

Children's Activities on Saturdays: A Preliminary Report

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Introduction

This research describes what children in the Phoenix metropolitan area did on Saturdays during the school year. In particular we look at what they did outside the home. This report presents data on what children did, what types of children did what kinds of activities, and who provided the services. The data were collected between October 2003 and February 2004 from 1,036 households in the Phoenix metropolitan area which had children between the ages of 5 and 12. Upon calling a household, we randomly selected a child and interviewed a parent (or another adult who had knowledge of the child's activities) about what the child did the previous Saturday. Interviews were suspended during the holiday season and began again after the holidays.

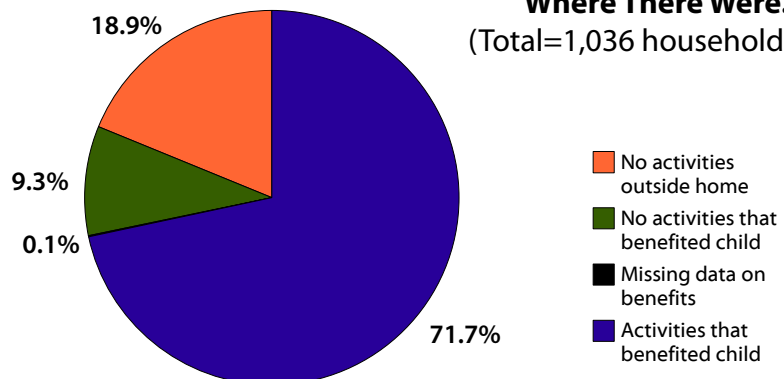
28.2% of children had no activities outside the home that benefited them.

Who Did Activities? Who Did Not?

Not all children participated in activities outside the home. In **Figure 1** we see that of the 1,036 children surveyed, 196 (18.9%) had no reported activities outside the home. Of those who did activities outside the home, we asked if the child participated in an activity which benefited the

child, an adult only, or the child and an adult. Of the 840 children who had activities outside of the home, 96 (11.4% or 9.3% of total) participated in activities that benefited only an adult and 1 case had missing data (0.1%). Doing a multivariate analysis we compared the children who participated in activities which benefited them to the children who participated in activities which benefited only an adult or who had not participated in activities outside the home. Those who had no activities outside the home or no activities that benefited the child tended to be Hispanic or with less income. Females were as likely as males to have activities that benefited them, and other non-Hispanic

Figure 1: Number of Households Where There Were...
(Total=1,036 households)



minorities were as likely as non-Hispanic whites to have activities that benefited them.

What Did Children Do?

Figure 2 shows what the 840 children did. On average, these children participated in 1.5 activities on Saturdays for a total of 1,256 activities. We included activities that were both organized and unorganized. The coding of activities is in the Appendix. Socializing (visiting, partying, sleepover, etc.) was the most frequently cited activity, followed by shopping/personal services, eating, playing, team sports (football, soccer, baseball, etc.), individual sports (tennis, golfing, biking, skating, horseback riding, etc.), spectator events (movies, rodeos, parades, sporting events, etc.), developmental activities (including religious, educational activities, arts/performances,

and hobbies/games), and miscellaneous (helping an adult, traveling, animal care, etc.). We were unable to code three activities.

Who Did What?

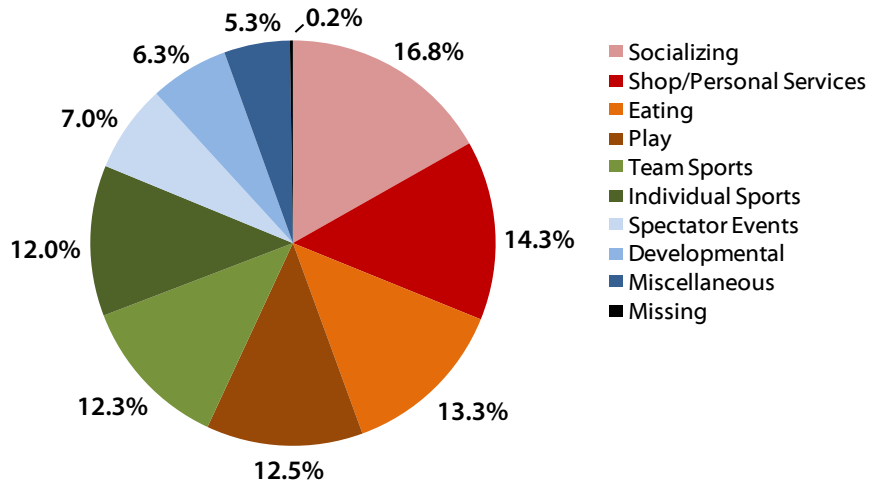
We next correlated the child's gender, race/ethnicity, and household income with these 1,256 activities.

