NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

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Advisor: Susan Ray-Degges, Ph.D., FASID, MN-CID, FIDEC
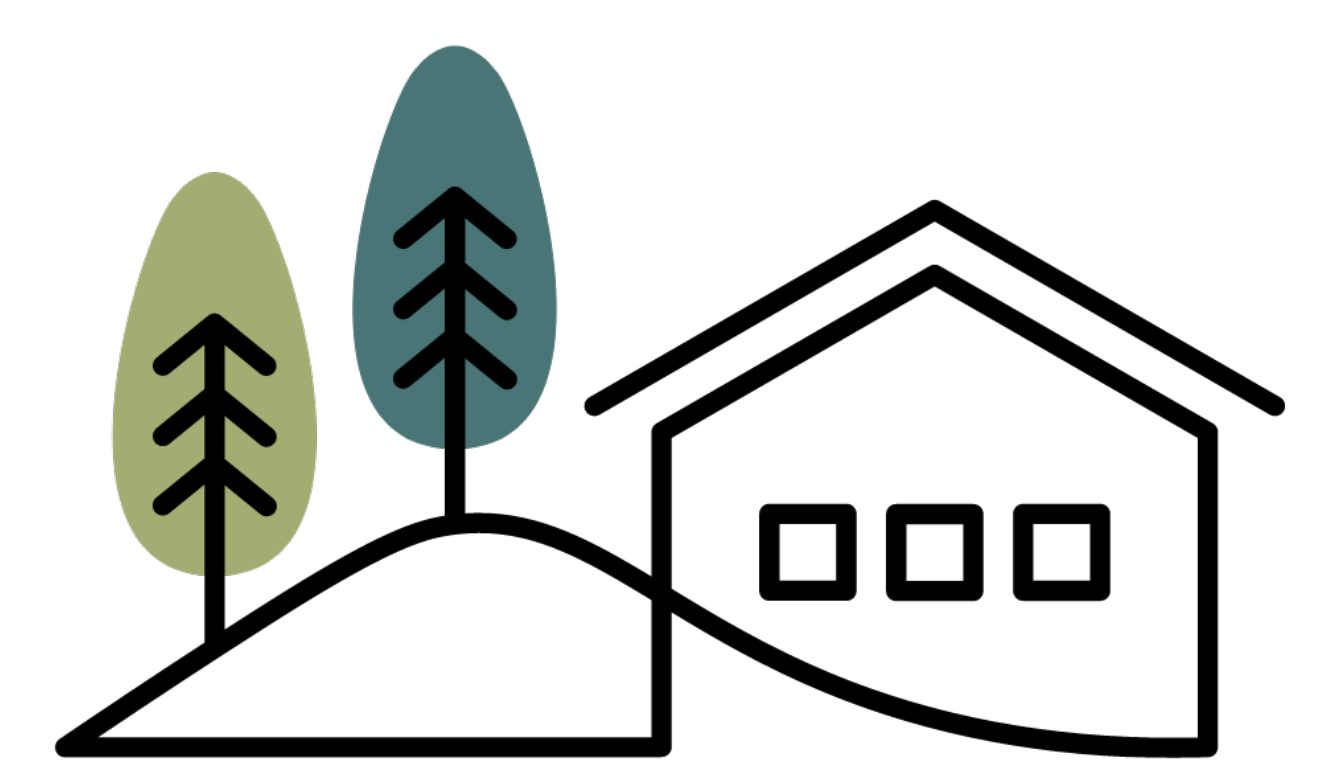Apparel, Merchandising, Interior Design, and Hospitality
Management Department

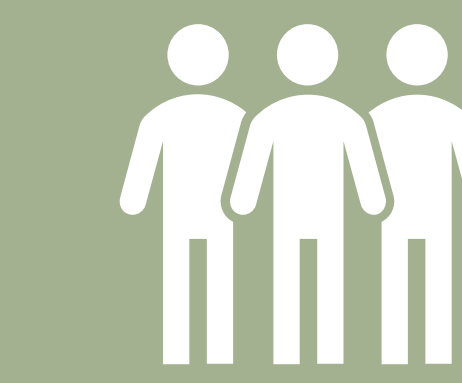# Family and Guest Perceptions in Family Centered Care

Abstract.

