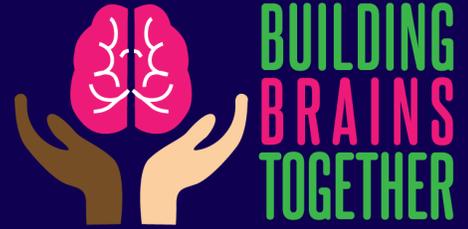


Lethbridge Adolescent Play Survey

Make Learning an Adventure



University of
Lethbridge



Building Brains Together Background:

In 2016, Building Brains Together created a curriculum of playful activities that aimed to improve executive function skills in preschoolers. Executive function skills are the mental processes that enable us to plan, focus attention, remember instructions, and juggle multiple tasks successfully. The curriculum of games was implemented into early education programs at Lethbridge School Division and Holy Spirit Catholic School Division. Children's executive function skills were assessed before and after participating in the program and it became clear that children who engaged in the curriculum experienced an increase in executive function and self-regulation scores, relative to developmental norms.

Research shows that adolescence is a time of significant growth and brain development. Due to the success of the early childhood programs, Building Brains Together has received dozens of requests from both organizations and families to expand their programming to address strengthening executive function skills in teenagers. Building Brains Together is now in the process of expanding the existing curriculum to include activities designed to help enhance executive function skills in teenagers. The Adolescent Play Survey was designed as part of the initial information gathering in the early stages of curriculum development. Responses from the Adolescent Play Survey are outlined in the following report and will be used to inform the design of activities suited to adolescents and teenagers that will target and enhance executive function development. The curriculum will be created using what youth themselves have shared about how they are engaging in play.

For more information about Building Brains Together visit buildingbrains.ca or contact buildingbrainstogether@gmail.com.

Survey Questions:

01 Demographics (age, gender, French or English)

02 Name three ways you like to play

03 What makes an activity playful?

04 How do you like to play?

05 What stops or prevents you from playing?

06 Name one way you would like to see play incorporated into your classroom:

	Lethbridge School Division	Holy Spirit School Division
<i>total responses</i>		
	290	328
<i>age</i>		
<i>10-11 years</i>	20%	1%
<i>12-13 years</i>	50%	43%
<i>14-15 years</i>	30%	56%
<i>gender</i>		
<i>female</i>	54%	47%
<i>male</i>	45%	52%
<i>non-binary</i>	1%	1%
<i>program</i>		
<i>english</i>	88%	92%
<i>french</i>	12%	8%

sports

baseball, basketball, volleyball, football, soccer, rugby, hockey, badminton, tennis, dodgeball, etc.

electronics

video games, computer games, phones, online, T.V., movies, etc.

social

outdoors

creative

art, crafts, acting, singing, music, imagination, reading, writing, Lego, building things, strategy games, puzzles, etc.

