

### **GAA-CH Duine Evaluation:**

In order to evaluate this programme questionnaires were given to the parents/guardians and the participants themselves. Upon induction in week one, a pre-programme evaluation form was given to all to complete. Subsequently, in week nine, all parents and participants were asked to complete a post-programme review in an effort to measure the outcome and effectiveness. These questionnaires contained a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions in the hope of establishing a baseline and providing parents and participants the opportunity to best communicate any constructive feedback.

With an initial group of twenty confirmed interested parties, upon commencement, approximately fifteen attended the induction. A core group of thirteen regulars emerged with an average attendance of approximately eleven. Of this group, eight parents and six participants completed their evaluative questionnaires. An important point of note is that parents reported that incompleteness of their child's evaluations was due to lack of insight and inability to understand the forms.

### **Parent/Guardian Questionnaires:**

Prior to the initiative parents were asked what they were hoping to get for their child out of this service. Predominantly, parents reported GAA skill acquisition, social skills (including turn-taking), and opportunities for engagement/participation. Six out of eight parents rated their child's level of physical activity engagement at five or above out of ten. However when asked to rate their child's ability in GAA, the average score was just four and a half, despite high levels of reported physical activity engagement e.g. five of the participants were engaged in other sports at the time.

After the initiative concluded, all parents reported that it facilitated the achievement of their goals fully and that they were extremely satisfied with the service (average 9.5 out of 10). Also, all parents reported that they would re-engage in the service if it were to be re-run. Finally parents were asked to re-rate their child's level of ability in GAA. All parents, except one reported improvement in their child's level of ability in GAA. Interestingly, it would appear as though there is a correlation between level of engagement in the service and improvement in terms of ability. The only parent not reporting improvement in their child's level of ability, also reported the lowest level of engagement of all returned evaluations.

### **Participant Questionnaires:**

Participants were initially asked why they wanted to play GAA. These reasons included the following:

- Helping to mix with their peers
- Enjoying sport in general and
- Having an interest in GAA from playing it previously

Participants goals included wanting to improve their GAA skill (goal scoring being the most common), learning social skills and and gaining confidence. Finally, participants were asked to rate their own ability both in hurling and gaelic football. All participants rated their hurling ability below five and their football ability averaged at approximately five out of ten.

Having completed the four weeks of hurling and four weeks of football, the participants were also asked to fill out an evaluative questionnaire. All participants reported achieving their goals set out in week one and all stated they wished to continue playing sports in the future. When asked to report their level of enjoyment out of ten, the average was nine and a half with the reported favourite parts including scoring in penalty shootouts, playing with others and getting help from coaches.

### **Discussion:**

Completing this evaluation, has also helped highlight areas which could be improved within the service. Throughout the weeks of the service the average ratio of participants to coaches was 3:2. The evaluation highlighted that this ratio was satisfactory however, parents reported that instruction may have been better given from the individual group leader as opposed to centrally from the overall session facilitator. Also, it was pointed out that allowing for parent involvement at times in order to better facilitate future engagement at home may have been beneficial.

Fun and enjoyment are essential components in all sport, particularly at a young age. This programme's focus was on engagement as opposed to the traditional competitive element associated with GAA. This conception assisted in optimally facilitating enjoyment as it removed unwanted pressures on participants. It allowed participants to engage freely without fear of failure and thus gain the necessary basic skills to fully enjoy the sports. An example of this can be seen in the programme's use of penalty shoot-outs, which gave all a chance to take penalties and if they wished, go in goal. This format was non-competitive as coaches attempted to ensure all participants were cheered after shooting and were given chances to score. Evidence in support of this format, as above, is outlined in the programme evaluation denoting the penalty shoot out as one of the most desirable aspects. This is possibly as it gave participants the best chance to reach their goals.

Overall the data reveals that this programme was effective. The results of the evaluation denote that, from both a participant and a parental perspective, the programme fully facilitated goal achievement and skill development, among other things. This shows that the programme allows all participants to realise their own subjective objectives. This supports the notion that this programme is a worthwhile venture.

In conclusion, the programme's effectiveness could also be displayed in the fact that all participants and parents evaluated the programme and outlined it as worth doing again. Regardless of progression, goals, level of engagement or level of ability, all parties reported this programme as something they would like to re-engage in. As such, it is clear from the data that this initiative was a thoroughly worthwhile venture and also that there is value in replication.