

Children's Places, Children's Voices

Monday 20 June 2016
Great Hall, Belfast City Hall

Healthy Places for Children

Professor Lamine Mahdjoubi

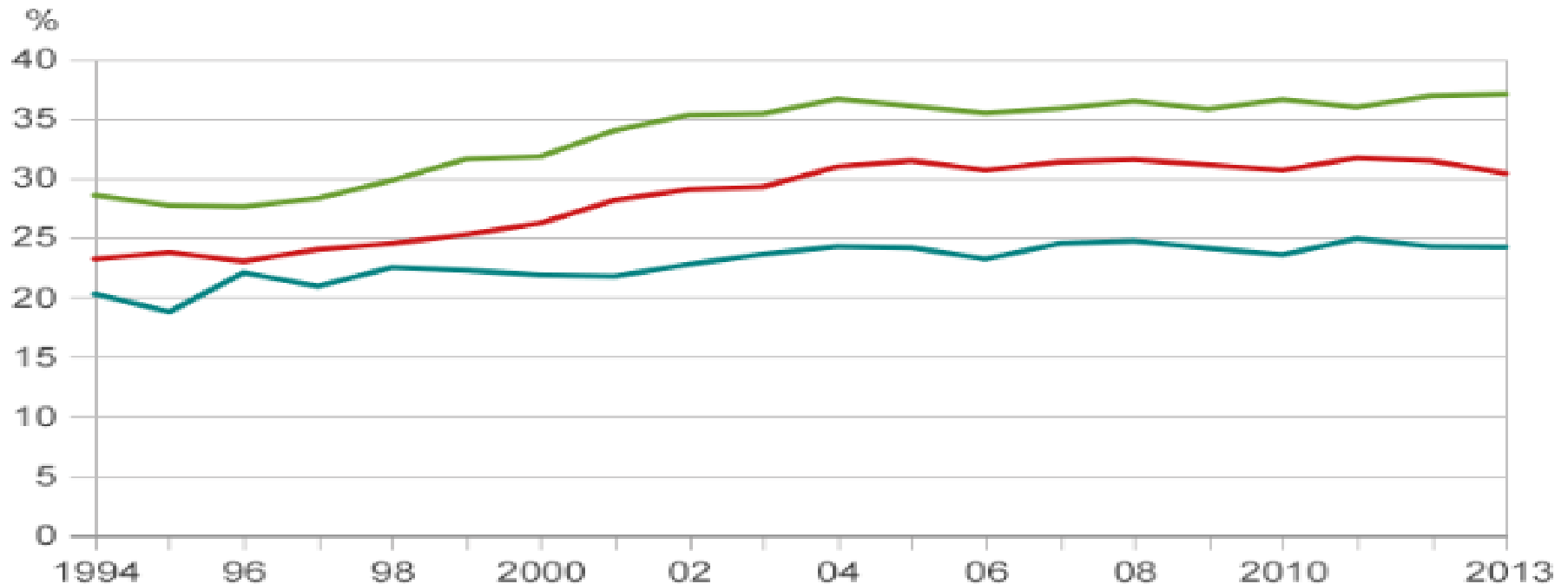
Director of Centre for Architecture and the Built Environment Research

University of the West of England, Bristol, UK



Percentage of children who are overweight, by age group

Age: — 2–5 — 6–10 — 11–15



Source: King's College London

- Childhood obesity one of most serious global public health challenges for the 21st century (Who 2014)
- 2014/15 show that a third of 10-11 year olds and over a fifth of 4-5 year olds were overweight or obese
- Loosing the fight against childhood obesity

**News Front Page**

Africa

Americas

Asia-Pacific

Europe

Middle East

South Asia

UK

England

Northern Ireland

Scotland

Wales

UK Politics

Education

Magazine

Last Updated: Monday, 7 August 2006, 13:03 GMT 14:03 UK

E-mail this to a friend

Printable version

Children 'must have outside play'

Young people face a "physical and mental illness time bomb" unless they get more chance to play outside, a conference has heard.

Professor Lamine Mahdjoubi, of the University of the West of England (UWE), said a lack of outdoor exercise caused heart problems and diabetes.

Councils must create more open spaces, he told a conference in Bristol.



Inner-city children need more playspace, it was argued

- Counteract deficiencies in children's fitness = spend longer periods of time playing outside
- More time children spent outdoors, the higher the activity level
- Outdoor play helps children to engage in higher levels of PA

NEWS

[Home](#)[UK](#)[World](#)[Business](#)[Politics](#)[Tech](#)[Science](#)[Health](#)[Education](#)[Education](#)[School Report](#)

Walk-to-school numbers falling, say campaigners

By Angela Harrison

Education correspondent, BBC News

20 May 2013

[Education & Family](#)

111

Half of parents driving their children to UK primary schools live under a mile away, walk-to-school campaigners say.



The charity Living Streets says the numbers walking to school are falling.