games

card games, board games, organized games

active

individual

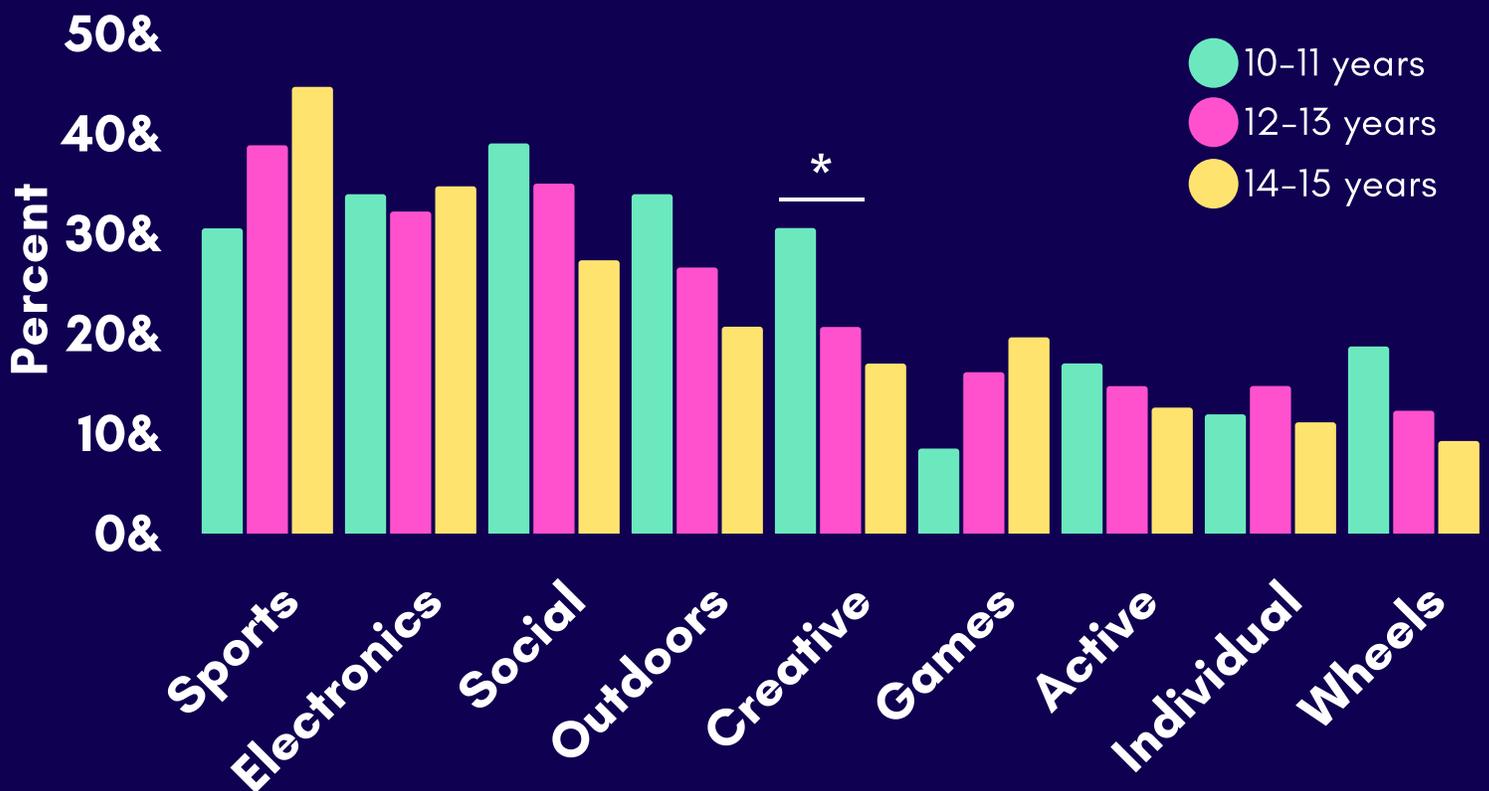
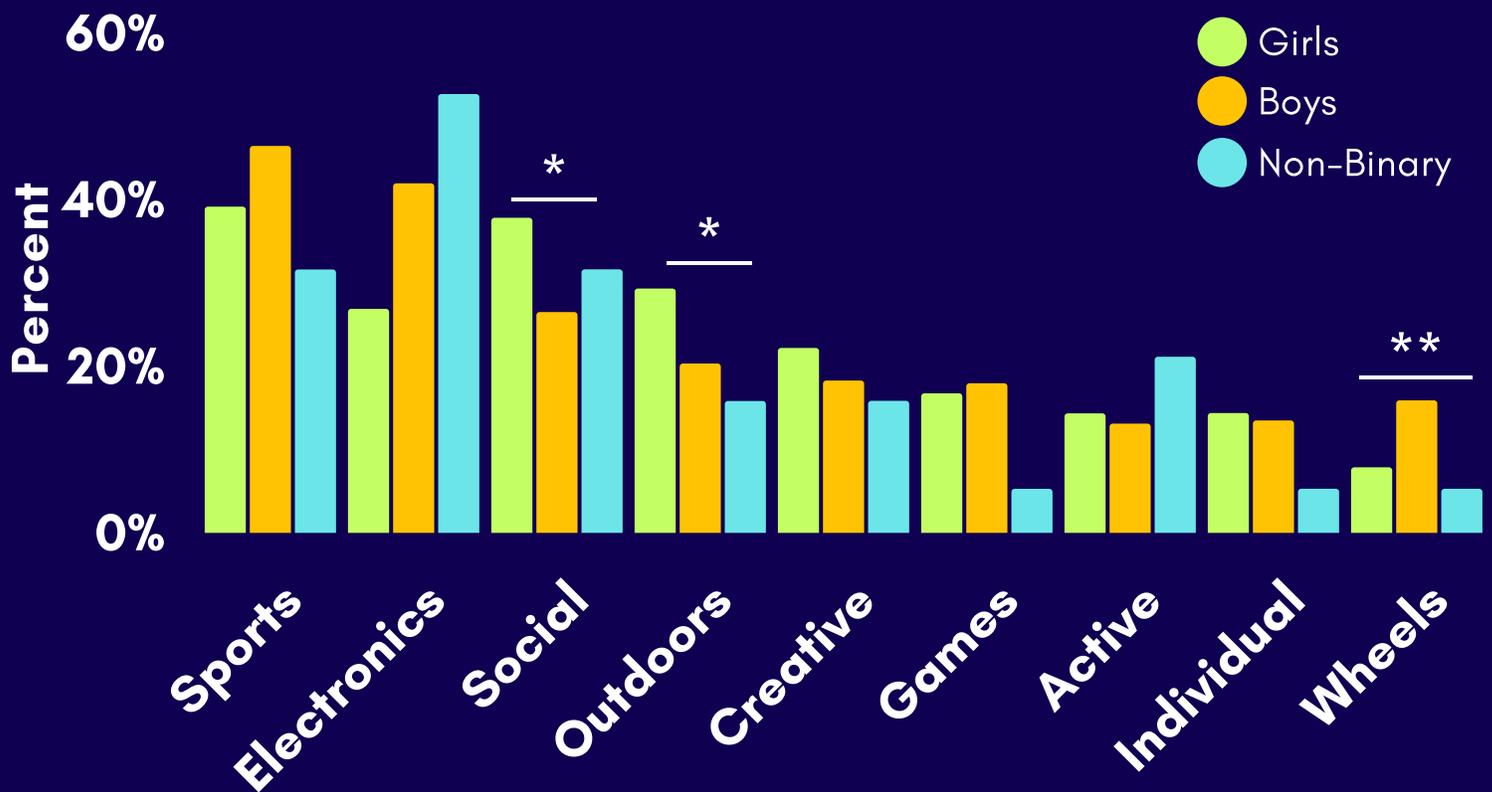
dance, gymnastics, swimming, running, rock climbing, working out, snow mobiling, dirt biking, etc.