Male and higher income children were more likely to play team sports on Saturdays.

Figure 3 presents our results. 16% of boys' activities were team sports as compared to 8% of girls' activities. In contrast, 8% of girls' activities were developmental in nature compared to 5% of boys' activities, and 9% of girls' activities were spectator events compared to 6% of boys activities. These three differences were statistically significant even when we controlled for the child's race/ethnicity and household income. No other differences

were statistically significant in the multivariate analysis.

Figure 2: Types of Activities that Children Participated In (Total=1,256 activities)



were statistically significant in the multivariate analysis.

Figure 4 shows the breakdown by race and ethnicity. Non-Hispanic whites were more likely to be engaged in individual sports (15%) than Hispanics (7%) and non-Hispanic minorities (7%), however, there was no statistically significant difference across groups with respect to team sports once we control for income and gender. Hispanics

were more likely to go out and eat (16%) than whites (12%) and non-Hispanic minorities (9%) and less likely to attend spectator events (4%) than whites (8%) and non-Hispanics minorities (10%). Non-Hispanic minorities were more likely to shop or purchase personal services (21%) than whites (14%) and Hispanics (14%). All these differences persisted when we controlled for income and the child's gender.

Figure 3: Percent of Activities that Boys and Girls Participated In (Total=1,247 activities)

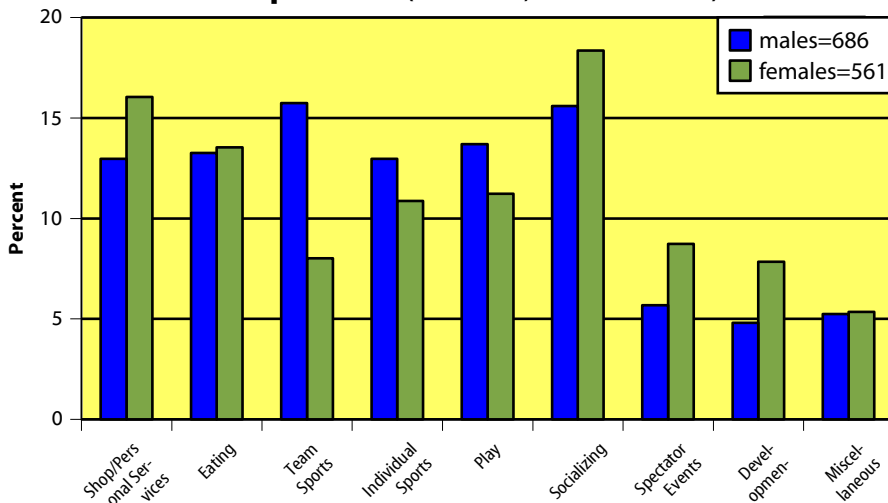


Figure 5 presents the breakdown by household income. The major differences are between children from families that earned less than \$60,000 a year and those that earned more. Children from more affluent families were more likely to engage in team sports, while those from less affluent families were more likely to engage in play. In a multivariate analysis which controlled for the child's race/ethnicity and gender, these income effects remained significant. Figure 5 shows that low income children were less likely to be involved in individual sports and spectator events, but

Figure 4: Percent of Activities that Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Children Participated In
(Total=1,235 activities)