- Decline of children walking to school
- Half parents driving their children to school live under half a mile away



- **Friendships, and socialising** as indicators of having a **good life** (Children's Society, 2009)
- Importance of **outdoor play** including the **street**
- **Decrease in number of best friends** from around 1:5 eight to almost 1:8



- Nearly 1 in 5 children play outside for less than one hour a week (including weekends)
- Strong link between amount of time spent outdoors and the time spent on sedentary activities
- Rise in sedentary lifestyles



- Sound of children's play used to reverberate in streets

2012 over 34m of them


1960s 1.5 m cars in London
1971 19m cars in the UK

- Greatest impact on child play has been the rise of the car
- Loss of connection between home and the street
- Children have vanished from streets





- Obsession with 'Ghettoised Play'
- Uninspiring outdoor play environments losing their appeal for children

- 
- Fear of litigation
 - Diversion of resources for provision into hard and soft safety measures
 - The **cost** of playgrounds has more than **doubled**
 - **Bland design is restricting children's creativity***



RECREATIONAL CULTURE

Over 70% walk

- All ages, but particularly children and young people
- All social groups £600m for 2.5 billion visits

FITNESS CULTURE

Over 80% drive

Pre-dominantly 18 - 45

Mostly professional users

£400m for 100 million visits*

PREVALENCE OF THE RECREATIONAL CULTURE

*From *Greener Spaces, Better Places*



NEWS VIDEO PEOPLE VOICES SPORT TECH LIFE PROPERTY ARTS + ENTS TRAVEL MONEY

UK v / World v / Business v / People / Science / Environment v / Media v / Technology / Education v / Images / Obitua

News

Poor children 'prisoners' of fearful parents

Threats at playtime: Report says climate of fear breeds a stay-at-home generation which risks growing up without vital skills

GLEND A COOPER | Tuesday 22 August 1995

f SHARE t TWEET g+ SHARE reddit REDDIT in SHARE

Shares: 0

PRINT | A A A

GLEND A COOPER

Fear of a wide range of perceived dangers makes parents keep children virtual prisoners in their homes, inhibiting the development of vital language and social skills.

According to a new report from Barnado's, Playing It Safe, and investigations by BBC's Public Eye, poorer children are living the



Would a gay Peppa

- Parents control children's play in order to minimise their exposure to danger
- Children are taught to believe in a 'guarded' environment
- Detrimental effects on their social skills and health

Southmead study

- Provide an objective account of children outdoor play
- 63 primary school children (aged 6-10 years) were monitored for physical activity (accelerometers) and movement and duration (GPS)



Southmead is a northern suburb and municipality ward of Bristol, in the southwest of England

