

### INTRODUCTION

*You're With Us* helps to create and facilitate opportunities for young adults with disabilities. *You're With Us* is a non-profit organization and provides services through the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Following a meeting with prospective program participants, the organization creates an individualized supportive behavior plan that helps program participants meet individualized goals. *You're With Us* provides young adults with disabilities the opportunity to join and engage within their community. A main goal of this community-based organization is to facilitate mentoring opportunities between college students and young adults with disabilities to help provide a critical sense of inclusion helping them to thrive in the communities in which they work and live.

### INTERNSHIP PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this project is to determine which activities to include in summer programming based upon feedback from *You're With Us* program participants. Participants were surveyed using the Summer Assessment Preference Tool to best determine preferences for activities that they feel would be most beneficial to them. It is hoped that feedback received will help increase participation and satisfaction in the summer program activities.

### RELATED LITERATURE

According to Ross-Gordon (2024), learning disabilities are lifelong pervasive cognitive limitations that can make it difficult to perform typically with arithmetic, executive functioning, communicating verbally, and engaging in appropriate social interactions (Ross-Gordon, 2024).

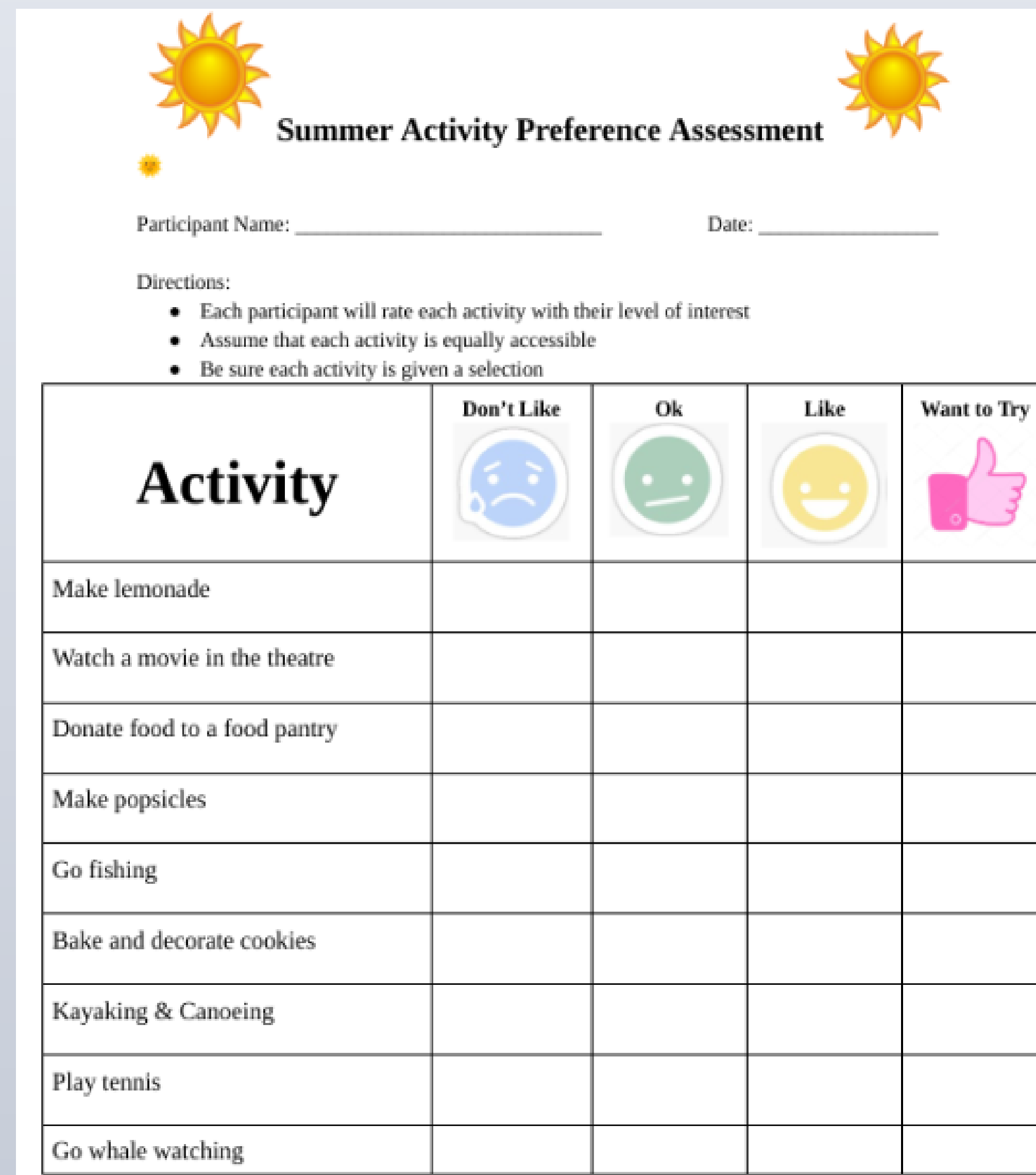
Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is one of the most diagnosed neurodevelopmental disorders that is denoted by having distinctive traits such as atypical social behaviors, limited interests, repetitive behavior, and verbal and nonverbal communication preferences. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can affect people's ability to function cognitively, intellectually, and verbally. (APA PsycNet, n.d.)