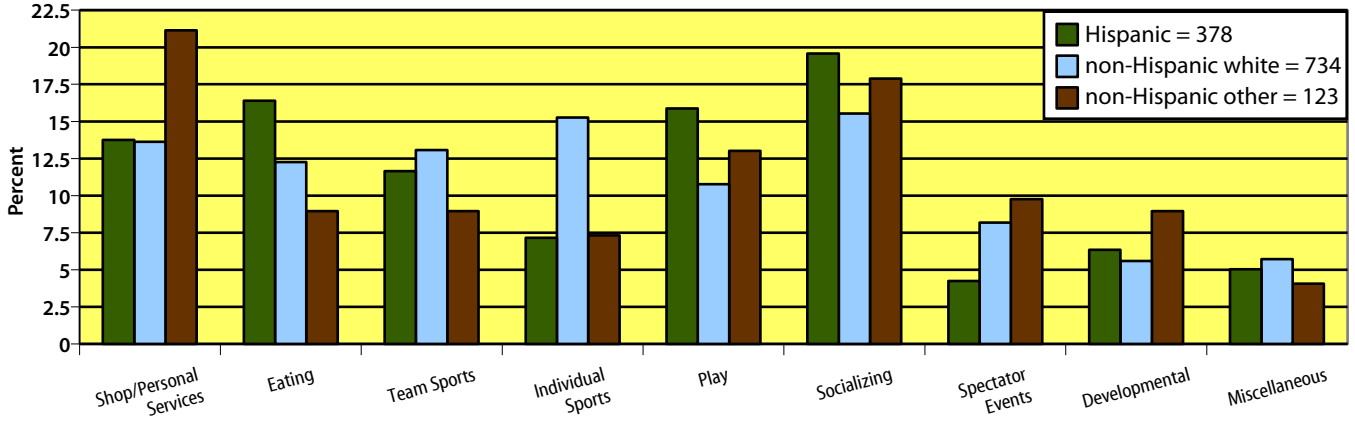
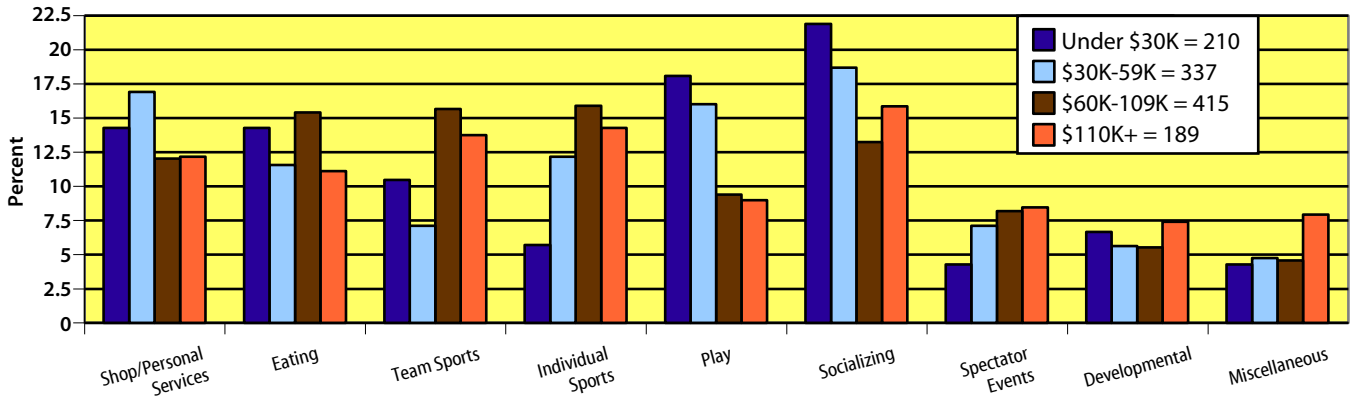


Figure 5: Percent of Activities that Low, Middle, and Upper Income Children Participated In
(Total=1,151 activities)



these effects were weaker once we controlled for race/ethnicity and gender.

In sum, we find that different population segments engaged in different activities on Saturday. Males and children from families making more than \$60,000 a year participated more in team sports than females or children from less wealthy families. Whites participated more in individual sports than non-whites. Girls were more likely to do developmental activities than boys. Girls and non-Hispanics were more likely to attend spectator events than boys and Hispanics. Hispanics went out to eat more than non-Hispanics. Non-Hispanic

minorities were more likely to shop or purchase personal services than non-Hispanic whites or Hispanics. Finally, children from lower income families were more likely than children from upper income families to engage in play activities. Socializing with others and miscellaneous activities were activities which all groups were equally likely to do.

Who Provided the Services?