Typology of play spaces



Legend

- Informal Play Space
- Formal Play Space
- Private Play Space

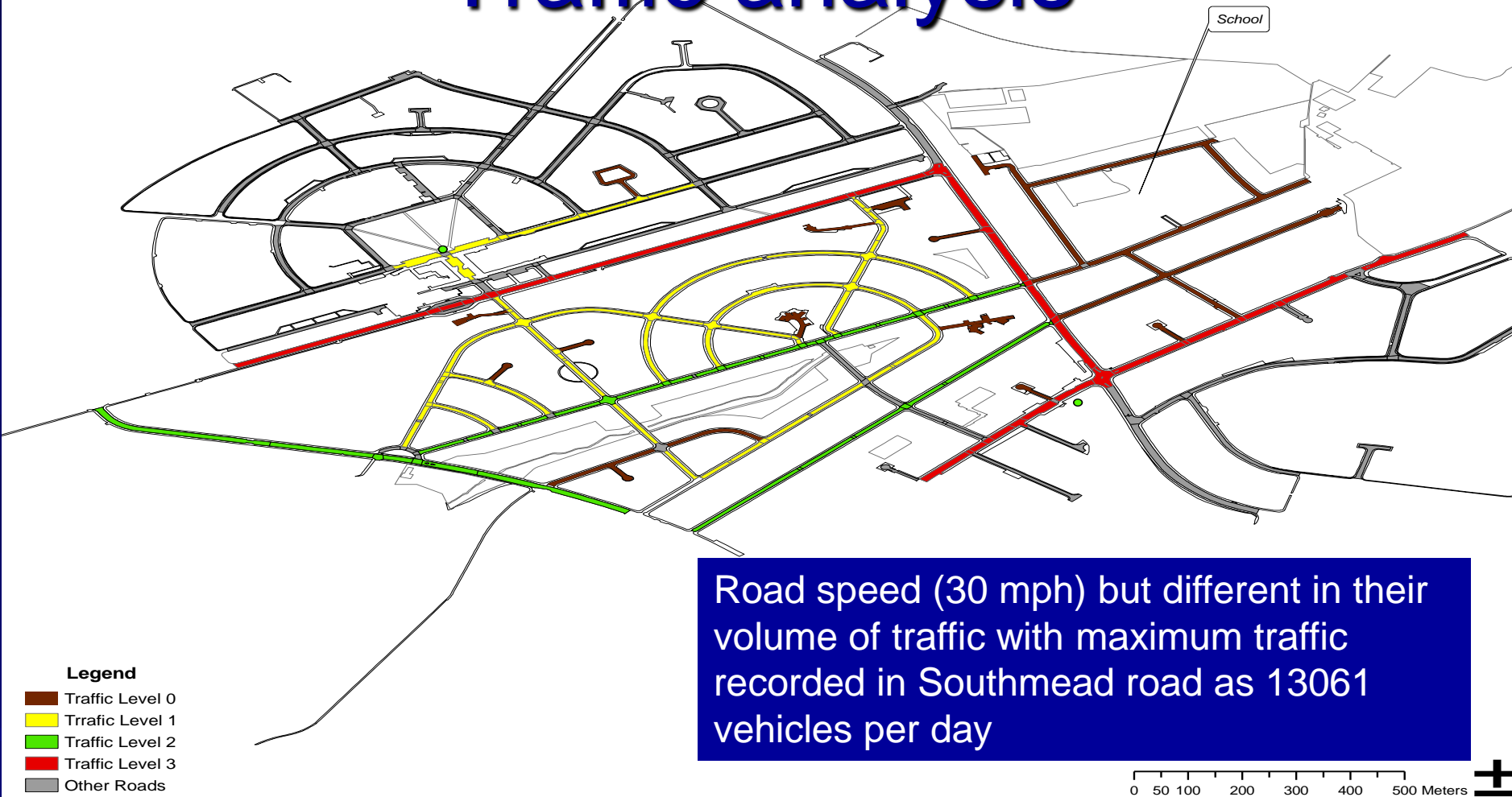
0 45 90 180 270 360 450 Meters



Formal play spaces



Traffic analysis



Road speed (30 mph) but different in their volume of traffic with maximum traffic recorded in Southmead road as 13061 vehicles per day

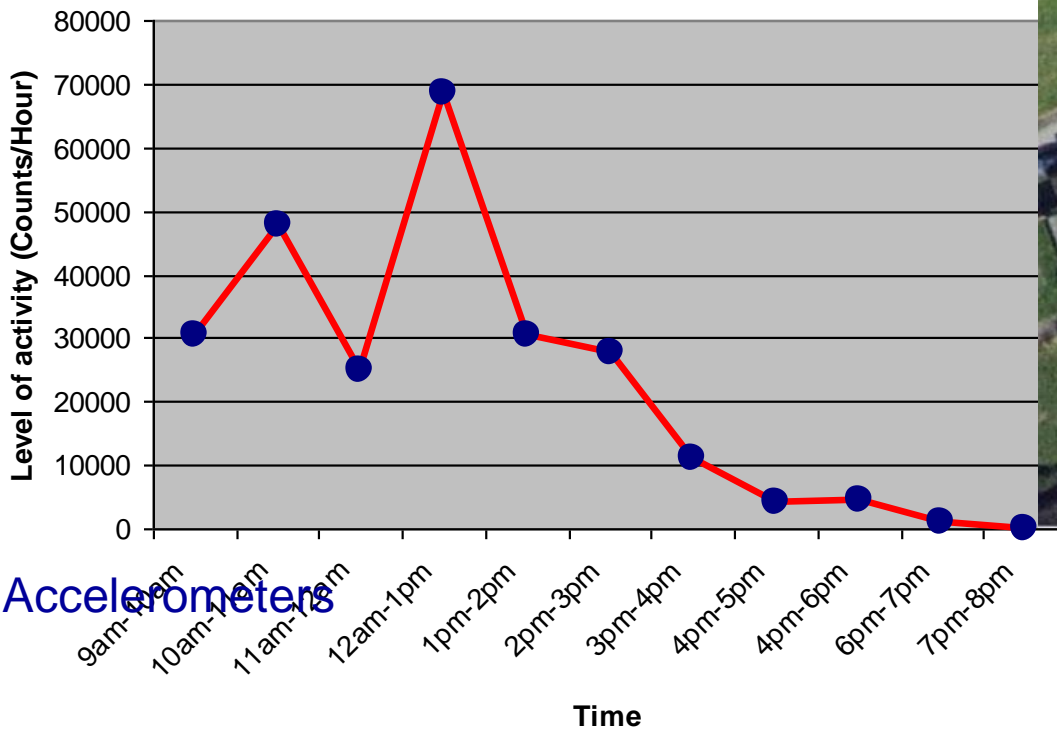
0 50 100 200 300 400 500 Meters



- Less than 500 vehicles per day (level 0)
- Between 500 to 1000 vehicles per day (level 1)
- Between 1000 to 10000 vehicles per day (level 2)
- More than 10000 vehicles per day (level 3)