Family centered care facilities are integral to the success of patient/family healing by "providing "normalcy" and a respite from the intensity of the hospital experience [that] can reduce the extreme psychological stress of having a critically ill or injured child in the hospital" (Lantz et al., 2014, p. 1). It is important to understand how the interior of family centered care facilities can facilitate social support, aid in stress reduction, and alleviate mental health issues through interior design. The focus of this study includes family and guest perceptions on the interior design of these facilities and how design influences guest experiences. Using an online survey, families and guests who have utilized a Ronald McDonald House(RMH) in Fargo and Minneapolis were invited to participate in the study. After analysis of the data, it was found that interior amenities were important to participant mental health, wellbeing, and social support. Results indicate that the most preferred interior amenities include large community kitchens, large lounge areas, game/TV rooms, and outdoor lounge/play spaces.
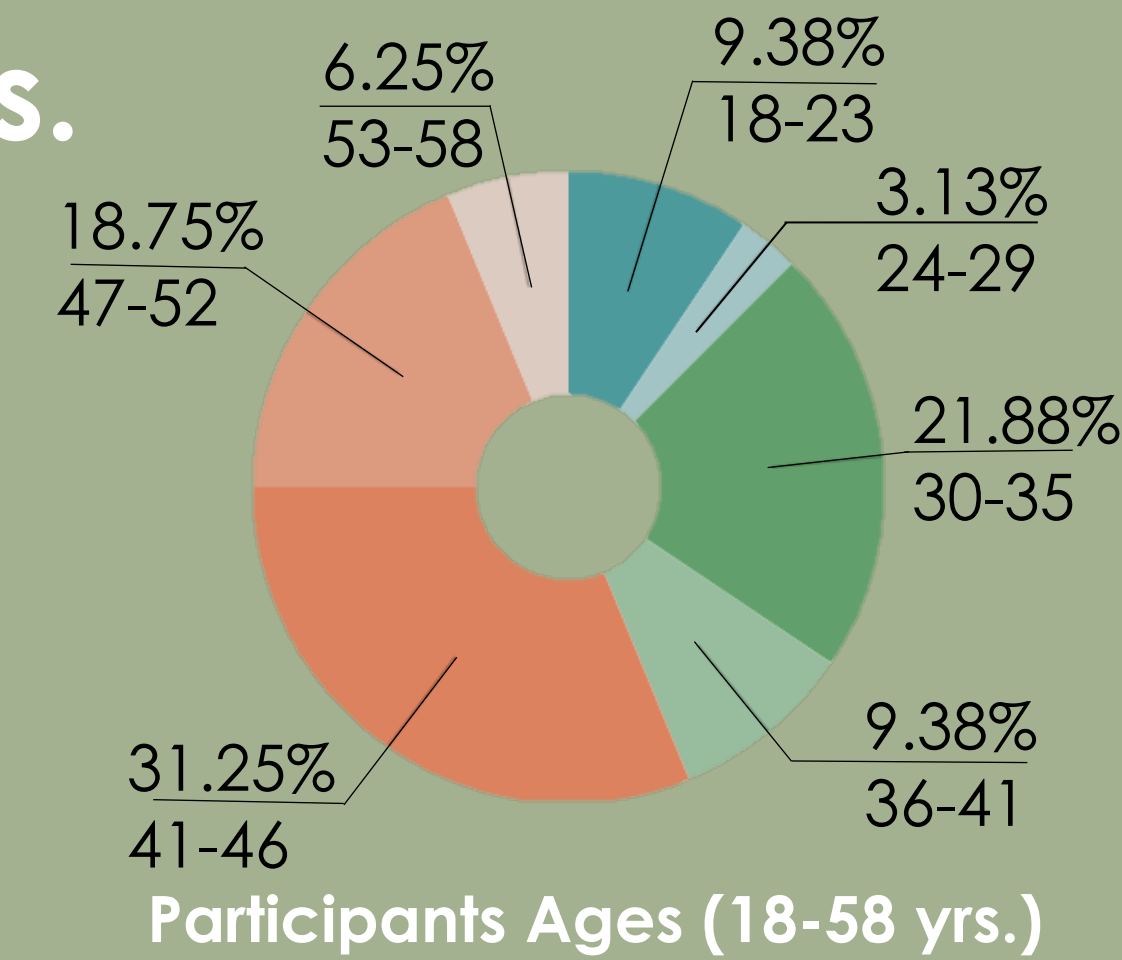
Methodology.

