communities are experiencing the play spaces* through the Challenge.

This work is important because it will help others learn how to spark play in their communities; discover what is possible with small play implementation grants; better understand challenges associated with play space build-outs; and help other organizations learn how to implement a large-scale, play-based grant process. This research stops short of proving that the Challege was successful or not. Also, there were challenges in gaining play space user survey participation. Future evaluative work should seek to

answer how successful the Challenge was across all projects[5], as well as evaluate the success rate of consecutive cohort grants. This future work should also aim to gather more robust data from play space users to gain deeper insight into their perceptions of the play spaces.

For this study, MAI designed a mixed-methods evaluation, which was conducted over twelve months to answer the following research questions:

4) *What were the implementation challenges and successes of the Challenge?*
5) *What short-term outcomes are associated with the Challenge?*
6) *How are communities experiencing the play spaces built through the Challenge?*

DATA SOURCES

This evaluation of the Challenge is mixed-methods, meaning that both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered and analyzed to answer the study's key research questions. These data sources were:

1) **Program Document Review.** The evaluation team reviewed over eighty documents and materials about the Challenge and its grantees. RWJF and Target provided Challenge materials and general orientation to MAI during the initial proposal process. In the early stages of the study, KaBOOM! shared Challenge materials associated with the grantee application and selection processes, the technical assistance provided to grantees, as well as raw data related to the grantee applications and two-stage selection process. Gehl and ideas42, KaBOOM!'s technical partners, provided materials related to technical assistance provided to grantees (e.g., webinars, tools).

2) **Key Informant Interviews With Challenge Stakeholders.** Interviews with key funders (RWJF and Target) were conducted to learn about the impetus for the Challenge grant. Interviews with KaBOOM! and technical assistance providers associated with the Challenge (i.e., ideas42, Gehl, and Monitor Deloitte) were conducted to gather more information related to the grantee application and selection processes, grantee build-out expectations, and general successes and obstacles associated with the Challenge process and timeline. In total, we interviewed nine stakeholders, employing a mix of individual and group interview formats.

3) **Blue Ribbon Panel Online Survey.** An online survey was administered to a group of experts selected by KaBOOM! to judge applications for the Challenge. The survey gathered information about the panelist's background, the grantee application and selection processes, and the panelist's reflections on participating in the Challenge. The survey was completed by eighteen of the twenty-eight panelists.

4) **Grantee Online Survey.** An online survey was administered on a rolling basis as grantees completed their play space build-outs. The goal of the survey was to assess each grantee's perception of how easy or difficult it was to complete the Challenge, as well as determine their site's early short-term outcomes, get feedback on the technical assistance they received, and understand the grantee's plans for scaling and ensuring sustainability. Each site designated one

[5] Note: KaBOOM! conducted in-depth evaluation of 10 select Play Everywhere projects at the same time MAI's evaluation was occurring.

key point of contact to take the survey. The online grantee survey was completed by forty-two of fifty grantees.

5) **Play Space User Online Survey.** An online survey was administered to gather feedback from youth and adults from each community about their play space experiences. The survey included questions such as: did they intentionally come to the play space; what was their prior knowledge of the play space; what experiences did they have while at the play space; what was their assessment of the safety and accessibility of the play space; and did they have intentions of returning. In total, 224 play space users participated in the survey. Out of the 224 play space users who participated in the online survey, 141 survey participants were from one site (70 percent). The remaining eighty-three survey participants represented the other eighteen participating sites, with most sites having fewer than ten participants. Play space survey findings do not equally represent all nineteen participating sites and are largely skewed towards one site.

6) **Play Literature Search and Review.** A literature search and review was conducted to learn more about the importance of play and to gather survey items that may be adapted for the purposes of capturing key short-term outcomes.

Table Two summarizes study participation. In total, our study included survey results from eighteen panelists and forty-two grantees, and interviews with nine stakeholders associated with the Challenge. We also surveyed 224 play space users. See Tables Six and Seven in the Appendix for a full breakdown (by grantee and geographic location) of grantee survey participation and play space user survey participation.

TABLE 2. STUDY PARTICIPATION

METHOD BY POPULATION	TOTAL POPULATION	TOTAL PARTICIPATION
Stakeholder Interviews	9	9
Blue Ribbon Panel Survey	28	18
Grantee Survey	50	42
Play Space User Survey	Unknown	224

In our next section, we present a summary of high-level findings from our three surveys and stakeholder interviews.

HIGH-LEVEL FINDINGS

About Judging. All Blue Ribbon Panel survey participants felt the amount of time given to judge the applications was adequate, and agreed that the judging and grantee recommendation process was completed according to the timeline that was shared with them when they agreed to judge. Although Blue Ribbon panelists agreed that they had a clear sense of the criteria they were expected to use to select grantees, panelists also varied in terms of how much weight they gave to certain judging criteria. For example, there were strong connections between the panelists' professional work experiences and

preference for related ranking criteria. Overall, though, panelists reported a preference for applicants who: *focused on distributing opportunities for play more equitably across a city* (100 percent of panelists agreed); proposed *inviting* play spaces (88 percent of panelists considered this "very important"); were *creative in revamping dead time/space into easy opportunities of play* (82 percent of panelists agreed); and included all three elements of *scale*, *ease*, and *equity* in their plans. Although it remains unclear how the panelists were valuing the six guiding principles and three components of playability, or how they assessed the elements of scale, ease, and equity, the aforementioned findings show a strong alignment of the panelists' priorities in selecting grantees and suggest that they were viewing the applications with a similar lens. Panelists saw potential for minor improvements to the judging materials, the judging process, the coordination of grantees, and communication-related to final grantee selections and play space outcomes.

About Grantees. Grantees felt supported throughout the application process, and many reported having improved their play space designs based on their experiences during the process. Grantees reported challenges related to completing the build-out on time. They also reported needing some supports they did not receive, which were related to counteracting issues that arose during the build-out process. Many grantees reported that they did not take full advantage of some technical assistance offered to them through the Challenge.

About Short-Term Outcomes. Some short-term outcomes that are associated with the Challenge include surveyed grantees reporting that their own personal perceptions of play infrastructure have expanded through their participation in the Challenge. Grantees also reported community-level impacts, including: strong agreement that the Challenge helped elevate play in their city or community; that the Challenge funding helped spread ideas, policies, and other interventions to encourage play in their city or community; and that an increased number of communities now have a formal play agenda (this went from 29 percent of communities with a formal play agenda to 46 percent, or a 17 percent increase). Sixty-three percent of surveyed grantees reported that they do, or will have, a community organization/local business serve as project host, responsible for the play space's long-term upkeep. Fifty-six percent of surveyed grantees have plans to build or expand their play space in the future. Eighty-two percent of surveyed play space users reported that they get the sense that their city encourages people to play, and an equal percentage think the Challenge helped increase play in their city/community. Furthermore, the vast majority of play space users (86 percent) reported that they plan on returning to their play space at some later point in time.

About Play Space User Experiences. Overall, play space users reported having very positive experiences. About 43 percent of the survey participants had visited their play space five times or more, suggesting play space users were purposely returning to the play space. Only 18 percent were visiting the play space for the first time when they participated in the survey. A large majority had first heard of the play space either via social media (71 percent) or word of mouth (66 percent). A majority of survey respondents reported that their play space was accessible (easy to get to, fit easily into their day/routine allowing them to play on the way to somewhere else) and was easy to use while there.

REPORT ORGANIZATION

First, we present background details related to the Challenge. Next, we present key findings from the three surveys (i.e., Blue Ribbon Panel survey, grantee survey, and play space user survey) organized around our three main research questions above.

ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

KaBOOM! is the national nonprofit dedicated to bringing balanced and active play into the daily lives of all kids, particularly those growing up in poverty in America. KaBOOM!'s vision is that all kids get the childhood they deserve, filled with balanced and active play, so they can thrive. As the leaders of and advocates for play infrastructure in underserved communities, KaBOOM! promotes several kinds of direct impact projects to achieve its goals, including building playgrounds that serve as community anchors and supporting the development of play spaces that can be easily integrated into families' daily lives. Aside from active outdoor play in school, which is arguably decreasing[6], going to a playground is an "event" for many kids, meaning that it takes planning and time to make happen. To get the play that they need, KaBOOM! recognized that a part of play needed to be more accessible to kids and caregivers. A national scan of everyday routines revealed that there were not many examples of cities and communities that were easily incorporating play into their residents' everyday lives.

Based on its desire to provide more everyday opportunities for play to youth and their families across the United States, KaBOOM! organized the Play Everywhere Challenge. The Challenge was a national, open, and results-focused competition to drive playability as a standard to which cities should aspire.[7] It was designed to help uncover the best replicable, scalable innovations in city redevelopment and design that would make play easy, available, and fun for all kids and families. It was an opportunity to reimagine *what* and *where* a play space is and can be.[8] With funding support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and Target, KaBOOM! ran the national competition that granted $1 million to be distributed across fifty organizations around the country to create innovative, accessible play spaces for kids and families, thereby increasing the playability of their communities. Projects were advised to be either temporary pop-up installations (2 weeks minimum) or semi-permanent to permanent built interventions, with the restriction that it could not be a program or event.

As an integral part of leading the Challenge, KaBOOM! brought in experts to help with various aspects of the Challenge. KaBOOM! convened a design charrette, in which experts, such as city government leaders, urban planners, and health and education experts, were brought in to develop testable ideas for how to transform elements of city environments including sidewalks, laundromats, and bus stops. Monitor Deloitte consulted with KaBOOM! on the design charrette, and managed other logistical aspects of the project.

KaBOOM!'s call to action and outreach inspired over 1,000 Challenge applications from various organizations and institutions. Of the applicants, forty-seven states and 439 cities were represented.

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[6] Tremblay, M. S., Gray, C., Babcock, S., Barnes, J., Costas Bradstreet, et al. (2015). Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 12*(6), 6475–6505. http://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph120606475

[7] Source: KaBOOM!'s Playability Initiative (2015).

[8] Retrieved from: https://kaboom.org/playability/play_everywhere/challenge/rules

Twenty percent of applicants (735 total) made it through the first phase of the review process. These applications were reviewed internally by KaBOOM!, and 200 finalists were selected and notified of their advancement. Of the 200 finalists, thirty-eight states and 150 cities were represented. The finalists' projects fell under multiple categories: 28 percent under "transportation infrastructure," 28 percent under "other," 23 percent under "public art," and 21 percent under "vacant lot."

During the second phase of the application process, 183 of the 200 finalists from the first phase were asked to refine and then re-submit their applications. Of these, eighty-four potential winners were selected by an internal KaBOOM! team. These potential winners were selected based on factors of *geography*, *project innovation*, *replicability*, *and scalability*. To support the grantee selection process for the Challenge, KaBOOM! invited select experts to serve on its Blue Ribbon Panel. The final Blue Ribbon Panel was comprised of twenty-eight individuals, representing various sectors, including business, nonprofit, urban planning, and the arts. The Blue Ribbon Judge panel divided into small groups to review and rank sub-sets of applications. Taking into consideration individual sub-group recommendations from the panel, KaBOOM! selected the fifty winners. These fifty winners represented twenty-six states and forty-three cities.

KaBOOM! offered resources to grantees including the Play Everywhere Playbook; a winner's manual; the Play Everywhere Guidebook; a final report guide; and press release templates. KaBOOM! also provided one-on-one supports (such as responses via telephone and/or email to questions and project challenges) to grantees on an as-needed basis. Over the course of the Challenge, KaBOOM! offered additional technical assistance to all fifty grantees through subcontracts with Gehl and ideas42. Each technical assistance provider is discussed below:

- **ideas42** uses the power of behavioral science to design scalable solutions to some of society's most difficult problems. As a technical assistance provider, ideas42 helped winners think more deeply and practically about how to incorporate behavioral science into their designs to ensure that their play interventions were engaging, successful, and well-used. The organization offered resources including a behavioral science self-assessment tool; a ninety-minute webinar titled "*What Makes Us Choose Play? Behavior, Public Life, and Play"*; and one-on-one assistance.
- **Gehl** is an interdisciplinary urban design studio that makes "cities for people." Its support for winners focused on creating quality designs that reflected the local community, encouraged sociability, and reimagined the potential of public spaces to support kids and families.[9] Specifically, Gehl offered resources including a permitting guide; a pre-application webinar about the Challenge; four thematic webinars (one about implementation, another about community engagement, and two about evaluation), exposing grantees to particular technical assistance experts; and office hours to provide more tailored one-on-one support to grantees.

The Challenge drew in a diverse applicant pool. Figure One shows the majority of grantees were from nonprofits (40 percent) or government entities (40 percent). Fewer than a third of the grantees were located in the Southeast (30 percent), with another third (30 percent) located in the Northeast, and roughly 20 percent located in the Midwest. No co-variations were found between geographic region and type of play space. All types of play spaces were represented across various geographic regions. Funding award amounts varied by grantee, but 50 percent of grantees received between $1K and $19,999K, and 38 percent were awarded between $20K and $39,999K. About 12 percent were awarded larger grants,

[9] Source: Play Everywhere Winner Guide (2016).

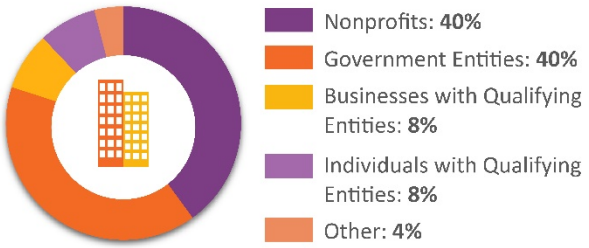
ranging between $40K and $50K. Grantees proposed a number of different types of play space installations. KaBOOM! organized these play spaces into seven categories:

- Streets, Sidewalks, and Trails: play spaces installed on streets, sidewalks, and trails
- Transit: play spaces located at bus stops or transit centers
- Moveable/Pop-Up Play: play spaces designed to be moved between locations or for special events
- Civic Spaces: play spaces installed at government-run locations, such as libraries, municipal buildings, etc.
- Parks and Open Spaces: play spaces in public parks or open spaces not considered streets, sidewalks, or trails
- Residential: play spaces located in residential neighborhoods
- Commercial Spaces: play spaces located inside or outside business entities

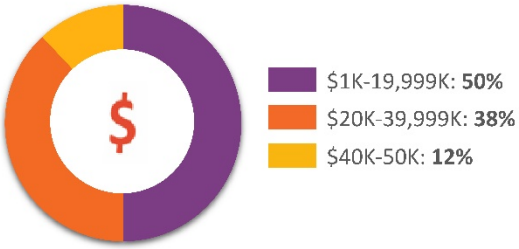
The most common play space type was "Streets, Sidewalks, and Trails" (36 percent), followed by "Commercial Spaces" (24 percent); "Transit" (20 percent); "Moveable/Pop-Up Play" (8 percent); "Civic Spaces" (6 percent); "Parks and Open Spaces" (4 percent); and "Residential" (2 percent).

FIGURE 1. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE STAKEHOLDER SPOTLIGHT

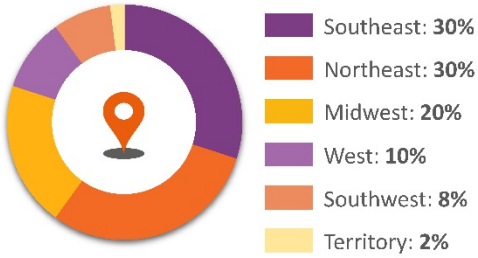
GRANTEES BY ORGANIZATION TYPE *(n=50)*



GRANTEE FUNDING AWARD AMOUNT *(n=50)*



GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTEES *(n=50)*

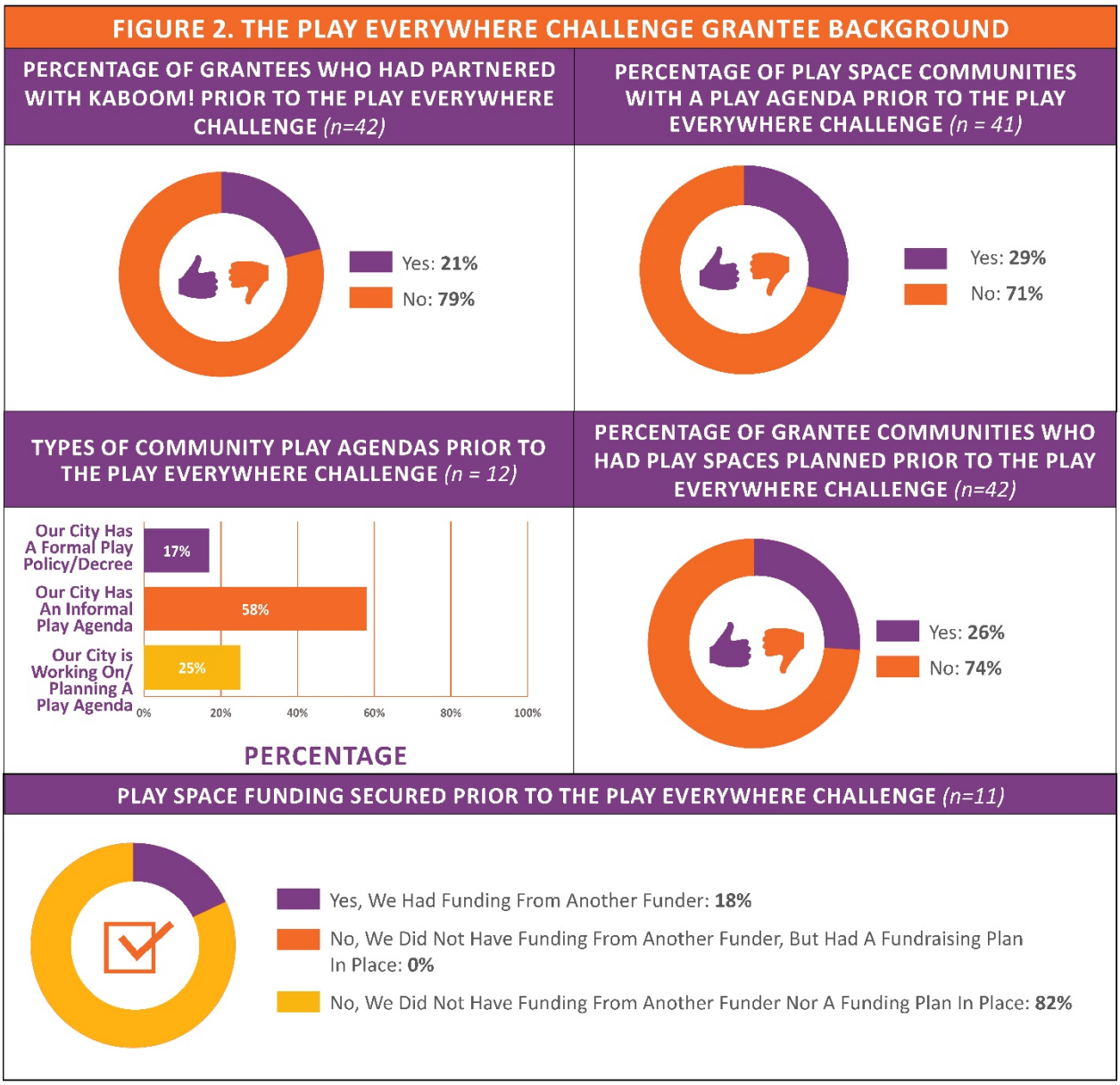


GRANTEE TYPES OF PLAYSPACES *(n=50)*

Play Space Category	% of Grantees
Streets, Sidewalks, and Trails	36%
Commercial Spaces	24%
Transit	20%
Moveable/Pop-up Play Space	8%
Civic Spaces	6%
Parks and Open Spaces	4%
Residential	2%

As shown in Figure Two, roughly 20 percent of surveyed grantees had partnered with KaBOOM! prior to the Challenge, while about 80 percent had not. **About 71 percent of surveyed grantees recognized their community did not have a play agenda prior to the Challenge.** Of the surveyed grantees that felt their community had a play agenda prior to the Challenge, 17 percent felt that their community had a formal play policy, 58 percent felt that their city had an informal play agenda, and 25 percent felt that their city was working on planning a play agenda. Of the forty-two surveyed grantees, about a quarter had play

spaces already planned prior to the Challenge, while three quarters did not. Also, fewer than 20 percent of all grantees had secured funding prior to the Challenge.



RESEARCH QUESTION 1: WHAT WERE THE IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES OF THE CHALLENGE?

GRANTEE APPLICATION PROCESS

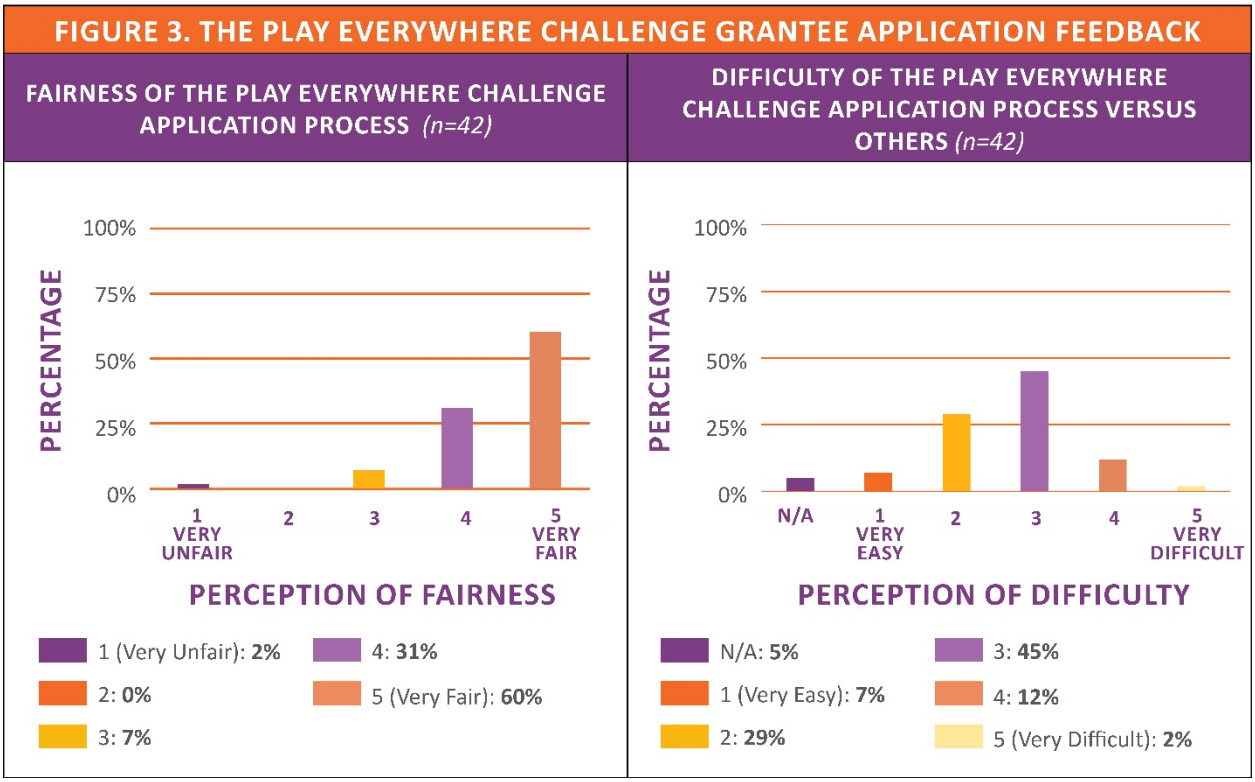
Grantees went through a two-stage application process. First, grantees were asked to submit an initial application. Over a thousand applications were submitted by various organizations and institutions. Seven hundred and thirty-five applicants advanced after the first phase. These applications were

reviewed internally by KaBOOM!, and 200 finalists were selected and notified of their advancement. Second, a select number of these finalists were asked to revise and re-submit their application. This select group was provided with some technical assistance during the application period.