Objective methods for measurement of children's play

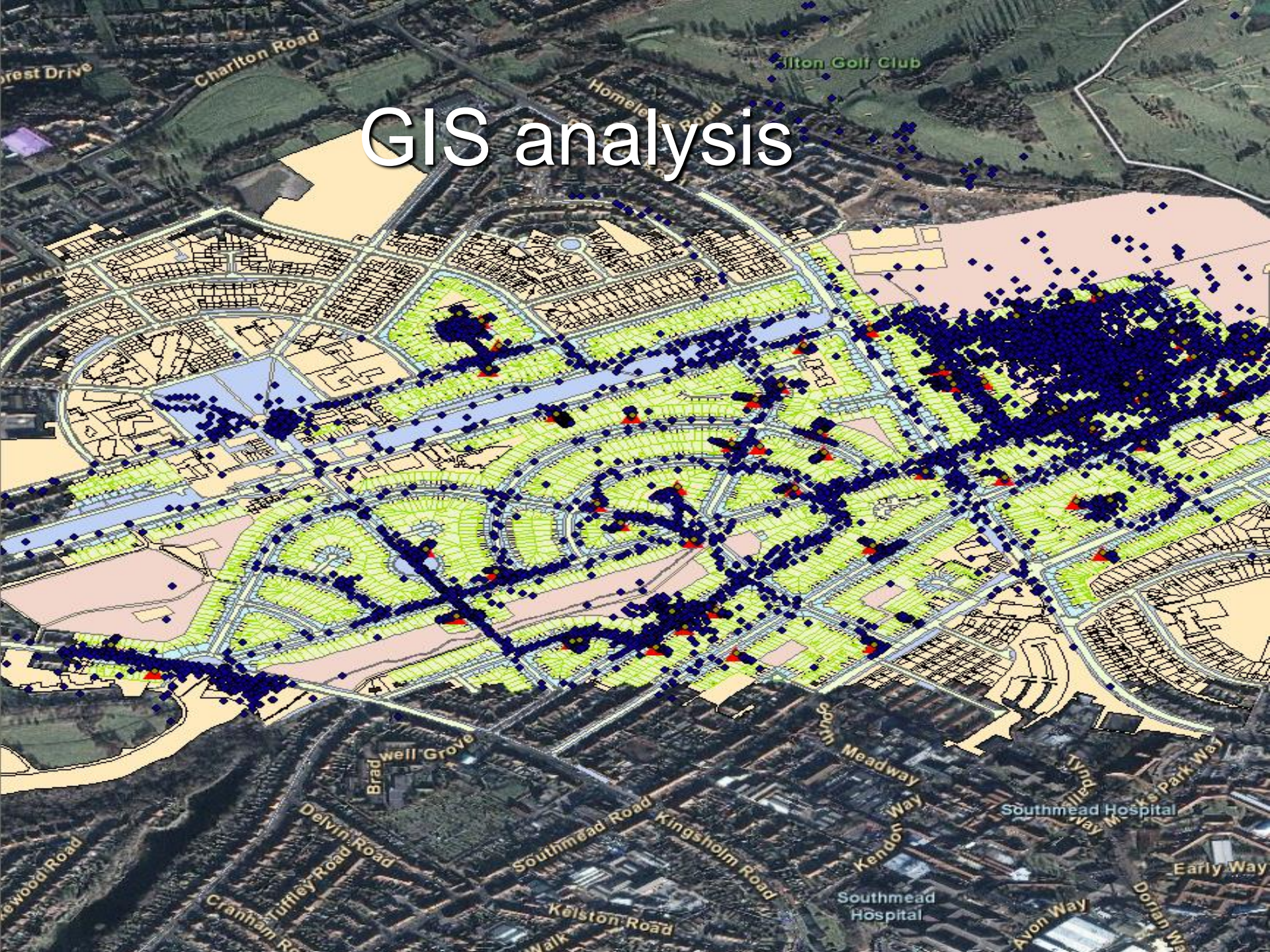
Activity Monitor (Child 1)



