

Wild Tots & Wild Babies



An Evaluation Report for Suffolk Wildlife Trust 2023

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Acknowledgements

The report authors would like to thank the Suffolk Wildlife Trust staff for their support in the production of this report in particular Sara Holman and Christine Luxton along with the various staff responsible for delivering the Wild Tots and Wild Babies sessions.

All images used in this report are reproduced courtesy of John Ferguson, Suffolk Wildlife Trust.

The Wild Tots and Wild Babies initiatives and this evaluation report were funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Executive Summary

Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) introduced the Wild Tots and Wild Babies initiatives with the aim of providing families of pre-school children the opportunity to take part in various activities in natural environments, with Wild Tots and Wild Babies sessions being delivered weekly as part of a 6-week programme.

The University of Derby was commissioned to evaluate the impact of the Wild Tots and Wild Babies programmes for the participants and to identify what might help families with young children to engage with the SWT reserves and activities more frequently.

Participants completed questionnaires which measured nature connectedness, confidence in being outdoors with their children along with several open questions about the experience. They completed these questionnaires at both the beginning of the Wild Tots and Wild Babies programmes and again at the end.

59 participants completed questionnaires at either one or both time points with 28 participants providing data at both time points.

Confidence in knowing what to do when playing outside with their families and confidence in trying out new activities with their family had both increased significantly, with a small to medium effect size.

Although there was no significant change in either nature connectedness or how much a person felt they were a part of nature, this was not surprising as participants already showed very high levels on these measures at the start of the programme. This means that the participants are already very connected with nature.

Similarly, there was no significant change in knowing where to go to play outdoors with their family, or in how easy it was to visit the SWT reserve.

The qualitative data supported the positive impact of the programmes. Participants noted the impact on their children where they developed an increased interest in and love for nature. They saw their children's confidence growing and the development of social skills and friendships with other children.

For the participants themselves, attending Wild Tots and Wild Babies meant they were able to enjoy spending time with their children in nature, they gained confidence and inspiration about things to do outdoors, and they also appreciated the social benefits from meeting other families with young children.

A number of recommendations were also derived from the responses. Advertising the SWT reserves and events was seen as important, along with making use of social media for promotion and awareness raising. The SWT might also consider providing more picnic areas, and specifically covered picnic areas, to support families whilst they visit, which would help them to shelter from the weather which was noted as a potential barrier to visiting more frequently.

In conclusion, the Wild Tots and Wild Babies programmes were viewed very positively by the participants, they gained a range of benefits from attending and appreciated the provision of such activities by the SWT staff.

1. Introduction

There is a well-established research base demonstrating the benefits of connecting with nature for health and well-being in both adults (Howell, et al., 2011; Nisbet et al., 2011; Pritchard, et al., 2019) and children (Mayer and Frantz, 2014, Capaldi, et al., 2014; and Capaldi, et al., 2015) with research demonstrating a variety of benefits to health and wellbeing associated with connecting with nature.

Keniger, et al. (2013) conducted a review which explored a range of positive benefits associated with interacting with nature. This review suggests that interacting with nature results in psychological benefits such as improved self-esteem, mood, emotions and behaviour. Similarly, they also established evidence of improved cognitive performance and better physical health as evidenced by reductions in stress. The review also highlighted the social benefits from interacting with nature, particularly where it can facilitate social interaction. Finally, spiritual benefits from spending time in nature were also noted. Given the range of benefits that may be derived from spending time in and connecting with nature, simple interventions that encourage people to spend time outdoors and develop greater connectedness to nature are valuable.

Yet whilst there is growing evidence of the benefits of spending time in nature, not all parents with young families get to spend time in nature with their children. Louv (2010) highlights the reduction in time spent in free nature play for children, and the problems he sees as being associated with this, introducing the concept of “nature deficit disorder” whereby children are becoming increasingly disconnected from nature. This reduction in time children spend playing in nature may occur for various reasons for example parents may experience heightened perceptions of danger (Van Truong et al., 2022) or may have a lack of competence or logistics to support their child whilst playing in nature (Gustafsson et al., 2021). Barnes et al. (2021) highlight the importance of understanding more about the abilities parents feel they have to engage their children in nature-based play, therefore initiatives which aim to support parents to develop confidence in playing in nature with their children are of importance.

Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) introduced the Wild Tots and Wild Babies initiatives with the aim of providing families of pre-school children the opportunity to take part in various activities in natural environments. Parents and their young children were given the opportunity to explore the various SWT nature reserves through facilitated free play, woodland crafts and forest school style activities, with Wild Tots and Wild Babies sessions being delivered weekly as part of a 6-week programme.

2. Evaluation methodology

SWT staff commenced delivery of the Wild Tots and Wild Babies sessions during 2018, providing a programme of 6-weekly sessions. However, delivery was interrupted by the Covid 19 pandemic, which led to the suspension of all sessions throughout the lockdown period. As restrictions were lifted SWT were able to recommence delivery and the 6-weekly programmes resumed.

The evaluation was co-created with SWT staff and it allows us to assess any impact of the programme. The research was approved by the University of Derby College of Life and Natural Science Research Ethics Committee and questionnaire data was collected at both the start and end of the 6-week programme so that we could assess any changes that had occurred.

Participants provided a range of demographic data to allow us to understand more about the people accessing the programme.

A number of questions tapped into how confident participants felt in knowing where to go and what to do when spending time outdoors with their family. Similarly, confidence in trying out new activities at the various SWT locations was also assessed. Participants were asked how easy it was to find the SWT location and how often they visited. All of these questions were measured on a 0-10 scale, with 0 being the lowest score and 10 being the highest.

Two measures of nature connectedness were taken, the Nature Connectedness Index (Richardson et al. 2019) and the Schultz (2001) Inclusion of Nature in Self scale. Participants also responded to a range of open questions designed to assess the impact of the project and what might make it easier for them to visit more frequently. A copy of the questionnaire is included in the appendices.

The Nature Connectedness Index (Richardson et al., 2019) includes six questions that are suitable for use with both adults and children. Questions include things like "Being in nature makes me very happy" and responses are scored from 1 (Completely disagree) to 7 (Completely agree). Once the overall scale score is calculated, participants can score between a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 7 with 7 representing the highest level of nature connection.

The Inclusion of Nature in Self scale (Schultz, 2001) measures how much an individual feels they are a part of nature through a series of seven sets of overlapping circles reflecting increasing degrees of inclusion of self in nature. Participants can receive a value between 1 and 7 with 7 representing the highest level of being a part of nature.

The evaluation also used qualitative methods. Open questions were asked to explore what might help participants to visit the SWT reserves more frequently, and a number of additional questions asked about the impact that attending the Wild Tots and Wild Babies sessions had for them and their children.

3. Results

Participant details

Participants were recruited from various Wild Tots and Wild Babies sessions delivered by the SWT. In total, 59 participants completed questionnaires at either one or both time points. Of this initial sample, 28 provided data at both time points. 53 participants attended the Wild Tots sessions with a further 6 participants attending the Wild Babies sessions. For the purpose of this analysis the data from the two programmes was combined.

Wild Tots was delivered at all locations shown in table 1, with Wild Babies being delivered at Carlton Marshes only. Details of the number of participants from each location are shown in table 1.

Table 1: Delivery locations

Delivery location	No of participants	% of participants
Brackfield Woods	5	8.5
Carlton Marshes	23	39.0
Fox Burrow Farm	14	23.7
Lackford Lakes	10	16.9
Redgrave and Lopham Fen	7	11.9
Total	59	

The sample of 59 participants allows us to capture the demographics and baseline data of the parents/carers. Of the sample of 59 participants, 51 provided demographic details and 8 preferred not to answer. Of these, 51 participants, 45 (88.2%) were female and 6 (11.8%) were male and 50 participants (98%) identified as white, and one participant (2%) identified their ethnicity as “other ethnic group”. Ages ranged from 23 to 66, with an overall mean age of 40.02 (standard deviation 12.39) years. English was not the first language for 2 participants (4%), with 47 (96%) stating that it was their first language.