OVERALL, HOW DID GRANTEES PERCEIVE THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

Grantees thought the application process was fair and easy. As shown in Figure Three, 60 percent of the surveyed grantees reported that the Challenge application process was "very fair," while another 31 percent found it "fair." On a scale of one to five (where "one" represented "very easy" and "five" represented "very difficult"), and in comparison to other application processes, the majority of grantees rated the Challenge application process a "two" or a "three."

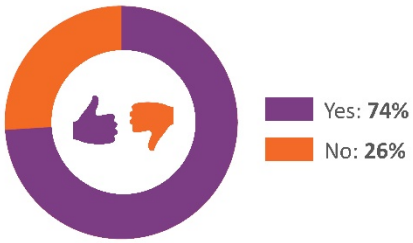
FIGURE 3. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE GRANTEE APPLICATION FEEDBACK



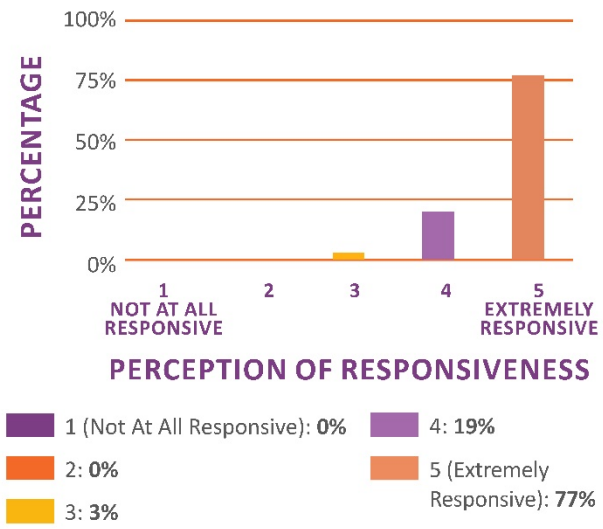
Grantees found the application process helpful. Figure Four presents more detail related to the grantee application process. Roughly two-thirds of grantees surveyed contacted KaBOOM! for application clarification help or support. Of those who contacted KaBOOM! for application clarification, help, or support, 77 percent reported that KaBOOM! was "extremely responsive," and another 19 percent reported KaBOOM! being in the next highest category ("four") on a scale of one to five (where "one" represented "not at all responsive"). About 20 percent of grantees reported being asked to revise and re-submit their applications by KaBOOM! following their initial submission. An overwhelming majority of grantees (95 percent), reported that they felt the application process had helped to strengthen their play space design.

FIGURE 4. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE GRANTEE APPLICATION PROCESS FEEDBACK

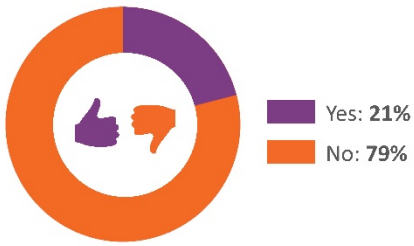
PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO CONTACTED KABOOM! FOR APPLICATION CLARIFICATION, HELP, OR SUPPORT *(n = 42)*



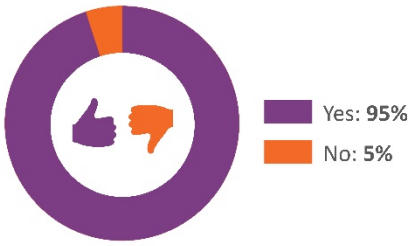
RESPONSIVENESS OF KABOOM! UPON CONTACT FOR APPLICATION SUPPORT *(n = 31)*



PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO WERE ASKED TO REVISE AND RE-SUBMIT THEIR APPLICATION BY KABOOM! *(n= 42)*



PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO THOUGHT THAT THE APPLICATION PROCESS HELPED STRENGTHEN THEIR PLAY SPACE DESIGN *(n= 42)*

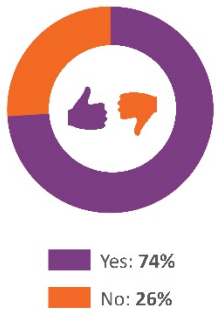


WHAT WERE GRANTEE PERCEPTIONS OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO THEM DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS?

Grantees used KaBOOM!'s support more frequently than other technical assistance providers, and found it more useful than support from other providers during the Challenge. Overall, more grantees reported receiving KaBOOM! technical assistance than technical assistance provided by Gehl and ideas42, and more grantees found KaBOOM! support helpful. As shown in Figure Five, about three-fourths (74 percent) of grantees surveyed received technical assistance or support from KaBOOM! during the application process. Of these grantees, about 70 percent found KaBOOM!'s support helpful (giving it either a "four" or "five" on a scale of one to five, where "five" represented "extremely helpful" and "one" represented "not at all helpful"). Only about a third (34 percent) of grantees surveyed reported receiving technical assistance or support from either Gehl or ideas42 during the application process.

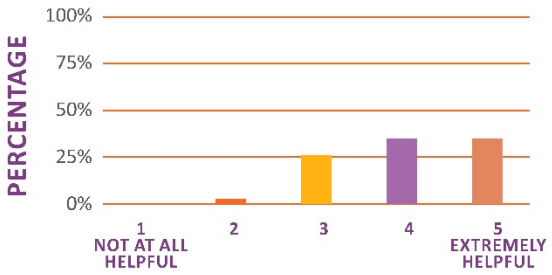
FIGURE 5. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DURING APPLICATION PROCESS

PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO RECEIVED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/SUPPORT PROVIDED BY KABOOM! DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS *(n = 42)*



Yes: **74%**
No: **26%**

PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO FOUND KABOOM!'S TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/SUPPORT HELPFUL DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS *(n = 31)*



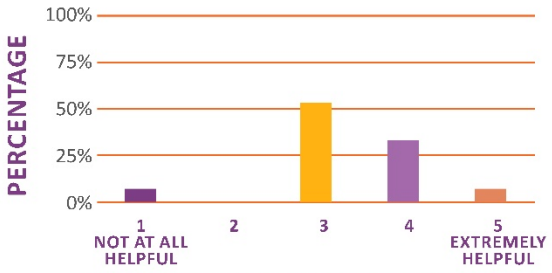
PERCEPTION OF TA HELPFULNESS

1 (Not At All Helpful): **0%**
2: **3%**
3: **26%**
4: **35%**
5 (Extremely Helpful): **35%**

PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO RECEIVED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/SUPPORT PROVIDED BY GEHL DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS *(n = 41)*

Yes: **34%**
No: **66%**

PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO FOUND GEHL'S TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/SUPPORT HELPFUL DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS *(n = 15)*



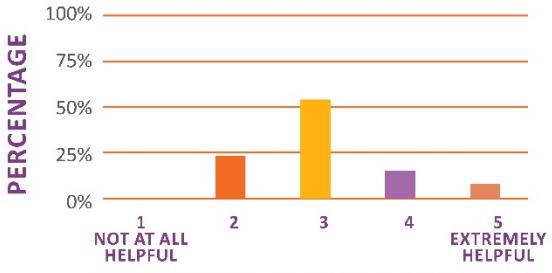
PERCEPTION OF TA HELPFULNESS

1 (Not At All Helpful): **7%**
2: **0%**
3: **53%**
4: **33%**
5 (Extremely Helpful): **7%**

PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO RECEIVED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/SUPPORT PROVIDED BY IDEAS42 DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS *(n = 41)*

Yes: **32%**
No: **68%**

PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO FOUND IDEAS42'S TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE/SUPPORT HELPFUL DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS *(n = 13)*



PERCEPTION OF TA HELPFULNESS

1 (Not At All Helpful): **0%**
2: **23%**
3: **54%**
4: **15%**
5 (Extremely Helpful): **8%**

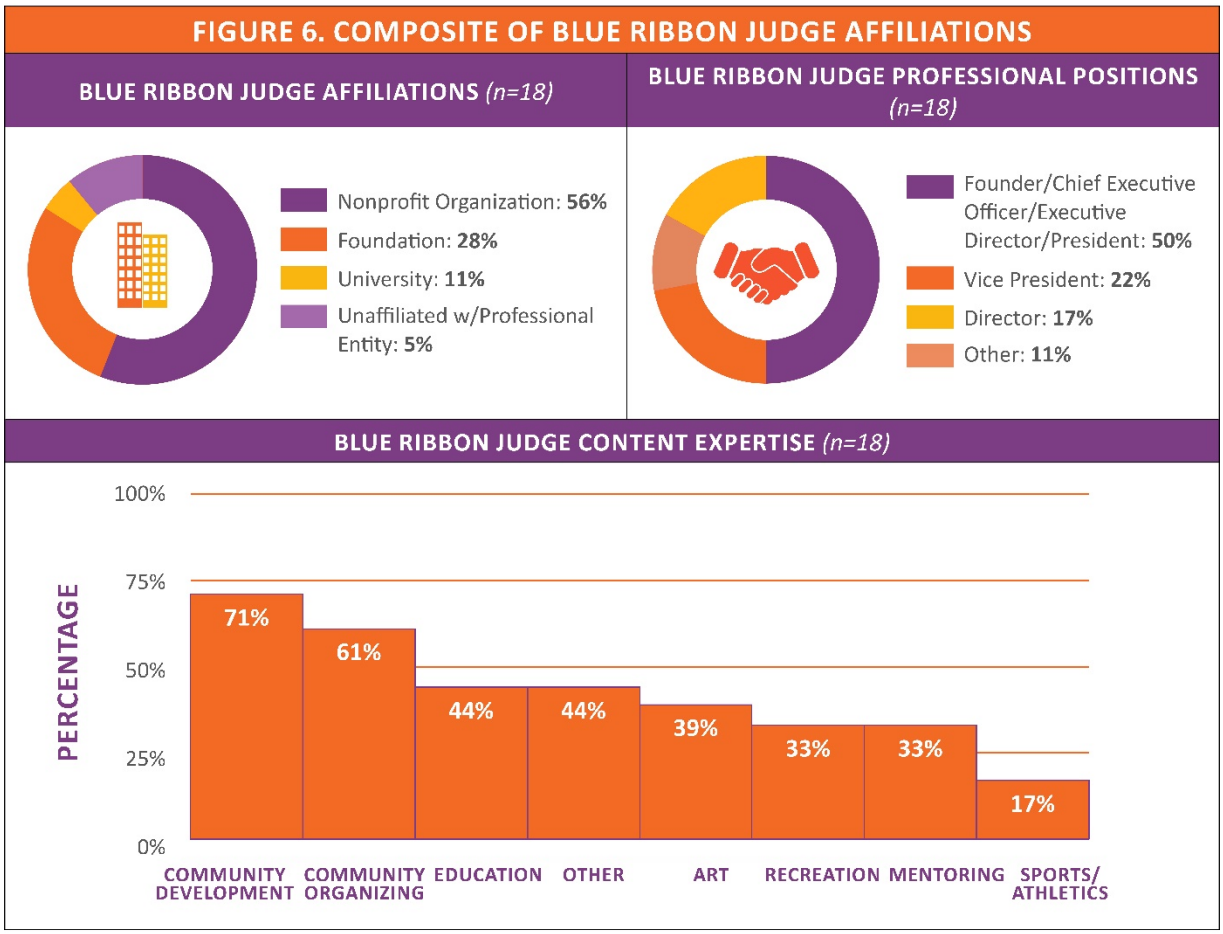
GRANTEE JUDGING/SELECTION PROCESS

WHO ARE THE PEOPLE ON THE BLUE RIBBON PANEL?

To support the grantee selection process for the Challenge, KaBOOM! invited select experts to serve on a Blue Ribbon Panel. KaBOOM! wanted to use external judges to infuse additional technical and content expertise into the judging process and increase short-term capacity. KaBOOM! reached out to people who were experts in play; art; education; recreation; community organizing; engineering and design; and child development. **KaBOOM! was successful in obtaining the participation of almost thirty panelists in the Challenge.**

Blue Ribbon panelists were experienced professionals who brought varied perspectives to their judging. The final Blue Ribbon Panel was comprised of twenty-eight individuals, representing various fields of expertise. Characteristics of the panelists can be found in Figure Six, below. The majority of Blue Ribbon panelists were affiliated with nonprofit organizations (56 percent) and others with foundations (28 percent) or universities (11 percent). Many of the Blue Ribbon panelists held senior positions, including founder, chief executive officer, executive director, president, and vice president. Content expertise[10] varied across the Blue Ribbon Panel, but most had some connection to the core substantive areas in which the Challenge was steeped. Of the Blue Ribbon panelists in our survey sample, 78 percent had "community development" expertise, and 61 percent had "community organizing" expertise. Almost half of Blue Ribbon panelists surveyed reported expertise connected to "education" (44 percent). Finally, just under half of the panelists had previously worked with KaBOOM! and had a relationship with the organization prior to the Challenge (44 percent). The range of the respondents' connection with KaBOOM! varied. One Blue Ribbon panelist was even involved in drafting the Play Everywhere Playbook, which was a document used in guiding the Challenge.

[10] Blue Ribbon panelists selected all applicable areas of expertise, and were not encouraged to only report one area. Therefore, percentages total more than 100. Respondents who selected the "other" category represented content areas, such as design of play equipment/spaces, government innovation, urban design, transportation, and streetscapes.



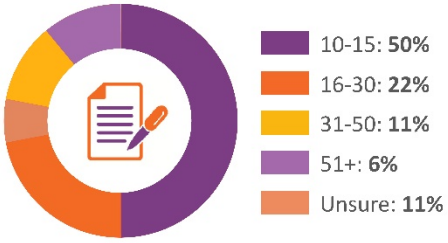
HOW DID BLUE RIBBON PANELISTS PERCEIVE THE CHALLENGE'S JUDGING AND SELECTION PROCESS?

In collaboration with KaBOOM!, MAI gathered Blue Ribbon panelists' perceptions of the Challenge and their experiences selecting grantees. **Overall, Blue Ribbon panelists reported very positive experiences, felt they understood the judging expectations well, and would recommend a colleague to serve as a panelist in the future.** Blue Ribbon panelists also offered valuable suggestions for improving judging materials, the judging and selection processes, and communication to panelists following judging duties.

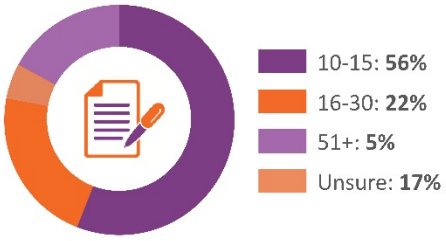
KaBOOM! broke Blue Ribbon panelists into judging groups to review batches of applications through what the Challenge called "consensus calls." Consensus calls were conference calls in which panelists verbally reviewed grantee application strengths and weaknesses and came to a consensus on application rankings. As shown in Figure Seven, the number of applications reviewed per judging group varied, but about half of Blue Ribbon panelists surveyed reviewed about ten to fifteen applications in their judging group. **Most Blue Ribbon panelists spent less than fifteen hours reviewing applications.**

FIGURE 7. BLUE RIBBON PANEL APPLICATION REVIEW

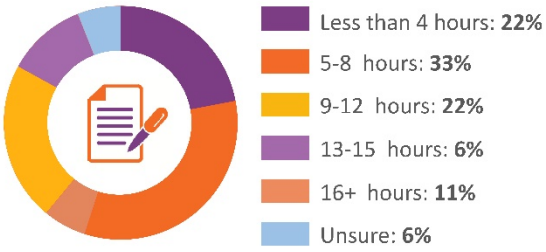
HOW MANY APPLICATIONS DID YOUR JUDGING GROUP REVIEW? *(n=18)*



HOW MANY INDIVIDUAL APPLICATIONS DID YOU PERSONALLY REVIEW? *(n=18)*



HOW MUCH TIME DID YOU PERSONALLY SPEND REVIEWING APPLICATIONS? *(n=18)*



Panelists felt comfortable with the number of applications they reviewed. Figure Eight, below, shows that a little over half of Blue Ribbon panelists surveyed reported that they viewed about the right amount of applications, while 12 percent reported that they wished they had reviewed more, and another 12 percent wished they had reviewed fewer.

FIGURE 8. BLUE RIBBON APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

DID YOU REVIEW THE IDEAL AMOUNT OF APPLICATIONS? *(n=18)*

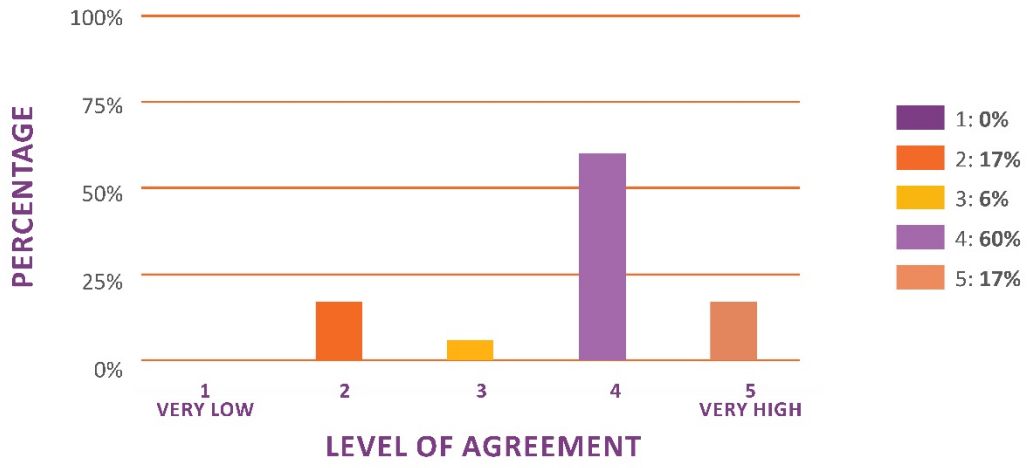
Most panelists found the consensus call approach effective; however, a few offered critiques of the process. Consensus calls were conducted to streamline the ranking process. Figure Nine shows that when asked about their impressions of the effectiveness of the consensus calls, Blue Ribbon panelists rated them fairly effective, with 94 percent rating them a "six" or better (on a scale from one to ten, where "ten" was the most effective). However, only 11 percent rated the effectiveness a "ten," suggesting there may be room for improvement in the consensus call process. The majority of Blue Ribbon panelists rated their level of agreement with other panelists' rankings as fairly high—60 percent rated their level of agreement a "four" on a scale of one to five (where "one" was "low agreement" and

"five" was "high agreement"), while another 17 percent rated their agreement level a "five." It should be noted, however, that 17 percent of Blue Ribbon panelists rated their level of agreement a "two," indicating that they may have felt they were unable to reach consensus. After looking more closely at how consensus call data varied by other data, we found the following:

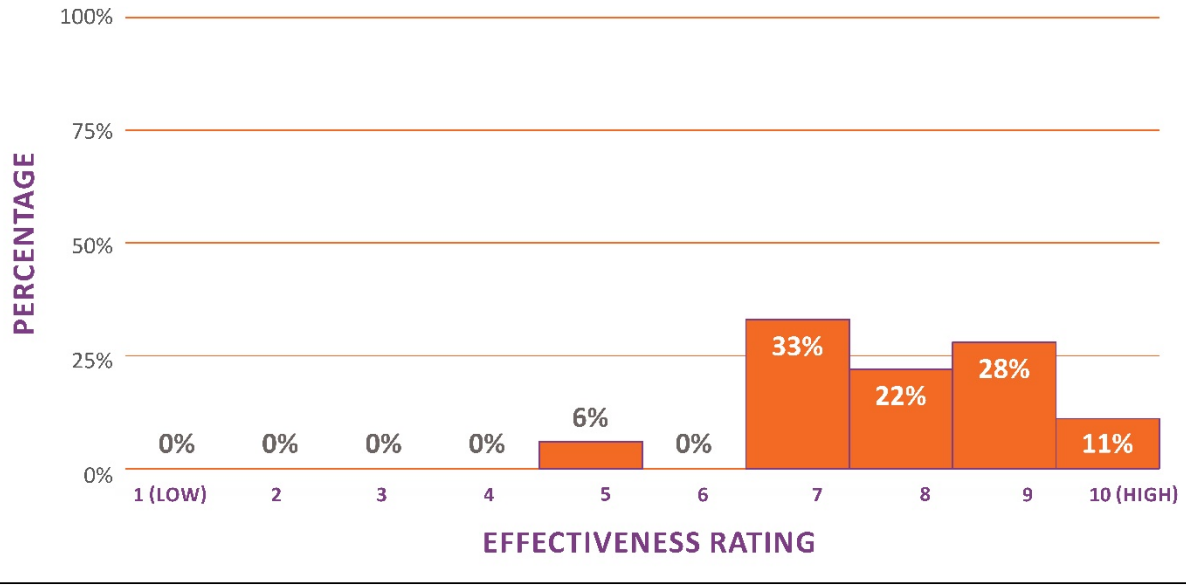
- Panelists who tended to rank consensus calls as less effective, also tended to rate their level of agreement with other panelists lower, and a handful of panelists reported that adding in just one in-person group meeting may have improved the consensus process.
- A couple of panelists proposed that consensus calls be more structured and occur in a more condensed timeframe - reducing challenges remembering details between calls.