Accelerometers



GIS analysis



Children's Cognitive Mapping



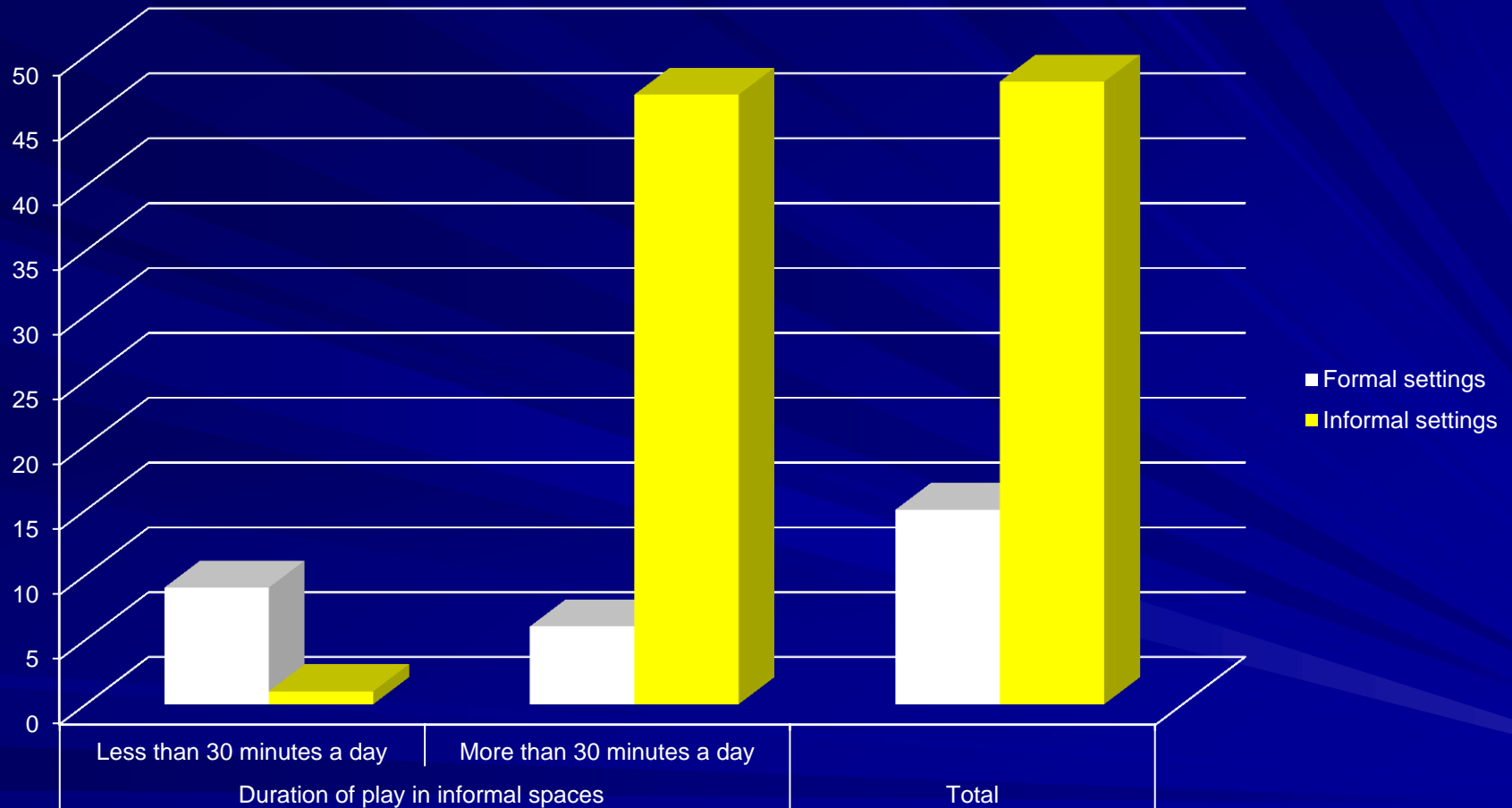
Key:
Don't Like ■
Like ■

On-site supervision

An aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood. The houses are arranged in neat rows along streets. The houses are mostly two-story buildings with brown roofs and light-colored walls. There are green lawns and trees between the houses. Several cars are parked on the streets. The overall scene is a typical suburban or urban residential area.

