

Early Years resources evaluation: reactions and reach



Overview

Introduction

Methodology (part 1)

Methodology (part 2)

Results: booklet views and downloads (part 1)

Results: booklet views and downloads (part 2)

Results: booklet orders

Results: professional learning modules (part 1)

Results: professional learning modules (part 2)

Discussion (part 1)

Discussion (part 2)

Discussion (part 3)

Recommendations



Overview

eSafety's Early Years program aims to assist the very youngest Australians to have safe and enjoyable experiences online.

Recognising that Australian children under five have ready access to the online world (eSafety, 2019) and so face a number of risks, eSafety developed a set of resources to help parents, carers and educators to discuss and promote online safety for this at-risk group. These new resources, released in 2020, include a booklet designed for parents titled [Online safety for under 5s](#) (the booklet) and four [online professional learning modules](#) (the modules) designed for educators.

As part of its commitment to continuous improvement, eSafety conducted an internal and external evaluation of these resources to gain insight into their reach and impacts.

eSafety's evaluation, detailed in this report, analyses the booklet's reach with parents/carers of children under 5. It also looks at educators' immediate reactions to the modules and the number of educators that completed them.

[Synergistiq's evaluation](#) assesses the level of parental engagement with the booklet and practice change that occurred among early years educators after completing the modules.

Results

This report shows that the booklet more than met the evaluation's performance standards for reach and that early years educators had positive first impressions about the content. Educators also reported feeling positive about how applicable the modules are and the likelihood of them using this material. Specifically, this evaluation found that:

1. The Online Safety for Under 5s booklet had been viewed or downloaded 12,805 times
2. Organisations including preschools, community groups and primary schools ordered 26,519 hardcover booklets
3. There were 3,467 educators that completed, or were currently completing, a professional learning module as part of their training.

Recommendations

Report recommendations include that eSafety continue to offer online safety information in alternate formats such as in hard copy and digital formats. Also, that eSafety share online safety information through multiple channels including relevant stakeholder organisations.

Other recommendations include that eSafety look to provide the results from the post-completion surveys, or a summary of results from this evaluation, to give early years educators more information about the module's content, relevance and applicability.

eSafety's Early Years resources were developed after extensive consultations with subject matter experts, early years industry groups and in 13 workshops with early years educators, parents and carers in urban and regional centres across New South Wales and Victoria. The booklet, Online safety for under 5s, was developed as both an online and a hard copy resource that was distributed to early learning centres across Australia. A total of 11,570 booklets were delivered nationally with each early learning centre in metro areas receiving one booklet and those in regional areas receiving four. Centres could also choose to order additional copies.

The professional learning modules were freely available online, hosted on Early Childhood Australia's (ECA) [learning management platform](#) and directly accessible from eSafety's early years professional learning [web page](#).

Questions covered in this report are in Table 1.

Table 1: List of evaluation questions by resource

Resource	Question
Booklet	How many booklets were downloaded?
Booklet	How many booklets were ordered?
Booklet	What was parent's level of engagement with the booklet?
Booklet	What was the most effective booklet delivery method - hard copy or downloadable link?
Modules	How applicable was module content to teacher's classes?
Modules	How likely are teachers to implement online safety practices since completing the modules?
Modules	How many teachers completed the modules?
Modules	Which module was most popular among participants?

Methodology

Procedure

eSafety's evaluation questions were determined through a Delphi study with two rounds. Relevant staff were asked to provide five key questions they wanted the evaluation to address which were then ranked for their relative importance on a scale of 1 to 5. Only the five highest ranked questions for each resource were then pursued as part of the evaluation.

The booklet and the modules' use were then monitored against the questions for a period of six months from April 2020 across eSafety's website, the ECA's learning management hub, and the booklet printers' order tracking system. Two instruments were also developed to assist in this task: a pop-up survey appearing on eSafety's website to better understand the audience for the booklet and a survey for educators to complete immediately after using each of the modules.

Measures

The pop-up survey:

The pop-up survey sought responses to two statements. The first aimed to understand the booklet's audience. The second, to gain some insight as to how parents or carers had heard about the booklet. Table 2 highlights those statements and relevant response options.

Table 2: Pop-up survey questions

Topic	Question	Response options
Audience source	I heard about this book from	'My child's early childhood service centre' OR 'Other'
Audience type	I can best be described as	'An educator of a young child aged 0 to 5' OR 'A parent of a young child aged 0 to 5' OR 'A carer of a young child aged 0 to 5' OR 'Other'

The modules survey:

The modules survey asked participants to respond to 3 substantive statements/questions measuring their attitudes and reactions to the modules that they completed. Table 3 outlines the substantive survey topics. On the other hand, Table 4 shows the number of surveys completed overall and for each module.

