

designExplorr

# Cudell Neighborhood Project

Youth Engagement Workshop  
and Activities at Marion Seltzer

August 25, 2025

Facilitated by: Dr. Jacinda N. Walker, Founder + Creative Director



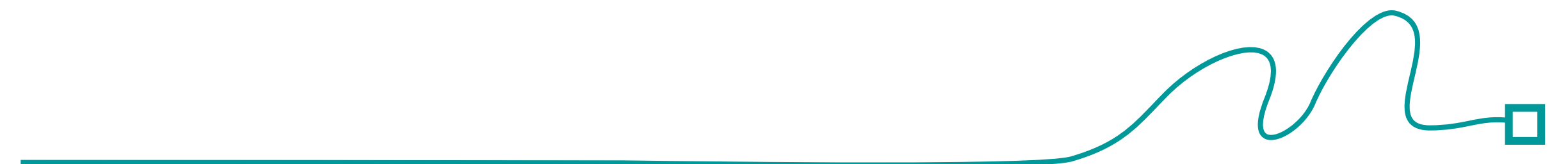




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**NOTE:** *Video clips are available for viewing.*





# About

## Dr. Jacinda N. Walker

Renowned for her work in design, diversity, research, and strategy. She is the founder + creative director of designExplorr, a social impact organization that addresses the diversity gap in the design profession. With over 25 years of professional design experience, her future goals are to develop design education initiatives for underrepresented youth.





DesignExplorr's mission addresses the diversity gap within the design profession, by increasing access to educational institutions and corporate organizations. We do this through collaborations that develop youth activities, coordinate diversity-building initiatives, and connect stakeholders to resources.







## DESIGN LEARNING CHALLENGE



About the design learning challenge workshop: An interactive workshop that allows youth to think like a designer, practice empathy for a social impact topic, and expand their imagination through creative exploration.





# DESIGN LEARNING CHALLENGE

**The Cudell Neighborhood Project  
Youth Engagement Workshop asks:**

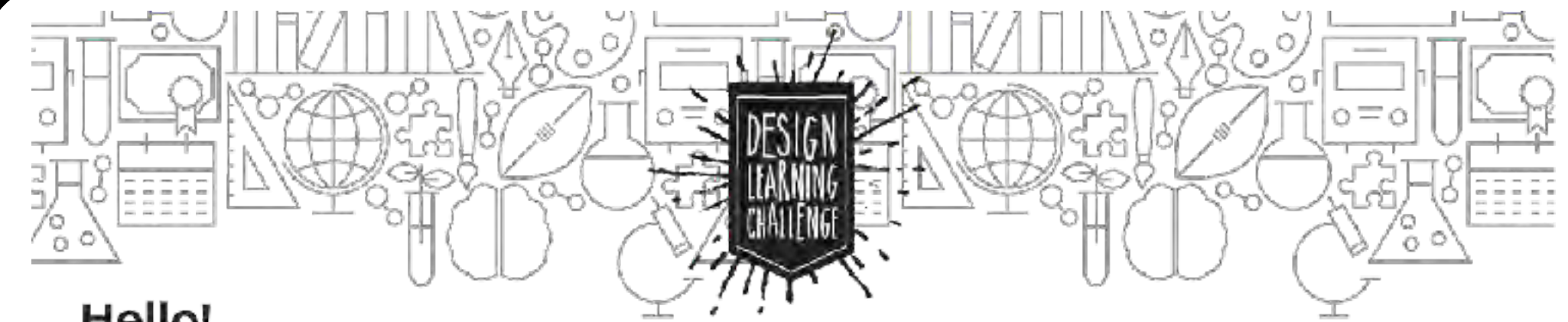
## **How might we design a better playground for our school community?**

This workshop integrates youth perspectives into the community engagement process through design thinking activities. Participants learn about design and create a physical prototype, give surveys, which all culminate in a collaborative session where students will present and reflect on their design solutions.

Tool students used:

# THE SURVEY WORKSHEET

- ▶ This survey worksheet was given to all sets of youth participants.
- ▶ The survey worksheet collected information about the student, their thoughts on the playground, along with their usage of the playground
- ▶ The worksheet was two-sided with a dot exercise on the back page
- ▶ Additionally, participants were showed a map visualizing the space



## Hello!

### Tell us about you...

Fill out this form to tell us more about you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your gender?

☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Prefer not to say

What is your race/ethnicity?

☐ Alaska Native or Indigenous American

☐ Asian

☐ Black/African American

☐ Biracial/Multiracial

☐ Hispanic/Latinx

☐ Middle Eastern North African

☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

☐ White/Caucasian

What other grades have you completed at this school? (check all that apply)

☐ K ☐ 1st ☐ 2nd ☐ 3rd ☐ 4th

☐ 5th ☐ 6th ☐ 7th ☐ 8th

☐ Not sure ☐ Prefer not to say

### Tell us about your school playground...

Answer the questions below to tell us more about your thoughts on the school playground.

#### 1 QUESTION 1:

Do you use the school playground?  
If yes, when?

#### 2 QUESTION 2:

What do you like about your playground?

#### 3 QUESTION 3:

What do you dislike about your playground?

#### 4 QUESTION 4:

What would you do to make the playground better at your school?

#### 5 QUESTION 5:

What is your design solution to make the playground better for our community?









**Hello!**

**Tell us about you...**

Fill out this form to tell us more about you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

What is your gender?

☐ Female ☐ Male ☐ Prefer not to say

What is your race/ethnicity?

- ☐ Alaska Native or Indigenous American
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black/African American
- ☐ Biracial/Multiracial
- ☐ Hispanic/Latinx
- ☐ Middle Eastern North African
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White/Caucasian

What other grades have you completed at this school? (check all that apply)

- ☐ K ☐ 1st ☐ 2nd ☐ 3rd ☐ 4th
- ☐ 5th ☐ 6th ☐ 7th ☐ 8th
- ☐ Not sure ☐ Prefer not to say

**Tell us about your school playground...**

Answer the questions below to tell us more about your thoughts on the school playground.

**1 QUESTION 1:**

Do you use the school playground?  
If yes, when?

**4 QUESTION 4:**

What would you do to make the playground better at your school?

**2 QUESTION 2:**

What do you like about your playground?

**5 QUESTION 5:**

What is your design solution to make the playground better for our community?

**3 QUESTION 3:**

What do you dislike about your playground?

# 1 THINK

**Identify the problem** // Write down what you like and dislike about your park/recreation center.

# 2 UNDERSTAND

**Use empathy** // What can be better? Select the person your solution is for. Consider the specific need(s) they have.

# 3 CREATE

**Build a design solution** // Design a prototype for your solution that visually represents your idea.



**Of the outdoor playground activities pictured, which are most important to you?** Place green dots on your THREE (3) most important, and red dots on your THREE (3) least important.