FIGURE 9. BLUE RIBBON PANEL PERCEPTION OF JUDGING GROUP CONSENSUS

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR LEVEL OF AGREEMENT AMONG THE BLUE RIBBON PANELISTS IN RANKING APPLICANTS? *(n=18)*



BLUE RIBBON PANEL PERCEPTION OF EFFECTIVENESS IN CONSENSUS CALLS *(n=18)*



Panelists felt that they had adequate time and information to complete the judging tasks successfully. Some successes and challenges related to consistency in rating grantees emerged from the panelist survey. All (eighteen out of eighteen) Blue Ribbon Panel survey participants felt that the amount of time they were given to judge the applications was adequate, and agreed that the judging and grantee recommendation process was completed according to the timeline that was shared with them when they agreed to judge. All Blue Ribbon panelists agreed that they had a clear sense of the criteria they were expected to use to select grantees (44 percent "strongly agreed"; 56 percent "agreed"). Only one survey participant reported that s/he was not provided a tool or rubric for rating applications.

Still, some survey respondents pointed to a handful of issues associated with applying the rubric. One mentioned an "*administrative hiccup in the ways the scores were tallied*"; another highlighted team member disagreement (e.g., "the child development people [of which I am one] differed on what is safe, what is replicable, and what is sustainable"); and a third noted that the criteria were "not prioritized, which made aligning with the ranking worksheet sometimes difficult."

KaBOOM!'s website lists the following criteria for judging applications for the Challenge:

- *Proposes a change in the built environment*
- *Encourages kids and families to engage in play that will activate their minds and/or bodies*
- *Encourages kids and caregivers to play together*
- *Benefits low-income kids and families*
- *Is in a public space and highly accessible to low-income families*
- *Displays community partnerships and relationship building*
- *Addresses a challenge or need in the community that is not directly related to play*
- *Must be built in three months or less, with a reasonable and feasible budget for the proposed project scope*

While Blue Ribbon Panel survey participants agreed that they consistently used this criteria in judging applications, there were variations in the importance they assigned to each category. These variations were determined to have been associated with the panelists' professional backgrounds. Panelists were asked to rank each criterion according to how important it was to them in selecting finalists, and responses to this question varied greatly. When totaling responses for each criterion, they ranked highest to lowest in the order listed in Table Three. *Encouraging kids and families to engage in play that will activate their minds and/or bodies* was ranked as the most important, and *proposing a change in the built environment* as the least. The right column presents the number of judges who ranked the criteria as the most important ranking criteria. Although the rating criteria for *encouraging kids and caregivers to play together* and *proposing a change in the built environment* were ranked lowest overall, a handful of panelists ranked it as the most important criterion. **There were strong connections between the panelists' professional work experience and their ranking of criteria.** For example, panelists whose organizations related to building play equipment ranked *proposing a change in the built environment* as the most important criterion versus those with different professional experience. Panelists whose professional experience related to equity tended to rank *benefitting low-income kids and families* as the most important. This suggests that panelists' professional experience was a factor in their judging of grantee applications.

TABLE 3. BLUE RIBBON PANEL RANKING OF GRANTEE SELECTION RATING CRITERIA	
OVERALL RANK	**RANKED CRITERIA #1**
1	Encourages kids and families to engage in play that will activate their minds and/or bodies *(n = 11)*
2	Is in a public space and highly accessible to low-income families *(n = 9)*
3	Benefits low-income kids and families *(n = 6)*
4	Displays community partnerships and relationship building *(n = 3)*
5	Must be built in three months or less with a reasonable and feasible budget for the proposed project scope *(n = 1)*
6	Addresses a challenge or need in the community that is not directly related to play *(n = 1)*
7	Encourages kids and caregivers to play together *(n = 3)*
8	Proposes a change in the built environment *(n = 4)*

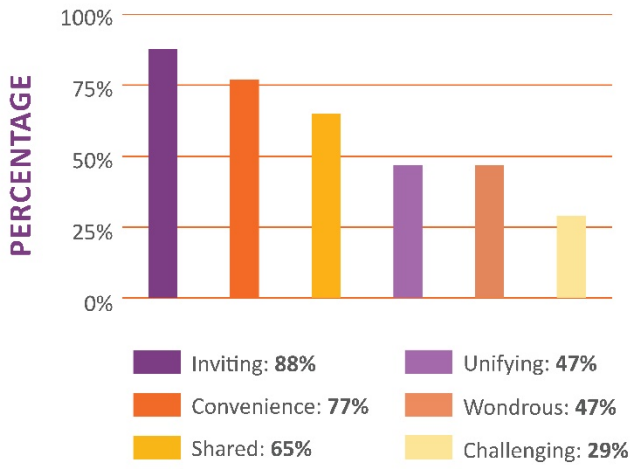
In developing play spaces, KaBOOM! advocates for *six guiding principles* (wondrous, challenging, convenient, inviting, shared, and unifying)*; three components of playability* (fostering play everywhere [integrated into "dead time"], making cities family-friendly [engaging the whole family], and creating a corner store for play [quick and convenient mini-play destinations around the corner]); and the importance of including elements of scale, ease, and equity into play space design**. Overall, Blue Ribbon panelists were in agreement that the guiding principles, components of playability and the elements of scale, ease and equity were important to consider while ranking applications.** As shown in Figure Ten, only one respondent "strongly disagreed" (6 percent) that the principles were part of the grantee selection process, while 41 percent "strongly agreed" and another 53 percent "agreed" that they were. Panelists were then asked how important each of these principles were to their judging. In Figure Ten, we list principles in the order of importance based on survey responses: *inviting* (88 percent, "very important"), *convenience* (77 percent, "very important"), *shared* (65 percent, "very important"), *unifying* (47 percent, "very important"), *wondrous* (47 percent, "very important"), and *challenging* (29 percent, "very important"). Blue Ribbon panelists were also asked to choose which component of playability was *most* important in creating successful play spaces. Seventy-one percent of surveyed Blue Ribbon panelists felt that *fostering play everywhere (integrated into "dead time")* was the most important component of playability, while 17 percent felt that *making cities family-friendly (engaging the whole family)* was the most important, and 12 percent felt that *creating a corner store for play (quick and convenient mini-play destinations around the corner*) was the most important.

Blue Ribbon panelists were also asked how much scaling potential was a factor in grantee selection. Figure Ten shows that 59 percent of panelists rated scaling as a very important factor (rating it "four" or "five," the highest levels of importance). According to Blue Ribbon panelists, applicants who *focused on distributing opportunities for play more equitably across a city* (100 percent of panelists agreed); proposed *inviting* play spaces (88 percent considered this "very important"); were *creative in revamping dead time/space into easy opportunities of play* (82 percent agreed); and who included all three elements of *scale*, *ease,* and *equity* (100 percent agreed) were ranked higher than other applicants. It remains unclear how panelists were simultaneously weighting the guiding principles, components of playability, and elements of scale, ease, and equity. **Although panelists were in agreement about the**

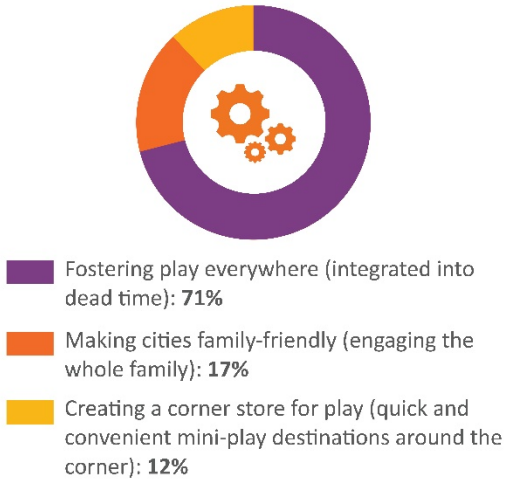
importance of the guiding principles, components of playability and scale, ease and equity, these findings also show some misalignment in the panelists' priorities in selecting grantees.

FIGURE 10. FACTORS IN GRANTEE SELECTIONS

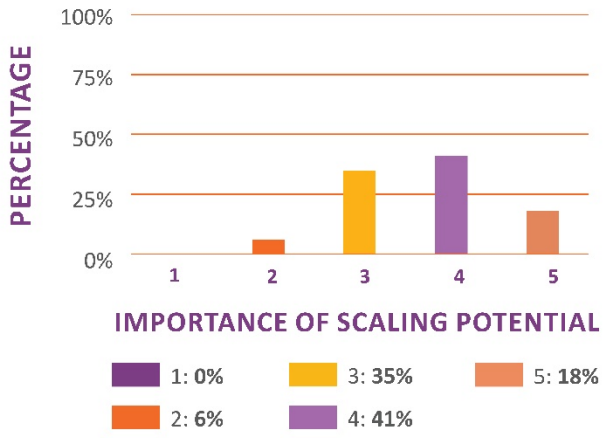
IMPORTANCE OF THE SIX GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF PLAYABILITY *(n=17)*



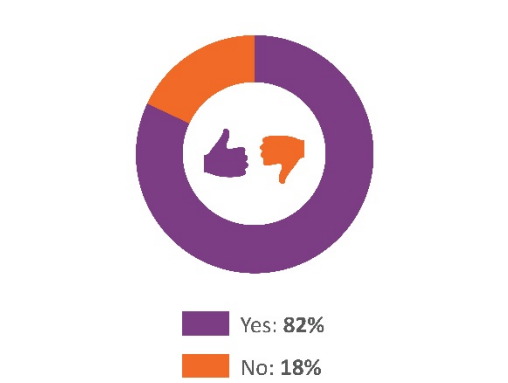
MOST IMPORTANT PLAYABILITY COMPONENT IN RANKING APPLICANTS *(n=17)*



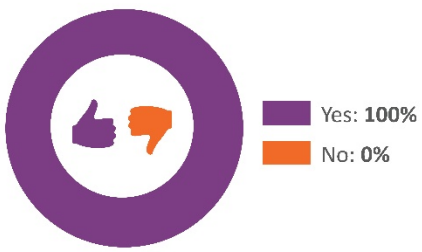
TO WHAT DEGREE WAS AN APPLICANT'S SCALING POTENTIAL A FACTOR IN GRANTEE SELECTIONS? *(1 to 5 Scale) (n=17)*



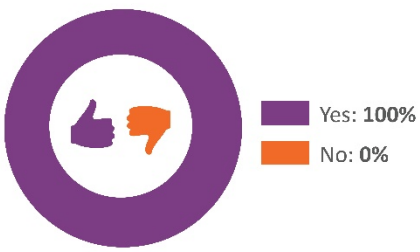
WERE APPLICANTS WHO WERE CREATIVE IN REVAMPING DEAD TIME/SPACE INTO EASY OPPORTUNITIES OF PLAY RANKED HIGHER? *(n=17)*



WERE APPLICANTS WHO FOCUSED ON DISTRIBUTING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLAY MORE EQUITABLY ACROS A CITY RANKED HIGHER? *(n=17)*



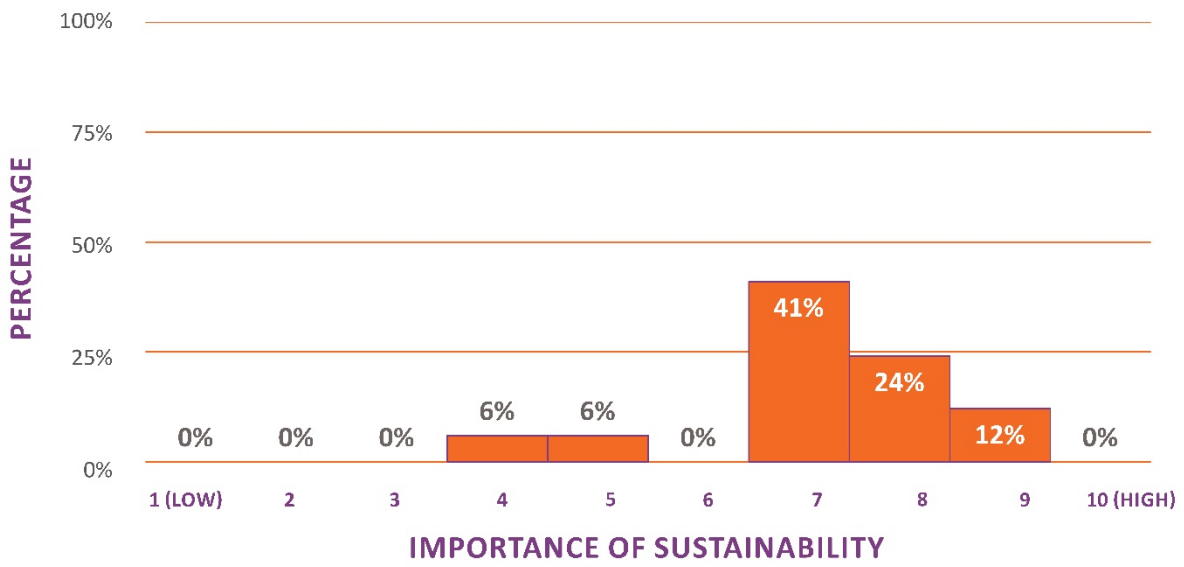
WERE APPLICANTS WHO INCLUDED ALL THREE ELEMENTS OF SCALE, EASE, AND EQUITY RANKED HIGHER? *(n=17)*



In Figure Eleven, though sustainability was still ranked fairly high, it was reported as a less important grantee selection factor.

FIGURE 11. FACTORS IN GRANTEE SELECTION *(SUSTAINABILITY)*

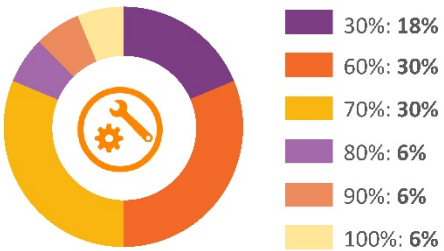
ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW MUCH WAS THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE APPLICANTS' PROJECTS A FACTOR IN THE SELECTION PROCESS? *(n=17)*



Since sustainability was not a major priority in grantee selections, it is understandable that Blue Ribbon panelists did not perceive all grantees would be likely to (or that they would intend to) maintain their play spaces. Figure Twelve, below, shows variations in Blue Ribbon panelists' expectations of the play spaces being maintained following the initial build-out period.

FIGURE 12. BLUE RIBBON PANEL PERCEPTION OF PLAY SPACE SUSTAINABILITY

WHAT PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES DO YOU THINK WILL BE LIKELY TO MAINTAIN THEIR PLAY SPACES? *(n=17)*



Overall, Blue Ribbon panelists generally agreed that they had the information they needed to be a good judge; that their voices were heard in the selection process; that individuals on the judging panel were team players; and that, overall, reaching consensus in their groups went smoothly (although there was less combined agreement for this survey item when collapsing "strongly agree" and "agree"

categories, which aligns with our prior finding related to the level of agreement in ranking applicants within judging groups). Table Four provides an overview of how Blue Ribbon panelists perceived their judging experiences. The survey item in which panelists strongly agreed the most was that their voice was heard in the selection process (65 percent). Sixty-four percent of panelists strongly agreed that reaching consensus in their judging group went smoothly, although some panelists (18 percent) disagreed with this question. After looking more closely at where there were challenges with the grantee selection process, we found the following:

- The one panelist who reported s/he did not have the information s/he needed to be a good Blue Ribbon panelist also reported that there was a low level of agreement in his/her judging group.
- One of the three panelists who disagreed that reaching consensus in his/her judging group went smoothly, also reported a need for stronger facilitation on consensus calls and a way to review applications that kept all relevant information together.
- Another panelist who disagreed that reaching consensus in his/her judging group went smoothly, proposed bringing in more people who understand child development and learning.
- The third panelist who disagreed that reaching consensus in his/her judging group went smoothly, proposed adding one in-person meeting to the process to help the judging group streamline reaching consensus.

TABLE 4. BLUE RIBBON PANEL PERCEPTION OF GRANTEE SELECTIONS *(n=17)*

STATEMENT	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
I feel like I had the information I needed to be a good Blue Ribbon panelist.	0%	6%	41%	53%
I feel like my voice was heard in the selection process.	0%	0%	53%	47%
I feel like the individuals on the judging panel were team players.	0%	0%	35%	65%
Reaching consensus in my judging group went smoothly.	0%	18%	18%	64%

Most panelists thought that they were helpful to the Challenge. Blue Ribbon panelists were asked to rate, on a scale of one to ten (where "one" is "not helpful" and "ten" is "very helpful"), how helpful they felt they were to the Challenge. Figure Thirteen shows that Blue Ribbon panelists varied in their perceptions, with only 6 percent rating their helpfulness a "ten." Nonetheless, most Blue Ribbon panelists rated their helpfulness fairly high, with the vast majority rating it between "seven" and "nine," and very few rating it lower than a "seven." Looking more closely at the one panelist who rated his/her helpfulness a "two," we found the following:

- The panelist also felt that s/he should have been brought into the judging process sooner, which, s/he reported, would have "*provided more context and clarity about the purpose of the effort.*"

FIGURE 13. BLUE RIBBON PANEL PERCEPTION OF HELPFULNESS TO THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW HELPFUL DO YOU FEEL YOU WERE TO THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE? *(n=17)*

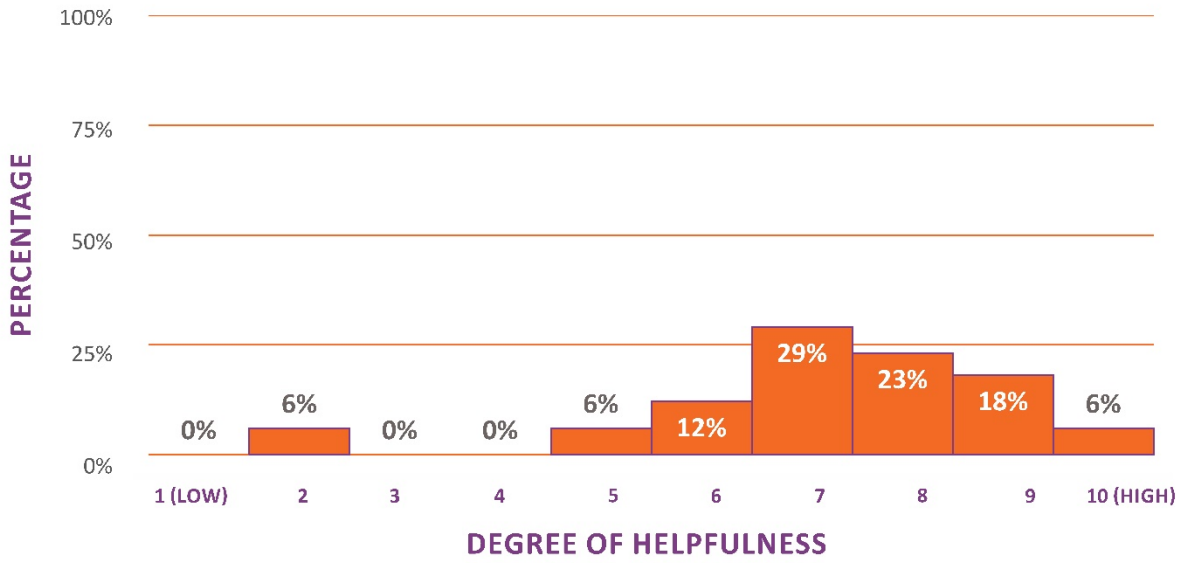
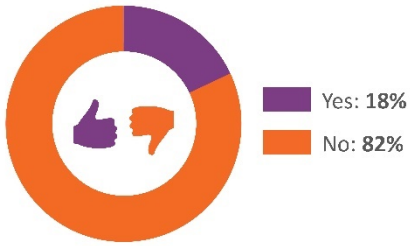


Figure Fourteen shows that 18 percent of Blue Ribbon panelists felt that they should have been brought into the applicant review process sooner.

FIGURE 14. BLUE RIBBON PANEL REFLECTION ON TIMING OF INVOLVEMENT

SHOULD THE BLUE RIBBON PANELISTS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT INTO THE REVIEW PROCESS SOONER? *(n=17)*



Of the three Blue Ribbon panelists who thought they should have been brought into the review process sooner, one shared:

> *"My focus is on child development. It is not just play, but the kind of play that is important. For example, I am very interested in promoting play that engages children in learning that promotes life skills. This was not a big factor in my group, because [others did not] have that background. So, for example, some [Blue Ribbon panelists] were ready to accept a cool design at a bus stop that was too close to traffic. [Parental] sensibility wasn't brought in explicitly enough either. Would you want your child to get all involved in climbing high on something if a bus is coming and you have to get on immediately? A*

child development perspective needed to be baked into the criteria (prior to the judging process) […]. I like the diversity of perspectives, but [these things that I mentioned] should have been part of the criteria. What kind of learning and engagement are these play spaces promoting?

Panelists generally agreed that the judging process used was a good way to select grantees; that KaBOOM! took their judging reviews into consideration when selecting final grantees; that participating in the judging process was a valuable use of their time; and that KaBOOM! selected the best applications to fund. Table Five shows that 100 percent of panelists had positive reflections on the Challenge's group selection process. All Blue Ribbon panelists agreed that the application and selection process helped applicant organizations learn how everyday spaces can be best transformed into PLAYces (or play spaces) for kids and families. Some panelists offered examples of impacts from the Challenge:

- The criteria for the Challenge encouraged grantees to rethink their strategy and intervention, refine their target outcomes, and focus more on sustainability/scaling.
- The Challenge even perhaps expanded organizations' (and panelists') perception of play and how it can be worked into urbanism.

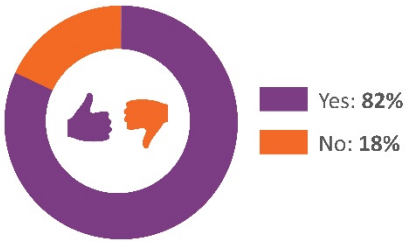
TABLE 5. BLUE RIBBON PANEL REFLECTIONS ON GROUP SELECTION PROCESS

STATEMENT	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
I feel like the Blue Ribbon judging process was a good way to select grantees. *(n=17)*	59%	41%
I feel like KaBOOM! took my judging reviews into consideration when selecting final grantees. *(n=17)*	47%	53%
I feel like participating in the Blue Ribbon judging process was a valuable use of my time. *(n=17)*	47%	53%
I feel like KaBOOM! selected the best applications to fund. *(n=17)*	53%	47%

Panelists benefitted from the application review. As shown in Figure Fifteen, 82 percent of Blue Ribbon panelists reported that they learned new things about play spaces while reviewing applications for the Challenge. Blue Ribbon panelists were quite impressed with the variety and creativity of proposed projects, and through this process expanded their knowledge in examples of play, both new and reinvented versions of classics. Panelists noted learning from other panelists, who had different professional expertise and knowledge (e.g., social, behavioral, economic), and highlighted becoming more aware through this process of differing viewpoints, as well as the challenges in reaching consensus. Panelists also noted learning more about the trend of re-using spaces (in different seasons and times of day), particularly through their experiences as Blue Ribbon panelists.