Table 3: Module survey questions

Topic	Question	Response option
Applicability of online learning	The online learning is relevant to my work and setting	Five point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree
Likelihood that online learning will be used in future	How likely are you to use what you have learned in your workplace?	100 point scale
Module rating	How would you rate the learning module that you have just completed?	100 point scale

Table 4: Completed surveys per module

Module name	Number of survey responses	Survey respondents as a percentage of completed modules
Creating a Safe online environment	84	17%
We MAKE and DO using technology	131	26%
We SAY and SHARE with technology	258	31%
We WATCH and EXPLORE with technology	168	39%
Total	641	28%

The evaluation rubric

An evaluation rubric – outlining relevant criteria and performance standards for this evaluation - was developed in consultation with eSafety staff. Relevant factors included the size of the potential target audience and reach of previous eSafety resources that had been targeted at parents of young children. Of particular importance were:

1. An estimated 1.2 million families with children under the age of 5 in 2013 (ABS 2015).
2. An estimated 30 to 34% of parents with children between the ages of 0 and 5 years old that looked for or received online safety information in 2018 (eSafety, 2019).
3. 1,266 downloads recorded in the five months to October for eSafety’s booklet: Online safety for parents and carers.

The target then became reaching around 1% of parents that might have previously looked for or received online safety information within the first six months of the booklet being available online. The details of the performance standards are outlined in the discussion's Table 10.

Data analysis

Given the limited number of survey items, the results did not extend beyond a descriptive statistical analysis of the data.

Booklet reach: views and downloads

Table 5 highlights the results of website monitoring to assess booklet views and downloads over a six-month period to September 2020. It shows the number of pop-up survey responses as a proportion of the total number of views and downloads.

Figure 1 shows the proportion of respondents who are part of the booklet's target audience—parents and carers of children under 5. Figure 2 shows the respondents who selected 'other' (as shown in Figure 1) and groups them into different categories. Table 6 is a table listing the location of pop-up survey respondents around the world.

Table 5: Number of downloads, views and pop-up survey responses in the 6 months to September 2020

Number of downloads	Number of views	Number of views and downloads	Number of pop-up responses	Pop-ups as percentage of views and downloads	Percentage booklet access from early education centre referral
3,149	9,656	12,805	1,727	13%	7%

Figure 1: Identity of pop-up respondents as a percentage of total number of respondents