**De las actividades de juegos al aire libre que se muestran en la foto, ¿cuáles son las más importantes para usted?** Coloque puntos verdes en sus TRES (3) más importantes y puntos rojos en sus TRES (3) menos importantes.



**Swings**  
Columpios



**Play Structure**  
Estructura De Juego



**Splash Pad**  
Almohadilla De Chapoteo



**Climbers**  
Estructuras Para Trepar



**Seating Steps**  
Pasos Para Sentarse



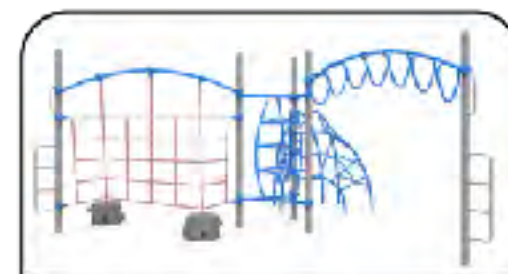
**Shade Area**  
Área De Sombra



**Fitness Play**  
Juego Físico



**Slides**  
El Tobogán



**Play Equipment**  
Equipo De Juego

# 1 THINK

**Identify the problem** // Write down what you like and dislike about your park/recreation center.

# 2 UNDERSTAND

**Use empathy** // What can be better? Select the person your solution is for. Consider the specific need(s) they have.

# 3 CREATE

**Build a design solution** // Design a prototype for your solution that visually represents your idea.

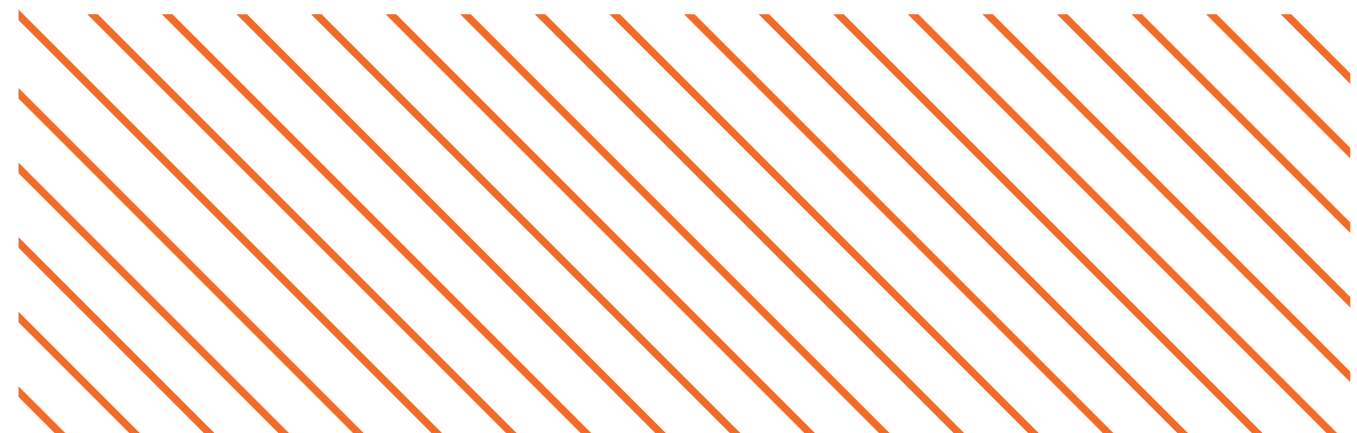




# Insights from student participants at Marion Seltzer



The Cudell Neighborhood Project is a collaborative community initiative focused on designing an engaging and functional playground and park space through a phased process of outreach, input, and design refinement.





# Insights from Grade: 4th

## Activity and Outcomes:

Participated in the 90-minute workshop, viewed the map, completed the worksheet survey with the dot exercise, and designed prototypes of their solution

## Demographic Student Data: 22 of participants

### Gender

Female 9; Male 10  
Prefer not to say 3

### Race/Ethnicity

Asian 1  
Black/African American 7  
Hispanic/Latinx 5  
Middle Eastern North  
African 2  
Prefer not to say 6  
White/Caucasian 1



**Top three things the students loved about their playground:** Swings, Slides, and everything

**A problem they recognized:** Everything. Stop graffitiing and kids fighting, pick up trash and make it more cool



# Insights from Grade: 5th

**Activity and Outcomes:**  
Viewed the map,  
completed the worksheet  
survey with the dot  
exercise, and designed  
prototypes of their solution



**Demographic  
Student Data:**  
22 of student  
participants

**Gender**  
Female 9  
Male 5  
Prefer not to say 8

**Race/Ethnicity**  
Asian 1  
Biracial/Multiracial 1  
Black/African American 5  
Hispanic/Latinx 7  
Middle Eastern North  
African 2  
Prefer not to say 4  
White/Caucasian 2

**Top three things the students loved  
about their playground:** Swings, slides,  
and the people

**A problem they recognized:** Size,  
everything is rusted and the color is  
fading, and old swings



# Insights from Grades: 6th, 7th, & 8th

**Activity and Outcomes:**  
Viewed the map, completed  
the worksheet survey with  
the dot exercise, and  
designed prototypes of  
their solution

## Demographic Student Data: 23 of participants

### Gender

Female 7  
Male 14  
Prefer not to say 2

### Race/Ethnicity

Biracial/Multiracial 1  
Black/African American 10  
Hispanic/Latinx 9  
Prefer not to say 2  
White/Caucasian 2