A preference assessment is an essential tool to meet the needs of adults with disabilities; preference assessments help strengthen motivation and participation in different offered activities (Preference Assessments | EBIP, n.d.).

### MATERIALS & METHODS

Create a Summer Activity Preference Assessment Tool (see below)

- Administer Summer Activity Preference Assessment Tool to program participants
- Analyze the data
- Present data to staff and participants
- Implement activities that program participants most want included in summer programming.



**Summer Activity Preference Assessment**

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions:

- Each participant will rate each activity with their level of interest
- Assume that each activity is equally accessible
- Be sure each activity is given a selection

Activity	Don't Like	Ok	Like	Want to Try
Make lemonade				
Watch a movie in the theatre				
Donate food to a food pantry				
Make popsicles				
Go fishing				
Bake and decorate cookies				
Kayaking & Canoeing				
Play tennis				
Go whale watching				



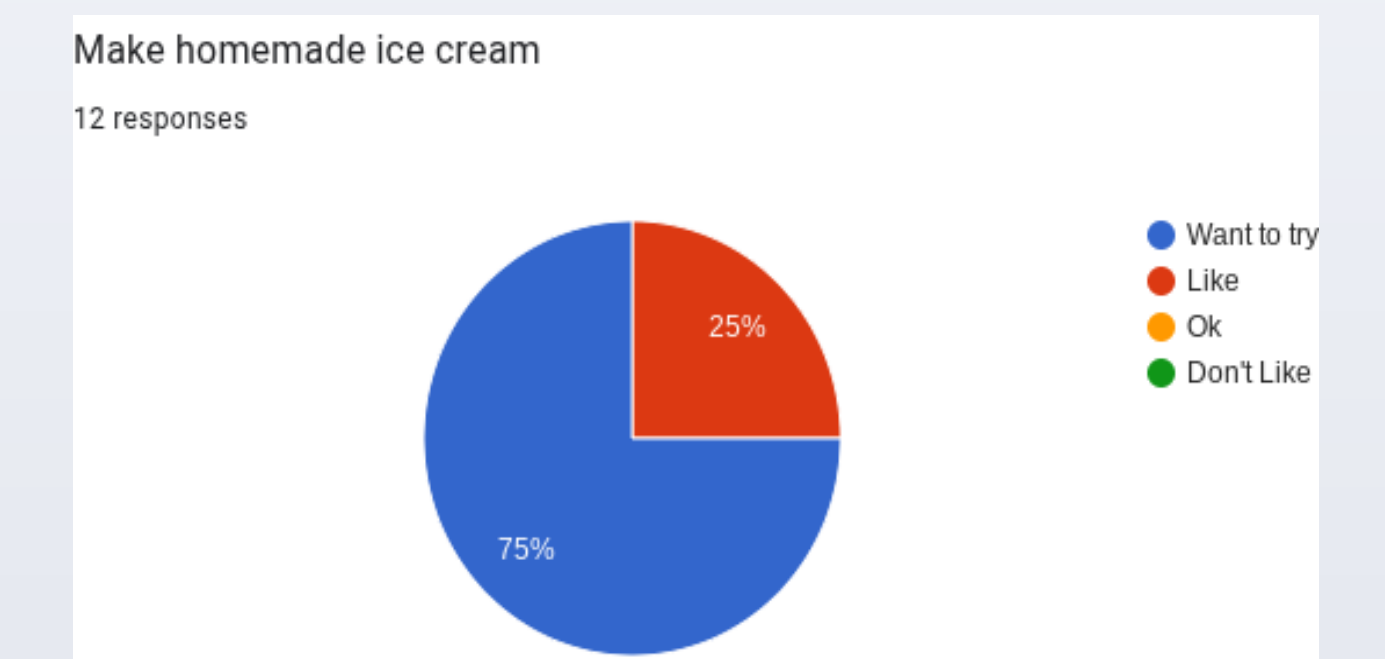
### RESULTS

The Summer Preference Assessment Tool was utilized the DEN Program and got twelve responses.