To better understand the needs of families' utilizing family centered care, an online survey was distributed to the Ronald McDonald Houses (RMH) of Fargo and Minneapolis to be dispersed among family members/guests who had stayed at the respective locations and were 18 years of age or older. The survey was used to collect complex information about preference of interior design applications within a Ronald McDonald House. The survey included open and close ended questions, some of which were Likert Scale and multiple choice. Questions with visual elements were also included where participants were asked color preference within family centered care. The survey was open for 4 weeks.

Participants.

39 | Total
25% | Male
75% | Female

Participants Ages (18-58 yrs.)

- 6.25% 53-58
- 9.38% 18-23
- 3.13% 24-29
- 21.88% 30-35
- 18.75% 47-52
- 9.38% 36-41
- 31.25% 41-46

Review of Literature.

Mental Health: "People feel better and have better mental health when they can control their surroundings. When opportunities for control over the environment are thwarted, helplessness can occur" (Evans, 2003, p. 544).

Social Support: "Providing social support from peers and other types of coping interventions reduces stress and depression and increases knowledge and confidence, which in turn improves parental participation in the care and support of their child" (Lantz et al., 2014, p. 2).

Guest Experience: "The facility should be organized into two areas: the public and the private. Families staying at the house have a need for solitude at some times and a need for interaction at other times" (Livingstone, 2003, p. 36).

Stress Reduction: "Family accommodation that includes lodging, food, laundry and childcare and other services can reduce some of the financial burdens and the accompanying stress" (Lantz et al., 2015, p. 384).

Results.

**Figure 1 | Color Preference of a Reception Space**

Light Neutrals 22.58%   Rich Color/Texture 19.35%   **Colorful/Playful 58.06%**

Figure 2 | Color Preference in Private Rooms

Light Neutrals 19.35%   Rich Color/Texture 38.71%   **Colorful/Playful 41.94%**

Figure 3 | Top Amenity Spaces

1 | Large Community Kitchen (20.16%)
2 | Large Lounge Areas (14.52%)
3 | Game/TV Room (10.48%)