FIGURE 15. JUDGING PROCESS REFLECTION *(n=17)*

DID REVIEWING THE APPLICATIONS TEACH YOU ANYTHING NEW ABOUT PLAY SPACES?

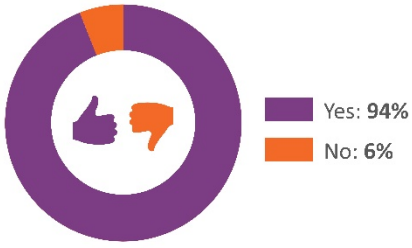


Almost all panelists would recommend the Challenge. Figure Sixteen shows all but one panelist (94 percent) would recommend the Challenge to a friend or colleague. The same percent endorsed the notion that they would recommend that a friend or colleague participate as a Blue Ribbon panelist, suggesting that they were satisfied with their experience. The one panelist who would not recommend a friend or colleague to serve as a Blue Ribbon panelist or the Challenge competition said s/he wished the process had been more concentrated. This panelist reported that "it seemed more work than it was because it had a long cycle time," and recommended a "*faster, more concentrated*" process. S/he noted that it was "hard to remember from one meeting/review to the next." This panelist further explained:

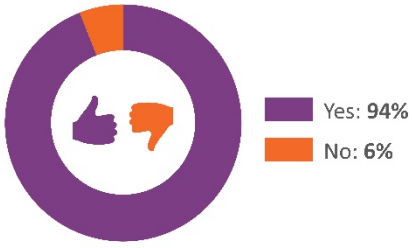
> *"I am a bit undecided as to the total effectiveness of this Challenge. I don't know if the projects have been installed, how they are performing, [or] if they have had an impact on the local community."*

FIGURE 16. BLUE RIBBON PANEL ENDORSEMENT OF THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE

WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THAT A FRIEND OR COLLEAGUE SERVE AS A BLUE RIBBON PANELIST? *(n=17)*



WOULD YOU RECOMMEND THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE COMPETITION TO A FRIEND OR COLLEAGUE? *(n=17)*



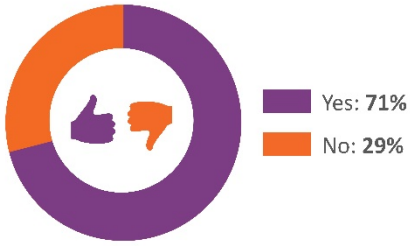
KaBOOM! established new partnerships through the judging process. Figure Seventeen shows that 71 percent of Blue Ribbon panelists reported having additional communication with KaBOOM! beyond the grantee selection process, whereas 29 percent reported no additional communication. By looking more closely at the panelists who did or did not have communication with KaBOOM! beyond the grantee selection, we found:

- For the panelists who did not continue communication with KaBOOM! after selection of the grantees, slightly more of these panelists had previously worked with KaBOOM! (22 percent), while 11 percent had not.
- For the panelists who did continue communication with KaBOOM! after selection of the grantees, 44 percent had not previously worked with KaBOOM!, while 22 percent had.

These findings suggest KaBOOM! had established new partnerships through the judging process. A handful of panelists reported that they wished they had a better understanding of why KaBOOM! selected some grantees over others (contrasting with the advice their judging group provided). This was relevant even for panelists who stayed in communication with KaBOOM! beyond grantee selections.

FIGURE 17. COMMUNICATION WITH KABOOM! AFTER SELECTION OF GRANTEES

ONCE THE WINNERS WERE CHOSEN, DID YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION WITH KABOOM! REGARDING THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE? *(n=17)*



GRANTEE BUILD-OUT PROCESS

WHAT ARE GRANTEE PERCEPTIONS OF THE BUILD-OUT PROCESS?

MAI gathered grantee perceptions of the build-out process. Although the grantees reported very positive experiences about the Challenge itself, many grantees had issues completing their play space builds within the expected ninety-days.

A majority of play spaces were not able to be built in the ninety-day window desired by the Challenge. In Figure Eighteen, sixty-four percent of grantees reported that they had not completed their play space within ninety days. Only 7% percent of grantees reported that they "strongly agree" when asked if the play space build-out happened according to plan. Fifty percent of grantees reported that they "agree," but 38 percent reported "disagree," and another 2 percent reported "strongly disagree." Only about a third of grantees reported that the ninety-day build-out period was adequate. Of those grantees who felt the build-out period was inadequate, 11 percent reported that four months would have been more adequate, 29 percent reported that five months would have been more adequate, and 61 percent reported that six months would have been more adequate. We looked into what types of play spaces were more likely not to have been completed in the ninety days, and we found:

- "Streets, Sidewalks, and Trails" (about half) and "Commercial Space" (about 20 percent) were those that were most difficult to complete within the ninety-day time frame.

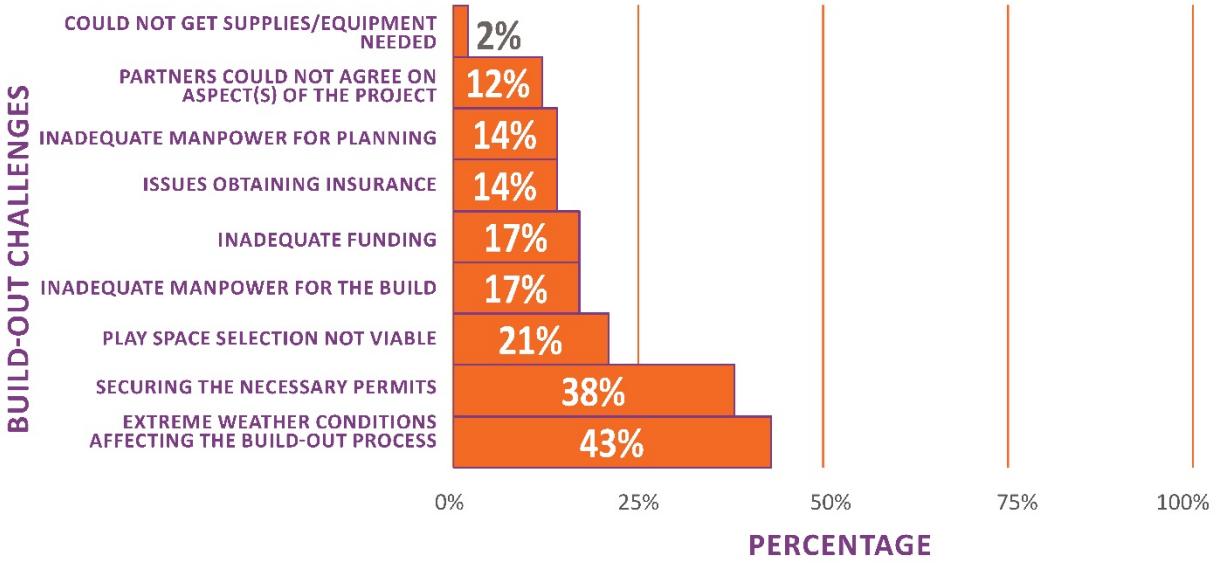
As shown in Figure Nineteen, sites reported some of the major challenges they experienced during the build process. **Major challenges included:**

- "Extreme weather conditions affecting the build process" (43 percent)
- "Securing the necessary permits" (38 percent)

Other challenges included:

- "Play space selection was not viable" (21 percent)
- "Inadequate manpower for the build" and "inadequate funding" (17 percent)
- "Issues obtaining insurance" and "inadequate manpower for planning" (14 percent)
- "Partners could not agree on aspect(s) of the project" (12 percent)
- "Could not get supplies/equipment needed" (2 percent)

FIGURE 19. PLAY SPACE CHALLENGE BUILD-OUT PROCESS CHALLENGES *(n = 42)*



Interestingly, weather issues affected grantees across the U.S., including California, Georgia, Texas, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Florida during the build-out period.

Although every type of challenge we asked about cut across regions and types, certain types of challenges were more commonly associated with some play space types. We looked into if certain types of challenges were more commonly associated with some play space types and found the following:

- "Streets, Sidewalks, and Trails" play spaces tended to have more issues with "partners who didn't agree on aspects of the project" (four out of five sites), "permitting" (four out of seven sites), "obtaining insurance" (three out of six sites), and "inadequate planning" (three out of six sites).
- "Commercial Spaces" play spaces had more issues with "inadequate funding," and the "play space not being viable" (four out of nine sites). "
- Transit" play spaces were reported to have more issues with "inadequate manpower for the build" (three out of six sites).

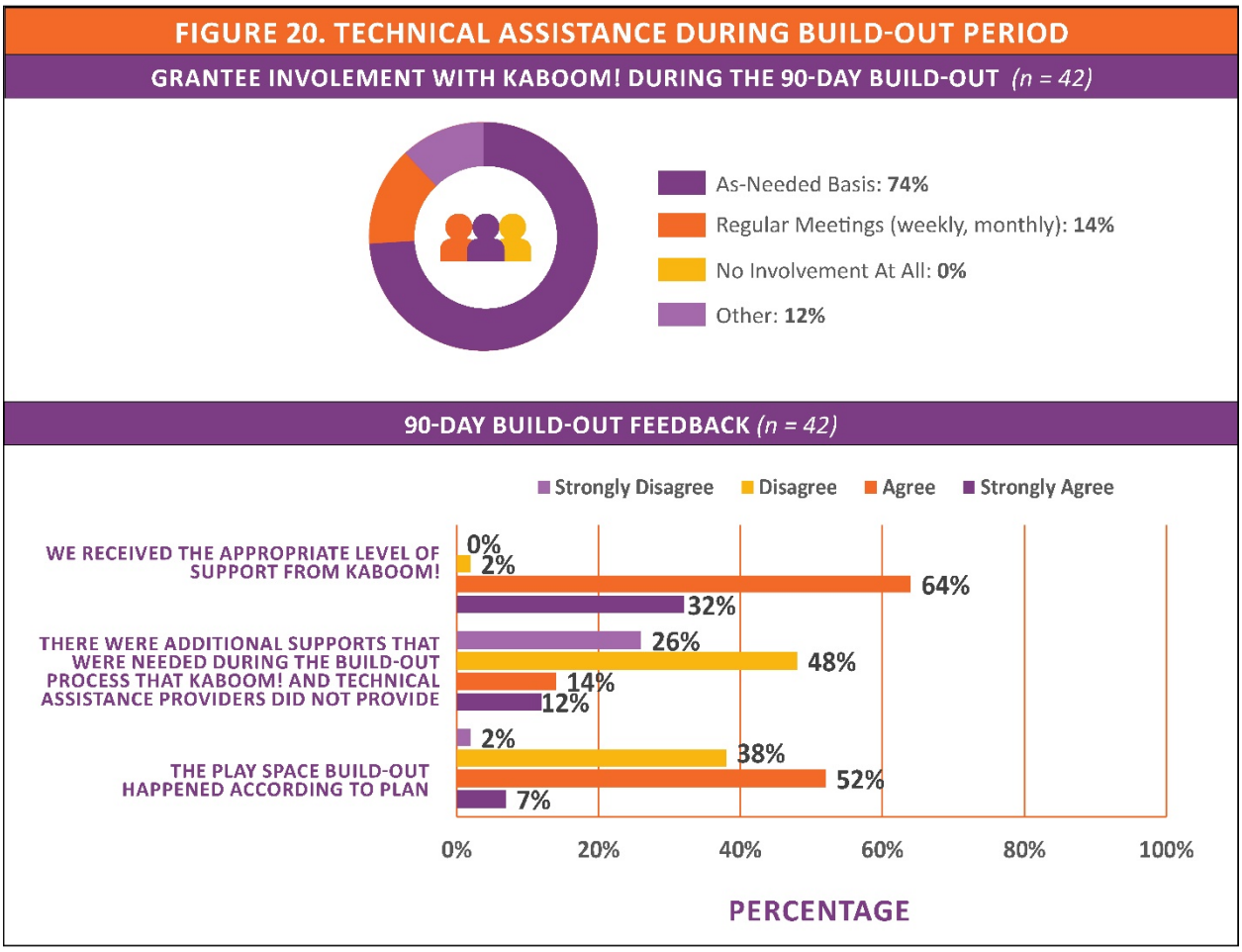
WHAT WERE GRANTEE PERCEPTIONS OF THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OFFERED BY KABOOM!, GEHL, AND IDEAS42 DURING THE CHALLENGE?

Grantees who accessed technical assistance during the Challenge represented a mix of play space types and geographic regions. Also, there was no clear pattern in certain play space types or geographic regions accessing technical assistance more than others.

As shown in Figure Twenty, **grantees reported accessing KaBOOM! feedback on an "as-needed basis" during the ninety-day build-out period.** Further, only about one-third of grantees strongly agreed that they received the appropriate level of support from KaBOOM!. After looking more closely at grantees who reported they needed additional supports, but did not receive them, we found the following:

- Many grantees that reported that they needed additional supports during the build-out process, had never partnered with KaBOOM! prior to the Challenge (eight out of ten grantees).
- These same grantees reported that they had inadequate manpower for planning their play space (four out of ten sites) and inadequate manpower for building their play space (five of ten sites), and that they were not clear on all the different technical assistance available to them (four out of ten sites).

FIGURE 20. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE DURING BUILD-OUT PERIOD



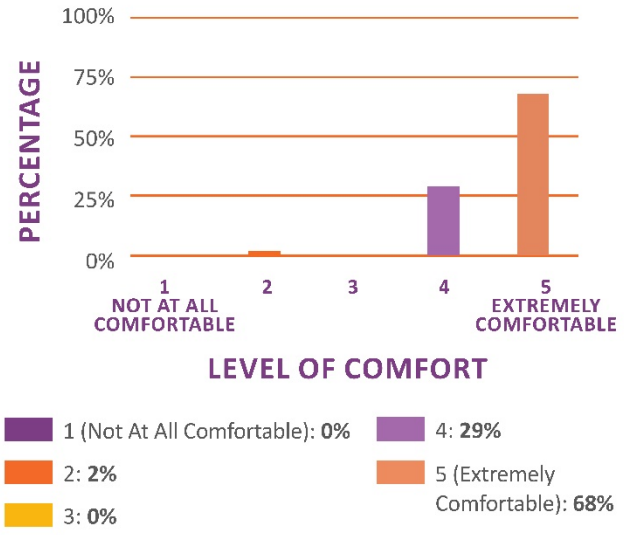
About **a quarter of grantees surveyed agreed (either "agree" or "strongly agree") that there were additional supports that were needed during the build-out process that KaBOOM! and other technical assistance providers did not provide.** Originally, Gehl had planned to identify the types of technical assistance needed by grantees and create a matrix outlining this. However, once the applications came in, the wide range of play spaces proposed suggested to Gehl and KaBOOM! that they needed to move to a more customized approach. However, Gehl noted that there was continued reflection from KaBOOM! on what technical assistance was most needed by grantees:

"[…T]hat was an ongoing […] question from KaBOOM! […]: Should there be more technical assistance providers, and who should they be? And I do remember we were kind of going back and forth […]—we felt like, well, we really have to understand what these applicants are proposing [in order] to know what the core technical assistance needs are. And, so, it was kind of […] this constant circle […]—we felt like we need[ed] to know the applicants, but then […] there was a desire to move forward […] So, I think we were thinking with KaBOOM!, […] should there be somebody who knows more about the physical construction of projects, or should there be someone who's more focused on, let's say, public art? And, I think where we ended up landing was, because, you know, there was such a broad range of applications that it was too hard to say, specifically, who else KaBOOM! should hire with a specific piece of funding, that it might be good to think about a few people who could be on-call, or be on sort of a contractor basis, who could be based on the needs that develop. And, I'd say, how it ended up developing was, because there was such a broad range, [that] what we ended up doing through the technical assistance provided between May and August, was doing four webinars where we, for some of them, could bring in other experts. For example, for one of the webinars, we brought in the National Endowment for the Arts and they invited some of their partners [such as] the Center for Urban Pedagogy and the Community Organization of Philadelphia […] to contribute case studies around effective community engagement."

Grantees were comfortable accessing KaBOOM! for assistance during the build-out process. In Figure Twenty-One, we show that surveyed grantees reported being very comfortable (68 percent selected "extremely comfortable") approaching KaBOOM! if problems arose with their play space during the build-out process. Almost all grantees surveyed (98 percent) reported that they reached out directly (either via email or phone) to KaBOOM! with questions. About 80 percent of surveyed grantees reported that KaBOOM! was both "extremely responsive" to their questions and "extremely helpful" when grantees reached out.

FIGURE 21. GRANTEE COMMUNICATION WITH KABOOM! DURING BUILD-OUT PERIOD

PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO WERE COMFORTABLE APPROACHING KABOOM! IF PROBLEMS AROSE WITH THE PLAY SPACE BUILD-OUT *(n = 41)*

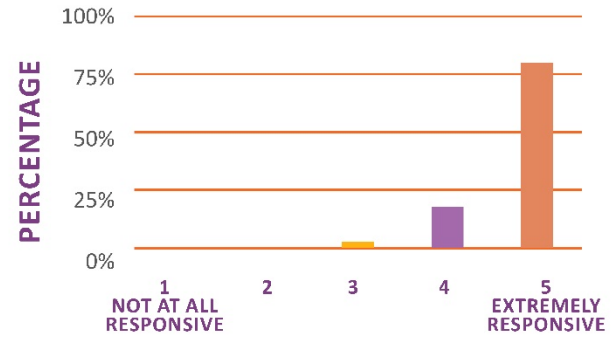


- 1 (Not At All Comfortable): **0%**
- 2: **2%**
- 3: **0%**
- 4: **29%**
- 5 (Extremely Comfortable): **68%**

PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO EMAILED OR CALLED KABOOM! DIRECTLY WITH QUESTIONS *(n = 41)*

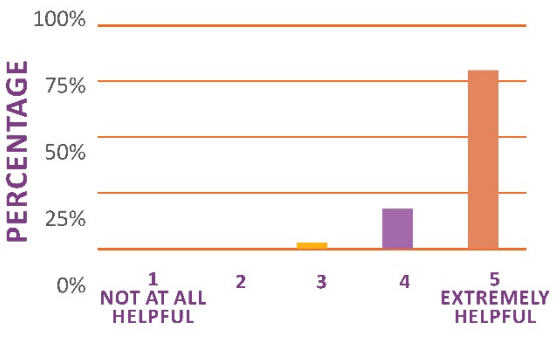
- Percentage of Grantees Who Reached Out to KaBOOM!: **98%**
- Percentage of Grantees Who Did Not Reach Out to KaBOOM!: **2%**

PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO FOUND KABOOM! RESPONSIVE TO THEIR QUESTIONS WHEN REACHING OUT DIRECTLY *(n = 40)*



- 1 (Not At All Responsive): **0%**
- 2: **0%**
- 3: **3%**
- 4: **18%**
- 5 (Extremely Responsive): **80%**

PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO FOUND KABOOM! HELPFUL WHEN REACHING OUT DIRECTLY WITH THEIR QUESTIONS *(n = 40)*



- 1 (Not At All Helpful): **0%**
- 2: **0%**
- 3: **3%**
- 4: **18%**
- 5 (Extremely Helpful): **80%**

Technical assistance in the Challenge, particularly from sources other than KaBOOM!, was inconsistently accessed and met with mixed reviews from grantees. In Figure Twenty-Two, we show that grantees surveyed found the final report guide and the Play Everywhere Guidebook the most helpful out of the technical assistance resources provided. Grantees found the press release templates the least helpful.

FIGURE 22. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE KABOOM! TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE *(n= 41)*

PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO FOUND KABOOM!'S TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE HELPFUL

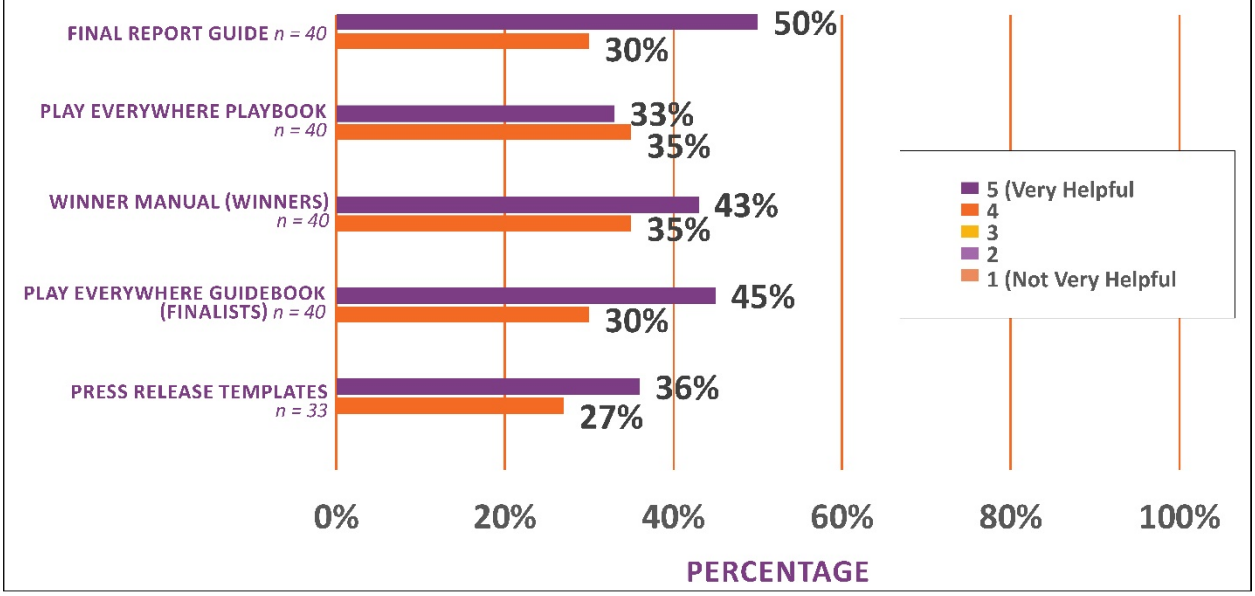
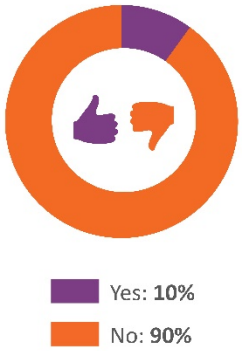


Figure Twenty-Three shows that **only about 10 percent of surveyed grantees reported using Gehl's Permitting Guide as a technical assistance resource, which is very low, considering 38 percent (sixteen grantees) noted they had issues securing permits.** For the sixteen grantees that reported experiencing issues securing permits, only two reported utilizing Gehl's Permitting Guide. Of the 10 percent who utilized the Permitting Guide, three-fourths rated it a "two" or "three" in terms of helpfulness. Almost all surveyed grantees participated in the intro webinar, and about a third found this webinar to be "very helpful." Of the additional webinars that some grantees participated in (about two-thirds participated in each of the others), grantees found the evaluation webinar about how to measure the impact of projects as the most helpful, with about 51 percent rating it a "four" or a "five" on a scale of one to five, where "five" represented "very helpful."