Number of overlooking windows of child play per 100 meters

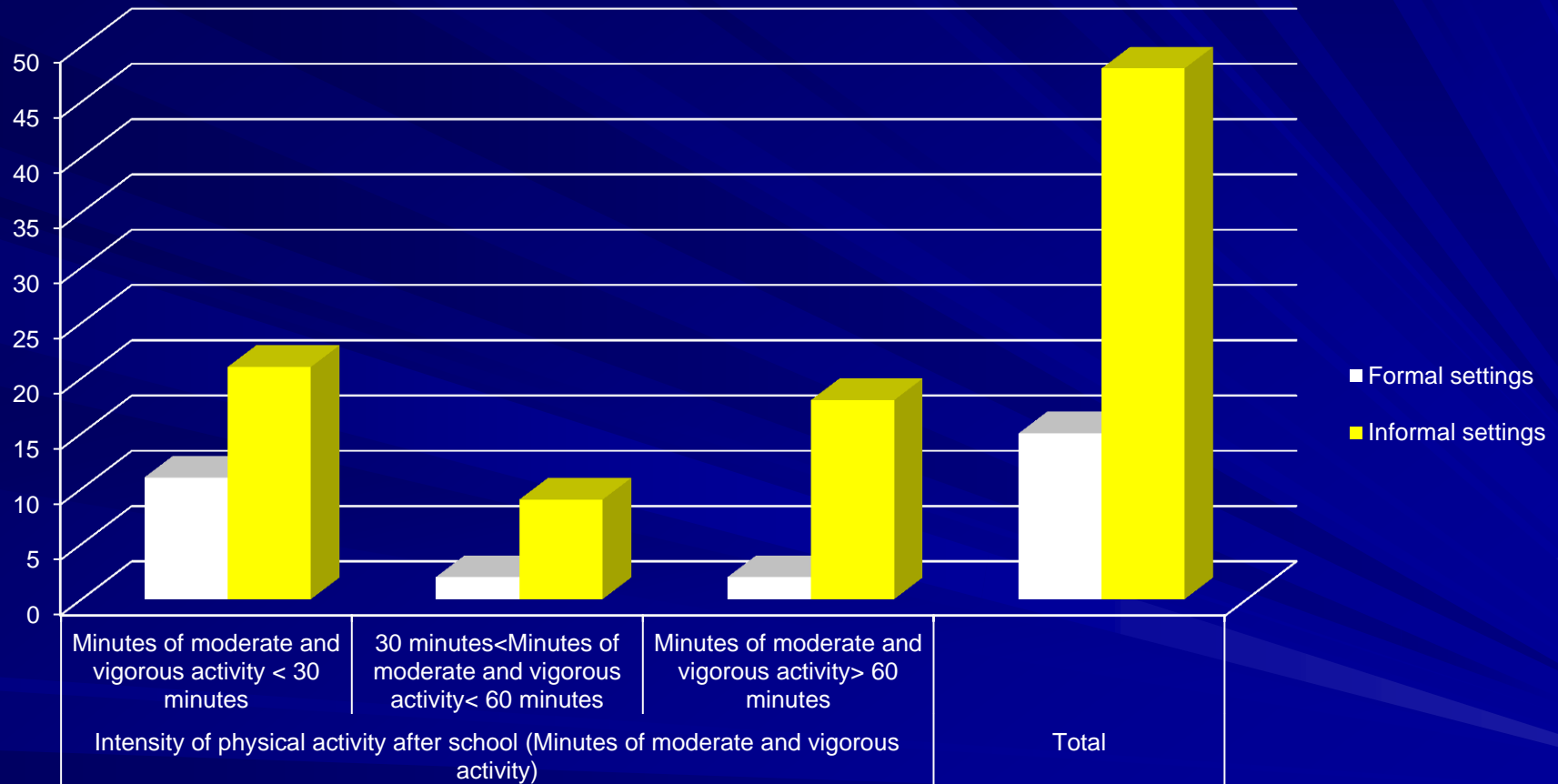
Duration of play



Pearson Chi-Square (p=0.00)