Details of the participants’ occupational status is shown in table 2 whilst annual household income is shown in table 3.

Table 2: Occupational status

	Number	%
Working Full Time	4	7.8
Working Part Time	25	49.0
Not in work or education	9	17.6
Working as stay at home parent	10	19.6
Retired	3	5.9
Total	51	

Table 3: Annual Household Income

	Number	%
Under £10,000	1	2.0
£10,000 - £19,999	4	8.2
£20,000 - £20,999	7	14.3
£30,000 - £30,999	8	16.3
£40,000 - £40,999	10	20.4
£50,000 - £50,999	5	10.2
£60,000 - £60,999	1	2.0
£70,000 or above	6	12.2
Prefer not to say	7	14.3
Total	49	

Thirty-two participants provided details of their employment across a range of occupations. Some owned their own businesses, with others working in occupations such as teaching, health care, the service industry, hospitality and the arts.

Participants were asked how they had travelled to the SWT reserve with 49 participants (96.1%) travelling by car and 2 (3.9%) walking to the location.

Nineteen participants (36.5%) reported that it was their first time visiting the SWT reserve, with 33 participants (63.5%) having visited the site before. Of those who had already visited the site, they had attended between 1 and 30 Wild Tots/Wild Babies sessions previously (average 4.96 visits).

Participants were also asked how often they visited the SWT nature reserve. Only 5 participants reported visiting less than once a year, with most participants indicating that they visited the nature reserve several times during the year with 15 participants visiting at least once a week. Details of the responses are shown in table 4.

Table 4: Frequency of visiting the SWT nature reserve

	Number	Percentage
Less than once a year	5	10.64%
1-6 times a year	17	36.17%
7-11 times a year	3	6.38%
1-3 times a month	7	14.89%
Once a week	14	29.79%
2 or 3 times a week	1	2.13%
4 or more times a week	0	0%
Total	47	

3.1 Quantitative analysis

In order to assess any impact of the project on those attended, we compared data collected both before and after the Wild Tots/Wild Babies sessions, however as many of the participants had already visited the site and engaged in previous Wild Tots/Wild Babies sessions the results may not reflect the true impact of the initiative compared to new starters.

Initial exploration of the data indicated that participants were already scoring highly on all of the measures presenting a skewed distribution of data. This meant that some data was not suitable for the parametric analysis and so a nonparametric alternative was employed.

The Wilcoxon Sign Rank analysis was used to assess change over time, comparing measures taken at the start of the 6-week programme of Wild Tots/Wild Babies sessions and the end of the 6 week programme. There was a significant difference in *confidence in knowing what to do when spending time outdoors with your family* where people felt more confident at the end of the 6-week programme ($Z=-2.823$, $p=.005$), with a small to medium effect size ($r=0.4$). Similarly, there was a significant difference in *how confident people felt to try out new activities with their family at the SWT nature reserve*, again people felt more confident at the end of the 6-week programme of activities ($Z=-3.097$, $p=.002$) with a small to medium effect size ($r=0.4$).

There was no significant difference for how confident people felt in knowing where to go to spend time outdoors with their family, or for how easy it was to visit the SWT nature reserve. Full details of the means, standard deviations (SDs), Z values and significance levels are shown in table 5.

