

Leisure activities and leisure needs of children with disabilities (and their parents)



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Who?

- **Children** with disabilities (6-12 years) and their **Parents** - Brussels Capital Region.
 - mild, moderate to severe intellectual disability
 - serious emotional or behavioral problems
 - motor disability
 - visual and hearing impairments
 - speech, language and severe learning disabilities.
 - autism spectrum disorders
 - multiple disabilities
- Research funded by **Flemish Community Council** (dutch speaking government services)

Research questions

- How do children participate to (organized) leisure activities? (state subsidized)
- Is there demand for an expansion of (state subsidised) organised leisure activities ?
- What are barriers to participation and what are possible answers?

Leisure categories

Sports

Games (e.g. in group, organised, not videogames)

Cultural activity (e.g. concert)

Education (e.g. music education)

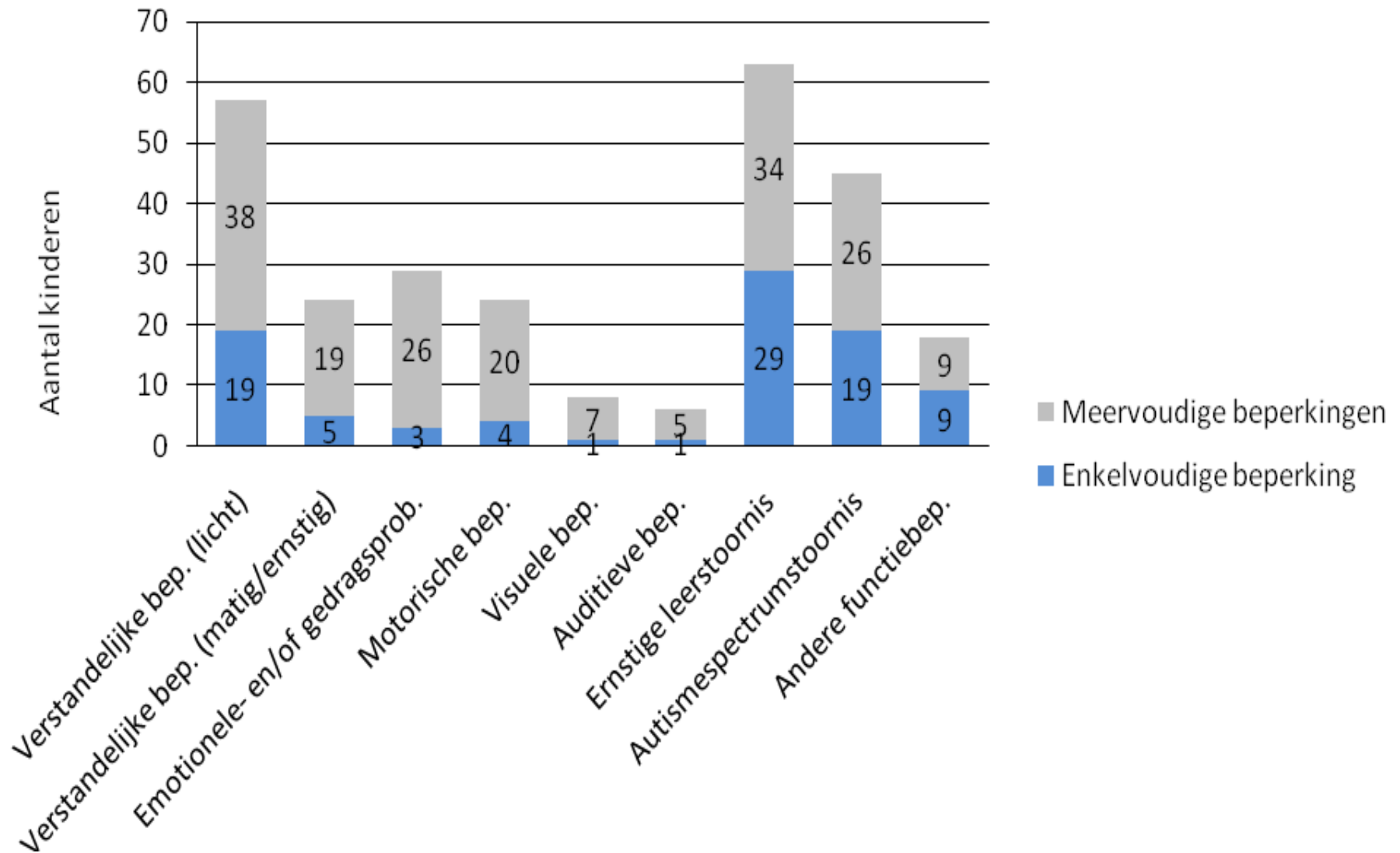
Method

- 7 focus groups (3 with parents, 4 with children)
- 800 questionnaires distributed to parents and children

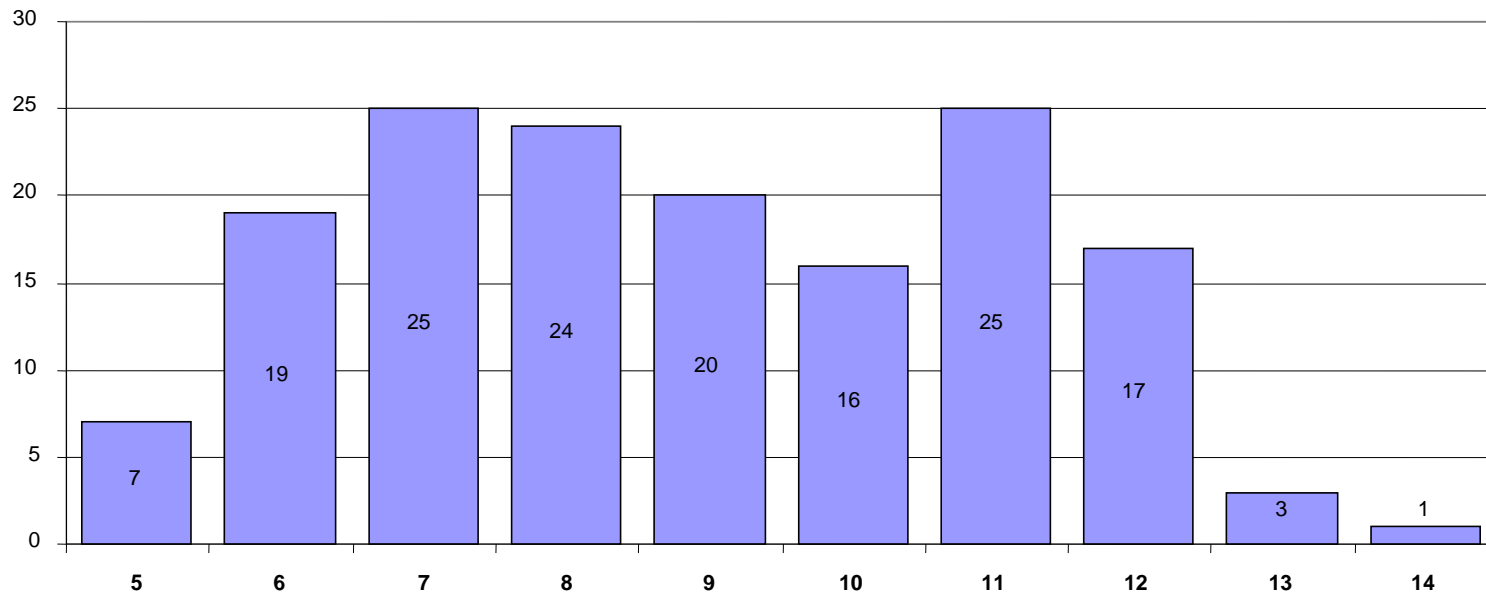
Questionnaire

- Prepared from input
 - Focus groups
 - Theoretical framework
- On paper and online (SurveyMonkey), Dutch and French versions
- 800 questionnaires distributed
- Respons :
 - Total: 165 (21%)
 - NL : 126 (76%) en FR : 39 (24%)
 - Involved children: 77%