**Top three things the students loved  
about their playground:** Activities,  
hanging out, and sitting

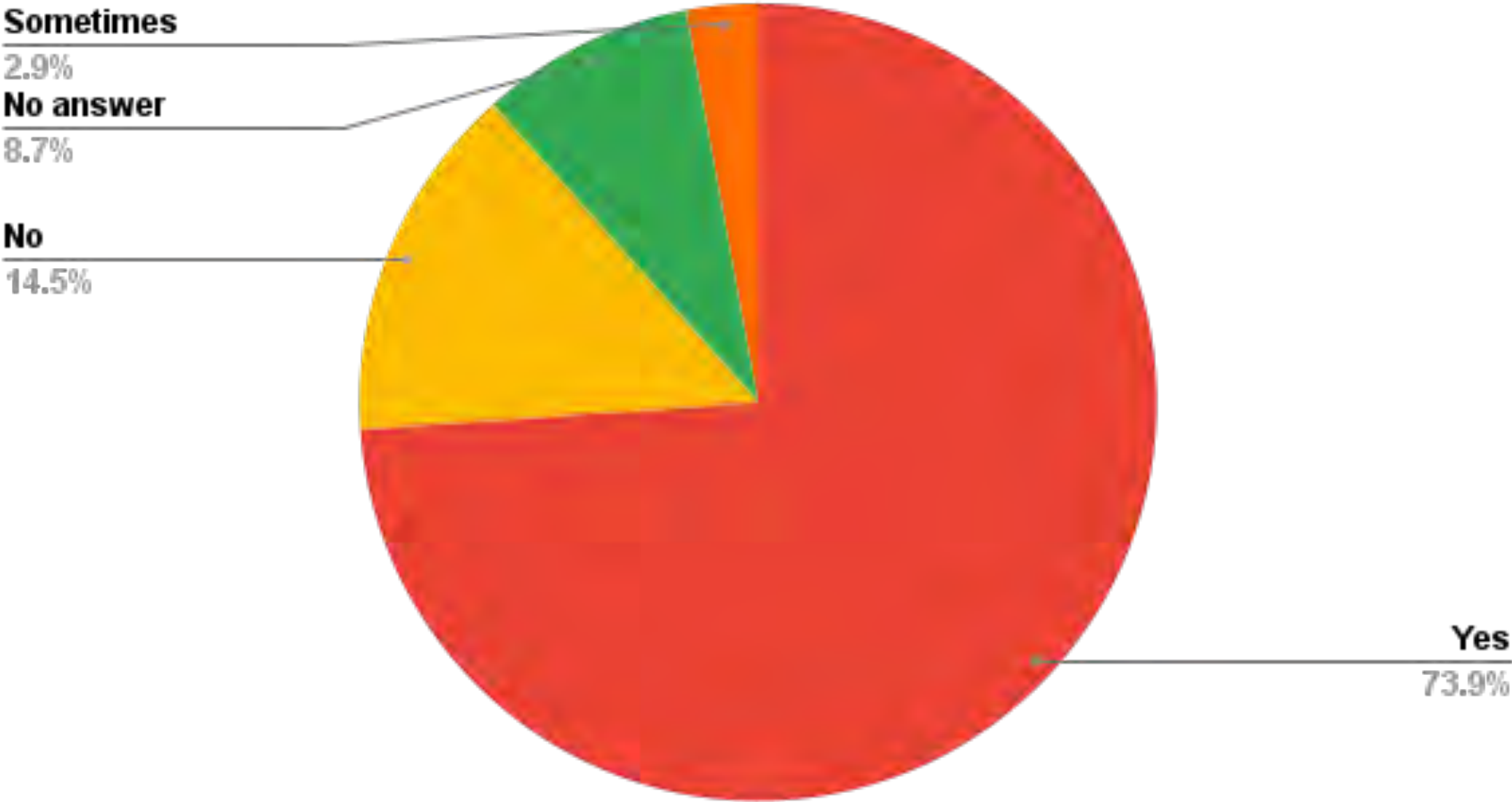
**A problem they recognized:** Everything,  
Need to just rebuild the playground



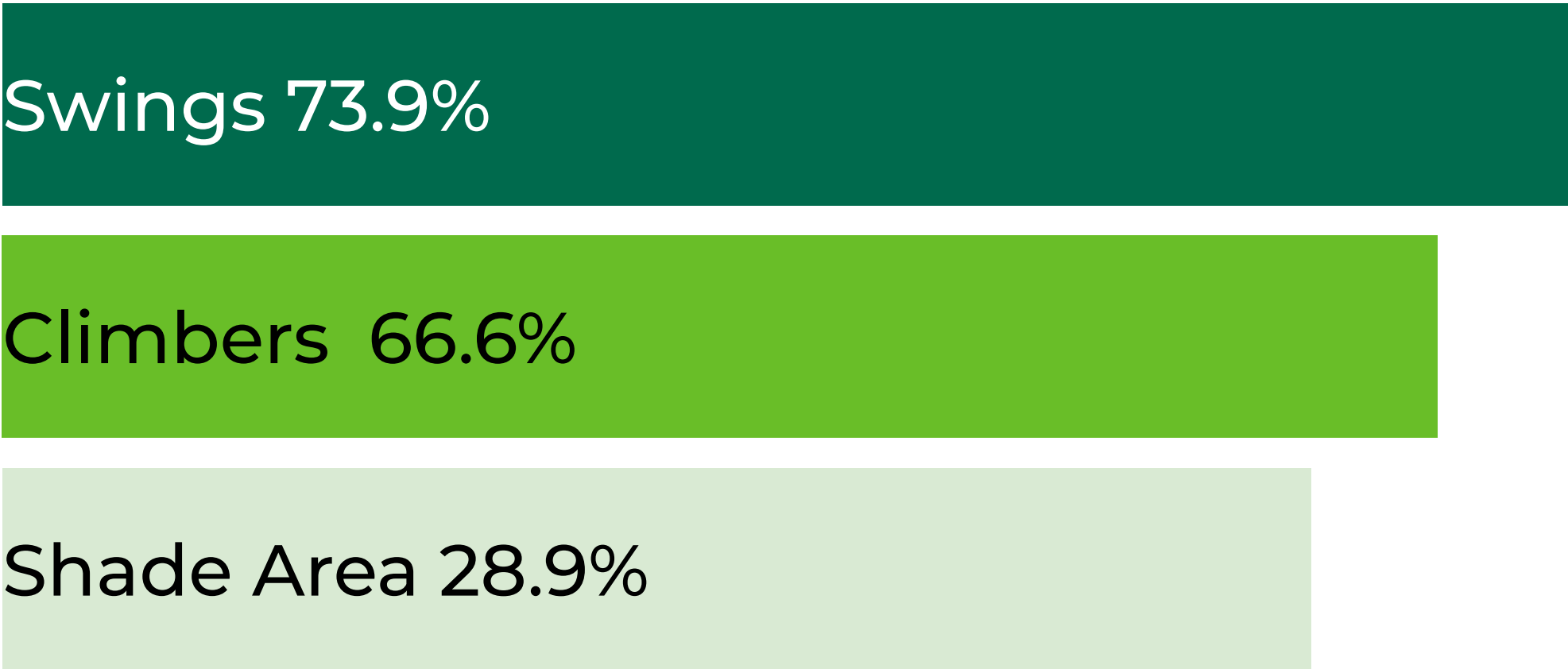
Grades: 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th [69 respondents]