Table 5: Change in confidence and ease of finding the reserve

	Mean (sd) Time 1	Mean (sd) Time 2	Z value	P value
How confident do you feel about knowing where to go to spend time outdoors with your family?	8.64 (1.13)	8.86 (0.95)	-1.000	.317 Not significant
How confident do you feel about knowing what to do when spending time outdoors with your family?	8.14 (1.27)	8.93 (0.94)	-2.823	.005 Yes significant
How confident do you feel about trying out new activities with your family at the SWT nature reserve?	8.36 (1.70)	9.14 (.97)	-3.097	.002 Yes Significant
How easy did you find it to visit the SWT nature reserve?	8.96 (1.48)	9.11 (1.26)	-.312	.755 Not significant

It should be noted that the maximum score that a participant could achieve for each of these measures was 10, therefore participants were also scoring very highly on these measures at time 1, meaning there was little room for them to achieve a much higher score at time 2.

As with the first set of analyses, due to the skewed nature of the data for nature connectedness and inclusion of nature in self, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank analysis was also used to test for any changes in these two measures between the start and the end of the 6-week programme of Wild Tots/Wild Babies. There was no significant difference for either measure of nature connectedness and full details of the means (SDs), Z values and significance levels are shown in table 6. For both measure the maximum score a participant could achieve was 7, so time 1 scores for the nature connection index were already very high, creating a ceiling effect.

Table 6: Means (SD), Z values and significance levels for Nature Connectedness and the Inclusion of Nature in Self

	Mean (sd) Time 1	Mean (sd) Time 2	Z value	Significant
Nature Connection Index	6.42 (.57)	6.48 (.52)	-.772	.440 Not significant
Inclusion of Nature in Self	4.75 (1.46)	4.79 (1.20)	-.023	.982 Not significant

Participants were also asked about the outdoor places where their children currently play. Fifty-two participants provided details with the most common places being their own garden or back yard and playgrounds with play equipment. Other common places to play included parks with greenspace, beaches, woodland and countryside. Over 42% of participants said their children played in nature reserves, whilst playing in the street, common land and school grounds were the places where children played outdoors the least. Details of the number and percentage of places where children usually play outdoors are show in table 7.

Table 7: Places where children play outdoors

	Number	Percentage
Own garden or back yard	47	90.4%
Playground with play equipment	43	82.7%
Park with greenspace	37	71.2%
Beach	36	69.2%
Woodland	36	69.2%
Countryside	33	63.5%
Nature reserve	22	42.3%
School grounds	11	21.2%
Common land	10	19.2%
Street	6	11.5%

3.2 Qualitative analysis

At the start of the programme, participants were asked two open questions about what would help them to visit the SWT nature reserve more often and what the barriers to visiting more often might be. A themed analysis was conducted with the responses to each question.

Beyond attending Wild Tots/Wild Babies, what would help you to visit the SWT nature reserve more often?

Responses were analysed and a number of themes were developed including:

1. Activities
2. Awareness raising
3. Facilities
4. Logistics

Theme 1: Activities

Several participants suggested that additional activities would help them to visit more often suggesting *“focused activities for children”* and *“other children’s events”*. Some suggested the specific nature of these possible activities such as a *“scavenger hunt for children”* and a *“tot’s picnic”*. Some participants focused on the family nature of suggested activities e.g., *“family days”* and *“activities for families”* whilst one participant also suggested additional activities for adults asking for *“more adult sessions (learning about trees/birds/flowers)”*.

Walking as an activity also featured in several responses, for example *“walking the trails”*, *“walk with the dog”* and simply *“walking”*.

Theme 2: Awareness raising

Some participants mentioned the importance of raising awareness of the site and events. They felt the details of the programme were not clear to them, and suggested improving the use of advertising and social media, one participant stated:

“Before attending Wild Tots, I wasn’t aware of how much they did. Now I am part of the Facebook page and attend each week. I can keep up to date with it all and attend what we fancy.”

Another person was not aware of the Facebook page and asked, *“do you have a Facebook page?”* Another suggestion from a different participant was to have *“more advertising”*.

Participants also referred to the importance of signage both in relation to accessing *sites* and in relation to the walking routes within the reserves, for example:

“I didn’t know you were open dusk til dawn until I saw the sign today (on the entrance)”

“more well signposted walks”

“clearer indication of which routes are buggy friendly”.