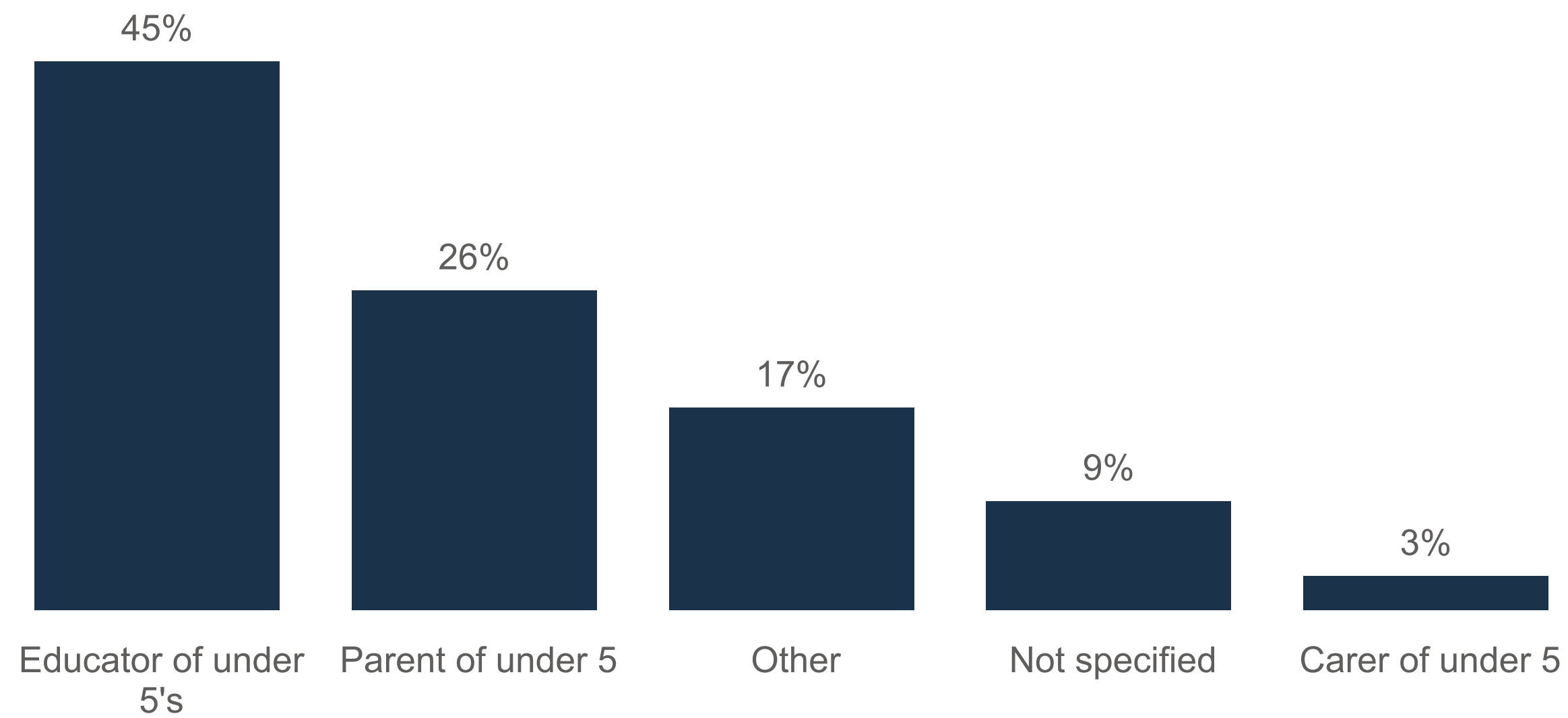


Figure 2: Reclassifications as a percentage of total number of 'Other' respondents