FIGURE 23. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY GEHL: FEEDBACK

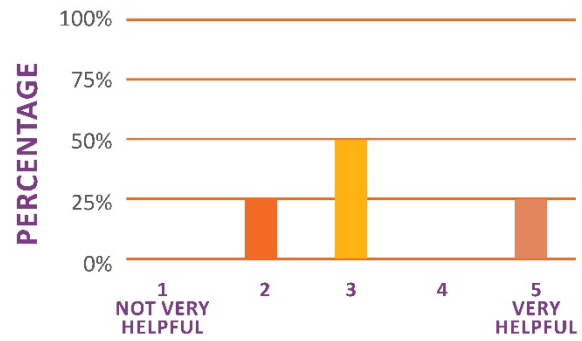
PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO UTILIZED GEHL'S PERMITTING GUIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCE *(n = 41)*



Yes: **10%**

No: **90%**

PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO FOUND THE GEHL PERMITTING GUIDE HELPFUL *(n = 4)*



1 (Not Very Helpful): **0%**

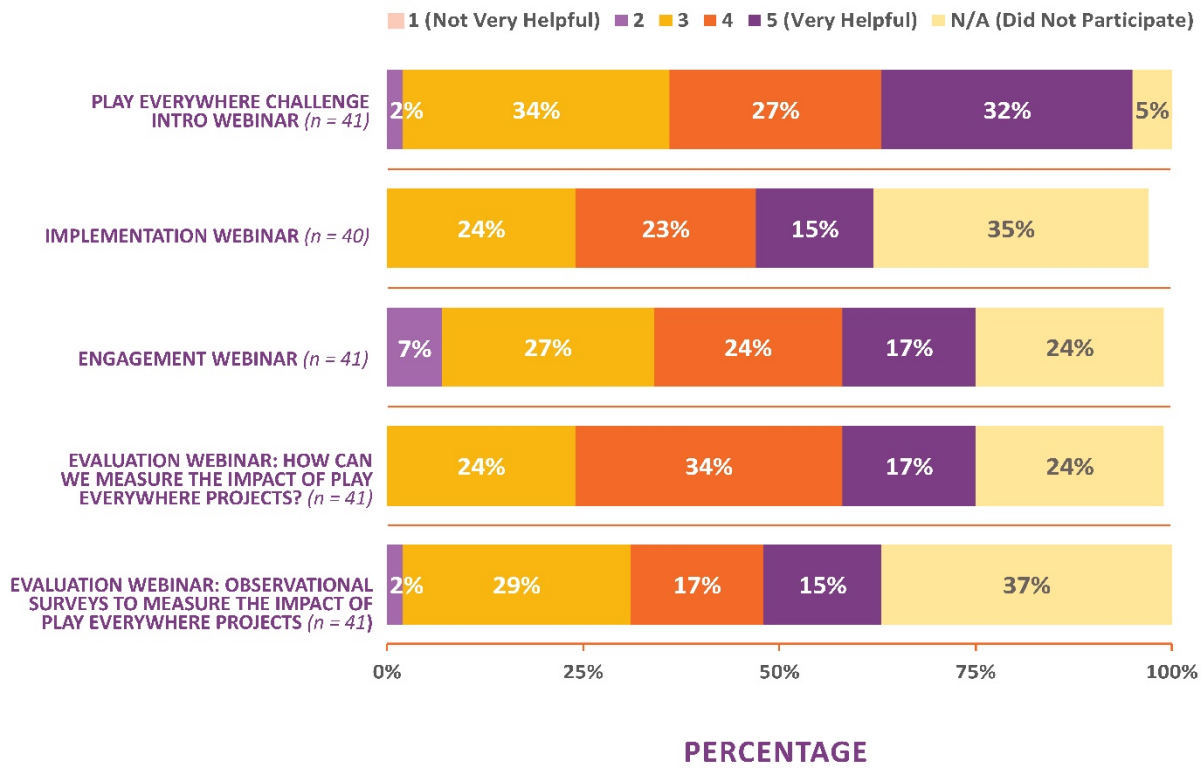
2: **25%**

3: **50%**

4: **0%**

5 (Very Helpful): **25%**

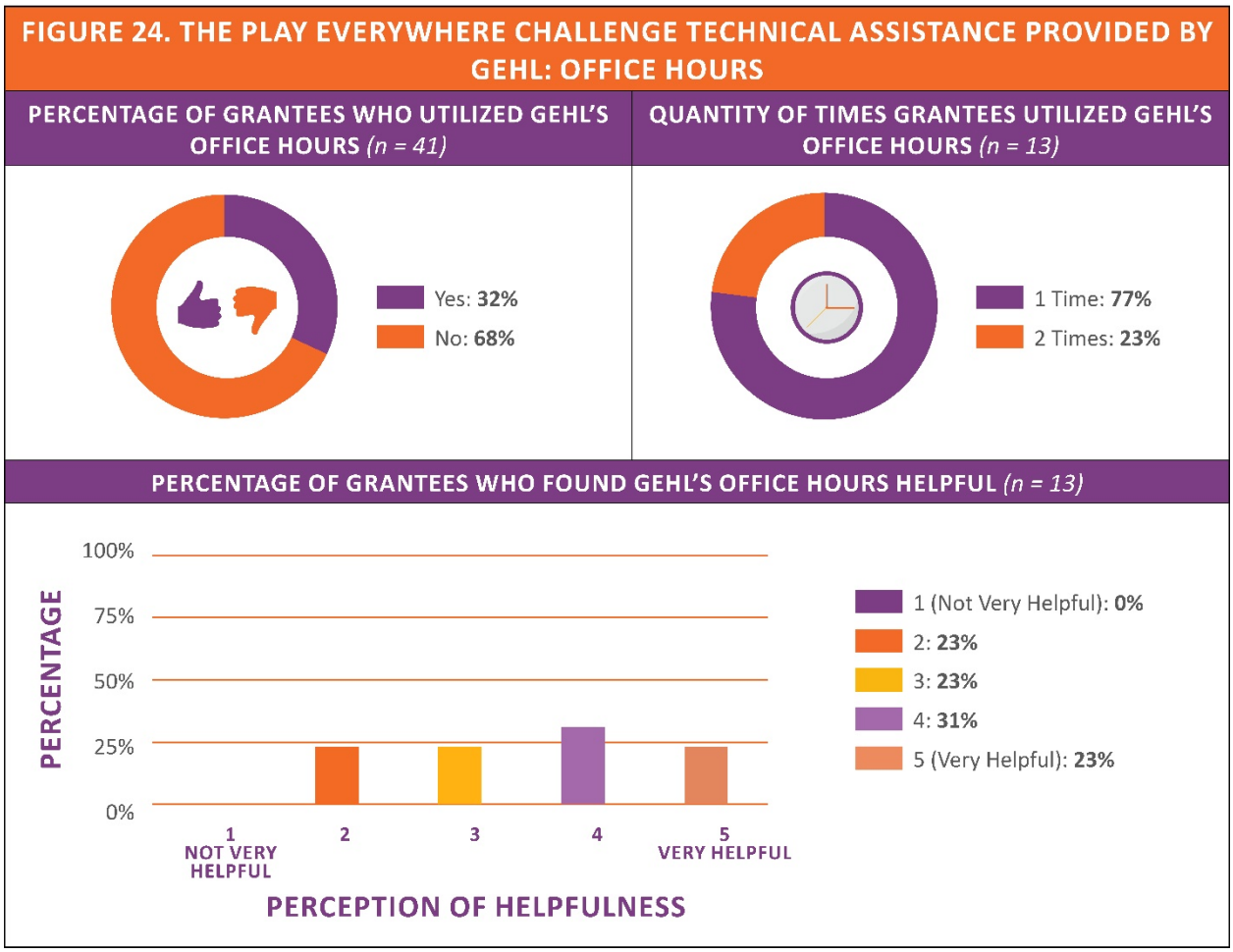
PARTICIPATION AND RATING ON THE HELPFULNESS OF GEHL'S FIVE WEBINARS



Gehl offered office hours as a way to provide more tailored supports to grantees. In Figure Twenty-Four, **roughly 32 percent of surveyed grantees reported using Gehl's office hours as a technical assistance**

resource. Of the grantees that took advantage of Gehl's office hours, 77 percent of grantees utilized them once, and 23 percent utilized them twice. Of surveyed grantees who participated in Gehl's office hours, a moderate number (54 percent) reported the office hours as helpful (rating them either a "four" or a "five" on a scale of one to five, where "five" represented "very helpful").

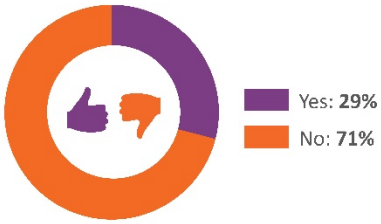
FIGURE 24. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY GEHL: OFFICE HOURS



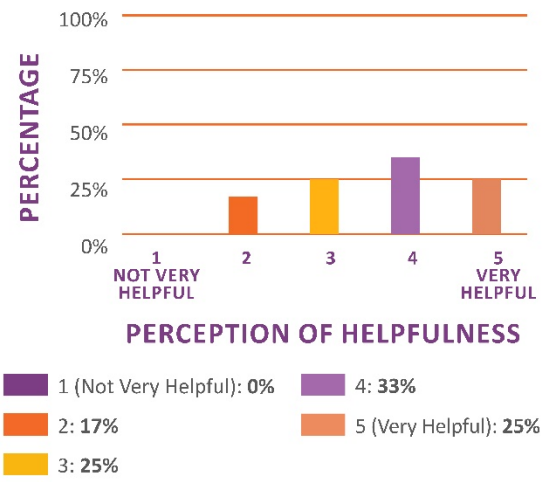
In Figure Twenty-Five, **a little less than a third of grantees (29 percent) utilized ideas42's Behavioral Science Self-Assessment Tool and one-on-one assistance entitled**, "*Understanding Behavioral Science and Evaluating the Impact of Your Play Projects"* (27 percent). Almost 70 percent of surveyed grantees utilized the ninety-minute webinar, "*What Makes Us Choose Play? Behavior, Public Life, and Play*." There was variation in how helpful grantees perceived each of these webinars to be. On the whole, however, surveyed grantees who utilized these resources found them helpful, with 58 percent reporting the self-assessment tool was either a "four" or a "five," and 67 percent reporting the one-on-one assistance was either a "four" or a "five" (on a scale of one to five, where "five" represented "very helpful). About 15 percent of surveyed grantees reported that the limited number of time slots was a factor in participating in the one-on-one assistance offered to winners.

FIGURE 25. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY IDEAS42

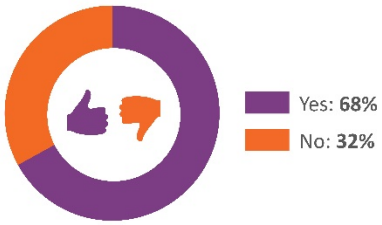
PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO UTILIZED "THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL" PROVIDED BY IDEAS42 *(n = 41)*



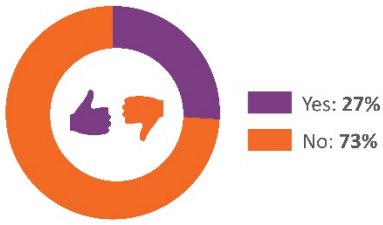
PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO FOUND "THE BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL" PROVIDED BY IDEAS42 HELPFUL *(n = 12)*



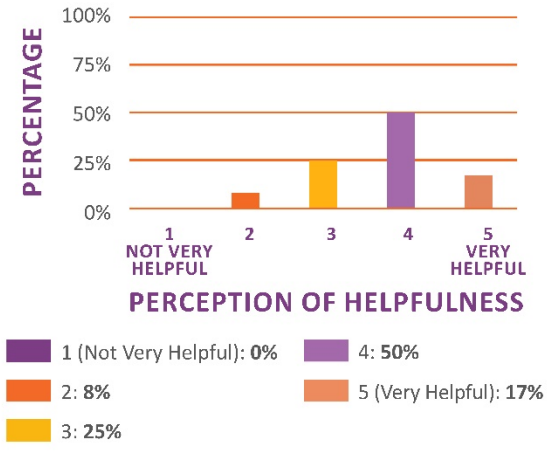
PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO UTILIZED THE 90-MINUTE WEBINAR "WHAT MAKES US CHOOSE PLAY? BEHAVIOR, PUBLIC LIFE, AND PLAY" PROVIDED BY IDEAS42 *(n = 41)*



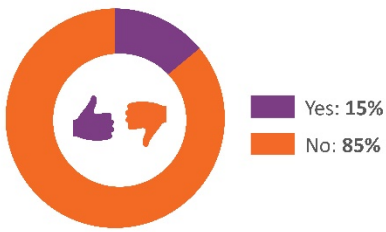
PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO UTILIZED THE ONE-ON-ONE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO WINNERS, "UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE AND EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF YOUR PLAY PROJECTS" *(n = 41)*



PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO FOUND THE ONE-ON-ONE ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO WINNERS HELPFUL *(n = 12)*



PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO STATED THAT THE LIMITED NUMBER OF TIME-SLOTS WERE A FACTOR IN PARTICIPATING IN THE ONE-ON-ONE ASSISTANCE OFFERED TO WINNERS *(n = 41)*

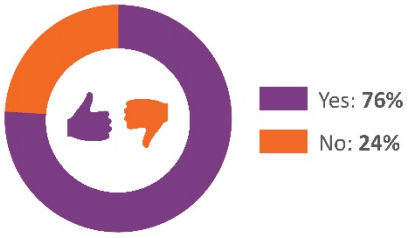


Our findings confirm that technical assistance in the Challenge was under-utilized, yet Figure Twenty-Six shows that three-quarters (76 percent) of surveyed grantees reported that they were clear on all the different types and sources of technical assistance available to them through the initiative. Our data does not include technical assistance that grantees may have been accessing through other channels, such as indirectly gaining knowledge via Facebook. Gehl noted:

> *"[…W]e would also respond to questions via the Facebook page. And then also post responses to questions and make the response in a way that we hoped would be relevant to other people who maybe hadn't formulated their question yet, but could still benefit from the answer."*

FIGURE 26. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE GRANTEE AWARENESS OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE *(n= 41)*

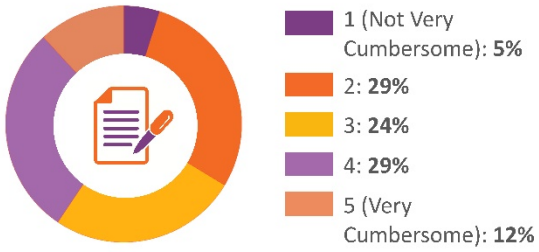
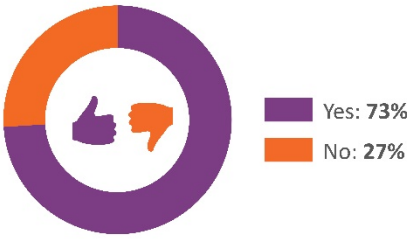
WERE YOU CLEAR ON ALL THE DIFFERENT TYPES/SOURCES OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO YOU?



HOW DID GRANTEES PERCEIVE THE GRANT REPORTING PROCESS?

Grantees varied in their perspectives on the ease of reporting to KaBOOM!, but a majority benefitted from the process. There was a lot of variation in how surveyed grantees responded when asked about the reporting phase of the grant. As shown in Figure Twenty-Seven, roughly 12 percent reported that it was "very cumbersome," rating it a "five" on a scale from one to five. Twenty-nine percent of surveyed grantees rated the reporting phase a "four," 24 percent rated it a "three," 29 percent rated it a "two," and 5 percent rated it a "one" (or "not very cumbersome"). Despite some surveyed grantees finding the reporting phase cumbersome to some degree, about three quarters (73 percent) reported benefitting from the reporting process in some way.

FIGURE 27. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE GRANTEE GRANT REPORTING/ EXPECTATIONS

THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE GRANTEE RATING OF THE REPORTING PHASE OF THE GRANT *(n = 41)*	PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHO REPORTED BENEFITTING FROM THE REPORTING PROCESS *(n = 41)*
	

RESEARCH QUESTION 2: WHAT SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHALLENGE?

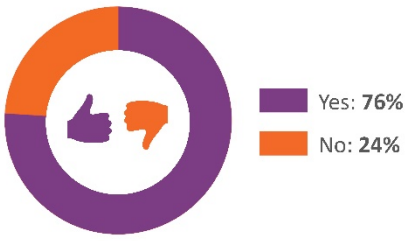
GRANTEE PERCEPTIONS OF SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

WHAT ARE GRANTEE PERCEPTIONS OF SHORT-TERM PLAY SPACE OUTCOMES?

Most grantees reported outcomes that suggested that participating in the Challenge elevated play in their communities. Figure Twenty-Eight shows that about three-quarters of the surveyed grantees reported that their city's government had promoted their play space, while about a quarter did not experience this outcome. One hundred percent of those who were from government entities reported that their city's government promoted their play space—most commonly via social media.

FIGURE 28. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE GRANTEE PLAY SPACE PROMOTION *(n = 41)*

HAS YOUR CITY'S GOVERNMENT PROMOTED THIS PLAY SPACE?



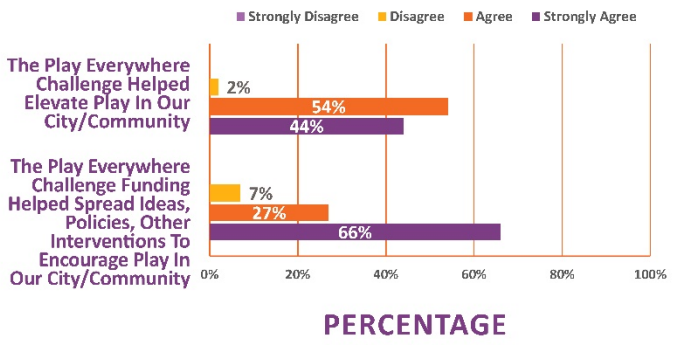
Grantees reported positive personal and community-level impacts related to the Challenge. Figure Twenty-Nine shows that roughly 78 percent of surveyed grantees reported that their own personal perception of play or playability has expanded due to participating in the Challenge. Furthermore, grantees reported community-level impacts related to the Challenge. There was strong agreement from

surveyed grantees that the Challenge helped elevate play in their city or community (44 percent selected "strongly agree" and 54 percent selected "agree") and that the Challenge funding helped spread ideas, policies, and other interventions to encourage play in their city or community (66 percent selected "strongly agree" and 27 percent selected "agree"). **Prior to the Challenge, only 29 percent of grantees reported that their communities had a formal play agenda, while, following the Challenge, 46 percent of grantees reported that their communities have a formal play agenda in place—an increase of 17 percent.**

FIGURE 29. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE PLAY SPACE OUTCOMES
(following a 3-month project)

PERCENTAGE OF GRANTEES WHOSE PERCEPTION OF PLAY OR PLAYABILITY HAS EXPANDED DUE TO PARTICIPATING IN THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE *(n = 41)*

COMMUNITY IMPACTS OF THE CHALLENGE *(n = 41)*



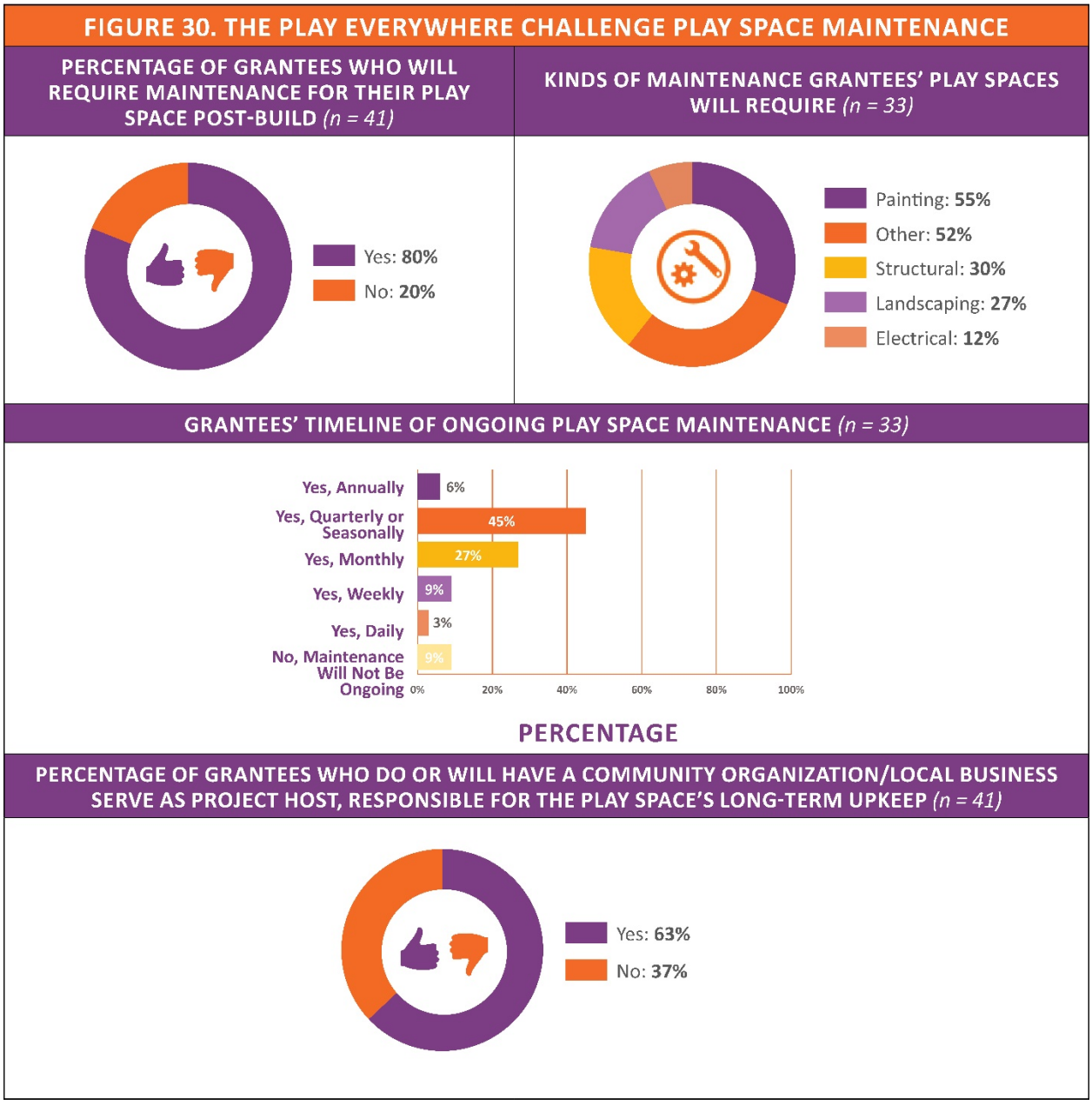
PERCENTAGE OF THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE GRANTEES WHOSE COMMUNITIES NOW HAVE A PLAY AGENDA *(n = 41)*

WHAT ARE GRANTEE EXPECTATIONS RELATED TO MAINTENANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THEIR PLAY SPACES?