Figure 4 | Duration of Participants' Longest Stay At the Ronald McDonald House

- 12.90% Less than a week
- 19.35% 1-4 week(s)
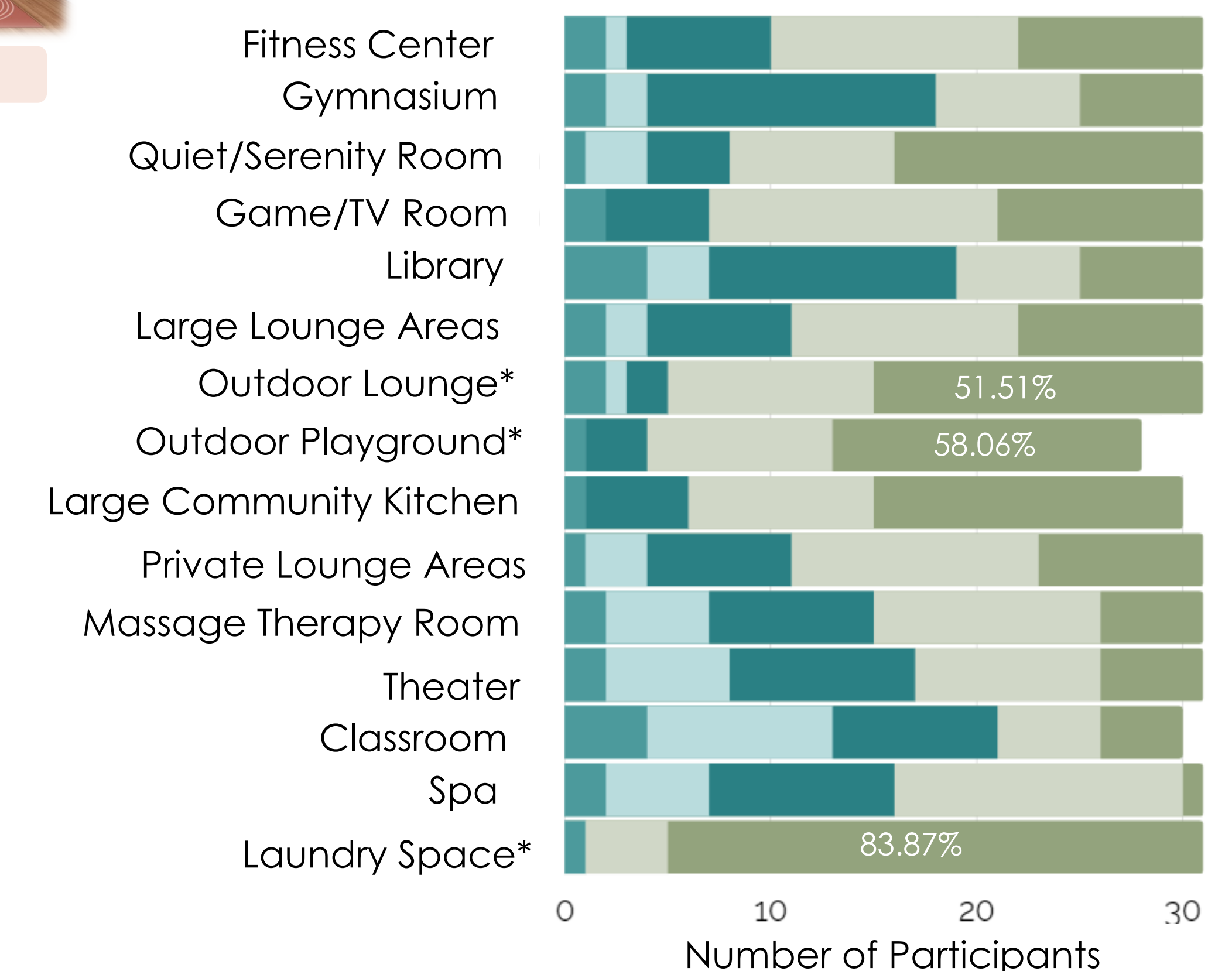- 51.16% 1-6 month(s)
- 16.13% 6 months to 1 year
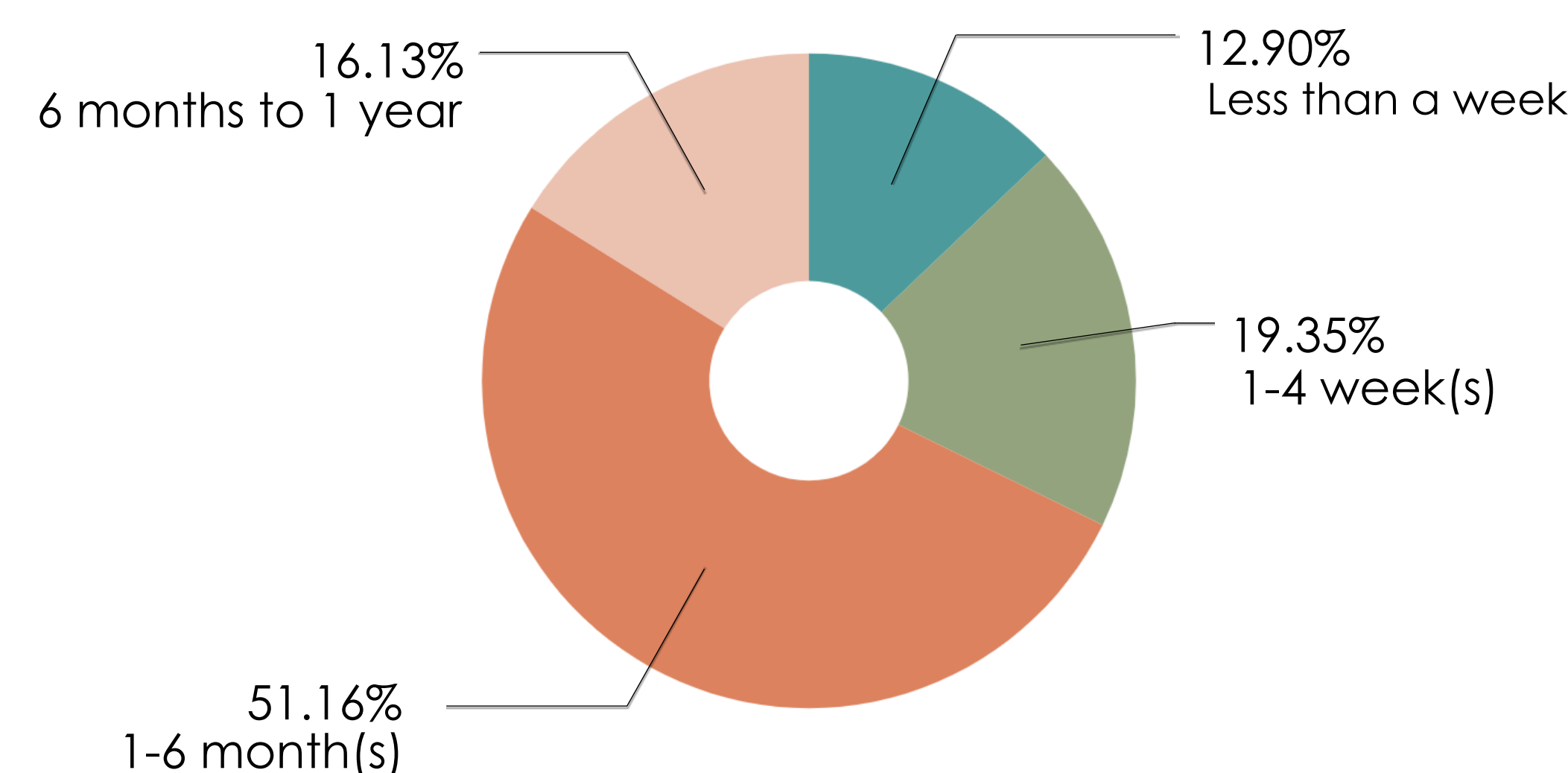
Family Quotes.