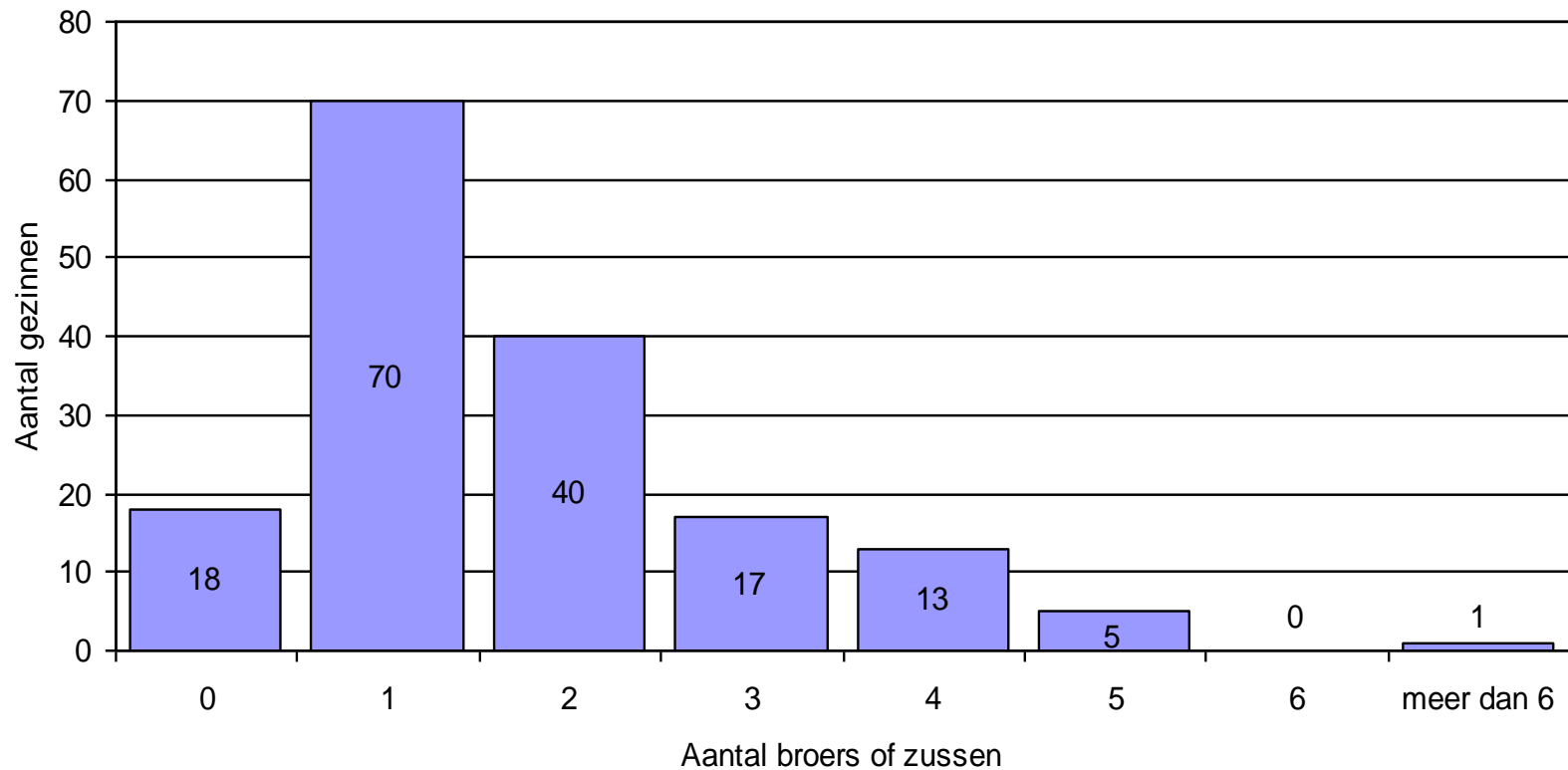
Sample: type of disability



Sample: age children