Some grantees face play space sustainability challenges. As shown in Figure Thirty, about 80 percent of surveyed grantees anticipate needing maintenance for their play spaces post-build, while 20 percent do not. Grantees reported that play spaces will require maintenance, such as painting, structural fixes, landscaping, and, in fewer cases, electrical support. About 50 percent of surveyed grantees classified the

required maintenance their site will need as "other," and included things such as cleaning and trash removal in this category. Most surveyed grantees reported their site will need maintenance quarterly/seasonally (45 percent) or monthly (27 percent). Sixty-three percent of surveyed grantees reported they do, or will have, a community organization/local business serve as a project host, responsible for the play space's long-term upkeep.

FIGURE 30. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE PLAY SPACE MAINTENANCE



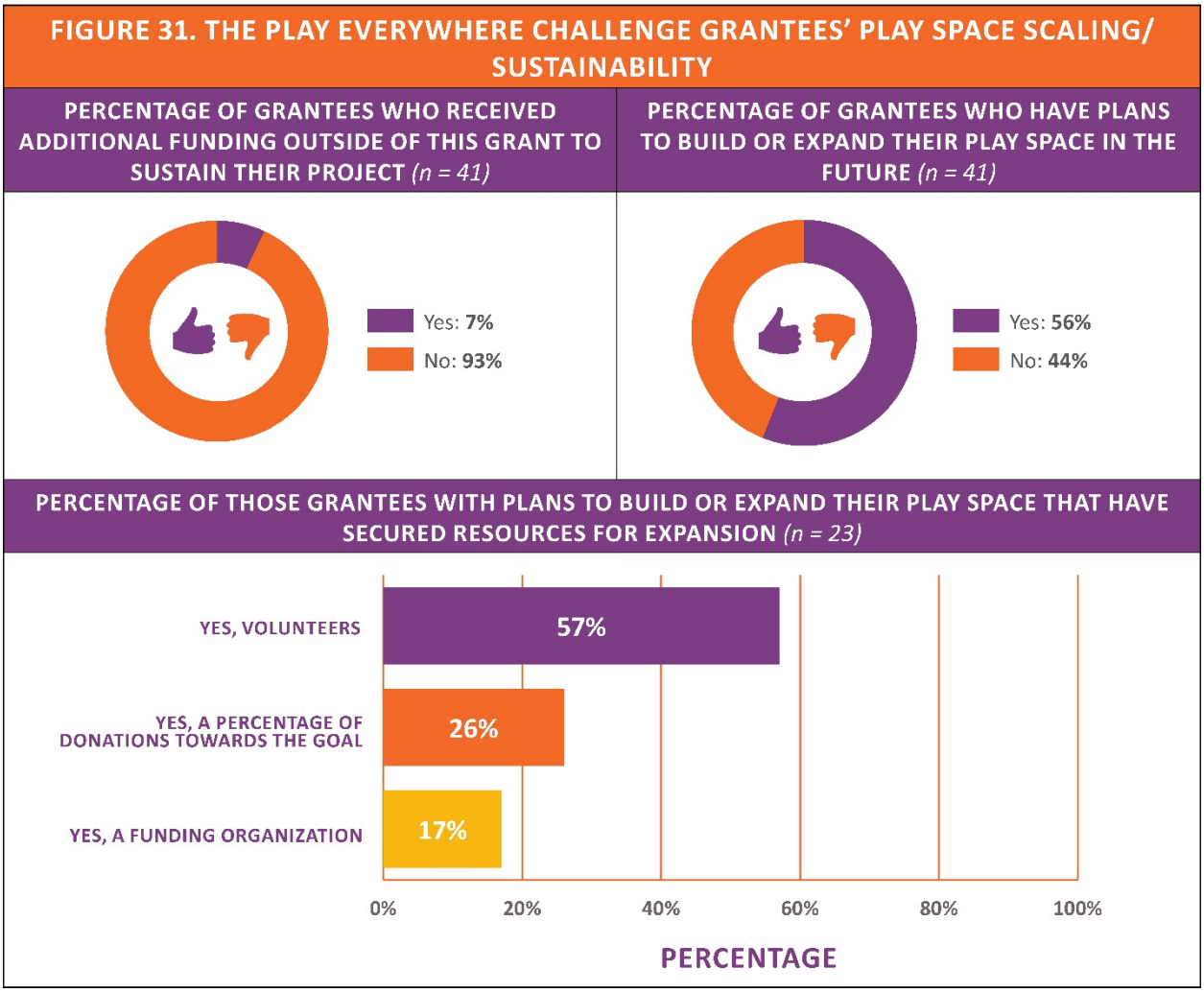
In Figure Thirty-One, almost all surveyed grantees (93 percent) did not receive additional funding outside of this grant to sustain their play space project, and 56 percent have plans to build or expand

their play space in the future. Looking more closely at the 56 percent who had plans to build or expand their play space in the future, we found:

- The 56 percent represents a mix of grantee organization types, play space types, and geographical locations.

Out of the 56 percent of grantees who have plans to build or expand their play space in the future, 57 percent reported having secured volunteers, 26 percent reported having secured donations to a funding goal, and 17 percent reported having secured a funding organization.

FIGURE 31. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE GRANTEES' PLAY SPACE SCALING/ SUSTAINABILITY



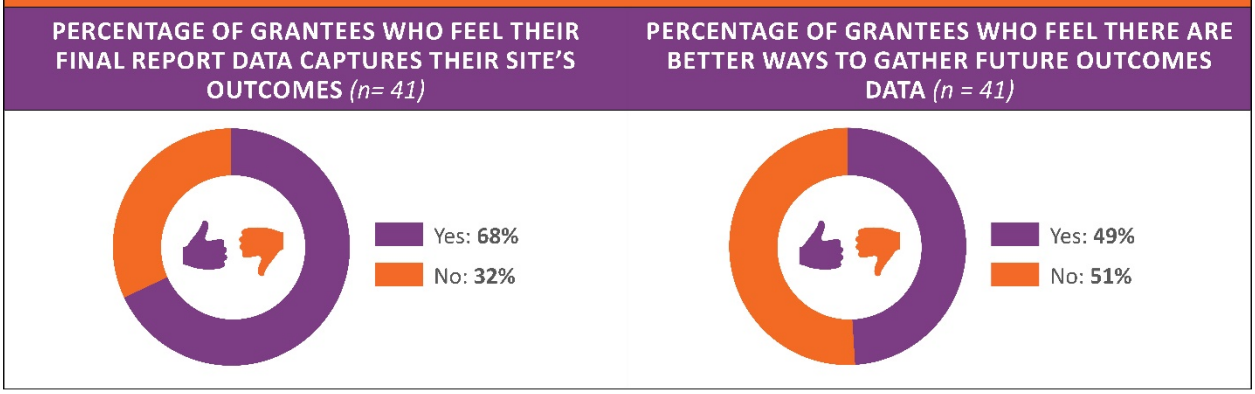
WHAT ARE GRANTEE IMPRESSIONS OF THE OUTCOMES DATA THEY GATHERED FOR THEIR FINAL REPORT?

Grantees had mixed reviews of the extent to which they felt that their final reports provided meaningful data. As shown in Figure Thirty-Two, about 68 percent of surveyed grantees reported that they felt their final report data captured their site's outcomes well, while 32 percent did not. Furthermore, about 49 percent of surveyed grantees felt that there are better ways to gather future

outcomes data. Some grantees proposed the use of observations to best capture play space users experiencing the play space. One grantee explained:

> *"Surveys felt antithetical to play, especially [for] a project like ours that is designed to offer a very fleeting moment of play. The survey took five times as long to complete as the play."*

FIGURE 32. GEHL'S PLAY SPACE OUTCOME DATA

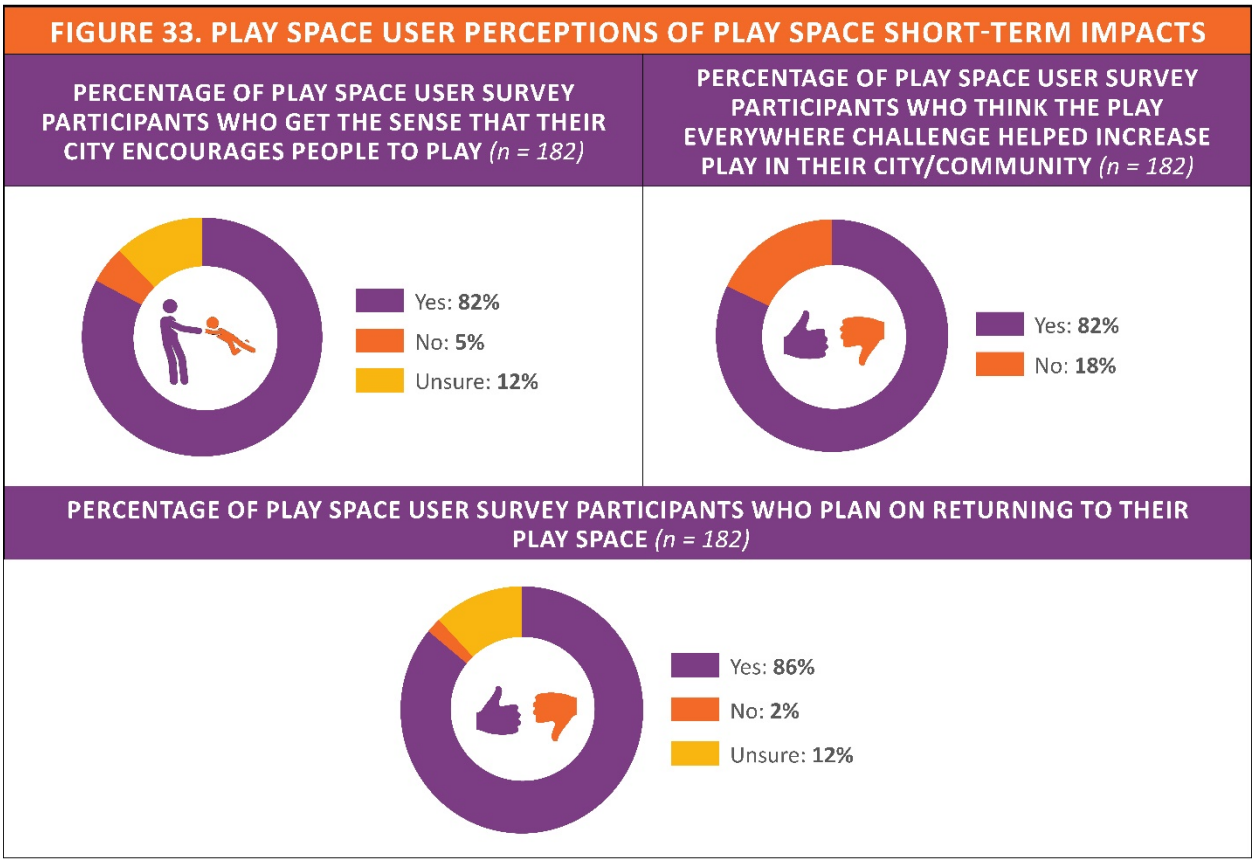


PLAY SPACE USER PERCEPTIONS OF SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

WHAT IMPACTS DO PLAY SPACE USERS REPORT THE CHALLENGE HAS HAD ON COMMUNITIES?

Keeping in mind that the play space user survey overrepresented one particular site, **most of the users surveyed reported endorsing the new play space.** Figure Thirty-Three shows a sample of play space user perceptions of short-term outcomes. Eighty-two percent of survey participants reported that they get the sense that their city encourages people to play, and 82 percent of survey participants thought that the Challenge helped increase play in their city/community. Furthermore, a large majority (86 percent) reported that they plan on returning to their play space at some later point in time.

FIGURE 33. PLAY SPACE USER PERCEPTIONS OF PLAY SPACE SHORT-TERM IMPACTS



RESEARCH QUESTION 3: HOW ARE COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCING THE PLAY SPACES BUILT THROUGH THE CHALLENGE?

PLAY SPACE USER PERCEPTIONS OF PLAY SPACES

In this section of the final report, we present an overview of play space user survey findings. MAI gathered play space user perceptions of the play spaces and their experiences via self-report data. In collaboration with KaBOOM!, MAI worked with grantees to deploy an online survey on September 1, 2017. All fifty grantees were encouraged to participate. Out of fifty grantees, eight did not participate due to the temporary nature of their play space. An additional three sites were unable to participate in the play space user survey because of natural disasters occurring during the survey administration period.

In all, thirty-nine sites displayed signage advertising the play space user survey in early September. Only one site requested a replacement sign during the survey administration period. In late September, sites were contacted via email and phone to encourage play space user survey participation, and the survey was extended through mid-October. Despite a slight uptick in participation for a handful of sites, play space user participation remained low in most sites, even after follow up. At the close of survey administration, only nineteen (out of thirty-nine) play space sites had survey participation representing their sites, for a total of 224 survey participants. One site comprised 141 of the survey participants, while the remaining eighty-three survey participants were from the other eighteen participating sites.

This concentration of play space users in one site makes it difficult for us to fully answer how place space users across the fifty sites were experiencing the play spaces. **Therefore, due to low survey participation across sites and overrepresentation from one site, these findings are not likely representative of all play space users, and therefore, should be interpreted cautiously.**

First, we present who used the play spaces. Next, we present findings related to how play space users heard about the play spaces. Finally, we provide findings on play space user perceptions of accessibility and degree of difficulty. Overall, play space users in our sample reported very positive experiences at the play spaces and found them accessible, easy to use, and inviting.

WHO USED THE PLAY SPACES?

Figure Thirty-Four shows that most play space user survey respondents were adults. Fifty percent were between thirty to thirty-nine years old, and 25 percent were between twenty-three and twenty-nine years old. The majority of survey respondents identified themselves as "white" (89 percent), and 11 percent identified themselves as "Hispanic or Latino(a)." Eighty-six percent of survey respondents identified as female. When reducing the sample to the primary site only (Building Playware; Eau Claire, WI), more respondents identified as "white" (98 percent) and "girl/female" (93 percent), and fewer identified as "Hispanic or Latino(a)" (1 percent).

FIGURE 34. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE PLAY SPACE USER DEMOGRAPHICS

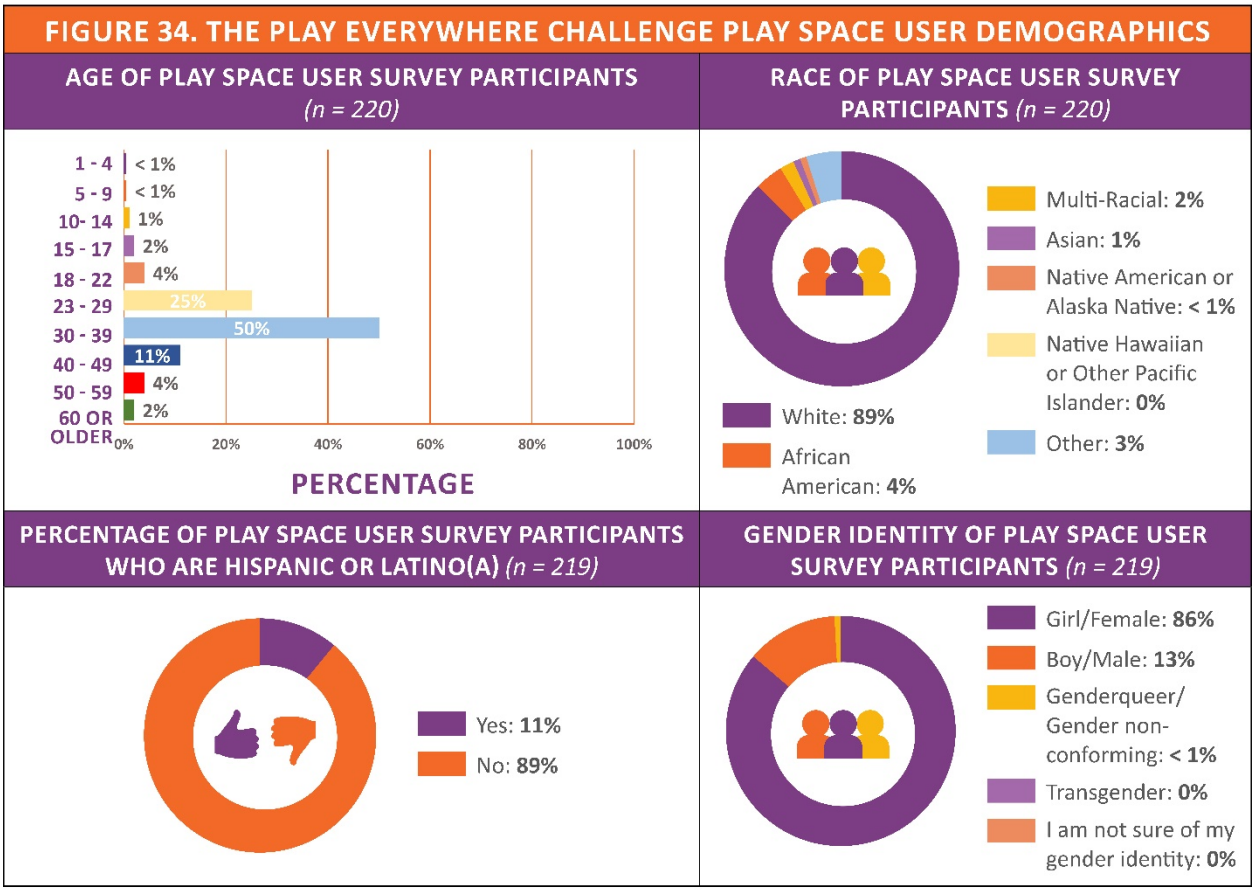
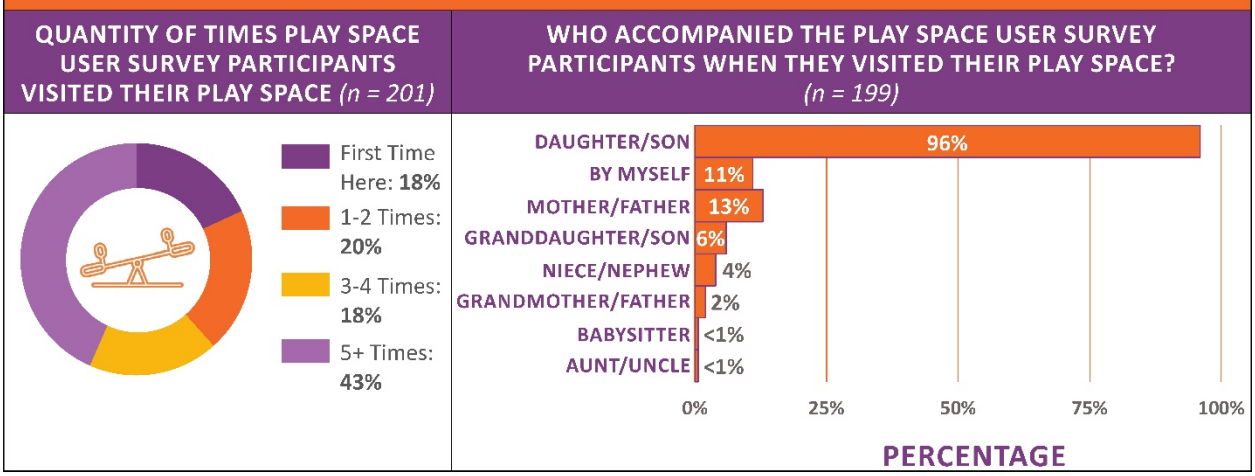


Figure Thirty-Five shows many (43 percent) survey respondents had been to their play space five times or more. About 18 percent of survey respondents were at the play space for the very first time at the time of survey participation. Another 20 percent had been there one to two times, and 18 percent had been there three to four times in total. The majority of play space user survey respondents were accompanying their son or daughter to the play space. About 11 percent of survey respondents had come to the play space alone, and another 11 percent indicated that they had come with multiple family members (i.e., like a mother visiting the play space with her son and husband).

FIGURE 35. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE PLAY SPACE USER BACKGROUND



HOW DID PLAY SPACE USERS HEAR ABOUT THE PLAY SPACES?

There were a variety of ways that play space users heard about the play space. Figure Thirty-Six shows that 68 percent of survey respondents indicated that they had come to the play space on purpose, while 32 percent had stumbled upon it on the way to somewhere else. A little over half of survey respondents reported that they had heard the play space advertised, while a little less than half reported that they hadn't heard of the play space prior to seeing it. Of those who had heard of the play space, a large majority first heard of the play space via social media (71 percent) and word of mouth (66 percent).

FIGURE 36. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE PLAY SPACE USER VISIT

PERCENTAGE OF PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO HEARD THEIR PLAY SPACE WAS ADVERTISED *(n = 201)*

HOW PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS CAME ACROSS THEIR PLAY SPACES *(n = 200)*

HOW PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS HEARD OF THE PLAY SPACES THEY VISITED *(n = 111)*

DID PLAY SPACE USERS PERCEIVE THE PLAY SPACES AS ACCESSIBLE?

