Author's response to reviews

Title: Children's active play: self-reported motivators, barriers and facilitators.

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor

We would like to thank you for the additional opportunity to respond to the comments of Reviewer 1. Please find below a point by point response (in italics) to each comment below. We have used the highlighter option in Word to show all of the changed sections in the main document.

Please note that we are very happy to look at the possibility of further changes to the manuscript, if we are provided with more specific guidance as to which issues you would like us to address.

Reviewer 1 (Chloe McAdam)

Thank you for the opportunity to review this interesting paper. I have a number of comments and suggestions for changes which are outlined below.

*We thank the reviewer for the positive comments; responses to each of the points raised are detailed below.*

**Major Compulsory Revisions**

1. Gender differences - you suggest that you analysed these data by gender and conclude that there may be gender differences, but these are not fully presented in the results and it is not clear from the quotations/themes presented what these gender differences may be. I do not think you can make this conclusion without the explicit presentation or discussion of these data.

*We accept the reviewer’s point. Although we presented the results by gender we acknowledge that we did not explicitly analyse by gender. We have removed Line 3 of Paragraph 2 in the ‘Analyses’ section and Line 2 of the Conclusions section which we hope clarifies this.*

2. The gender make-up of the focus groups is also not presented. Were these single-sex groups or mixed? I do not think the use of mixed-gender focus groups would be appropriate to complete a concrete analysis of gender differences since the very nature of a focus group means children will respond to other children’s answers and may be more likely to conform/react to traditional gender norms.

*Thank you for highlighting this. We have now added in that our focus groups were mixed gender to Paragraph 3, Line 5 of the Methods section. We accept the reviewer’s point that the use of mixed gender focus groups may have impacted how participants responded to focus group questions and have added in a sentence to the Limitations section (Paragraph 1, Lines 5-6) acknowledging this. We agree with the reviewer that a concrete analysis of gender differences is not appropriate, for these reasons, and discuss the need for further research in this area in Paragraph 2, Lines 8-11 of the Limitations.*
3. Differences by Deprivation
You recruited children from schools in areas of varying deprivation, but do not discuss whether you examined any differences in children’s perceptions/experiences by deprivation? I imagine that this sampling may have been chosen to give a more representative sample or to provide a range of views rather than for a comparison and as such you may struggle to complete a full analysis of any differences due to the sample size. However, a sentence or two indicating any emerging results by deprivation and why these data cannot be used to complete a full analysis could be added.

*We recruited schools from areas of varying deprivation in order to provide a more representative sample. However, we did not feel that we had a sufficiently large sample to analyse differences by deprivation level in our findings. Given the relatively small sample size we do not feel it is appropriate to discuss emerging results by deprivation, however, we have added in a sentence to the Limitations section (Paragraph 2, Lines 8-9) regarding this point.*

4. Themes - Enjoyment
The results presented under enjoyment include specifically the social aspect of active play. This finding is often reported as a benefit of PA more generally and I don't think it should be overlooked or included under enjoyment, as in this case.

*Thank you for highlighting this point. We have now amended this theme to ‘socialising’, to reflect enjoyment specifically related to the social aspect of active play, which we agree is more representative of our findings.*

5. Themes - Freedom
I do not think the quotes you have used under this term indicate that children perceive active play gives them a sense of freedom. In two of the quotes used, the children speak about letting off steam and relaxing in the way adults might talk about the way that PA might have a stress reduction effect. I feel this is more related to the mental health benefits of active play rather than freedom from rules/adults.

*We agree with the reviewer that not all of the quotes under this heading accurately reflected a sense of freedom, and have now deleted a quote which was problematic. Whilst we fully acknowledge the mental health benefits of active play, we do feel that the quotes are representative of a sense of freedom, either from adult control or structured activities, such as homework or organised physical activity. After much discussion with the co-authors, where we considered use of alternative terms such as ‘Escape’ and ‘Release’, we have decided to keep the term ‘Freedom’ as we feel this most accurately captures the children’s perceptions. We have now amended the text under the term ‘Freedom’ on Page 10 (Results), to clarify our definition.*