"If [The Ronald McDonald House] wouldn't have been an option, our family would've felt so much more torn apart, in a really difficult time" (E. Anderson, personal interview, September 20, 2022).

"I would definitely rather stay there than have to worry about a hotel because usually it's a lot closer to the hospital. You want to be as close to your child as you possibly can" (A. Bittner, personal interview, September 23, 2022).

Figure 5 | Importance of Amenity Spaces to Participants Mental Health & Wellbeing

Legend: Very Unimportant | Unimportant | Neutral | Important | Very Important

Categories: Fitness Center, Gymnasium, Quiet/Serenity Room, Game/TV Room, Library, Large Lounge Areas, Outdoor Lounge*, Outdoor Playground*, Large Community Kitchen, Private Lounge Areas, Massage Therapy Room, Theater, Classroom, Spa, Laundry Space*

Outdoor Lounge* 51.51%
Outdoor Playground* 58.06%
Laundry Space* 83.87%

Number of Participants

Discussion.

Meaning: Results of the study suggest that the physical environment is important in promoting socialization, wellness, comfort, and security for families. Responses were received from the age range of 18-58 years, with the greatest number of respondents between the age ranges of 30-35(21.88%) and 41-46(31.25%) years of age. When asked about the duration of their longest stay at the RMH, it was found that most participants were at the facility for at least 1-6 months(51.16%), making this an extended stay residence (Figure 4). Participants utilized several amenities during their time at the RMH, but it was found that the large community kitchen (20.16%), large lounge areas(14.52%), and game/tv room(10.48%) were most important to their stay (Figure 3). When asked to identify a color preference they would like to experience within a family center care facility, the majority of respondents preferred a colorful/bright color palette for both public areas (58.06%) and private rooms (41.94%) within the space (Figures 1 & 2). Mental health was an important aspect of our survey because of the unique stressors and responsibilities participants face. When asked which amenities most positively affected their mental health and wellbeing, it was seen that the laundry space(83.87%), outdoor playground area(58.06%), and outdoor lounge space(51.51%) were very important (Figure 5). Through the data it was seen that interior amenities were important to participant mental health, wellbeing, and social support. It was also found that color preference was important to the overall satisfaction within family centered care.

Weaknesses: A limited amount of data was able to be analyzed with only 39 responses in this study from primarily the Midwest region.

Recommended: For future research it would be pertinent to gather information from a larger number of respondents in a variety of different regions throughout the United States. Providing the survey to a wider range of people that have previously stayed at the Ronald McDonald House would have advanced the results of our research.

References.

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