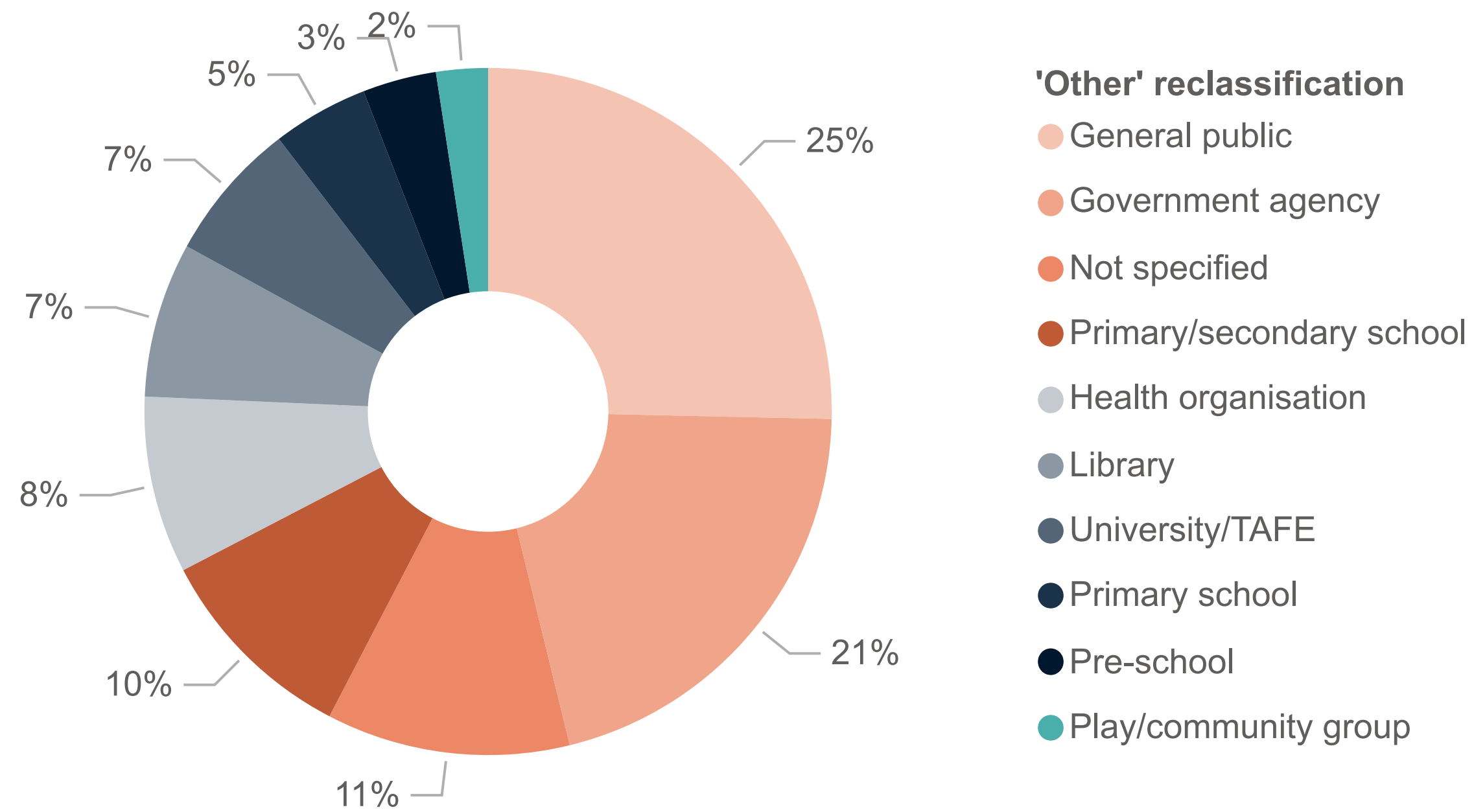


Table 6: Number of pop-up respondents by country

No responses	Location
1634	Australia
17	United Kingdom
14	United States of America
8	India
6	Singapore
6	United Arab Emirates
4	New Zealand
3	China
3	Philippines
2	Canada
2	Hong Kong
2	Hungary
2	Ireland
2	Mexico
2	Portugal
2	Spain
2	Thailand
2	Turkey
1	Austria
1	Brazil
1	Iceland
1	Italy
1	Lebanon
1	Malaysia
1	Morocco
1	Myanmar
1	Netherlands
1	Peru
1	Qatar
1	South Africa
1	Taiwan

Booklet orders

Table 7 shows the total number of hard copy booklets that were ordered around the country as well as the average and median number of booklets delivered per order. Figure 3 identifies the type of organisations that made the order as a proportion of the total number of orders. Table 8 instead shows the number of ordered booklets by the state where that order originated from. The highest number of orders came from New South Wales, followed by Victoria and Queensland.

Table 7: Total number of booklets ordered in the six months to September 2020

Number of ordered booklets	Average number of ordered booklets	Median number ordered of booklets
26,519	43	20