wheels

biking, scootering, longboarding, skateboarding, rollerblading, etc.



02 Ways I like to play



* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Other categories youth identified included playing alone, playing fair, playing with or without rules, cognitive games, playing indoors, playing just for fun, and playing with their pets.

There were statistically significant differences between genders for outdoor play, social play, and wheels. More girls named outdoors ($p = .028$) and social aspects ($p = .014$) as ways they like to play. More boys identified biking, skateboarding, etc. ($p = .007$) than did girls. There were no other gender differences between categories, and no statistically significant differences for non-binary youth in the above categories.

The only statistically significant difference among age groups in play preferences was seen in creative play. Younger youth were more likely to report creative play in their top three ways of playing than were older youth ($p = .058$).

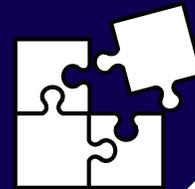


laughter

FUN

enjoyment

creativity



interest

skill



challenge

activity
movement

competition



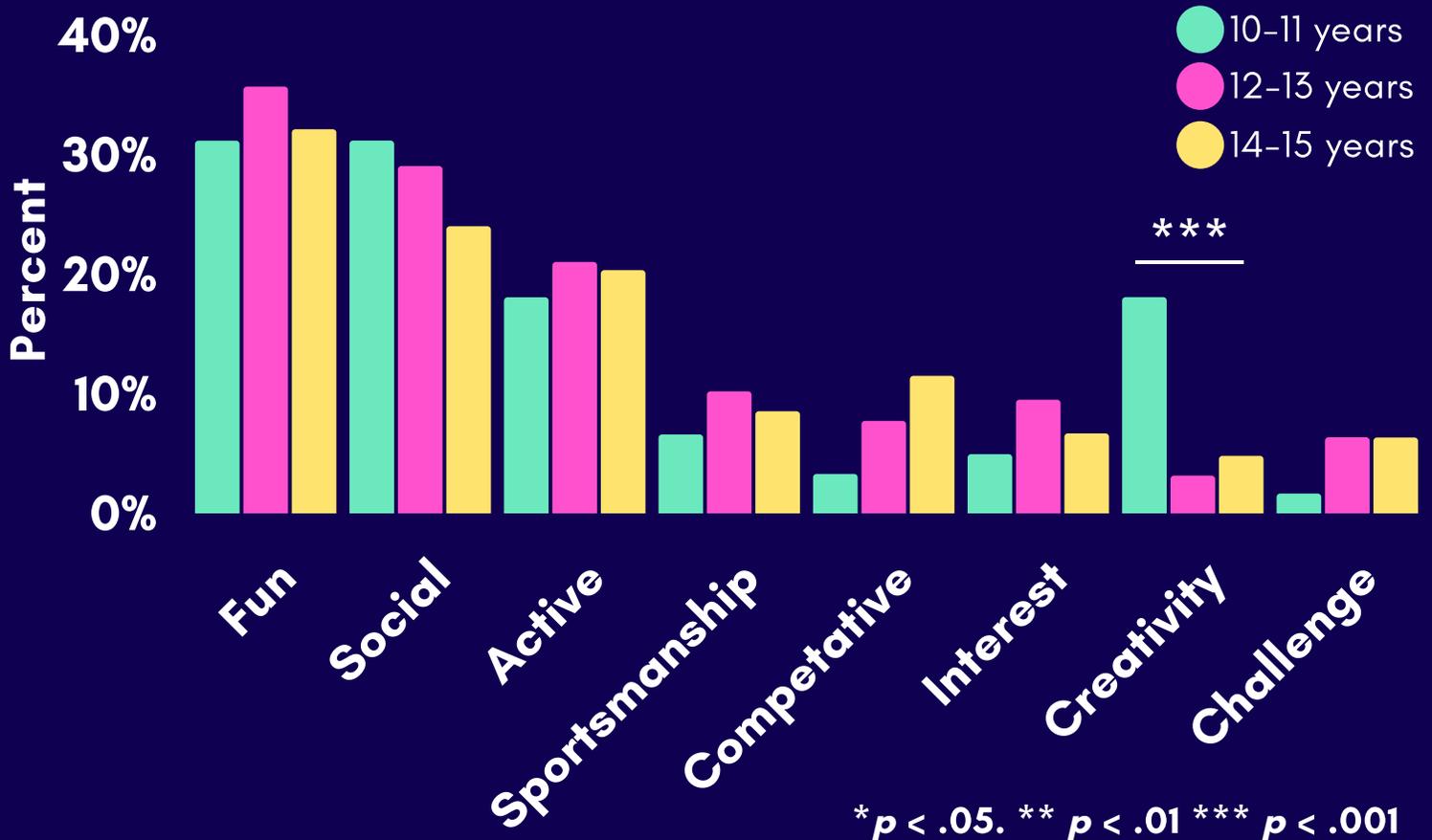
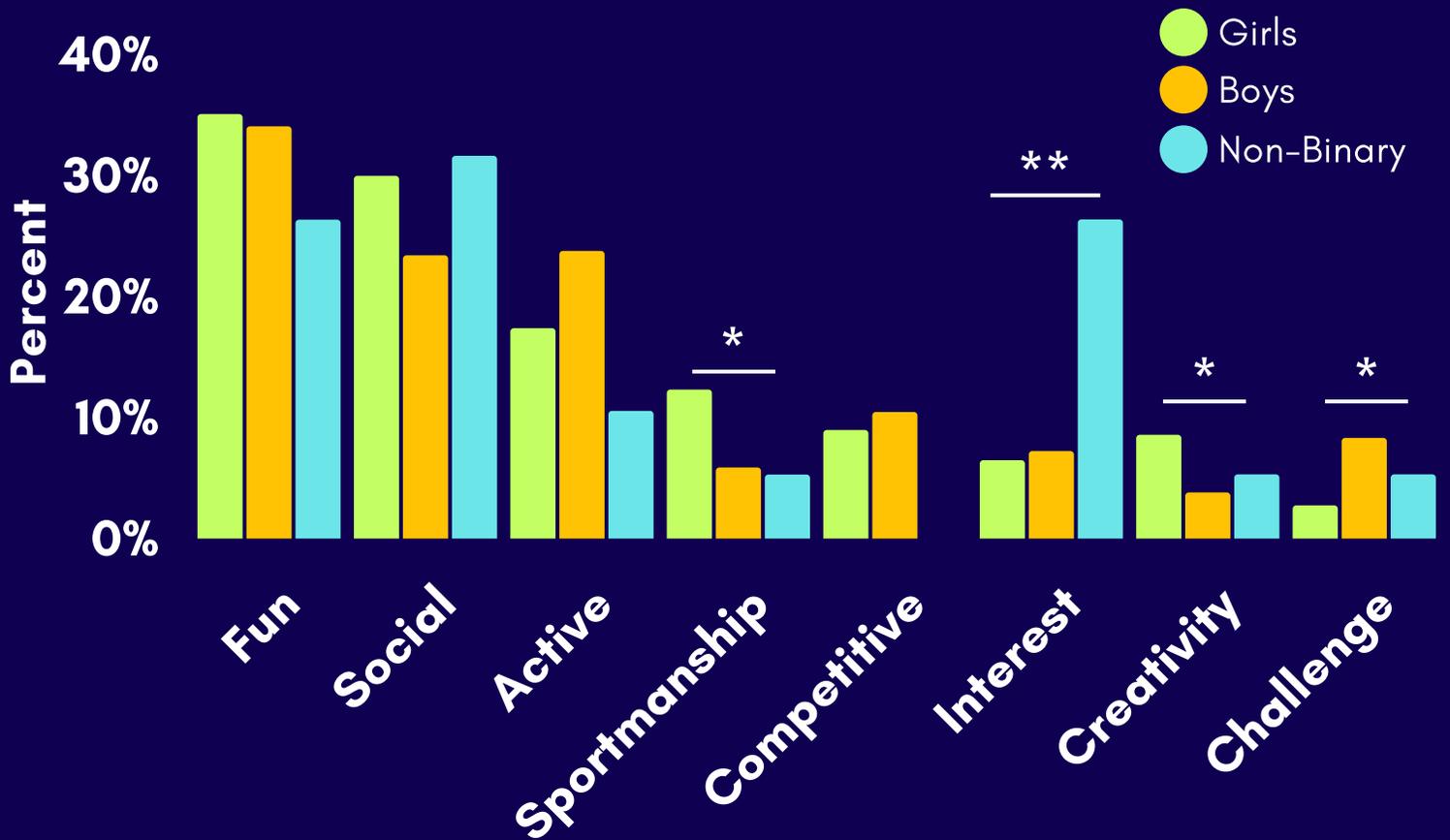
social
friends