#### Preferred Activities

Over 50% selecting 'Want to Try':

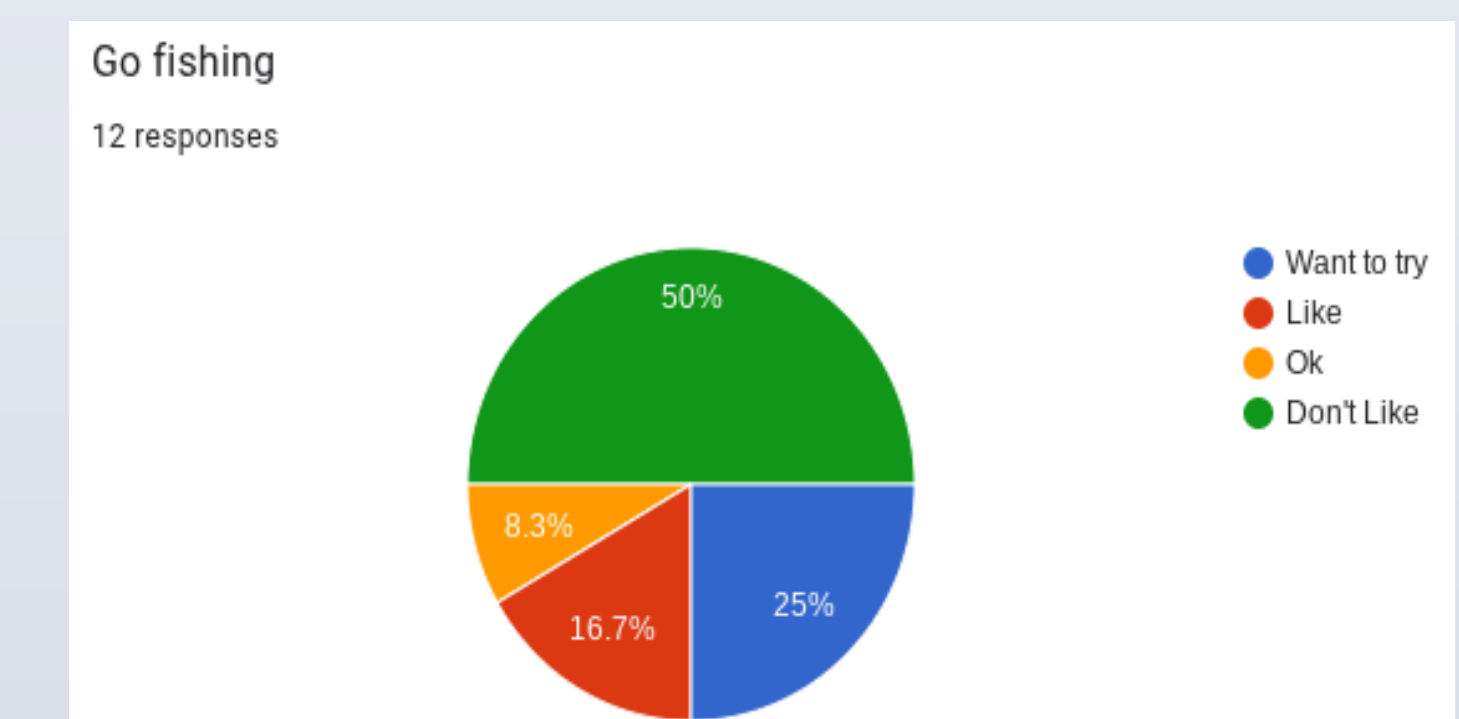
- Visit Barnes & Noble with a Starbucks
- Make homemade ice cream
- Go out for ice cream
- Walk in nature
- Walk in downtown Salem
- Visit the Peabody Essex Museum
- Bowling
- Visit the local mall



#### Non-Preferred Activities

Over 50% selecting 'Don't Like':

- Go fishing
- Make and play hopscotch
- Crocheting and knitting



The last part of the assessment asked, 'Are there any activities that interest you that were not provided, if so please list them?' The responses included, waterpark, barbecue, train spotting at Forest Hill, Lynch Park playground, Endicott Park, Crane Beach, Patriot's training camp, Kitty Café, and swimming.

### CONCLUSIONS

The participants enjoyed being given the opportunity to voice their preferences to inform summer programming options that meet their needs. There was a trend within the data that pointed to most participants preferring to do activities in the community as opposed to doing activities in the DEN. All the food and drink preparation activities were highly preferred including making lemonade, fruit popsicles, iced coffee, and homemade ice cream.

### REFERENCES

- APA PsycNet. (n.d.). <https://psycnet.apa.org/fulltext/2025-58450-001.html>
- Preference Assessments | EBIP. (n.d.). <https://ebip.vkcsites.org/preference-assessments/>
- Ross-Gordon, J. M. (2024). Learning disabilities and the adult learner. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.20542>
- You're with us! (n.d.). You're With Us! <https://www.yourewithus/>

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

- Joanne Carlson** - Faculty Advisor  
**Nicole Kraus** - Site Supervisor  
**Zachary Weidner** - Site Supervisor  
**Abby Eskenas** - Board Certified Behavior Analyst