# Data/Findings about survey question 1:

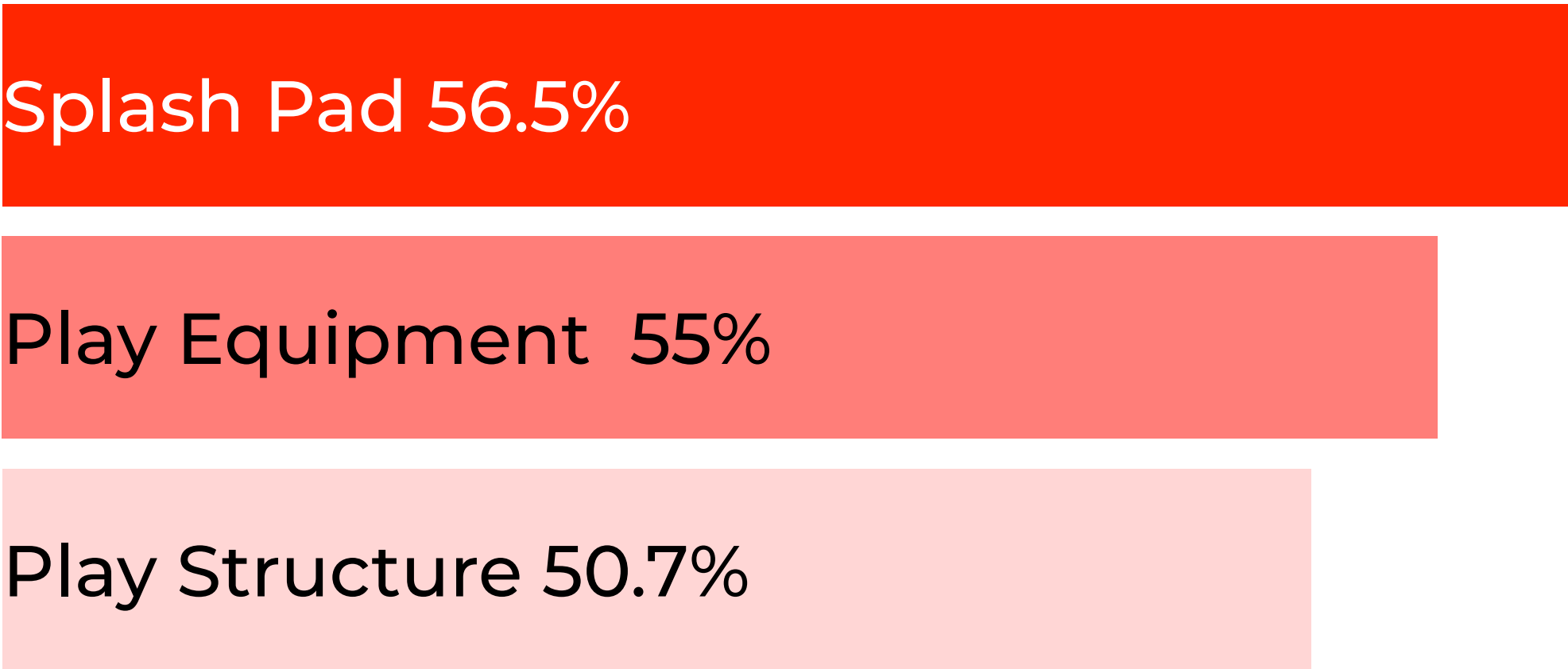
Do you use the playground?  
If yes, when?



Of the outdoor playground activities, which are most important to you? Place GREEN dots on your THREE (3) most important.



Of the outdoor playground activities, which are most important to you? Place RED dots on your THREE (3) least important.





Grades: 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th [69 respondents]

# Data/Findings about survey question 2:

What do you like about your playground?

QUESTION 2: What do you like about your playground?	Number of Student respondents	%
swing	36	52
IDK	5	7
No answer	5	7
the slide	5	7
All	4	5
the columbians	3	4
Basketball court	1	1
It will have a shade area where we cool off	1	1
its clean	1	1
its fun	1	1
Its is pretty big	1	1
Splash pad	1	1
the cute rocks	1	1
the pol	1	1



Grades: 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th [69 respondents]

# Data/Findings about survey question 3:

What do you dislike about your playground?

QUESTION 3: What do you dislike about your playground?	Number of Student respondents	%	QUESTION 3: What do you dislike about your playground?	Number of Student respond ents	%
Nothing	8	11	I don't like the shoes	1	1
No answer	7	10	seating steps	1	1
slide	7	10	That it is not full	1	1
Ellnes Feel good water	2	2	the basketball court	1	1
the floors	2	2	the hard ground	1	1
the park	2	2	the playground	1	1
IDK	2	2	the soccer	1	1
Its dirty	2	2	the sun	1	1
the tictac	2	2	kinda unsafe	1	1
everything	5	7	Not to much	1	1
swing	5	7	stairs	1	1
that are not big	4	5	the pole	1	1
bench	1	1	the tress	1	1
I dislike the splash pad	1	1			



Grades: 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th [69 respondents]

# Data/Findings about survey question 4:

What would you do to make the playground better at your school?

QUESTION 4: What would you do to make the playground better at your school?	Number of Student respondents	%	QUESTION 4: What would you do to make the playground better at your school?	Number of Student respondents	%
slide	10	14	Stop graffitiing and kids fighting	2	2
No answer	8	11	tabobq	1	1
everything	5	7	everyday	1	1
climber	4	5	make it bigger	1	1
More fun and cool	4	5	Make the yard bigger	1	1
More time	4	5	moen swings	1	1
swing	4	5	more climbers	1	1
Buy another monkey bar	3	4	no littering	1	1
Clean it	3	4	nothing	1	1
fitness play	2	2	pick up trash	1	1
I dont know	2	2	Play with friends	1	1
something to replace the ticktac toe board because I feel like its broken	2	2	rebuild it	1	1
splash pad	2	2	siko	1	1




Grades: 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th [69 respondents]

# Data/Findings about survey question 5:

What is your design solution to make the playground better for our community?

QUESTION 5: What is your design solution to make the playground better for our community?	Number of Student respondents	%	QUESTION 5: What is your design solution to make the playground better for our community?	Number of Student respondents	%
slides	10	14	To design a monkey bar	2	2
No answer	9	13	Climbers	1	1
bigger	6	8	Create	1	1
everything	6	8	Make a new park	1	1
more time more things	4	5	monkey bards	1	1
swings	4	5	more safe for kids and change the melted slides	1	1
add better swings	3	4	more swings and on the floor	1	1
Splash pad	3	4	no fighting	1	1
Clean it move	2	2	porker	1	1
clean our messes	2	2	Shade	1	1
I dont know	2	2	take it out of the ground. Not so babyish	1	1
nothing	2	2	to be a lot better	1	1
Splash park for summers more swings	2	2	to make people happy	1	1