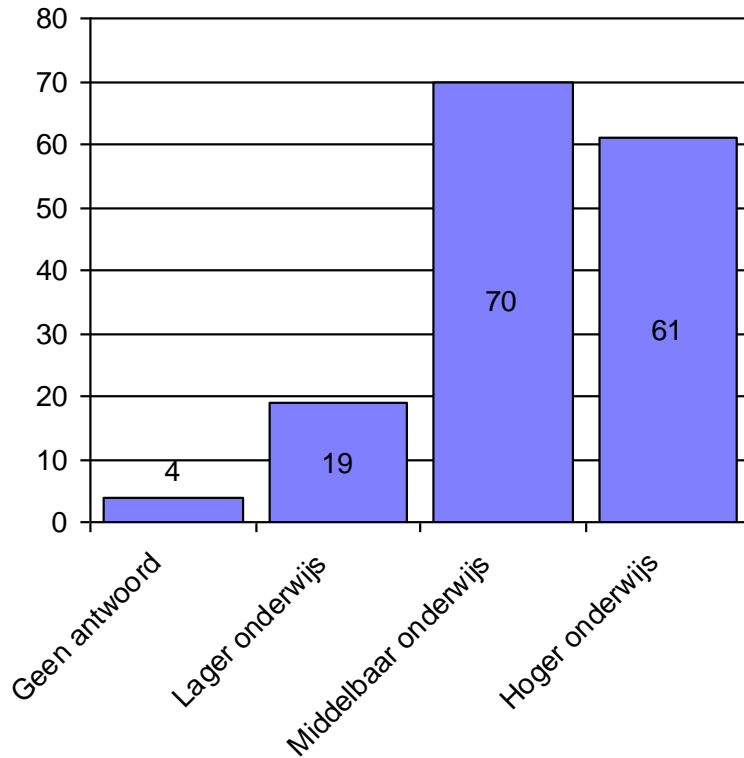


Family of children: number of brothers/sisters