cooperative

interactive



03 What makes an activity playful? page 07



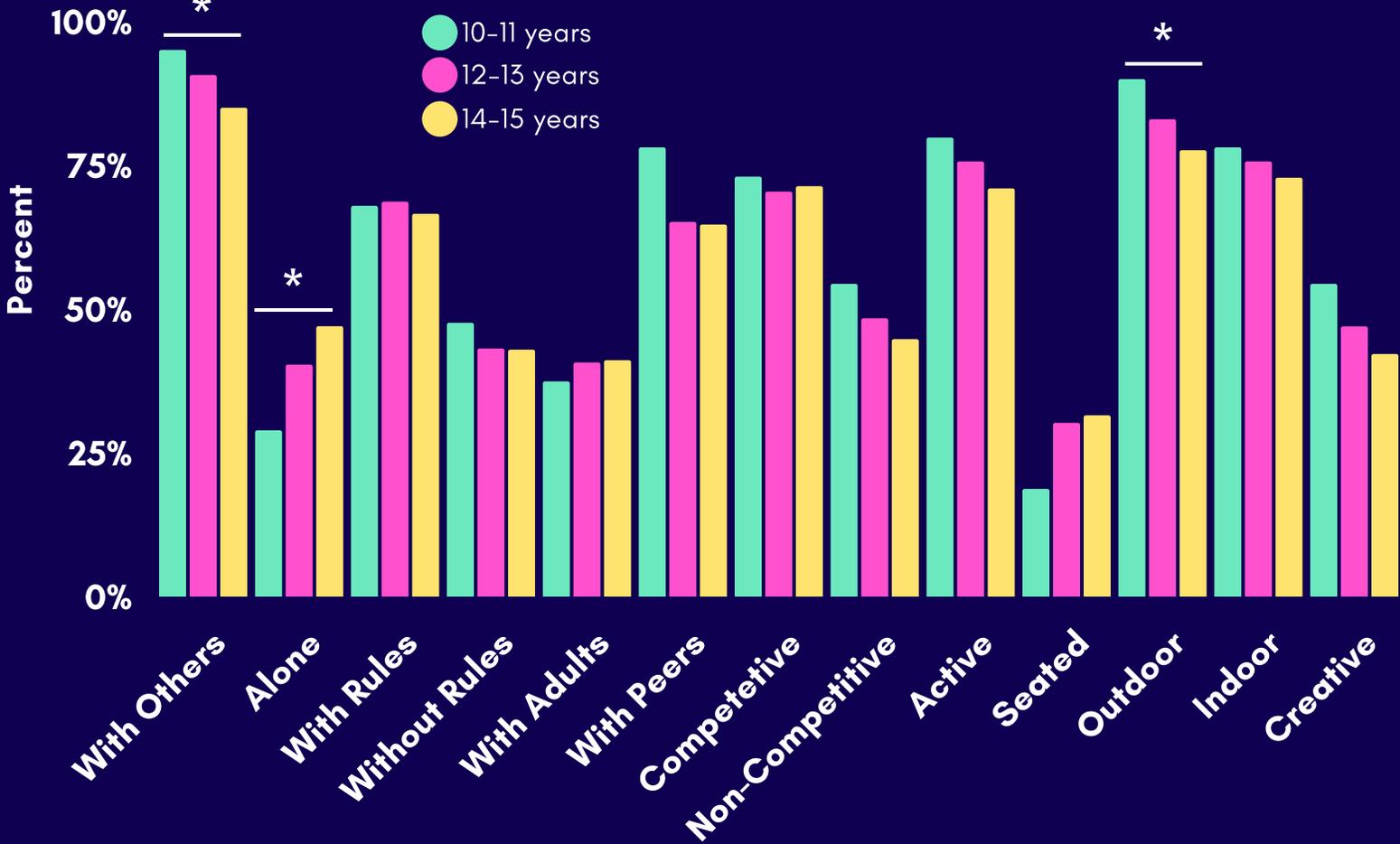
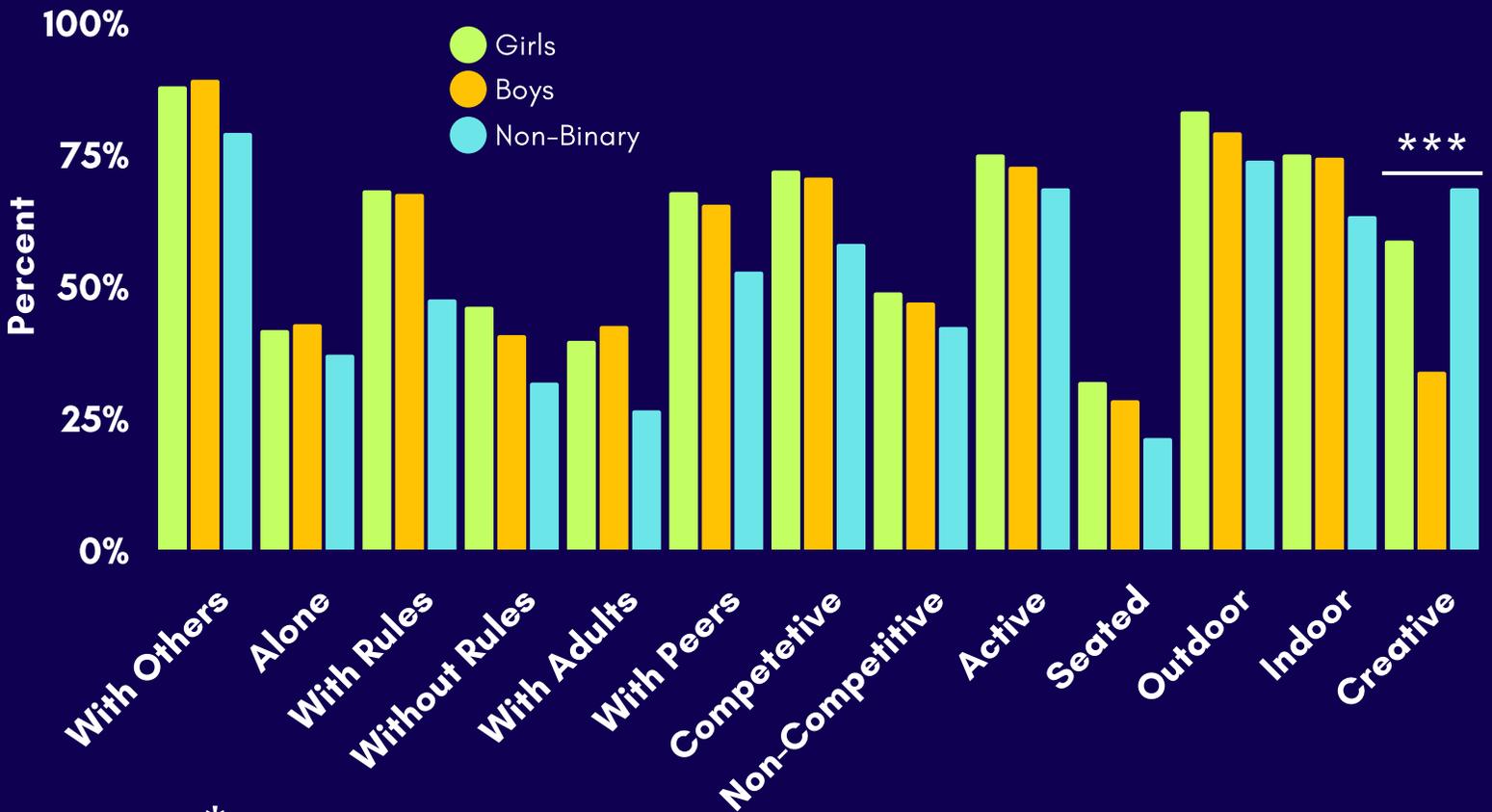
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Other categories youth identified included playing alone, playing outdoors, non-challenging/non-academic activities, simple and clear rules, and mindless fun.