There were many different kinds of service-providers which families used. **Figure 6** gives a breakdown of these providers. The most common providers were businesses (e.g., food and retail establishments), followed

by households (other than the respondent's), government agencies (e.g., parks), nonprofits (e.g., sports clubs, scouts, YMCA's), and churches. Children also did activities in the street or desert (e.g., bike riding, hiking, etc.). Most of the missing data were for miscellaneous activities (things that happened outside the metro area or the child did work for an adult).

Figure 7 (page 5) presents the correspondence between service

Boys, girls, whites, nonwhites, lower, middle, and upper income children all socialized on Saturday.

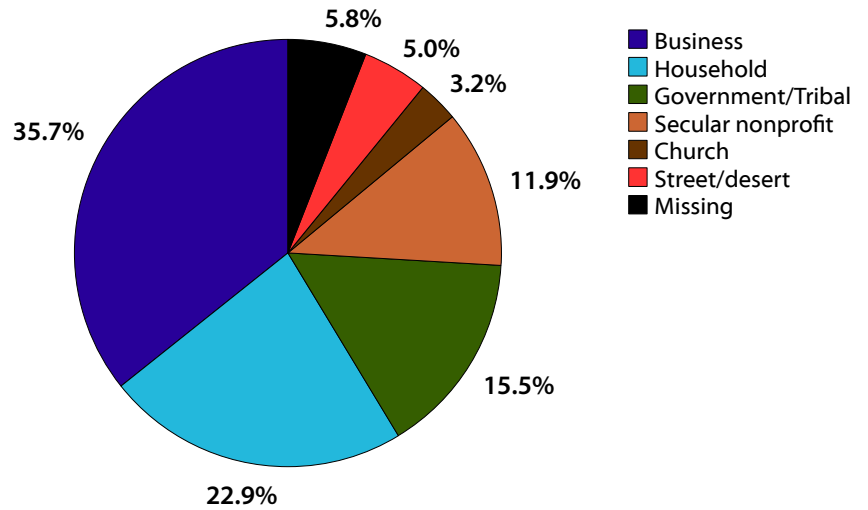
provided and type of provider. As we might expect, businesses provided shopping/personal services, eating, spectator events (mostly movies), and individual sports (e.g., gymnastics, karate, go-karting). Households provided a venue for socializing and playing. Government agencies, mostly parks, provided a range of activities. They were, by far, the most diversified provider. Children played informally, did team and individual sports, had developmental activities and attended spectator events. Nonprofits provided mostly opportunities for team sports but

At least one Saturday activity crossed social boundaries and was common to all children.

also provided developmental activities and hosted spectator events. Children engaged in individual sports (bike riding, hiking) and played in the street/desert. Churches provided primarily developmental activities (mostly religious services and instruction). Individual sports and developmental activities were the most competitive domains, while the other domains were dominated by one or two types of providers.

Figure 8 (page 6) combines information on the child and the provider. To simplify the chart we only present data on race/ethnicity and income. The X-axis represents the children's characteristics, e.g., Hispanic, and the Y-axis is the percent of those children's activities that were provided by each of the six venues. Thus 4.5% of Hispanics' Saturday activities were provided by churches, 3% took place in the

Figure 6: Types of Providers Used by Children
(Total=1,256 activities)



desert, 9% by nonprofits, 21.4% by government agencies, etc.

We see that nonwhites were more likely to use churches than whites, but only the difference between Hispanics and whites was statistically significant after we controlled for income and gender. Whites were more likely to use the street/desert for recreation than Hispanics. This effect was also statistically significant after we entered controls. Whites and upper income families were more likely to use nonprofits than nonwhites and poorer families, but only the income effect held up once we introduced controls. Hispanics were more likely to use government providers than non-Hispanics, and lower income families were more likely to use government providers than wealthier families. These effects also held true when we introduced controls. All groups tended to use household and business providers equally once we introduced controls.