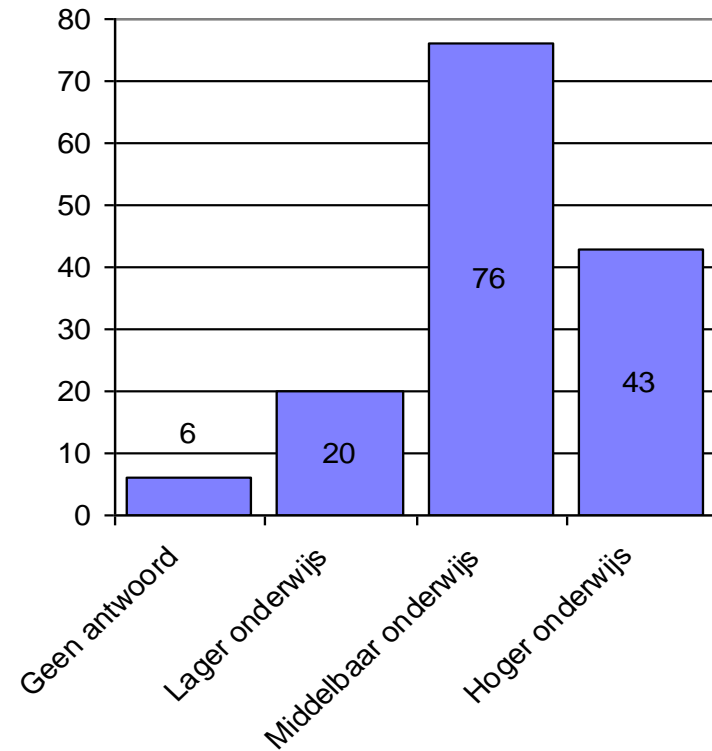


Sample: education level parents

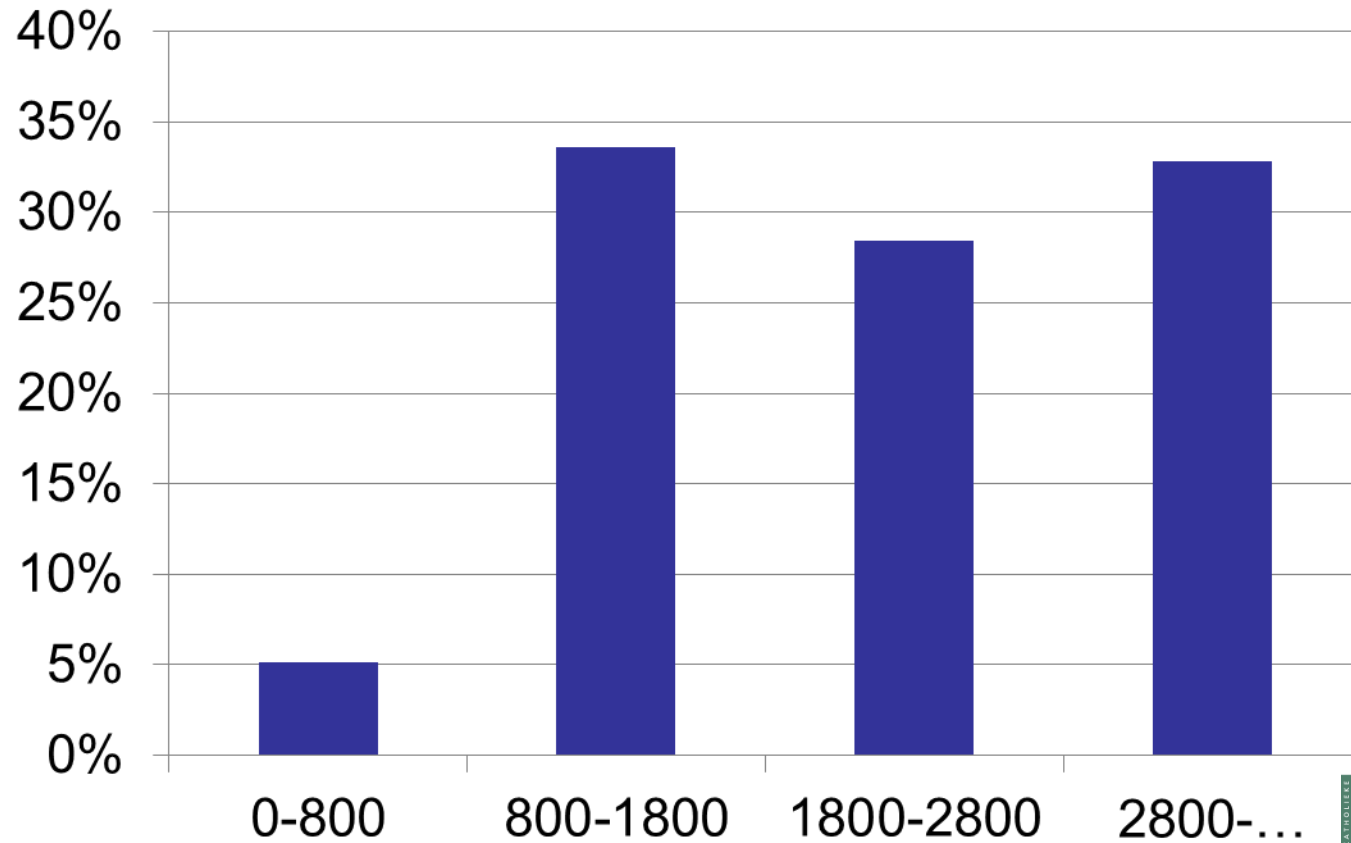