A number of participants suggested *“knowing roughly how longthey [the walking routes] are and how long they take”* would be helpful

Theme 3: Facilities

The role of facilities was highlighted by several participants. They suggested, “a café, restaurant,” was an important feature for them, with one participant looking forward to “*the new visitor centre being completed*”. Other suggestions they would like to see included “a food van available at weekends” and “a covered area with picnic tables”.

Theme 4: Logistics

The final theme relates to the accessibility and logistics of visiting the SWT sites. These included having “*better weather*”, “*having the time*” “*a bus route from Halesworth*” and “*...it’s a matter of travelling*”.

What are the barriers to visiting the SWT nature reserve more often?

Three themes were developed from their responses:

1. Time and competing commitments
2. Travel and parking
3. Weather

Theme 1: Time and competing commitments

Many participants noted that a lack of time and juggling other commitments was a key barrier which prevented them from visiting the SWT nature reserve more often. They mentioned for example: “*Time pressure*”; “*Family responsibilities*” and “*time and competing commitments*”

Theme 2: Travel and parking

Distance to the SWT nature reserve and issues with parking at some sites were also identified as a barrier to visiting more often by a number of participants. Some participants expressed location was an issue as “it’s quite a drive from home”. Some lacked transport - “I don’t always have a car”. For some with cars, parking was a challenge, and if car parks were full they had to make adjustments: e.g. by using “*parking nearby*”, or “*we always find street parking when we come*”

Theme 3: Weather

This was the theme mentioned least frequently but was noted by four participants as a potential barrier to visiting more frequently, particularly “*winter*” weather..

Open Questions

Participants were also asked to respond to four open questions as follows:

1. What sort of things do you do when visiting the SWT nature reserve?
2. What, if any, impact has attending Wild Tots/Wild Babies had on your child/children?
3. What, if any, impact has attending Wild Tots/Wild Babies had on you?
4. Do you have any other comments about the Wild Tots/Wild Babies programme that you would like to share?

The number of participants providing written responses to the open questions varied slightly across questions, with 43 participants providing responses to question 1, 28 responding to question 2, 27 responding to question 3 and 33 participants responding to question 4. A content analysis was used to identify the key factors that people identified when answering these open questions.

What sort of things do you do when visiting the SWT nature reserve?

A total of 4 themes were developed in response to this question:

1. Walking
2. Observing wildlife
3. Nature-based activities
4. Enjoyment of being outdoors.

1. Walking

The first theme of walking, was noted by many of the respondents. Several expanding on this to describe the nature of the walk in a little more detail e.g., *“walk by the river”*, *“following trails”* and *“walk the dog”*.

2. Observing Wildlife

Observing wildlife was a key theme being identified by many participants with some focusing on looking for nature e.g., *“look at plants, trees and birds”*, and *“see the birds, sheep, rabbits...”*. Others focused more specifically on seeking out nature e.g. *“hunt for bugs”*, *“go in the bird hide and look for birds...”*. Three participants noted identifying and naming things they came across, *“identifying plants/trees”* for example.

3. Nature-based activities

The third theme of nature-based activities was supported by a number of participants as they identified examples of nature-based activities they did with their children such as *“collecting sticks”*, *“splashing in puddles”* and *“Plopping stones off bridges”*.

4. Enjoyment of being outdoors

Three participants noted the enjoyment of being outdoors for example to be able to *“run and feel free”* and *“enjoy the fresh air”*.

Finally, a number of participants also mentioned having a *“picnic”* and *“play(ing) at the park”* as activities they would do at the SWT reserve.

What, if any, impact has attending Wild Tots/Wild Babies had on your child/children?