There were statistically significant differences between genders for challenge, sportsmanship, creativity, and interest. Boys more likely to name challenge and skill as making an activity playful ($p = .013$) while girls were more likely to report creative or imaginative aspects as playful ($p = .058$). Girls were more likely to emphasize the need for sportsmanship, kindness, and fair play ($p = .021$) than were boys. Non-binary students more frequently stated that the activity had to be of interest to them ($p = .005$) than did boys or girls.

The only statistically significant difference among age groups in reports of what makes an activity playful was again seen in creative play. Ten and eleven year olds were the most likely to report creativity or imagination as contributing to a playful activity while twelve and thirteen year olds were the least likely ($p < .001$).

04 How I like to play



* p < .05. ** p < .01 *** p < .001

The most frequently reported play preference was outdoor play, followed by playing with peers or others. Students in this group preferred outdoor play to indoor play, and slightly preferred non-competitive to competitive play and playing with rules over playing without rules.

The only statistically significant difference between genders in types of play was in creative play with girls selecting that they liked creative play more frequently than boys ($p < .001$). There were no other gender differences between categories

There were some differences in play preferences between age groups. Ten and eleven year olds were slightly more likely to report that they like to play with others than were fourteen and fifteen year olds ($p = .029$), while the oldest group of youth were slightly more likely to report that they liked playing alone ($p = .027$). Ten and eleven year olds were also slightly more likely to report playing outside than were their oldest peers ($p = .054$).

time

- chores
- school
- homework
- work

people

- no one to play with
- cheaters/poor sports
- bullying
- judgement
- parents

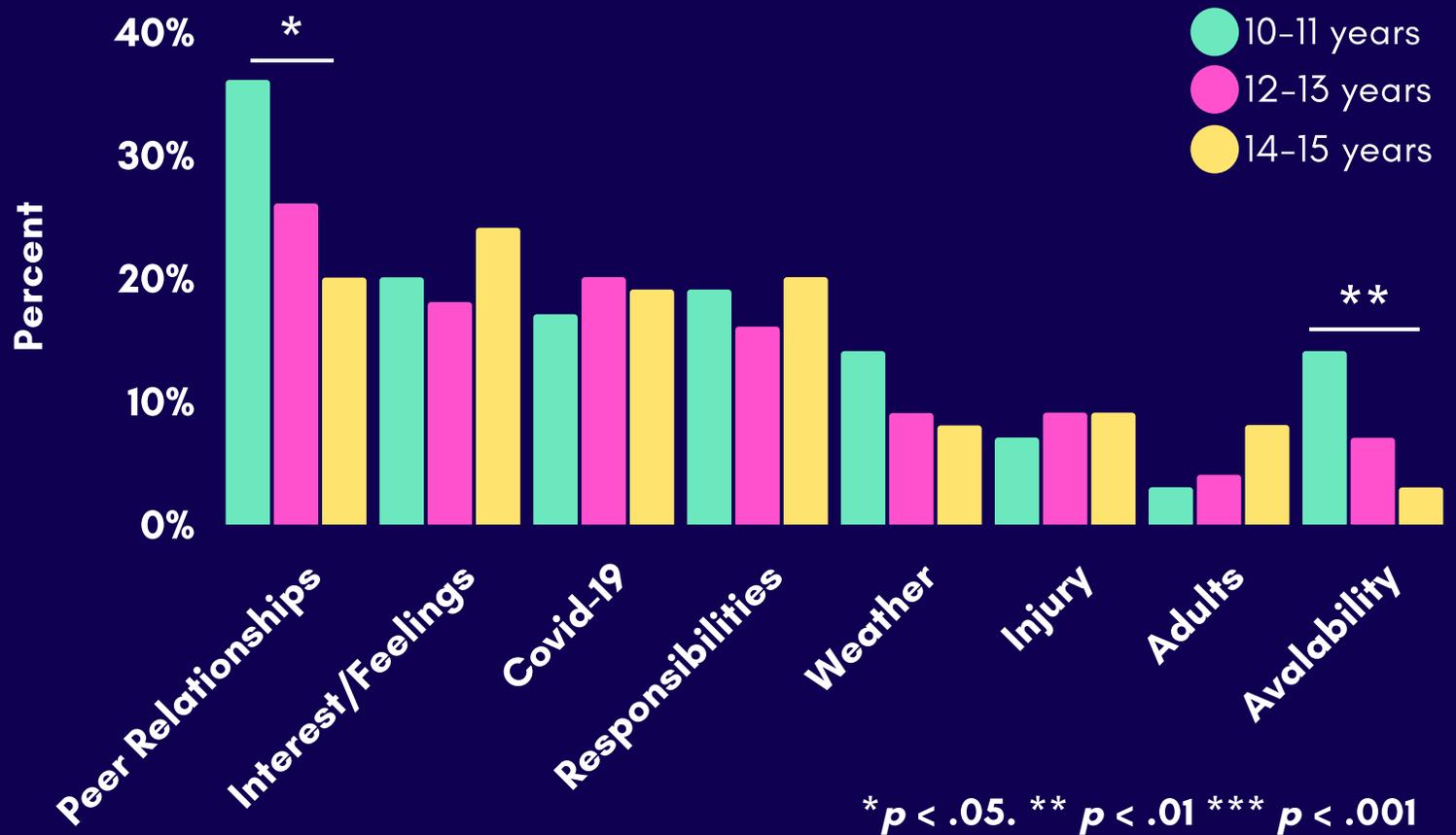
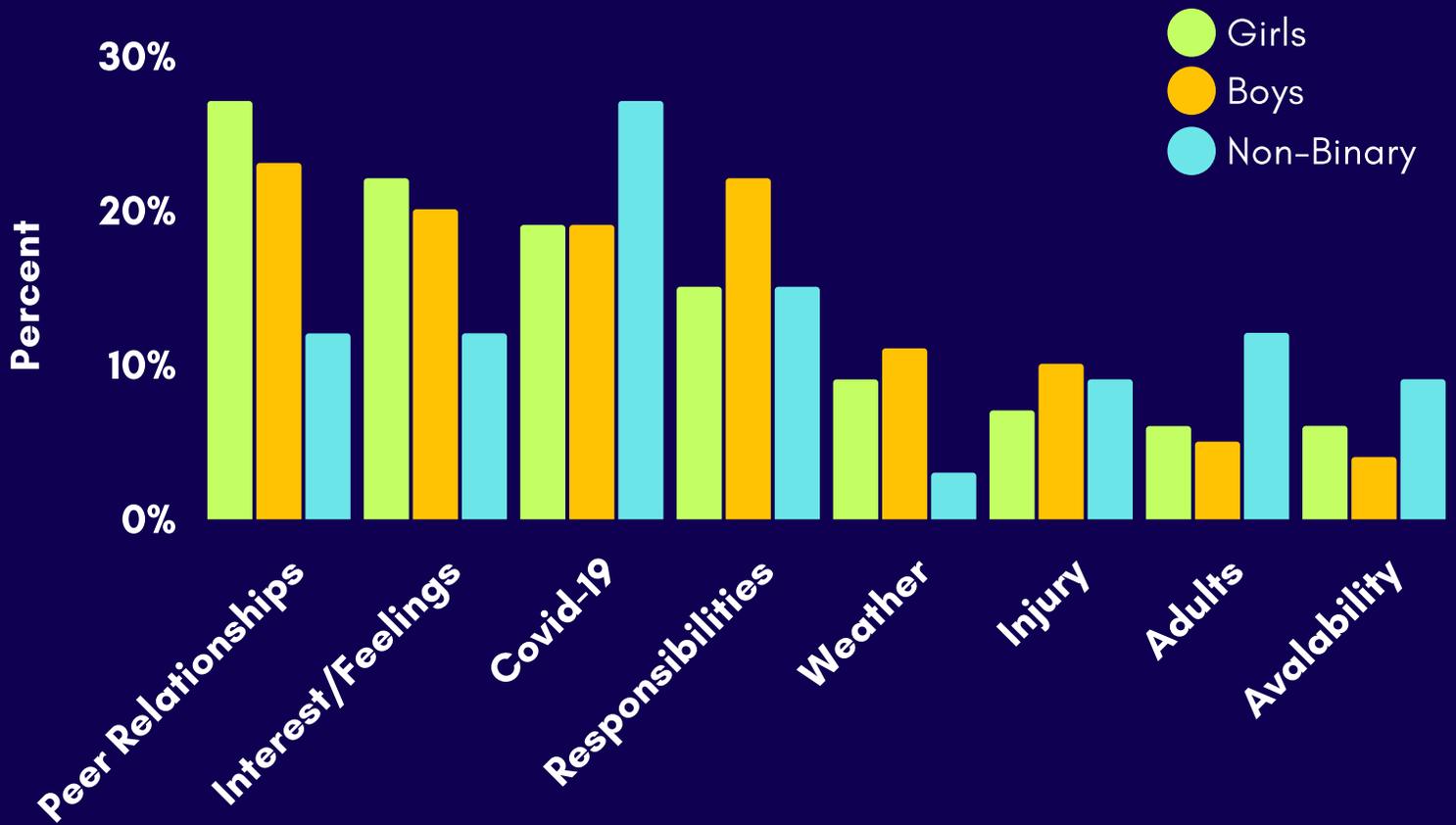
structure