Diploma moeder



Diploma vader



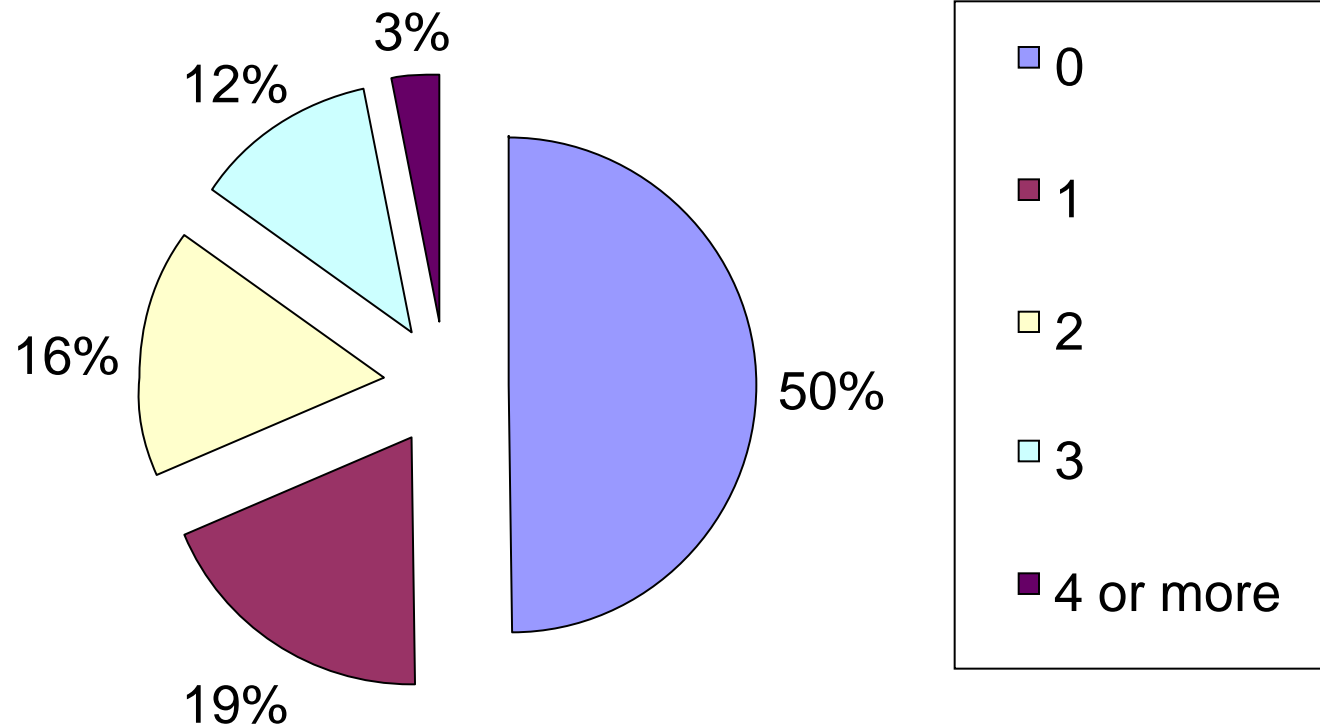
Family income (euro)