Three key themes were developed from the data:

1. Interest in / love of nature
2. Increased confidence
3. Social/friendships

1. Interest in / love of nature

This first theme was very evident in the data, being present in the comments from twenty of the twenty-seven participants who responded to this question. Participants noted the

impact the programme had on their children, e.g., “*inspiring a curiosity in nature*”, and had “*fostered a love of outdoors*”. Some participants noticed their children learning at the same time e.g., they were “*enjoying nature, getting to know nature more*”. One participant stated, “*she identifies animals and insects and birds. She loves it!*” Others noticed that the time spent at Wild Tot’s/Wild Babies had “*Increased their interest in birds, insects, what’s growing/happening around them*”.

2. Increased confidence

Ten participants noticed that their children had grown in confidence during the Wild Tots/Wild Babies sessions with comments such as “*She is much more confident in nature now*”; “*she has grown in confidence*” and “*she is a lot more confident around new adults and children, she now enjoys messy play whereas before she hated having messy hands*”. Some also noticed that this increased confidence meant their children were more likely to explore for example “*it has really helped him with exploring*”.

3. Social/friendships

The impact the Wild Tots/Wild Babies sessions had on social relationships and friendships was also noted by 9 participants, for example, one participant stated, “*spending time with other children has been helpful for social development*”, another noticed that their child enjoyed “*interacting with other children*”.

What, if any, impact has attending Wild Tots/Wild Babies had on you?

Five themes were developed from the responses to this question:

1. Pleasure from observing and being with own children
2. Confidence
3. Enjoyment of nature
4. Inspiration about things to do
5. Social benefits

1: Pleasure from observing and being with own children

A number of participants commented on the enjoyment they gained from watching their children during the sessions and how much they valued spending time in nature with their children. For example, “*we enjoy it immensely and love to see our son out in the open air enjoying the fen*” and “*Spending more quality time with daughter outside*”. One participant commented that they were “*happy watching my child having fun*” whilst another noted that “*I love making time to spend with him outside*”.

2: Confidence

In addition to noting the increased confidence of the children attending the group, some participants felt that their own confidence had also increased. One commented that they felt “*more confident in guiding and supporting our grandchild*” whilst another felt more confident when “*walking with (the) sling*”. Another participant felt that the experience had made them feel “*more confident about groups*”.

3: Enjoyment of nature

Several participants gave comments which reflected a general enjoyment of spending time in nature, for example: “*It has made me appreciate the beauty of where I live*” and more specifically, “*I’ve loved being outside too, the sunshine and birdsong was lovely*”.

4: Inspiration about things to do

Taking part in the activities as part of Wild Tots/Wild Babies also acted as a source of inspiration for some participants, for example *“it has given me ideas to take home and compete in our garden and local meadow”* and another commented that they now had *“more idea when we’re outside of things to look for”*.

5: Social Benefits

The social aspect of attending the programme was also noted by a number of participants; they enjoyed *“making friends”* and one participant stated, *“I have really enjoyed meeting the other mums and ladies who run the sessions.”*

Several participants also noted specific benefits they personally experienced such as *“de-stressing”* and *“benefitting from going for walks and getting outside”*. Another participant commented that *“I’ve also learned a lot about the animals, insects, and birds.”*

Do you have any other comments about the Wild Tots/Wild Babies programme that you would like to share?

There was one overarching theme that was clear from the additional comments about the Wild Tots/Wild Babies programme and that was praise for Wild Tots and Wild Babies.

Theme: Praise for Wild Tots and Wild Babies

The majority of participants responding to this question were extremely positive about the programme.

This included comments about individual members of staff such as *“many thanks to Laura for running the sessions”*, *“Lauren is fantastic”* and *“Sophie and her team are fantastic and great with the kids. Very organised too!”*; and more general comments about SWT for example *“Excellent staff and good opportunities for children to explore in a relaxed environment. thank you for organising these sessions and for a warm cup of tea at the end!”*.

Some participants expressed how they valued the sessions by asking for a continuation of Wild Tots and Wild Babies with comments such as *“more please”*, *“keep it going”* and *“I’m looking forward to continued visits”*, whilst others suggested additional activities *“More sessions throughout the year as seasons change would be lovely”*.