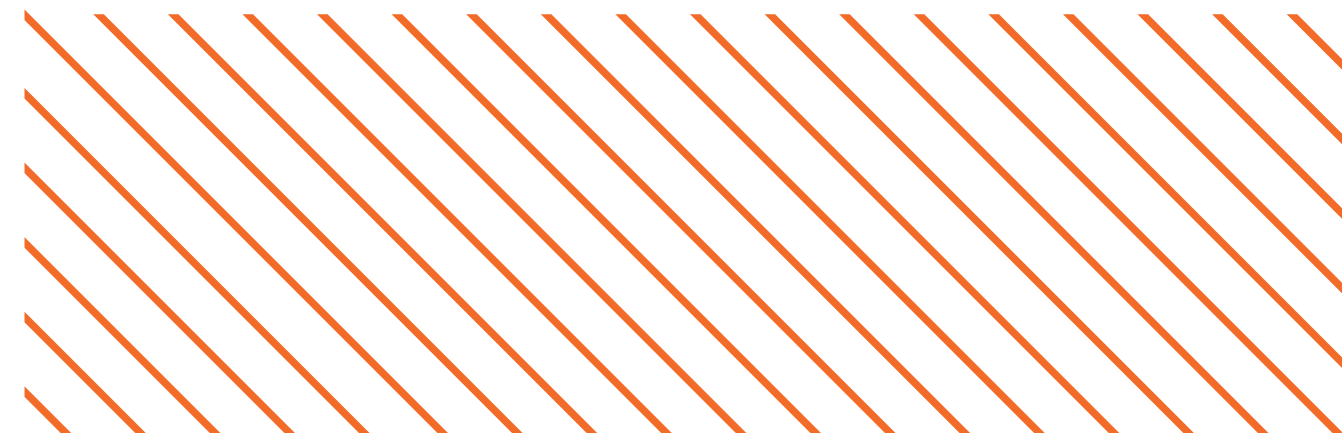




# Insights from young adult participants at the Cudell Fine Arts Center



The Cudell Neighborhood Project is a collaborative community initiative focused on designing an engaging and functional playground and park space through a phased process of outreach, input, and design refinement.





# Insights from Art Center Teens Attendees

## Activity and Outcomes:

Attended full workshop,  
completed the worksheet  
survey with the dot  
exercise, and designed  
prototypes of their solution

## Demographic Student Data: 7 of participants

### Gender

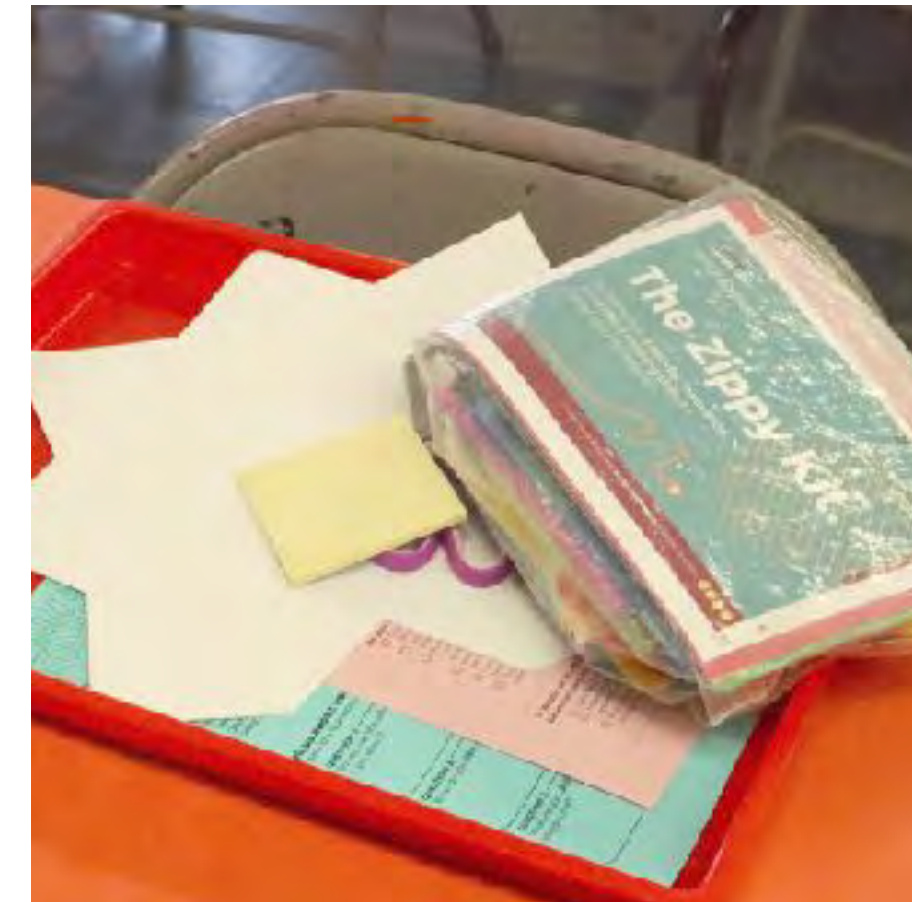
Female 3  
Male 3  
Prefer not to say 1

### Race/Ethnicity

Black/African American 1  
Hispanic/Latinx 3  
Prefer not to say 1  
White/Caucasian 2

## A problem they recognized:

A limited of activities, it's not  
that big for lots or children.