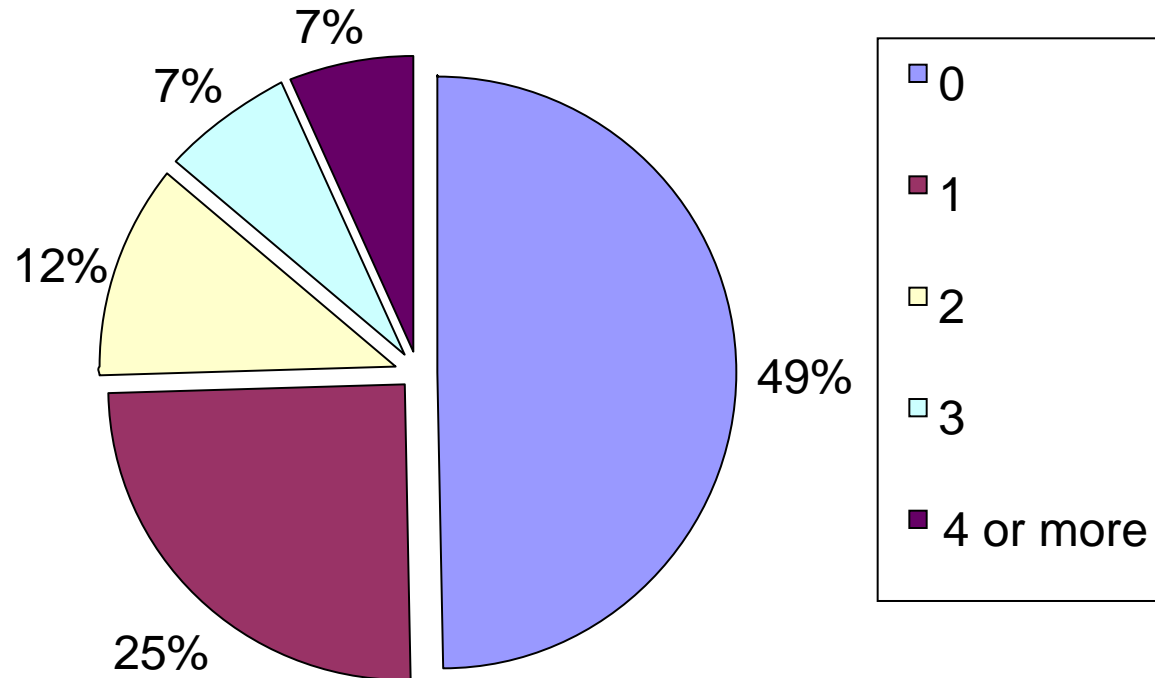
Current leisure activities

Number of activities during schoolyear



- Time: 1h to 1h15m per week, 1,5h additional demand
- Especially youth work (15%) and swimming (19%)
- Especially inclusive organizations, parents want more specific activities for their children with disabilities

Number of activities - during holidays



- Time: 11 days, demand for 10 days extra
- Especially playgrounds (31%)
- Especially regular organizations (“inclusion”)

(lack of) participation and needs

Leisure activity	No participation	Need specific activities	Need for inclusion
	93%		20%
Youth Association	82%		18%
Drawing school	96%		20%
Dance school	95%		19%
Music School	94%		21%
Theater Club	99%		24%
Film Workshop	100%		27%
Music club	100%		23%
Creative workshop	97%		18%
Swim Club	84%		8%
Dance club	98%		23%
Gym club or athletic club	95%		14%
Football Club	94%		23%
Club for combat sports	96%		25%
Something else	92%		

Preconditions - thresholds

- Social: feel good, not being different
- Must be fun
- Good assistance/support
- Cost, transportation, duration, nature of the activity ('fit')
- Too difficult, inaccessible
- Insufficient confidence in assistant
- Social: teasing, laughing, not being able to understand

Lack of appropriate assistance

- *" I always asked whether the three of them could be appointed to the same (play)group, two children with hearing loss and their brother without such hearing impairment, so they could help each other in terms of interpreting and stuff. "*

Accessibility

- *L: well, if you go to a camp where not much is adapted (to our disability) ... then it's difficult.*
- *M: Well, for instance if you go to a camp in the woods or something. Then there's holes (in the ground), roots, so you cannot pass or something. So for those hiking in the woods or something. It is fun to do, but if you cannot go along...*

Financial concerns

“We have to be able to pay for it, don't we?
A camp costs 299 euro for one week, I
have to work a week to pay for that .”

Inequal chances

- Depending on the subregion in Brussel en type of special education: bv. more financial problems and lack of information in families with children with learning disabilities (language barriers, Arabic/Maghreb immigrants, mild intellectual disability and behavioral problems)
- 38% of sample thinks leisure activities are too expensive
- 60% of low income families thinks leisure activities are too expensive

Recommendations

- Clear demand for a wider range of accessible activities. BOTH
 - More inclusion in regular activities
 - More specialized activities
- Location: easily accessible places in Brussels
- Formation of the assistants
- More information and more assistance in planning leisure time

Recommendations

- Information:
 - More proactive: Avoid that parents have to look hard and long
 - More integrated: too often scattered about in brochures, websites, etc.
 - User perspective: too often from the perspective of the organization: "What do we offer?"