Children tend to play longer in informal settings compared to formal settings

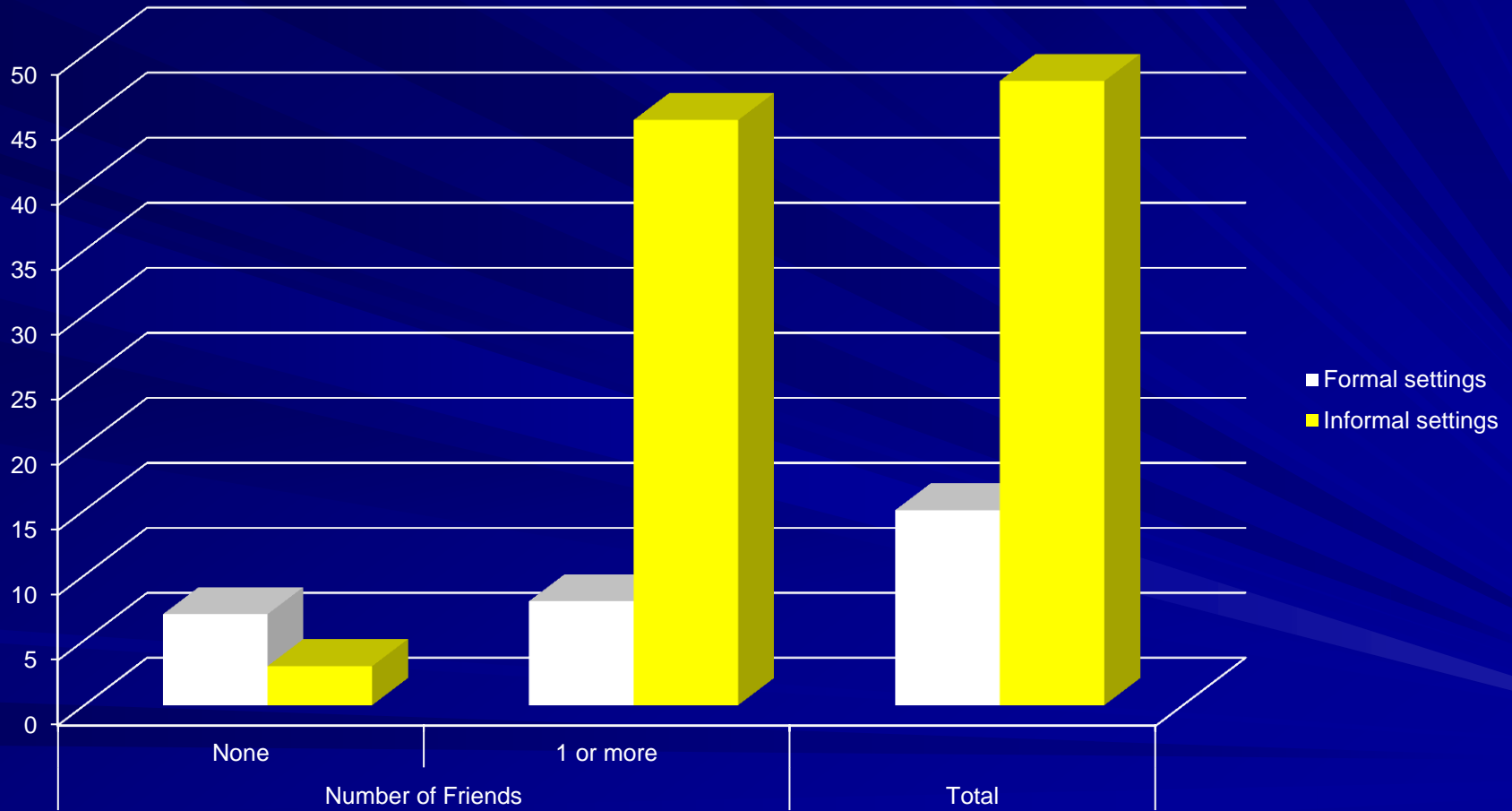
Intensity of Physical Activity



Pearson Chi-Square (p=0.00)

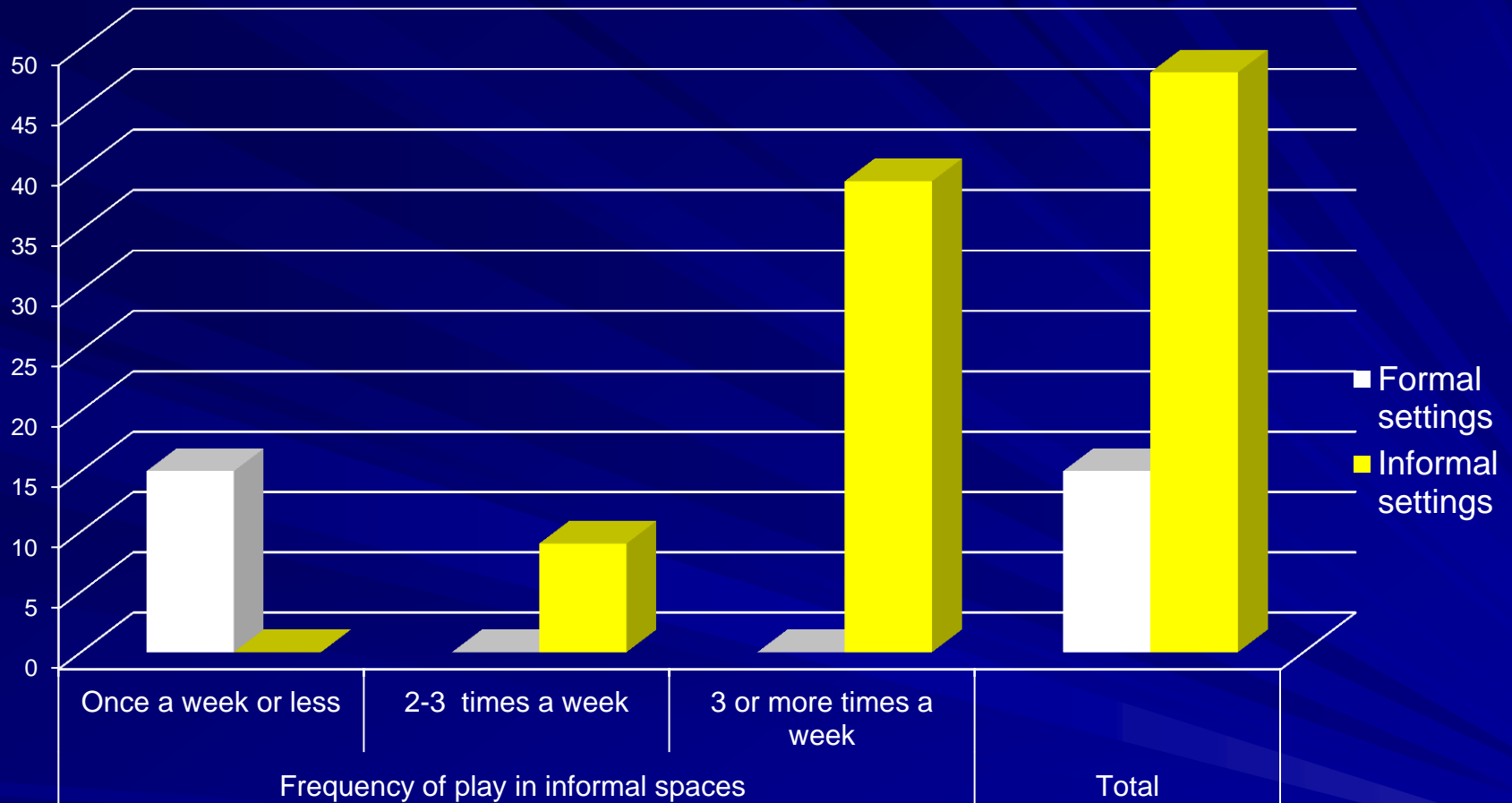
**Less than 30 min no significant difference between play in formal and informal settings
After 30 min children tend to be more physically active in informal settings compared to formal settings**

Social interaction



Children tend to socialise better in informal settings

Frequency of play



Pearson Chi-Square ($p=0.00$)

Informal settings, including streets and parks

- Attracted most of observed frequent play activities

Formal settings (playgrounds)