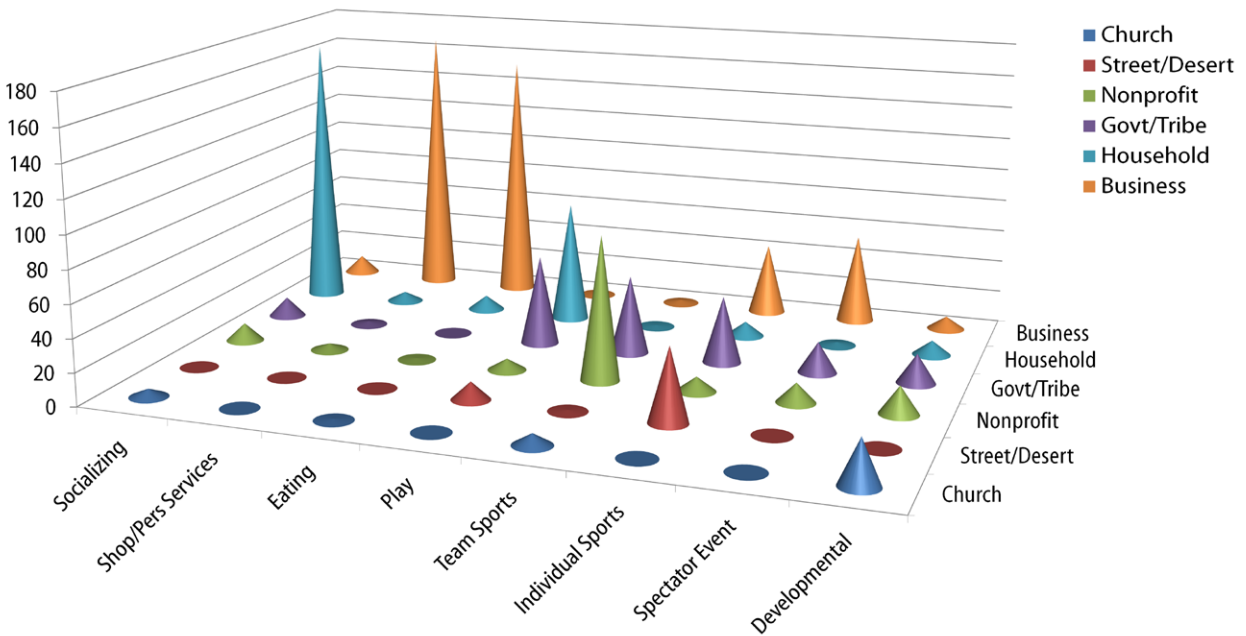
Conclusion

This report gave an overview of the activities that children engaged in on Saturdays during the school year in the Phoenix metropolitan area. To summarize our findings, first, a significant percentage of children had no activities outside of the household that benefited them on Saturday. These children tended to be Hispanic or low income.

Second, there were differences in what boys and girls did. Boys were more likely to do team sports, and girls were more likely to do developmental activities and attend spectator events.

Third, whites were more likely to participate in individual sports on Saturday than Hispanics or non-Hispanic minorities. Hispanics were more likely to go out and eat but less likely to attend spectator events than non-Hispanics. Other minorities were more likely than whites and Hispanics to shop or purchase personal services.

Figure 7: Frequency of Activities Provided by Different Venues (Total=1,162 activities)



Fourth, children from more affluent families were more likely to be engaged in team sports, while those from less affluent families were more likely to be engaged in play. After we controlled for race/ethnicity and gender, other differences across income categories were not statistically significant.

Finally, we found certain market niches among providers and users and some common patterns. For example, upper income families were more likely to participate in team sports, nonprofits provided team sports for children, and wealthier

families were more likely to cite nonprofits as providers. In contrast, poor children tended to just play, play frequently took place at parks, and poor children reported higher use of governmental facilities. Whites participated in more individual sports (such as biking or hiking), individual sports frequently took place in the street or desert, and whites were more likely to cite the street or desert as a venue. All these children had recreational experiences on Saturdays, but the type of recreation and the type of provider differed greatly.