Play space users who took the survey found the play spaces accessible. Figure Thirty-Seven shows that almost all survey respondents reported that their play space was "easy to get to" and that it "fit easily into their day/routine, allowing them to play on the way to somewhere else." Most survey respondents reported needing about fifteen minutes or less to explore their play space fully. Almost all (96 percent) survey respondents reported that they did not need to bring supplies to best use their play space, and all (100 percent) survey respondents thought that their play space was easy to use.

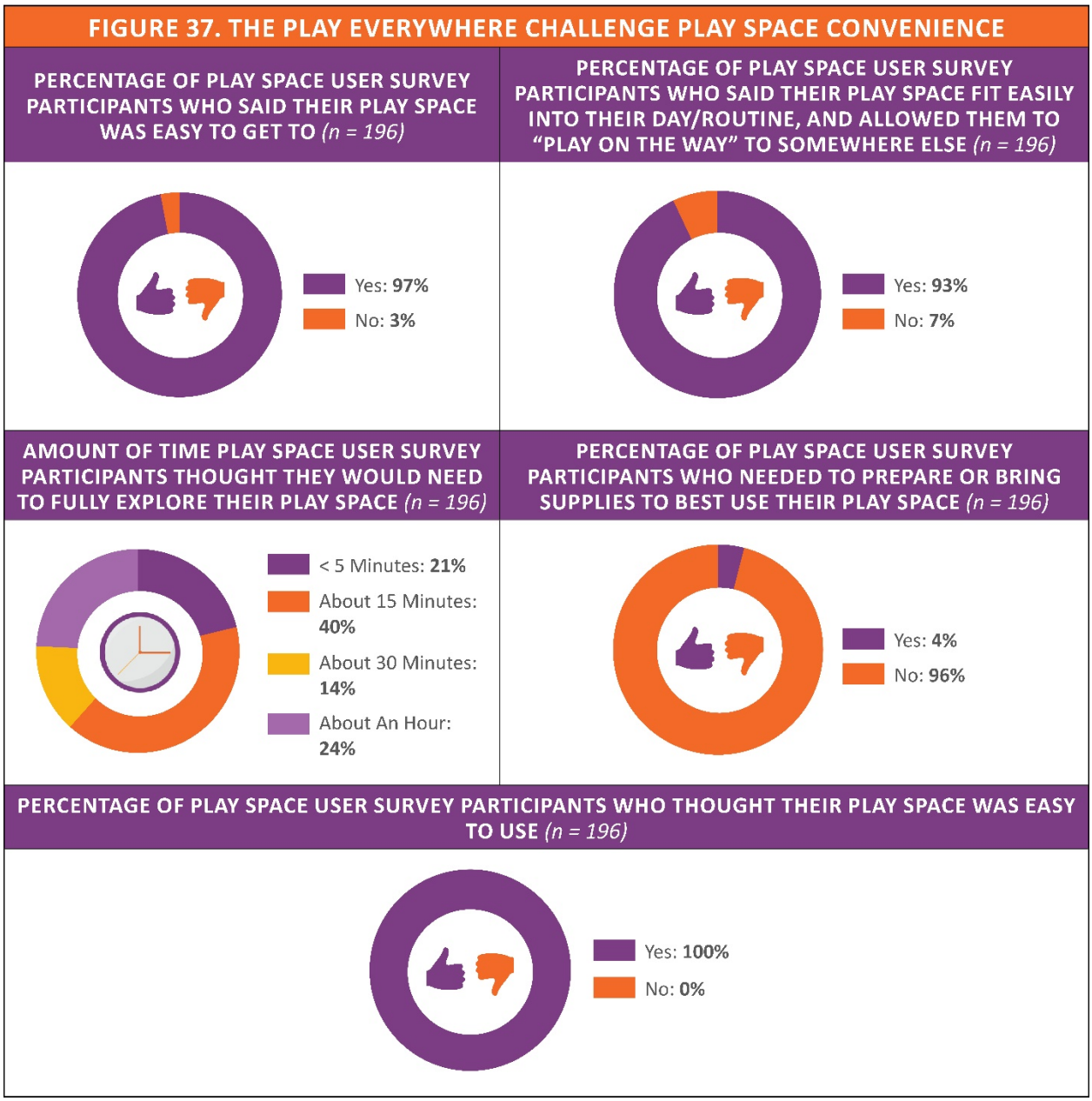


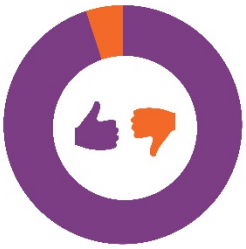
Figure Thirty-Eight shows that almost all survey respondents thought permission to play was obvious at their play space (93 percent) and found that the play space was easy to know how to use (95 percent).

FIGURE 38. HOW INVITING THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE PLAY SPACES ARE

PERCENTAGE OF PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO THOUGHT PERMISSION TO PLAY WAS OBVIOUS AT THEIR PLAY SPACE *(n = 192)*

- Yes, I Think Permission To Play Was Obvious: **93%**
- No, I Was Unsure I Could Play Here At First: **7%**

PERCENTAGE OF PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO FOUND IT EASY TO KNOW HOW TO USE THEIR PLAY SPACE *(n = 192)*



- Yes, It Was Easy To Know How To Use The Play Space: **95%**
- No, More Direction Could Be Provided For Users: **5%**

As seen in Figure Thirty-Nine, almost 80 percent of survey participants reported they could use their play space all day during daytime hours, and over 80 percent reported their play space was well-lit if open after dark, making it accessible to both daytime and nighttime play space user needs. Slightly fewer, although still a majority (75 percent), reported their play space would still be safe after dark.

FIGURE 39. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE PLAY SPACE HOURS

PERCENTAGE OF PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO CAN USE THEIR PLAY SPACE ALL DAY DURING DAYTIME HOURS IF THEY WANTED *(n = 192)*

- Yes: **79%**
- No: **3%**
- Unsure: **18%**

PERCENTAGE OF PLAY SPACES THAT ARE CLOSED AFTER DARK *(n = 192)*

- Yes: **20%**
- No: **44%**
- Unsure: **36%**

PERCENTAGE OF PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO SAID THEIR PLAY SPACE WAS WELL-LIT IF THEIR PLAY SPACE WAS OPEN AFTER DARK *(n = 84)*

- Yes: **83%**
- No: **17%**

PERCENTAGE OF PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO SAID THEIR PLAY SPACE WOULD BE SAFE AFTER DARK *(n = 84)*

- Yes: **75%**
- No: **25%**

Play space users who completed the survey reported that the play space was "community building." Figure Forty shows that almost all survey participants (93 percent) reported that their play space brought people who are reflective of the whole community together, and over 80 percent of survey

participants even reported that the play space was designed to encourage new connections across community members. About 90 percent of survey participants reported that the play space engaged the whole family across generations, and about a quarter (76 percent) reported that people at their play space did, indeed, interact with one another while they were there.

FIGURE 40. THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE PLAY SPACE UNIFICATION AND INTERACTIVENESS

PERCENTAGE OF PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO FEEL THAT THEIR PLAY SPACE BRINGS PEOPLE WHO ARE REFLECTIVE OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY TOGETHER *(n = 192)*

PERCENTAGE OF PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO SAID THEIR PLAY SPACE WAS DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE NEW CONNECTIONS ACROSS COMMUNITY MEMBERS *(n = 192)*

PERCENTAGE OF PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO SAID THEIR PLAY SPACE ENGAGED THE WHOLE FAMILY ACROSS GENERATIONS PRESENT *(n = 192)*

PERCENTAGE OF PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO SAID THAT PEOPLE AT THEIR PLAY SPACE INTERACTED WITH ONE ANOTHER *(n = 192)*

Figure Forty-One shows that while 60 percent of survey participants reported that there was something caregivers could do while kids played, 40 percent reported there was not.

FIGURE 41. PLAY SPACE APPEAL TO CAREGIVERS

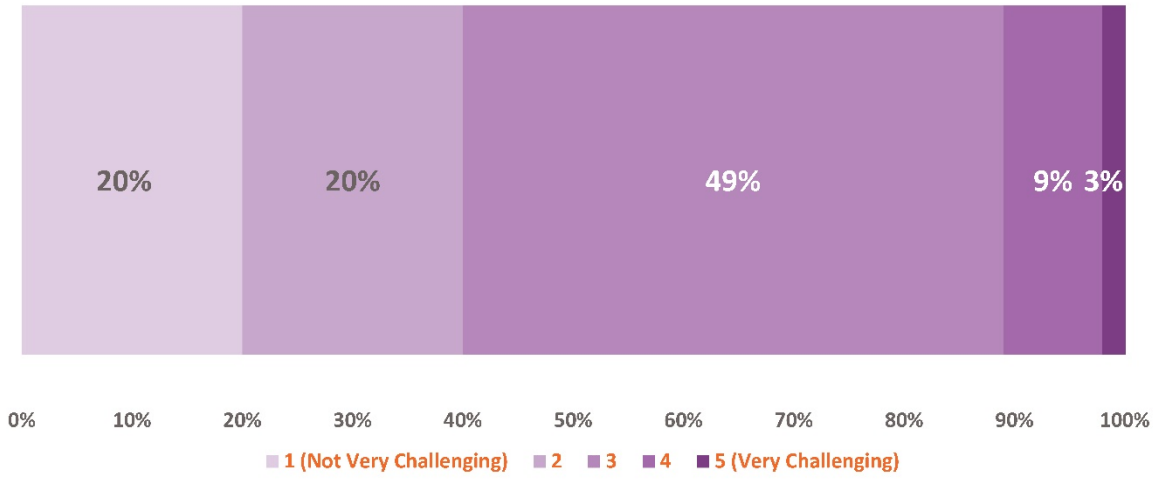
PERCENTAGE OF PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO SAID THERE WAS SOMETHING FOR CAREGIVERS TO DO WHILE KIDS PLAYED *(n = 192)*

WERE THE PLAY SPACES CHALLENGING?

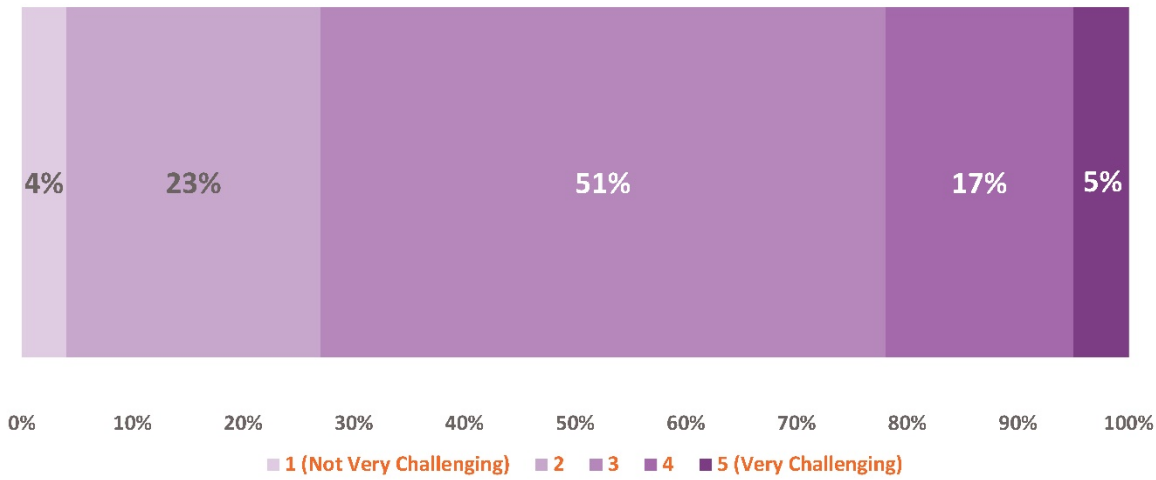
Play space users who completed the survey reported that the play spaces were moderately challenging, but offered a variety of benefits for youth. As shown in Figure Forty-Two, most survey participants found the play spaces only somewhat physically and mentally challenging, giving their play spaces ratings of "threes" and "fours" on a scale of one to five, with "five" being the most challenging. It is important to note that although play spaces are expected to be challenging (based on the playability guiding principles), play spaces are also expected to be appropriate for a wide audience; if the play space meets both criteria, users with different skill sets will be able to access the play space.

FIGURE 42. HOW CHALLENGING THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE PLAY SPACES ARE

PERCENTAGE OF PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO SAID THEIR PLAY SPACE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED ITS USERS *(n = 189)*



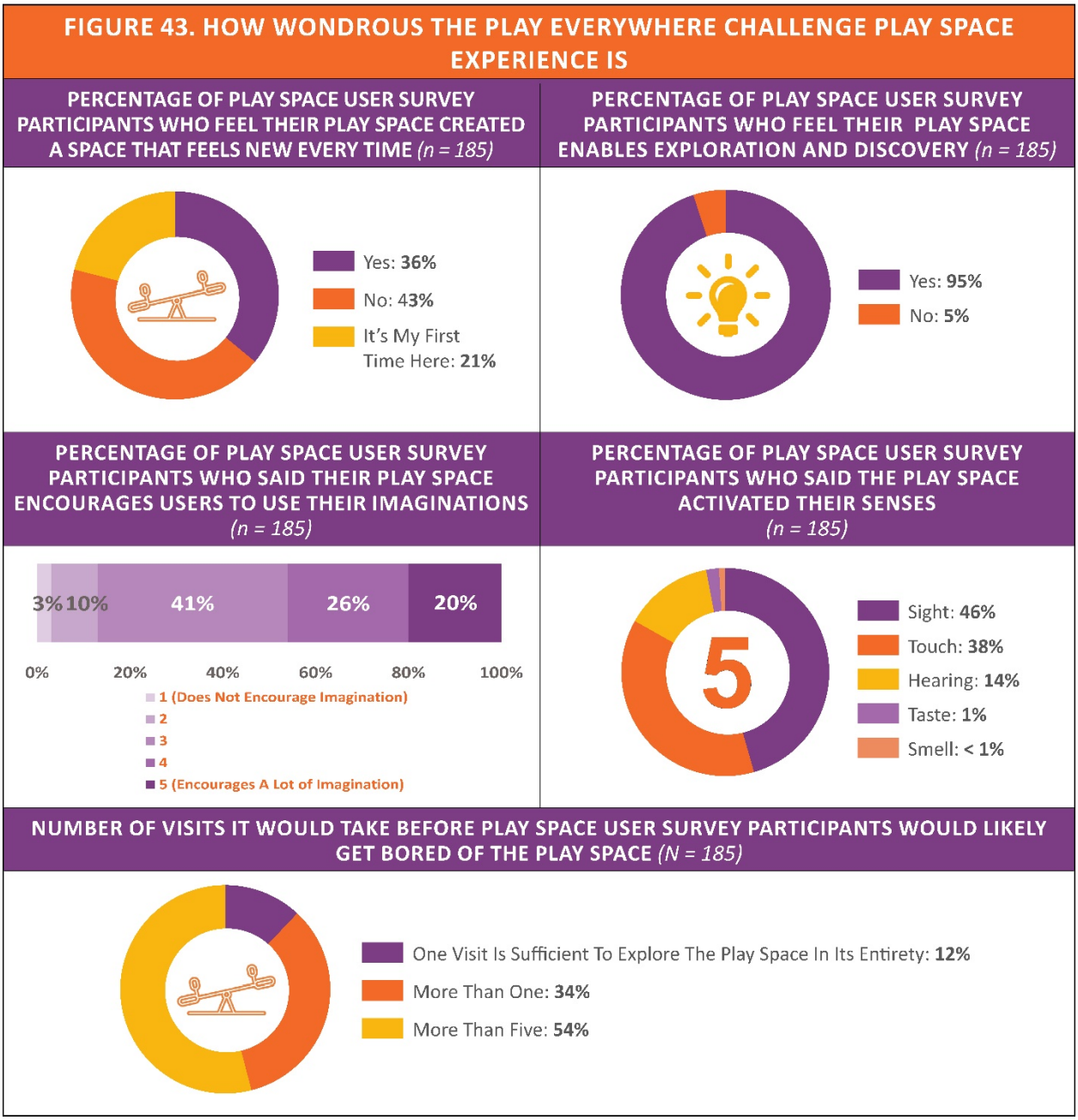
PERCENTAGE OF PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS WHO SAID THEIR PLAY SPACE MENTALLY CHALLENGED ITS USERS *(n = 189)*



Play space users who completed the survey reported mixed feelings on how wondrous the play spaces were. Figure Forty-Three shows that 43 percent of survey participants reported feeling that their play space created an environment that feels new every time, while 36 percent reported that it did not. Almost all (95 percent) survey participants reported that their play space enabled exploration and discovery. Survey respondents were in less agreement that their play space encouraged users to use their imagination (41 percent ranked this a "three" on a scale of one to five, where "five" represented "encourages a lot of imagination"). Sight (46 percent), touch (38 percent), and hearing (14 percent) were among the senses most commonly reported to be used while at the play space. Fifty-four percent of survey respondents reported that play space participants would likely get bored of the play space if they

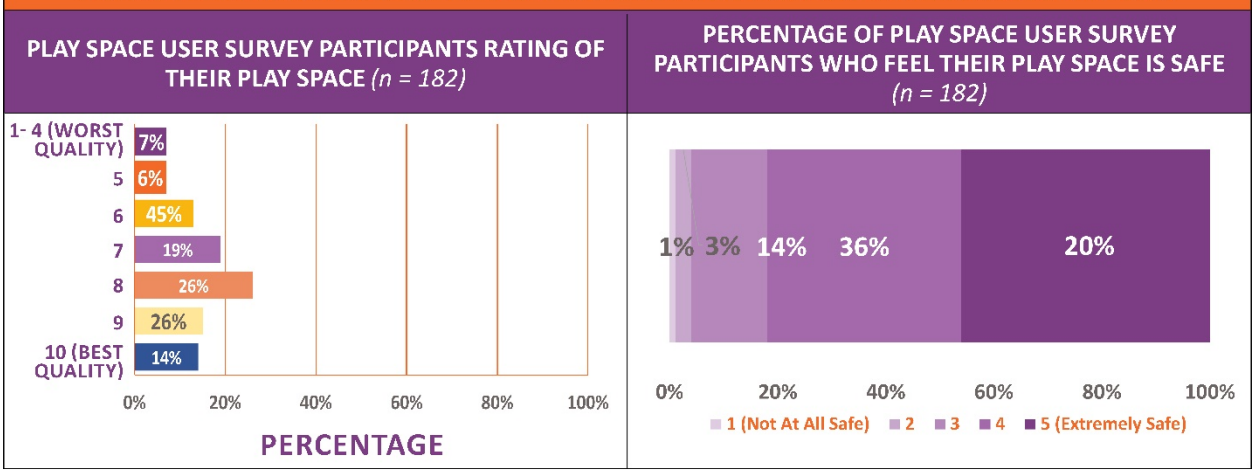
visited more than five times, and only 12 percent felt that one visit was sufficient to explore the play space in its entirety.

FIGURE 43. HOW WONDROUS THE PLAY EVERYWHERE CHALLENGE PLAY SPACE EXPERIENCE IS



Users who completed the survey felt safe at their play spaces, and a majority were satisfied with it. Figure Forty-Four shows play space user perceptions (of play space safety and ratings of overall satisfaction) related to the play spaces. Fifty-five percent of survey participants rated their play spaces between "eight" and "ten," where "ten" represented the "best quality play space." Also, the majority of survey participants reported that they felt either "extremely safe" or "safe."

FIGURE 44. PERCEPTIONS OF PLAY SPACE SAFETY AND OVERALL SATISFACTION



RECOMMENDATIONS

APPLICATION PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite its intensity, grantees credited the application process with improving their play space plans, and few proposed to change the process. Overall, stakeholders seemed satisfied with the application process. Blue Ribbon panelists, grantees, and technical assistance providers offered limited recommendations related to improving the application process.

The intensity of the application process. The Challenge may want to consider if the intensity of the application process is appropriate. One technical assistance provider offered the following critique of the application process:

> *"I think for the amount of funding people got, they really had to put a lot of work into these applications. Really dedicated organizations, but it was a lot of work for them. And, so, to apply for the finalist round, the winning round, they had to submit another application project narrative and complete four worksheets that explained their timeline, their budget, how they were going to evaluate, and how they were going to do community engagement."*

Uptake of application technical assistance. A good deal of the technical assistance occurred during the build-out process and was not mandatory. While some grantees took advantage of it, many did not. The Challenge should consider if alternative technical assistance timing and/or structure would bolster participation rates. For instance, webinars may be more appropriate in later stages of the application process (prior to round two selections), or making a handful of webinars mandatory may increase grantee uptake of these resources. One panelist argued for visual production support for grantees to promote better quality visual presentations, explaining how "some submissions were poor on this front, and were at a disadvantage while being judged," despite having a great concept.

JUDGING RECOMMENDATIONS

Influence of expertise on judging. Panelists tended to prefer criteria associated with their own professions while judging applications. Future Challenges should explore the implications of this finding. If the Challenge is interested in having a professionally diverse panel, then ensuring that consensus groups have equal representation in varying professional expertise is critical. However, if the Challenge is interested in ensuring that particular facets of the review are favored, panelists with that expertise should have a stronger representation.

Information and tools for panelists. On the judging materials, one Blue Ribbon panelist explained that the "dynamic ranking spreadsheet" was really hard to toggle back and forth on, which was time-consuming. The panelist explained that s/he needed to keep several windows open at the same time to gather the complete view of the applicant in order to rank them. Two other panelists had similar reports, suggesting that they would have benefitted from judging materials that kept all relevant information together in one location, rather than having to toggle from source to source. Another panelist reported that s/he spent a fair amount of time on Google, trying to get a sense of local leaders' ability to accomplish their project, and that judging would have been easier if this information had been readily available from KaBOOM!. Integration of information across documents and rating forms was also suggested to improve the judging materials.

The timing and time requirement of the judging process. In terms of the judging process, the majority of panelists reported that the timing and time requirements of the judging process were reasonable. A handful of panelists though felt that a faster, more concentrated judging process would have been beneficial to the Challenge. One panelist found it hard to remember certain details from one meeting to the next. Another explained "*it seemed like more work than it was because it had a long cycle time*." Another panelist noted s/he "would have liked more forewarning about the amount of information [panelists] needed to review so that [they] could have better allocated [their] time overall."