Finally, many participants expressed their general enjoyment and support for the programme *“I think it’s brilliant”*, *“We’ve very much enjoyed it, thank you!”*, *“Love coming to Wild Tots”* and *“It’s a wonderful programme, recommend all the time”*.

4. Conclusions

Overall, the findings of this evaluation are very positive and demonstrate the impact of the Wild Tots and Wild Babies programmes for the participants. A significant increase was shown in how confident participants were in knowing what to do when playing outdoors with their family and in how confident they were to try out new activities with their family at the SWT nature reserve. Both of these findings had a small to medium effect size.

Whilst there was no significant difference in confidence in knowing where to go, or in how easy it was to find the SWT nature reserve, it should be noted that participants scores were already very high when the initial (time 1) measure was taken. It appears that a ceiling effect (where there is little room for the scores to increase) may be occurring.

Similarly, there was no significant difference in either the nature connection index score or the inclusion of nature in self, however high time 1 values were again observed. This can be seen as a positive as it means that the people visiting the reserve already feel very connected to nature and so have the opportunity to experience the benefits that a strong connection to nature might provide.

The qualitative data also revealed positive results. Participants identified a number of things that would help them to visit the SWT nature reserves more often including provision of additional activities for families and children, better awareness of events happening, more information about walking routes (e.g., distances and timings) and access to facilities.

When asked about the impact of Wild Tots and Wild Babies on their children and themselves, the participants highlighted a number of positive outcomes. They felt that attending the groups had helped their children to become more interested in and connected to nature and also helped them to grow in confidence. They also noted the importance of the social aspect of the groups and how it provided a place for new friendships to develop for their children. This was also mirrored in their own experiences where the participants felt that their own confidence had also grown, and they too had the opportunity to make new friends and socialise with other adults in the group. The participants also highlighted the inspiration they gained from the group and activities, and the pleasure they derived from watching their children enjoying themselves in nature.

Participants highlighted a range of activities that they liked to do when visiting SWT nature reserves, with walking and looking for wildlife featuring strongly.

In conclusion, the evaluation supports the success of the initiative and impact it has had for the participants. The general comments were overwhelmingly positive about SWT and the programme of activities, with participants clearly appreciating the impact they had for themselves and their children.

5. Recommendations

A number of recommendations can also be drawn from the feedback provided by participants. The overwhelmingly positive responses relating to the Wild Tots and Wild Babies sessions reassures staff that the participants value what is provided so the recommendations are focused on the feedback relating to how SWT might engage more people with their reserves and activities.

Increased advertising

Increased advertising for events and raising awareness in local communities of what the SWT reserves have to offer could increase visitor engagement with the sites.

Maximise Social media presence

Making use of social media to target a wider audience could prove particularly beneficial.

Covered picnic areas

Some participants mentioned enjoying picnics, and another suggested a covered picnic area with benches would help them to visit more often. When asked to consider barriers to visiting more often, the weather was mentioned by some participants. Bringing these elements together, SWT might want to consider providing simple covered picnic areas with benches to support visitor engagement.

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Appendix: Copy of the questionnaire



Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research project. So we can track of your responses, we would like to record the last 3 letters of your first name and the last 3 digits of your mobile telephone number e.g. NNE345

Last 3 letters of first name _____

Last 3 numbers of mobile phone number _____

It is also helpful for us to know a little information about yourself.

Age _____ years)

Please tick the following:

Gender Female [] Male [] Prefer to self-define [] Prefer not to say []

Ethnicity White [] Black [] Asian [] Multiple ethnic group [] Other []

Are you:

Working full-time [] Working part-time [] In full-time education []

Not working or in education [] Working as a stay at home parent []

If you work please tell us your occupation.....

What is your postcode? _____

Is this the first time you've attended a Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Wild Tots session?

Yes [] No []

If you have attended the Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Wild Tots sessions before, please tell us roughly how many individual sessions you have attended
(A block of 6 sessions would include 6 individual sessions)

I have attended _____ Wild Tot's sessions

Where did you attend the Wild Tot's session?