## Top three things the students loved about their playground:

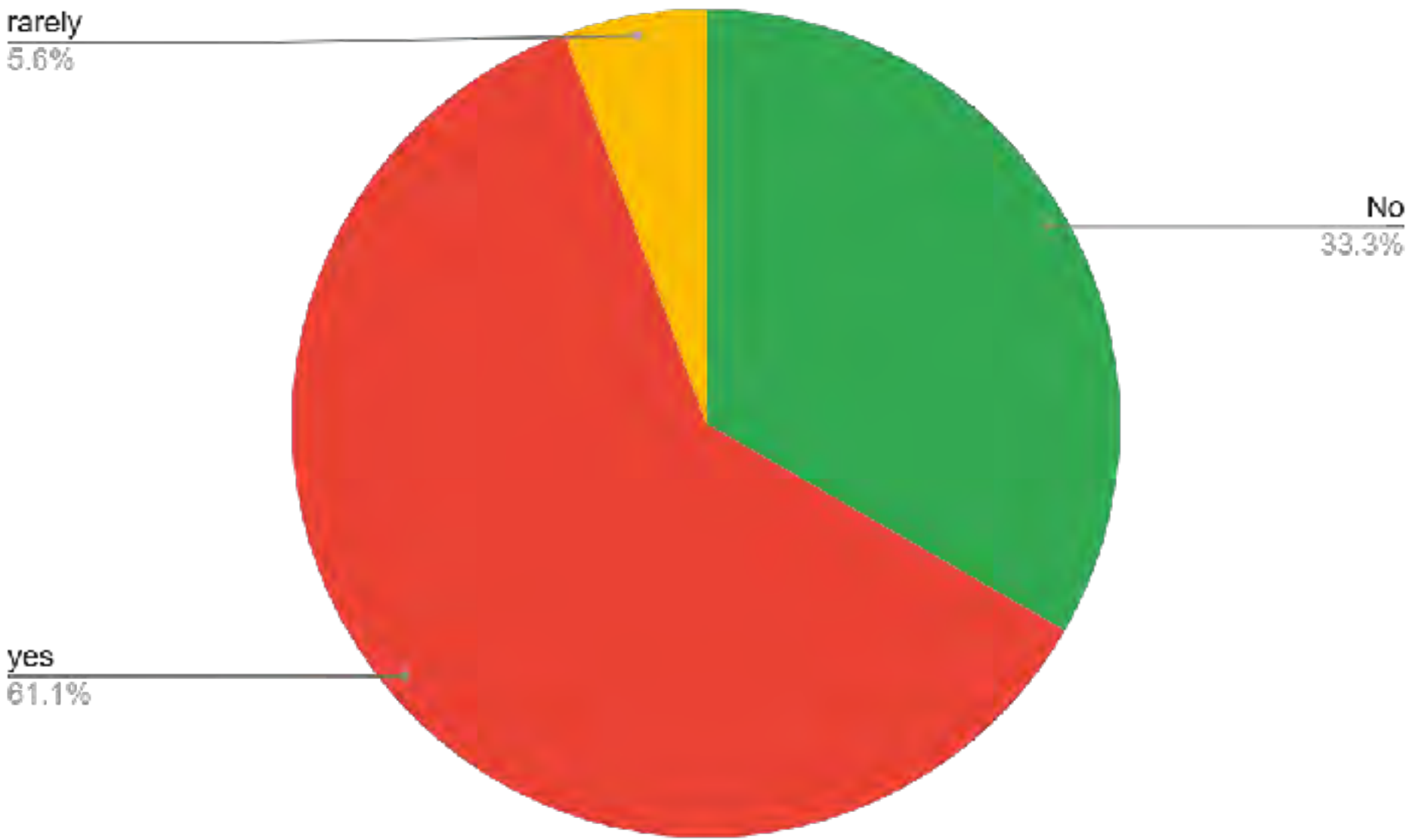
Seating Steps, swings, slides



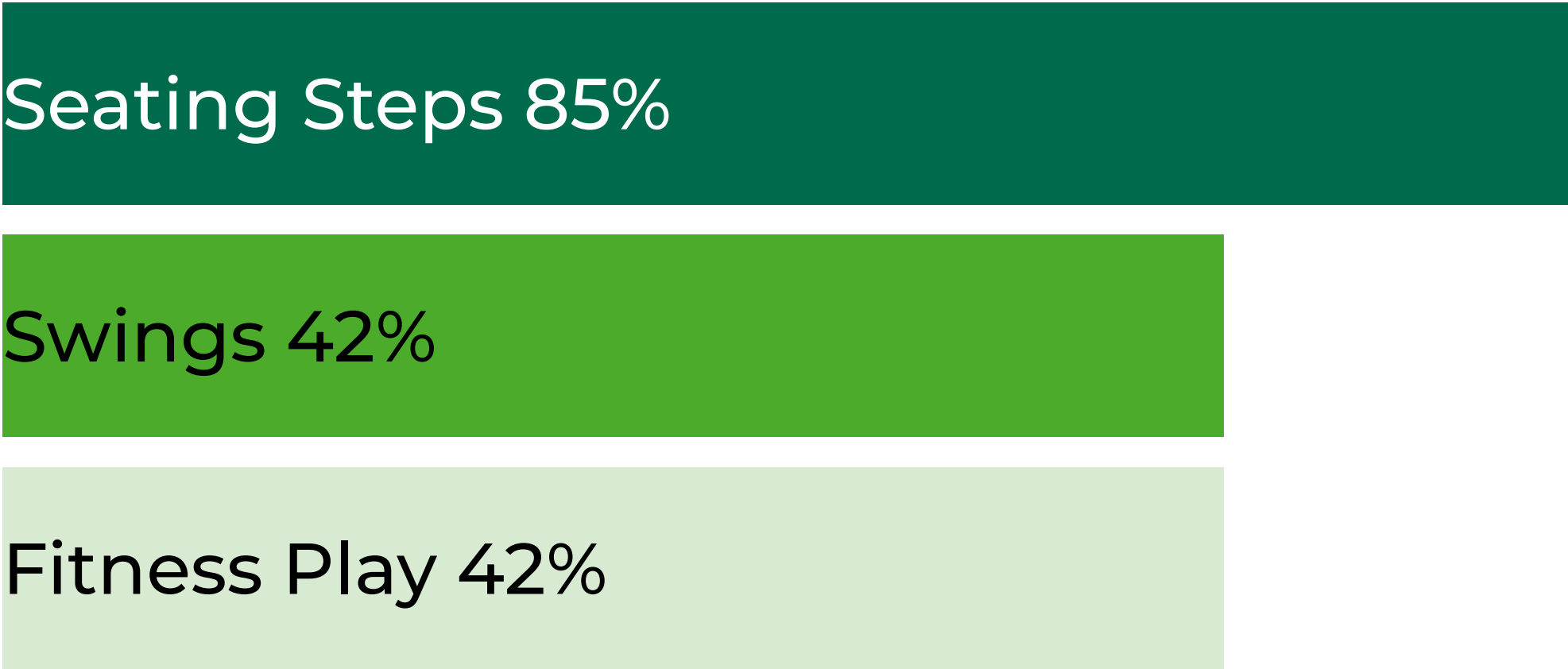


# Data/Findings about survey question 1:

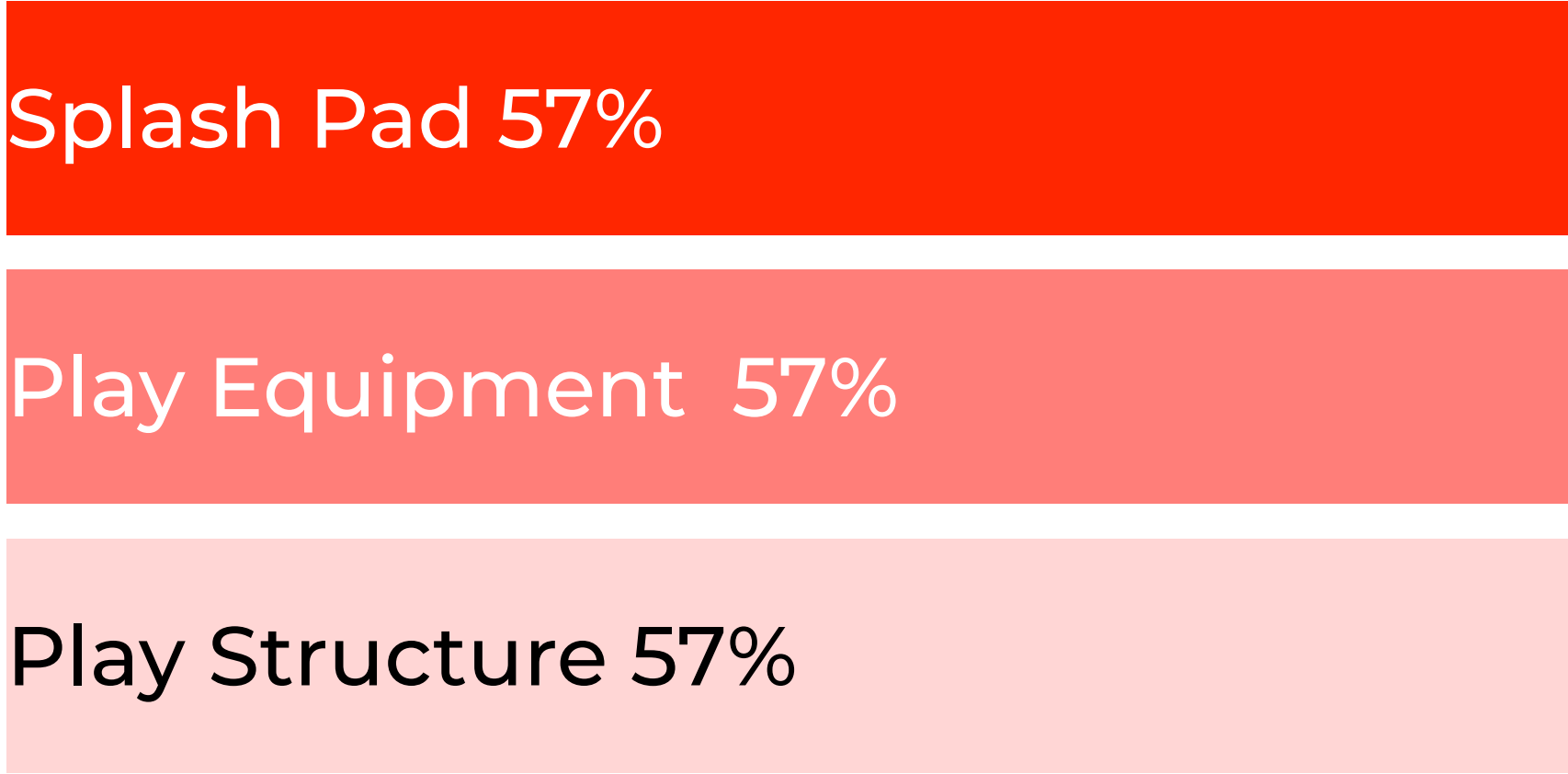
Do you use the playground?  
If yes, when?



Of the outdoor playground activities, which are most important to you? Place **GREEN** dots on your THREE (3) most important.



Of the outdoor playground activities, which are most important to you? Place **RED** dots on your THREE (3) least important.





# Data/Findings about survey question 2:

What do you like about your playground?

QUESTION 2: What do you like about your playground?	Number of Student respondents	%
n/a	1	14
swing	2	28
I have good memories there	3	42
It's you enough for children 4 8	1	14
the area	1	14



# Data/Findings about survey question 3:

What do you dislike about your playground?

QUESTION 3: What do you dislike about your playground?	Number of Student respondents	%
a limited of activities	3	42
It's not that big for lots or children	1	14
It's old and dirty	1	14
Its broken	1	14



# Data/Findings about survey question 4:

What would you do to make the playground better at your school?

QUESTION 4: What would you do to make the playground better at your school?	Number of Student respondents	%
Cleaner, less broken	3	42