- lack of enjoyment/fun
- too competitive
- unfair
- tired
- unclear rules

other

- Covid restrictions
- location
- lack of access
- parents
- mental health
- tired/exhaustion
- injuries
- weather

05 What stops or prevents me from playing



* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Other categories youth identified as interfering with play included health, mental health, style of play, and distractions of technology (phones, T.V., etc.)

There were no statistically significant gender differences in youth reports of what prevents them from playing.

Girls were more likely than both boys and non-binary students to report that peer relationships stopped or prevented them from playing ($p = .033$). Non-binary students were less likely than both boys and girls to report that peer relationships interfered with their ability to play ($p = .033$). Girls were more likely than non-binary students to report that availability interfered with their play, while non-binary students were less likely than both boys and girls to report that availability interfered with their play.

06 Ways I would like to see play incorporated into my classroom

page 14

get outside
more active, more
movement, less sitting

“Have brain breaks during class to re-gather myself and my thoughts so I can learn better”

“By teachers involving themselves.”

opportunities to
be creative
more art

more breaks
more fun and games that
still let us learn that are
active

“More interactive. More experiments, and more hands-on learning, not just from a book.”

“Having more interactions with other kids/students. Room for and celebration of individual creativity, getting to put my own ideas into how I do my work.”

Flex Fridays
options
free time

Make Learning an Adventure.

14-year-old participant

For more information please contact:

Vicki Hazelwood:

buildingbrainstogether@gmail.com

Frances Pope:

frances.pope@uleth.ca



University of
Lethbridge