Bradfield Woods [] Carlton Marshes [] Foxburrow Farm []
Ipswich parks [] Holywells Park [] Christchurch Park and Chantry Park []
Lackford Lakes [] Redgrave and Lopham Fen [] Stowarket []

Other (please state) _____

The following questions ask about how you feel about spending time outdoors. By outdoors we mean nature reserve, park, garden, countryside or beach.

Please circle the number that best describes how you feel in response to each question.

How confident do you feel about knowing **where to go** to play outdoors with your family? Not at all confident 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Extremely confident 10

How confident do you feel about knowing **what to do** when going to play outdoors with your family? Not at all confident 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Extremely confident 10

How confident do you feel about knowing **what to do** when visiting the SWT Nature Reserve with your family? Not at all confident 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Extremely confident 10

How confident do you feel about **trying out new activities** with your family at the SWT Nature Reserve? Not at all confident 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Extremely confident 10

How **easy** do you find it to visit the SWT Nature Reserve? Not at all easy 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Extremely easy 10

How **often** do you visit the SWT Nature Reserve? Less than once a year One or two times a year Once a month Once a week Two or three times a week Four or more times a week

What would help you to visit the SWT Nature Reserve more often?

What outdoor spaces do your children currently use to play in? Please circle all that apply:

- | | | | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|-------|
| Own garden/back yard | Nature reserve | School grounds | Playground with play equipment | Countryside | Beach |
| Woodland | Street | Park with greenspace | Common Land | | |

Other – Please list here: _____

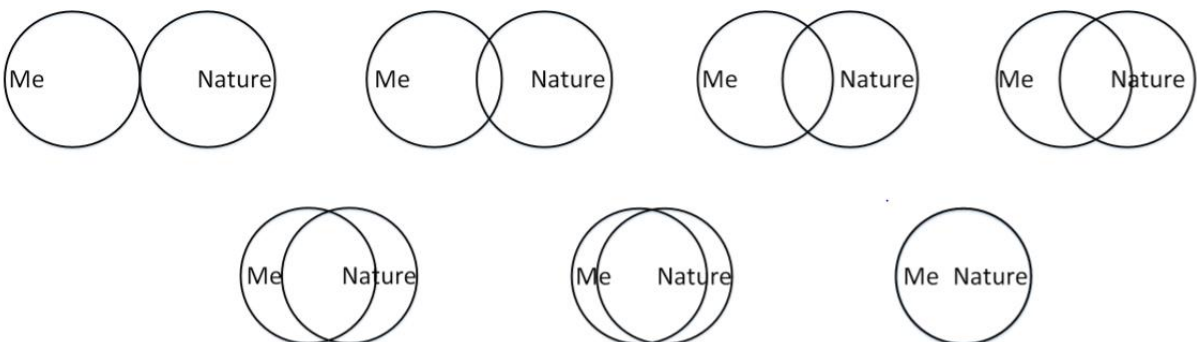
The following questions are about you and nature. By nature we mean all types of natural environment and all the plants, and animals living in them. Nature can be close to where you live in towns; the countryside or wilderness areas further away.

Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following:

	Strongly disagree							Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I always find beauty in Nature								
I always treat nature with respect								
Being in nature makes me very happy								
Spending time in nature is very important to me								
I find being in nature really amazing								
I feel part of nature								

We are interested in assessing your connection with nature. This refers to how much you feel you are a part of nature and exist as part of the natural world.

Please select the picture below which best describes your connection with nature right now.



When completing the questionnaire after the Wild Tots and Wild Babies sessions, the following questions were also included:

How many individual Wild Tots sessions have you attended within this 6-week block?
Please circle:

1 2 3 4 5 6

What, if any, impact has attending the Wild Tots had on your child/children?

What, if any, impact has attending the Wild Tots had on you?

Do you have any other comments about the Wild Tot's programme that you would like to share?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.