More things for kids to do, like basketball, and etc.	2	28
If actually had one	1	14
more access and safe options for the eternity	1	14



Data/Findings about  
 survey question 5:  
 What is your design solution to  
 make the playground better for our  
 community?

QUESTION 5: What is your design solution to make the playground better for our community?	Number of Student respon den ts	%
Keep clean, make a design	3	42
Adding more grounds	3	42
I am not sure	1	14

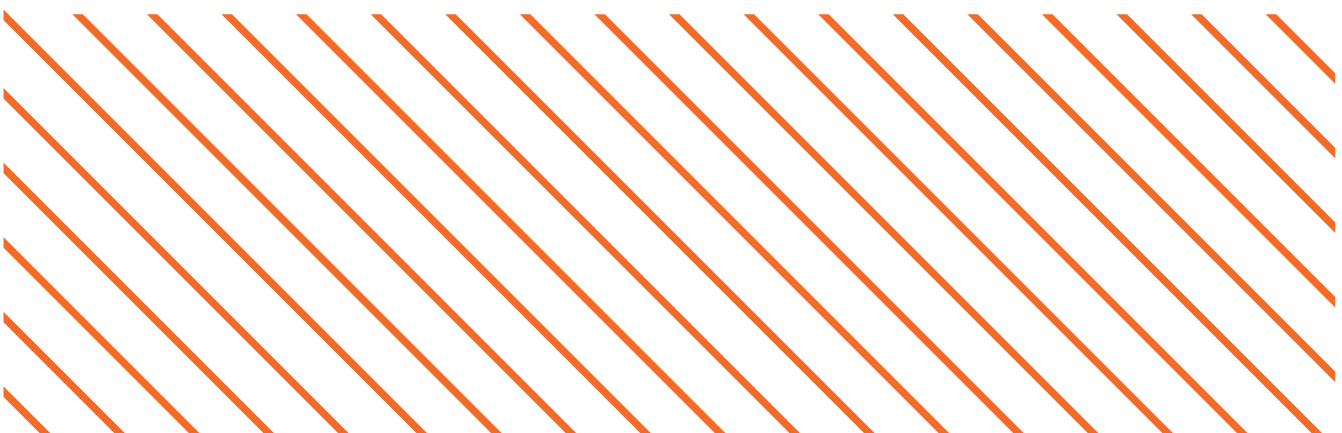




# Insights from young adult participants at the Cudell Recreational Center



The Cudell Neighborhood Project is a collaborative community initiative focused on designing an engaging and functional playground and park space through a phased process of outreach, input, and design refinement.





# Insights from Rec Center Teen Table Visitors

**Activity and Outcomes:**  
Attended full workshop,  
completed the worksheet  
survey with the dot  
exercise, and designed  
prototypes of their solution

**Demographic  
Student Data:**  
38 of participants

**Gender**  
Female 7  
Male 24  
Prefer not to say 7

**Race/Ethnicity**  
Black/African American 18  
Hispanic/Latinx 8  
Prefer not to say 5  
White/Caucasian 3  
Biracial/Multiracial 1

**A problem they  
recognized:**  
Old and broken equipment,  
limited activities, unsafe areas,  
and updates they disliked.