Decision-making process. As we noted earlier in this report, most panelists agreed that the consensus calls worked well; however, a couple of panelists made suggestions about how these calls could have been improved. One panelist thought that stronger facilitation of the consensus calls would have been helpful, and another argued for more "automation" with the judging process, stating that "*the calls were helpful, but it is still difficult to make decisions [on] a conference call*." One panelist suggested that there be at least one in-person meeting, explaining that being able to meet with other panelists in person would have made for a better discussion. Yet another panelist suggested site visits (or video conferences) to the grantee sites and/or interviews with applicants could have improved the judging process. One panelist noted that it would have been great if more targeted outreach to academic design institutions could have been made to specifically promote their participation in the Challenge.

Beyond judging. Multiple panelists were curious about what happened after the judging process. One panelist noted,

> *"[I]t didn't seem like the projects my judging group came to consensus about ended up being the winners, so that makes me think there was a gap somewhere between what KaBOOM! wanted and the judging criteria [panelists] were given."*

Another panelist explained that it "would have been great to get feedback on which of the applicants from our group were selected, and why some differed from our ranking." To avoid panelist dissatisfaction, it seems that time could be made for additional training prior to consensus calls to

ensure that all panelists are on the same page, and that, following grantee selections, KaBOOM! could debrief with panelists about which grantees were chosen and why. Two other panelists commented on wanting to follow up on the status of the actual play spaces. One was interested to hear more about play space usage, engagement, and sustainability, while the other noted, "I don't know if the projects have been installed, how they were performing, [or] if they have had an impact on the local community." Future Challenges could address panelist feedback to improve the process, and further increase panelist buy-in and engagement.

BUILD-OUT RECOMMENDATIONS

Build-out timeframe. Grantees ran into many challenges, both with weather issues during the build-out, and with the amount of time allotted for the build-out period. Some play spaces that opened in October had limited time before snow began and residents were unable to use the play space. More commonly, grantees ran into delays during the build-out period, and struggled to complete the play space during the expected ninety-day period. Weather and issues related to attaining permits caused major delays for some sites. A handful of sites had issues with needing to change their play space locations during the early stages of the build-out, which caused some delays. Sixty-one percent of surveyed grantees reported that a build-out period of six months would be more adequate. The limited timeframe also made it difficult to build strong relationships with partners and the community.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

Technical assistance accessibility and viability. Based on survey findings, there is room to improve the technical assistance provided through the Challenge. Overall, grantees did not report accessing all of the technical assistance that was offered, despite also reporting that they were clear on the types of technical assistance that were available to them. If the grantees were, indeed, aware of all of the types of technical assistance they could access, the Challenge should explore why the technical assistance offerings were not more widely used, and focus specifically on content and/or the ability of the grantee to take advantage of it.

However, it is also plausible that grantees *thought* they knew about all of the technical assistance provided, but really didn't. If this is the case, then the Challenge needs to refine the ways in which it communicates to grantees about technical assistance resources. For instance, a comprehensive list of available technical assistance options may be useful, or having technical assistance providers proactively connect with grantees to explore the challenges they are facing.

The technical assistance offerings could be more customized for the grantees in an effort to make them more useful, and, therefore, better utilized. Technical assistance could even be offered earlier in the process to encourage sites to think through issues sooner.

Technical assistance content. Those grantees who did access technical assistance provided by KaBOOM!'s partners may not have accurately reflected the needs of all grantees. The Challenge and its partners may want to consider conducting a needs assessment with grantees to help focus the technical assistance resources. Weather and permitting were real issues that sites faced while attempting the build process. Only two of the sixteen sites that had permitting issues reported participating in Gehl's

permit webinar. Perhaps the webinar could have been enough to counter the issues the other fourteen sites faced, or perhaps more intensive and tailored permitting support is needed for sites completing the Challenge. One panelist suggested that the use of a communications platform for sharing ideas across grantees would have been great, allowing grantees to connect after being selected as winners.

REPORTING RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a subset of grantees who felt as though their outcomes were not captured within their final report. Grantees offered some insights on how outcome data gathering could be done better. Grantees also offered suggestions on the use of surveys to capture play space outcomes, either through partner surveys, more kid-friendly surveys, feedback surveys that could be left at the play space after use, translated survey instruments in multiple languages, telephone surveys, and incentives for survey completion. Three grantees emphasized the power of qualitative data as being a "more applicable measure [of impact]," and proposed encouraging users to tell a story about their experiences at the play space. Grantees also explained the importance of creating a customized evaluation plan specific to sites (although this would have likely raised complications with evaluating the Challenge as a whole). One grantee explained:

> *"It would have been far more beneficial if we would have been able to establish our own metrics, rather than try[ing] to use standard metrics for measuring our success."*

One grantee noted that tracking more longitudinally would yield better quality outcome data. Another grantee noted that his/her site would yield better results if surveying was done after nearby construction was complete, also making the case for a longer evaluation period to capture more accurate data. Two other grantee suggestions included holding a community party to get lots of survey completions at once, and/or somehow electronically (as opposed to manually) tracking foot traffic at play spaces to more accurately capture usage occurring at all hours (as opposed to only periods of time being studied).

The final section of this report outlines our thinking on next steps for the evaluation of the Challenge.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This evaluation was designed to accomplish two goals: evaluate the implementation of the Challenge in order to provide formative feedback to its funders, KaBOOM!, and other stakeholders, and 2) to document early outcomes of the Challenge. As such, this study focused on the experiences of the Challenge's stakeholders: the Blue Ribbon Panel, the grantees, and the play space users in the first cohort of the initiative. While the research provides important insights into the Challenge's implementation, we were less successful in capturing and documenting the experiences of play space users and assessing longer-term outcomes of the Challenge.

Grantees offered valuable feedback emphasizing the importance of more longitudinal, qualitative fieldwork that evaluates customized outcomes determined by individual sites. Moving forward, it would be beneficial to continue studying Cohort One grantees to learn more about play space user experiences and longer-term outcomes, including sustainability and scaling. Key research questions may include:

5) How well are play spaces attracting play space users? Who is experiencing the play spaces?
6) What short and long-term impacts are play space users experiencing?
7) Are play spaces being sustained?
8) Have play spaces been scaled locally? What factors support sustaining and scaling play spaces?

Play space users. One thing that was difficult to determine during our study was how well play spaces were attracting users and how much traffic play spaces were experiencing. It is unclear whether sites were experiencing a lull in play space usage or whether play space users were uninclined to participate in an online survey. The next phase of research would benefit from tracking play space usage during systematic observational periods across either all sites or a sampling of sites[11] (based on meaningful distinctions region, type of play space, type of grantee, etc…) using a newly developed tool to be used during a systematic data collection process that would be relevant to all play spaces.

Short and long-term impacts. A handful of grantees explained there were some short-term disruptions near their site and taking a more longitudinal view would provide a more accurate picture of how play space users are experiencing the site. A more longitudinal look at play spaces could also eliminate any false impression of high usage that may happen closer to the play space opening. Furthermore, it would be interesting to track participants over time to see if repeat usage has stronger impacts or if impacts plateau, and if so, in what types of sites this happens. Play space users could be asked via survey or in-person (during observational periods) how many times they have visited the play space and play space outcomes could be examined with user frequency in mind. Critical to this research is the grantee suggestion to use homegrown or customized outcomes as opposed to outcomes that are uniform (and inappropriate) across all sites. Equally important, grantees suggested data would be most appropriately gathered qualitatively to learn deeply how play space users are experiencing the play spaces. Site interviews with play space users could yield this data.

Play space sustainability. We learned through phase one of this research that play spaces will require up-keep, with some grantees reporting more concrete plans than others. As sites begin to require maintenance, it would be timely to observe if up-keep is regularly occurring to sustain the play spaces. Grantee interviews are a potential backup option to learn more about maintenance activity if observations are not possible.

Play space scaling. Our survey touched on whether sites had plans to scale the play spaces but further research should examine this going forward, at a more relevant time when scaling would be occurring. One thing learned through phase one research is that certain cities supported the play spaces more than others. It would be interesting to examine what factors effect this support and if there are best practices in marketing and stabilizing the play space. Grantee or partner interviews would be the most appropriate method to gather this data.

[11] Of note, Gehl collected some play space user data for 10 hand-selected projects, with proximity to Gehl playing a factor in project selections.

This data, if gathered across all active play spaces, would provide nuance into how sites compare and contrast and how community context plays a factor, extending Gehl's work in their deep-dive sites. It also goes a step further by addressing grantee feedback in the evaluation process and offering approaches to counter those issues.

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APPENDIX

GRANT MILESTONES

In this section, we provide detail on MAI's evaluation milestones for this grant.[12] The following research activities were conducted:

Project management. We finalized our scope of work in January 2017 after completing some revisions to the initial SOW. Shortly following these SOW revisions, we held our project launch meeting. Over the course of our twelve-month study, we scheduled and facilitated monthly team meetings with RWJF, Target, and a KaBOOM! representative to update them on study progress and to tackle substantive data collection issues.

Literature search and document review. To start the project work, we conducted a literature search related to play, and performed a review of all relevant Play Everywhere Challenge documents. Documents came from various sources, including KaBOOM!, RWJF, Target, and Challenge partners, such as Gehl, ideas42, and Monitor Deloitte. We inventoried all program materials, and created an internal Excel tracking sheet to sort and catalogue materials by partner. In addition, to be sure our evaluation was not duplicating efforts with Challenge partners, we worked with KaBOOM! in April and May 2017 to review its internal database and examine where our proposed data collection may overlap. In places where it was duplicative, we examined the quality of KaBOOM!'s data to determine if it could meet MAI's needs for the evaluation.

Key informant interviews. After a thorough review of program documents, MAI moved into the interview protocol development stage. Interview protocols were internally vetted by RWJF, Target, and KaBOOM!. Suggested edits were made to all interview protocols, and key informant interviews were scheduled and conducted in April and May 2017. In collaboration with RWJF, Target, and KaBOOM!, key stakeholders were identified. These stakeholders included funders, technical assistance providers, and those most closely associated with the Challenge at KaBOOM!. Of the nine key stakeholders identified, all nine stakeholders were interviewed.

Blue Ribbon Panel survey. MAI developed the Blue Ribbon Panel survey at the same time the key informant interview protocols were developed. The survey was reviewed by RWJF, Target, and KaBOOM!, and revised accordingly. In April, the survey was programmed into online survey platform Survey Monkey, and internally piloted for skip logic and survey flow improvements. Blue Ribbon Panel online survey administration occurred between May 1 and July 14, 2017. All twenty-eight Blue Ribbon panelists were invited to participate in our online survey. With weekly reminders, a $50 incentive, and

[12] Please note that there were some SOW revisions and a timeline shift (due to the delay in the project start date and the timing of the Challenge grantees' build-outs). Initially, we planned to deploy the grantee online survey in two phases (January and late spring) to align with KaBOOM!'s original cohort build-out timeline (fall and spring). Due to delays, we postponed deployment of the grantee survey, and instead released it to grantees on a rolling basis in late spring, coinciding with grantee build-out progress, and following each grantee's completion of the final report. Also, RWJF and Target advised MAI to allow additional time working with KaBOOM! for feedback on protocol development, and to better understand the overlap between MAI's evaluation and Gehl's proposed work, so as not to duplicate evaluation efforts and burden grantees. The grantee survey was longer than originally planned so that we could gather similar data across all fifty sites—this was in lieu of conducting individual grantee interviews, which could have increased the burden on these grantees.

an extended administration period, we were able to entice eighteen (69 percent) panelists to participate.

Grantee survey. In May 2017, MAI developed the grantee survey, and finalized it by incorporating feedback from RWJF, Target, and KaBOOM!. The grantee survey was programmed into online survey platform Survey Monkey, and internally piloted for skip logic and survey flow improvements. Grantee online survey administration began on June 22, and continued through mid-October, providing all fifty grantees reasonable time to complete it. At the close of the survey, forty-two (84 percent) out of fifty eligible[13] grantees had participated.

Play space user survey. MAI worked with all fifty grantees to display a banner advertising a link to the online play space user survey and an incentive raffle for all survey participants. MAI's play space user survey was live from September 1 through September 30, 2017. Due to limited participation across sites, the survey was extended through October 15, and MAI worked with sites to increase play space user survey participation. At the close of the survey, 224 play space users had participated in MAI's survey, with nineteen sites represented and 141 participants all from one site.

Analysis. Analysis of the interviews and Blue Ribbon Panel survey was conducted between May and June 2017. Play space user survey analysis, grantee survey analysis, and cross-survey analysis occurred between October and November 2017.

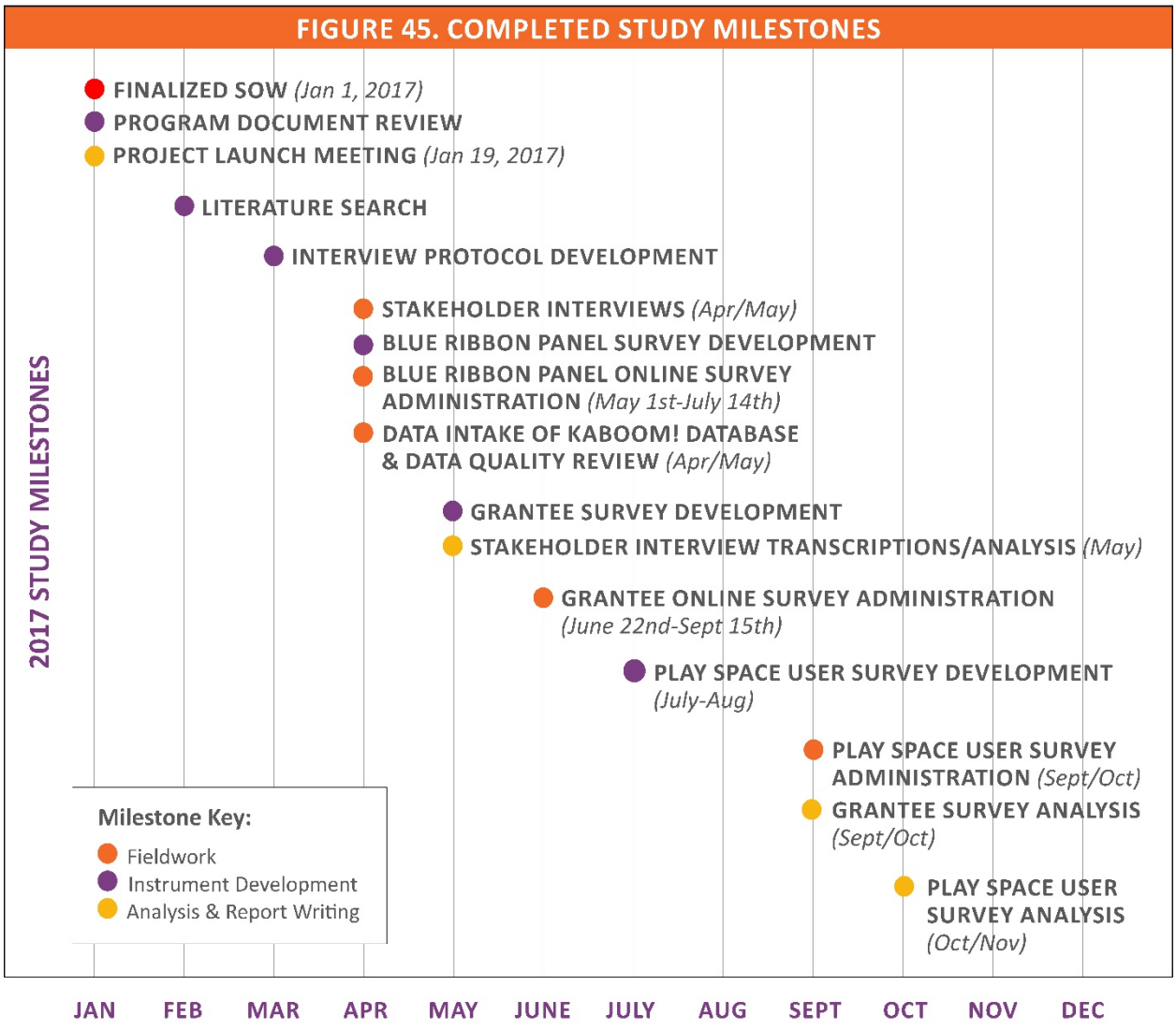
Final report writing. Final report writing occurred in November and December 2017. One-pagers of play space user survey findings tailored to grantee sites are scheduled to be produced by late December to end the grant.

To summarize research findings related to our research tasks above, MAI produced three deliverables for this project. The first, an interim report highlighting progress on our evaluation milestones through May 2017, and a snapshot of Blue Ribbon Panel survey findings. Our second deliverable is this final report, in which we provide basic background information about the Challenge grantees, a summary on completed grant milestones, and key findings related to the Blue Ribbon Panel online survey, the grantee online survey, and play space user online survey (including implementation successes and challenges). To close the final report, we provide recommendations stemming from survey findings and suggestions for future evaluation work. This report is intended for an internal audience. In recognition of the grantees' time and effort, we will also produce a third deliverable—a one-page document of feedback for certain grantees, highlighting findings from their sites' user surveys[14].

In Figure Forty-Five, we present a timeline of our evaluation milestones for this grant, highlighting when key research activities were conducted over the twelve-month period.

[13] As a courtesy to KaBOOM!, we delayed soliciting MAI's grantee survey from grantees until they had completed their build-out, as well as their final report requirements from Gehl. Prior to closing the survey, only two grantees had not yet completed their site's build-out process, so these two sites were offered an opportunity to complete the survey. Both grantees were able to complete the survey. The eight sites that did not participate in the survey have not provided MAI a reason for their non-participation.

[14] One-pagers will only be produced for sites that had more than ten survey respondents participate in the play space user survey.



GRANTEE SURVEY PARTICIPATION

In Table Six, we provide a breakdown of grantees who participated in our online grantee survey and their corresponding geographical locations.

TABLE 6. GRANTEE SURVEY PARTICIPATION *(n = 42)*	
GRANTEE NAME	**GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION**
CIVIC PLAY SPACES	
Animal Tracks!	Washington, DC
GovPorch	Charlotte, NC
Story Book Walk (Outside Phillis Wheatley Library)	Rochester, NY
COMMERCIAL PLAY SPACES	
Chicago Children's Theatre: Dreams on Parade	Chicago, IL
The Hangout	New Orleans, LA
iCrim: Playful Pathway	Flint, MI
Bubble Rooftops	Minneapolis, MN
Fun House	Independence, MO
Project Projection	Plattsburgh, NY
Big Play on Laundry Day	Spartanburg, SC
Upswing: Retractable Jump Ropes and Sidewalk Play as Neighborhood Renewal	Richmond, VA
The Laundromat Theater	Randolph, VT
Building Playware	Eau Claire, WI
Design to Move: Stair Trek	Madison, WI
MOVEABLE/POP UP PLAY SPACES	
Kit of Parks (KoP)	Boston, MA
The Moveable Fest	Nashville, TN
PARKS & OPEN PLAY SPACES	
Board Play	Providence, RI
RESIDENTIAL	
PLAY Court: OX4D Plays	Houston, TX

TABLE 6. GRANTEE SURVEY PARTICIPATION *(n = 42) (continued)*	
GRANTEE NAME	**GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION**
STREET SIDEWALKS & TRAIL PLAY SPACES	
Playful Gardens	Tuscon, AZ
Crosswalk Hop	Kerman, CA
iPlay MIAMI Streets	Miami, FL
Sidewalk Chalk Flood 2.0	Des Moines, IA
Perma-PlayStreets	Chicago, IL
Piedmont Plays: A Campaign to Love Your Neighborhood	Worcester, MA
A-Mazing Sidewalk Adventure	Jackson, MS
Sidewalk Playspaces	Benson, NC
Playful Sidewalks	Kannapolis, NC
Rain or Shine Interactive Sidewalk Play	Geneva, NY
Bronx Steps 2 Health: Pathway of Play	New York, NY
Way to Play	New York, NY
Urban Thinkscape	Philadelphia, PA
The Playable Sidewalk	Philadelphia, PA
The Play Parklet	Philadelphia, PA
Zona de Paz (Peace Zone)	Loiza, Puerto Rico
TRANSIT PLAY SPACES	
Veteran's Memorial Bus Stop	McFarland, CA
J.U.M.P! or Join Us at the MARTA Playspace	Decatur, GA
BUSt! Boredom	Lexington, KY
Rail Trail Symphony	Charlotte, NC
S.P.A.R.K (Socialize, Play, Accommodate to Reach Kids)	Charlotte, NC
Urban Periscopes	New York, NY
Walking School Bus Stops	Portland, OR
Metro McAllen Swing-and-Ride	McAllen, TX

PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPATION

Table Seven highlights the sites that participated in the play space user survey. The twenty bolded sites had at minimum of at least one survey participant. Of note, Building Playware, represented 70 percent of the survey respondents.

TABLE 7. PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PARTICIPANTS *(n = 224)*			
PLAY SPACES	**GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION**	**PLAY SPACE USER SURVEY PERCENTAGE**	**N**
CIVIC PLAY SPACES			
Story Book Walk (Outside Phillis Wheatley Library)	Rochester, NY	1%	2
Animal Tracks!	Washington, DC	< 1%	1
GovPorch	Charlotte, NC	< 1%	1
COMMERCIAL PLAY SPACES			
Building Playware	Eau Claire, WI	70%	143
Chicago Children's Theatre: Dreams on Parade	Chicago, IL	2%	4
Bubble Rooftops	Minneapolis, MN	1%	3
Fun House	Independence, MO	1%	2
Project Projection	Plattsburgh, NY	1%	2
Big Play on Laundry Day	Spartanburg, SC	< 1%	1
STREET SIDEWALKS & TRAIL PLAY SPACES			
Crosswalk Hop	Kerman, CA	6%	12
Playful Gardens	Tuscon, AZ	2%	5
Sidewalk Playspaces	Benson, NC	1%	2
Rain or Shine Interactive Sidewalk Play	Geneva, NY	1%	3
TRANSIT PLAY SPACES			
BUSt! Boredom	Lexington, KY	3%	6
Metro McAllen Swing-and-Ride	McAllen, TX	2%	5
Rail Trail Symphony	Charlotte, NC	1%	2
Downtown Slides	Knoxville, TN	1%	2
J.U.M.P! or Join Us at the MARTA Playspace	Decatur, GA	< 1%	1
Walking School Bus Stops	Portland, OR	< 1%	1

Unreported: *I have never visited a play space before n = 5; I don't know the name of the play space I visited n = 2.*