In contrast, some things

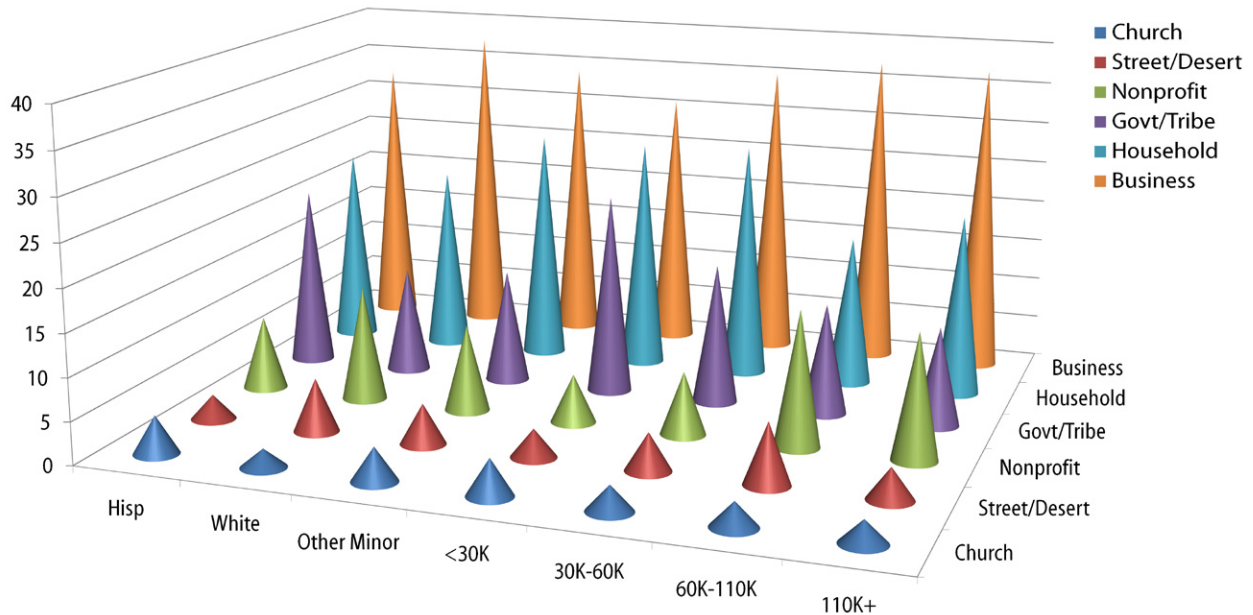
everybody did. Boys, girls, whites, nonwhites, lower, middle, and upper income children all socialized on Saturday (visits, parties, sleepovers, picnics, etc.). In fact, it was the most frequently cited activity by our respondents. Socializing took place overwhelmingly in friends', neighbors', and family members' homes, and children from different backgrounds were equally likely to mention visiting someone's home on Saturday. It seems that at least one Saturday activity crossed social boundaries and was common to all children.

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Figure 8: Percent of Children's Activities Provided by Different Venues



Appendix: Coding for the Activity Categories*

Arts/Performances

Acting
Art
Art class
Ballet class
Cheerleading
Dance class
Modeling class
Music class
Singing

Eat

Eating

Shop/Personal

Services
Getting a haircut
Going to doctor
Shopping

Educational

Ethnic schooling
Instruction
Library
School project

Visit museum
Visit science center
Visit zoo

Individual Sports/Exercise

All terrain vehicles
Archery
Bicycle riding
Boating
Bowling
Boxing
Camping
Climbing
Exercising
Fishing
Go-kart riding
Golfing
Gymnastics
Hiking
Horseback riding
Ice Skating
Karate
Kayaking
Laser tag

Motorcycle riding
Roller skating
Running
Scooter riding
Skate boarding
Swimming
Tae kwon do
Tennis
Track
Tumbling
Walking
Wrestling

Hobbies/Games

Card games
Pool
Slot car racing
Video/computer games

Play

Going to the park
(activity not de-
scribed)
Playing

Religious

Church activity
Religion class
Religious service

Social Activities

Meeting
Party
Picnic
Picture taking
Service activities
Sleepover
Social function
Visiting

Spectator Events

Air show
Boat show
Car show
Concert
Fair/festival/parade
Horse show
Movies
Rodeo
Sporting events

Team Sports

Baseball
Basketball
Hockey
Football
Soccer
Softball
T-ball
Volleyball

Miscellaneous

Help adult
Travel
Animal care
House search
Visit company
Babysitting

*This coding borrows from C.R. Edginton, S.D. Hudson, R.B. Dieser, S.R. Edginton. *Leisure Programming: A Service-Centered and Benefits Approach (4th ed.)*. New York: McGraw Hill, 2004.