**Top three things the students loved  
about their playground:**  
  
It has a swing, slide, monkey bars, and a  
lot of area

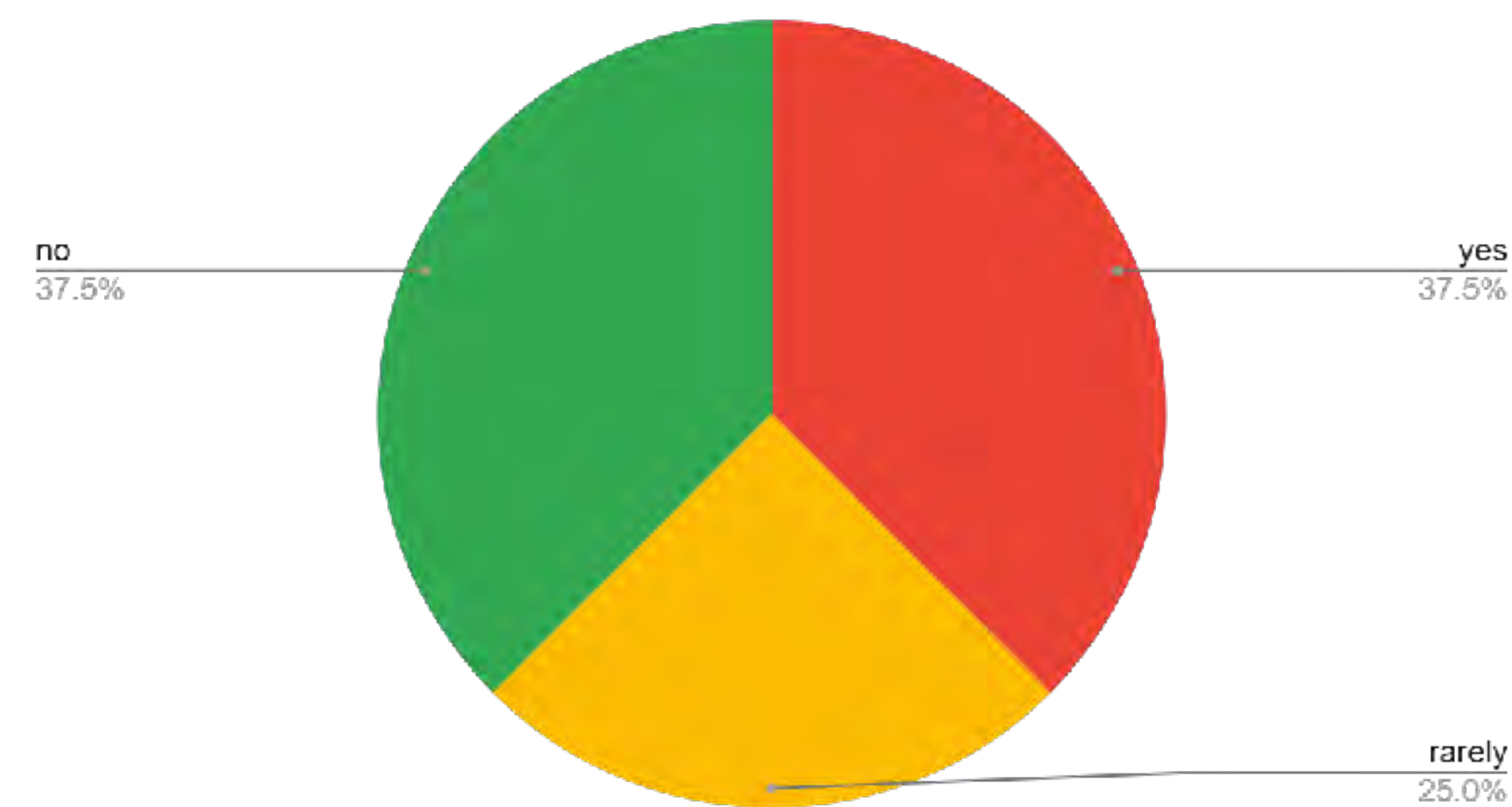


Presented By



# Data/Findings about survey question 1:

Do you use the playground?  
 If yes, when?



Of the outdoor playground activities, which are most important to you? Place **GREEN** dots on your THREE (3) most important.

Swings 65%

Shade Area 47%

Splash Pad 42%

Of the outdoor playground activities, which are most important to you? Place **RED** dots on your THREE (3) least important.

Play Structure 55%

Seating Steps 52%

Fitness Play 44%



Data/Findings about  
 survey question 2:

What do you like about  
 your playground?

QUESTION 2: What do you like about your playground?	Number of student replies	%
fun	4	10
swing	11	28
nothing	2	5
I have good memories there	2	5
It's you enough for children 4 8	3	7
it has a slide, monkey bars, and a lot of area	6	15



Data/Findings about  
 survey question 3:

What do you dislike about  
 your playground?

QUESTION 3: What do you dislike about your playground?	Number of Student respondents	%
old and broken	9	23
nothing	6	15
no answer	6	15
a limited of activities	4	10
basketball court	2	5
playground	2	5
seating seat	1	2
color	1	2
Drama	1	2
garden	1	2
hot floor	1	2
I dislike the updates	1	2
Monkey	1	2
the gate	1	2



Data/Findings about  
 survey question 4:

What would you do to make  
 the playground better at  
 your school?

QUESTION 4: What would you do to make the playground better at your school?	Number of Student respondents	%
no answer	9	23
basketball court	6	15
add more products	5	13
clean it up	4	10
bigger	4	10
pick up trash	3	7
I dont have one	3	7
make money	1	2
more access and safe options for the eternity	1	2
move it more enjoyable	1	2
N/A	1	2



Data/Findings about survey question 5:  
  
 What is your design solution to make the playground better for our community?

QUESTION 5: What is your design solution to make the playground better for our community?	Number of Student respondents	%
To add activities for all ages	8	21
Keep clean, make a design	5	13
no answer	11	11
Adding more grounds	4	10
more safer	3	7
nothing	3	7
Basketball stuff	2	5
flower	1	2
gates	1	2



## Conclusions:

# Youth Engagement Activities

- Our youth engagement activities open the door for students to connect and explore their playground area. These activities also allowed school students and community youth to voice their admiration and desire for a cleaner, safer, and more modern playground space. Their feedback shows just how much the playground matters, and highlights the importance of creating a space that is fun, feels safe, inviting, and truly theirs
- **NOTE:** Video clips are available for viewing.

1

Although, the fourth and fifth graders were very fond of the playground, indicating their favorite things were the swings, they did see a need for improvement.

2

Many of the sixth, seventh and eighth graders, used the playground as young students, and now they use it in a more “social” way (ie., hanging out not playing).

3

As long time users of the playground the sixth, seventh and eighth graders, see the structural and aesthetic issues and want the playground rebuilt.

4

The young adults surveyed in the rec center community stated their need for a multi-purposed space for still being able to have fun and hanging out with friends.

5

The responses show the playground is more than recreation for young adults; it's a vital community hub where fun, fitness, safety, friends, and belonging intersect.





# Contact us for additional information on our youth engagement activities.

We are here to answer any questions you have.

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