- Attracted most of active play during weekends and school holiday

Natural surveillance

- Play spaces that are watched allow natural surveillance
- Tend to be correlated with higher duration of outdoor play




Unaccompanied children and play



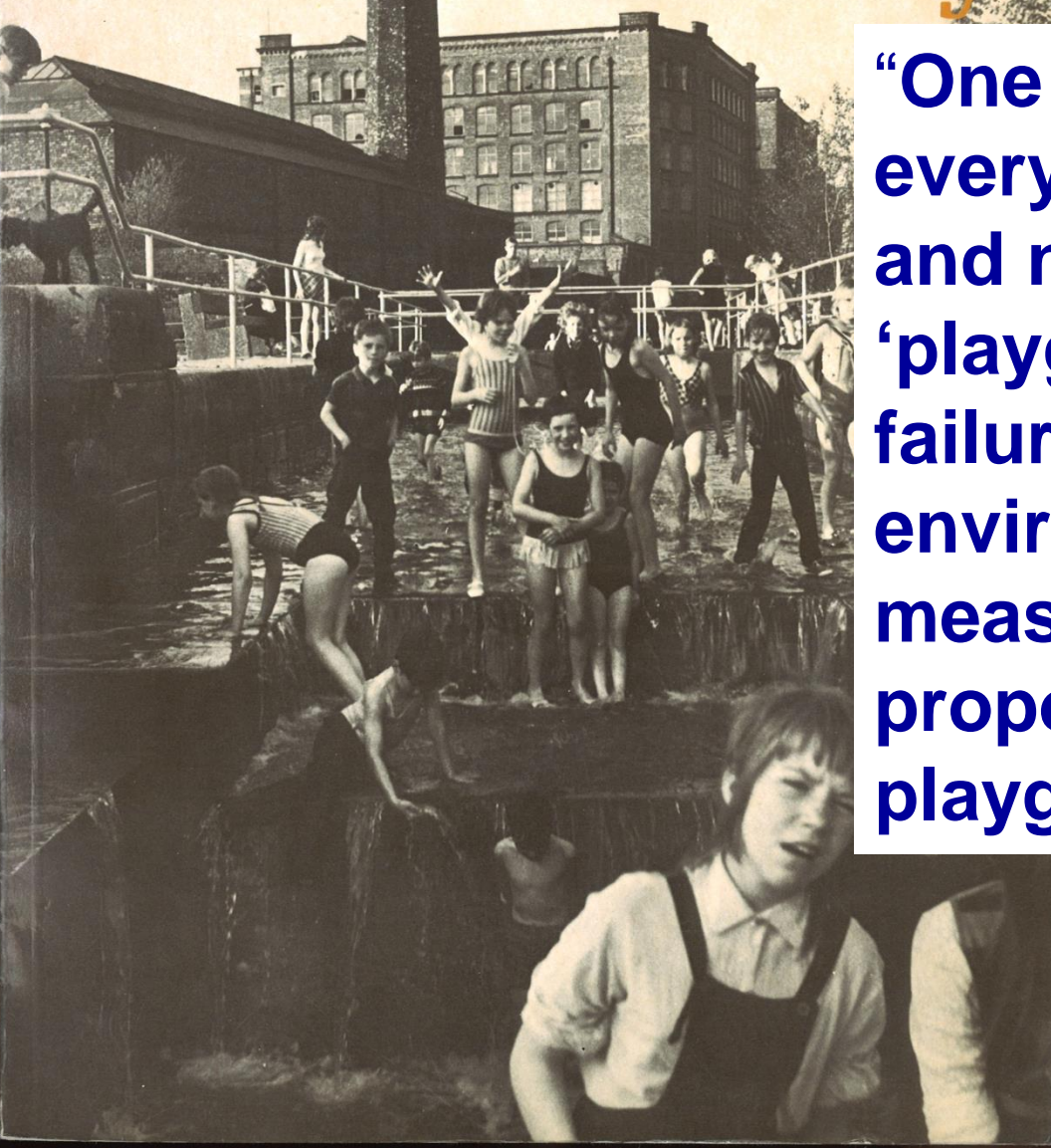
- Unaccompanied children played longer than those who were accompanied by an adult (≥ 60 minutes)
- Unaccompanied children are more likely to play in informal spaces and have extended home range

Conclusion

- 
- A photograph of five children playing on a residential street. On the left, a girl in a black tank top and pink shorts is running. In the center, two boys are riding kick scooters. To their right, another boy is jumping over a scooter. In the background, a boy in a red shirt is walking. The street is paved with red bricks and has white dashed lines. There are trees and a brick wall in the background.
- Encourage play opportunities in public realm
 - Streets are more accessible and secure
 - Incidental social interaction opportunities
 - Incidental physical activity (health) opportunities

Colin
Ward

The Child in the City



“One should be able to play everywhere, easily, loosely, and not forced into a ‘playground’ or a ‘park’. The failure of an urban environment can be measured in direct proportion to the number of playgrounds” (Ward 1977)