Figure 3: Percentage of ordered booklets by stakeholder sector

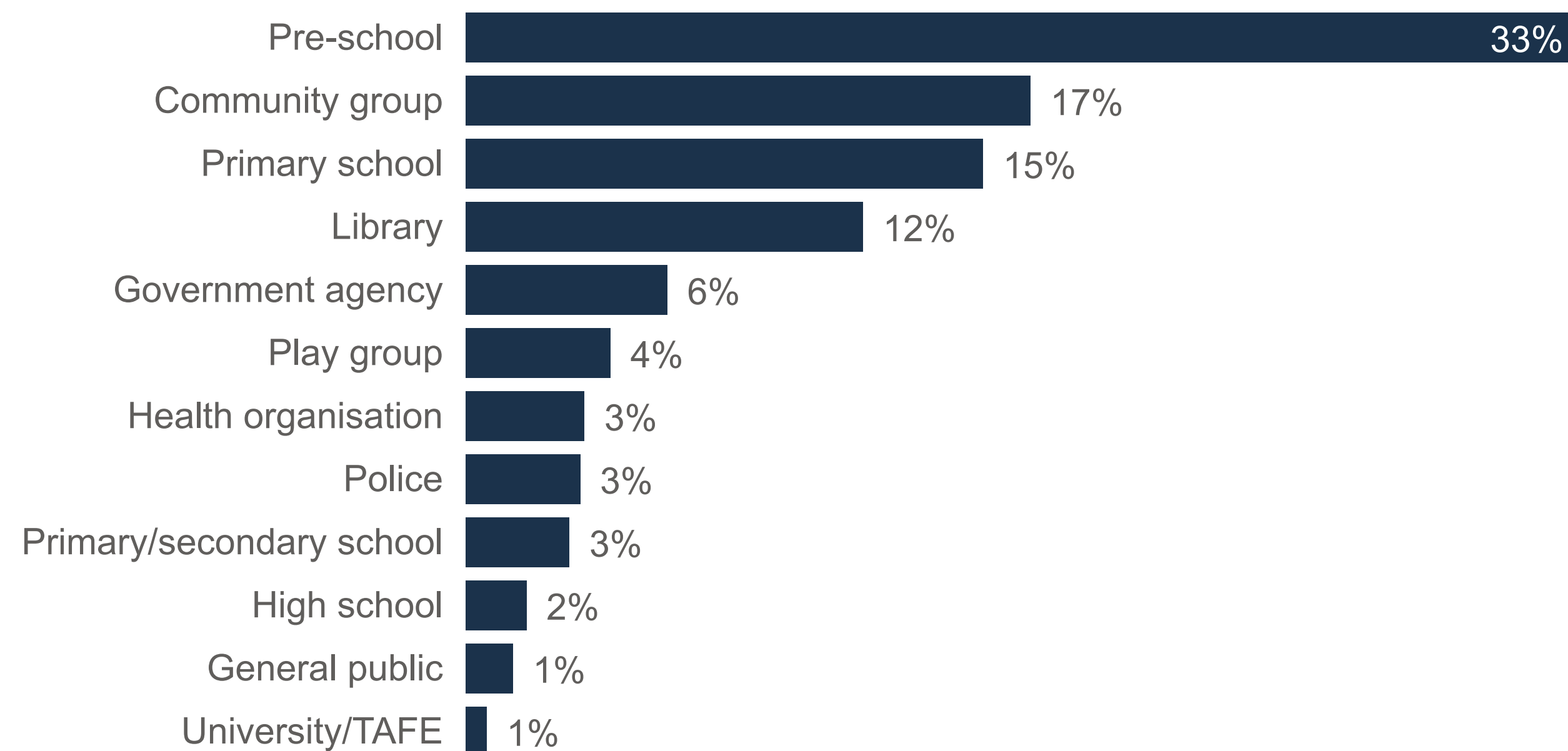


Table 8: Number of booklets ordered by state

State	Number of ordered booklets
NSW	7,485
VIC	6,219
QLD	4,048
WA	3,786
TAS	2,282
SA	2,265
ACT	274
NT	160
Total	26,519

Educator's reactions and completions: professional learning modules

Table 9 shows the number of completed and in progress modules in the six months to September 2020. Table 9 also highlights these as percentages of the potential number of people with access to the ECA's online learning hub. The average scores given by survey respondents to the question 'how relevant was what you learned in the module to your work context?' is shown in Figure 5. Figure 6 instead shows the average scores given by survey respondents to the question 'How likely are you to use what you have learned as part of your work?'

Table 9: Number of modules that were completed or in progress in the six months to September

Module name	Potential population (average total)	Completed	In progress	Completes as a percentage of potential population	In progress as a percentage of potential population	Completed or in progress as a percentage of potential population
We SAY and SHARE with technology	11,798	838	466	7%	4%	11%
Creating a Safe online environment	11,927	505	330	4%	3%	7%
We WATCH and EXPLORE with technology	11,902	428	229	4%	2%	6%
We MAKE and DO using technology	11,898	512	159	4%	1%	6%
Total	11,881	2,283	1,184	19%	10%	29%

Figure 5: Average relevance score after module completion (max score = 5)

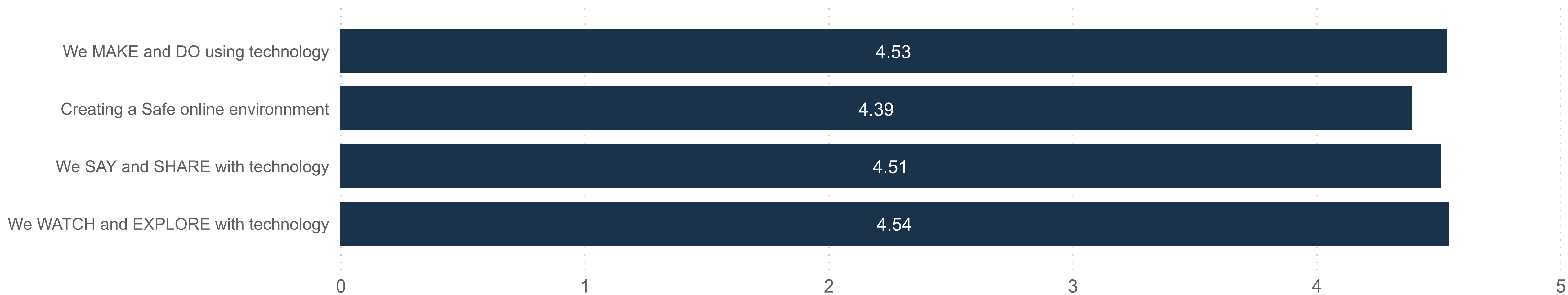
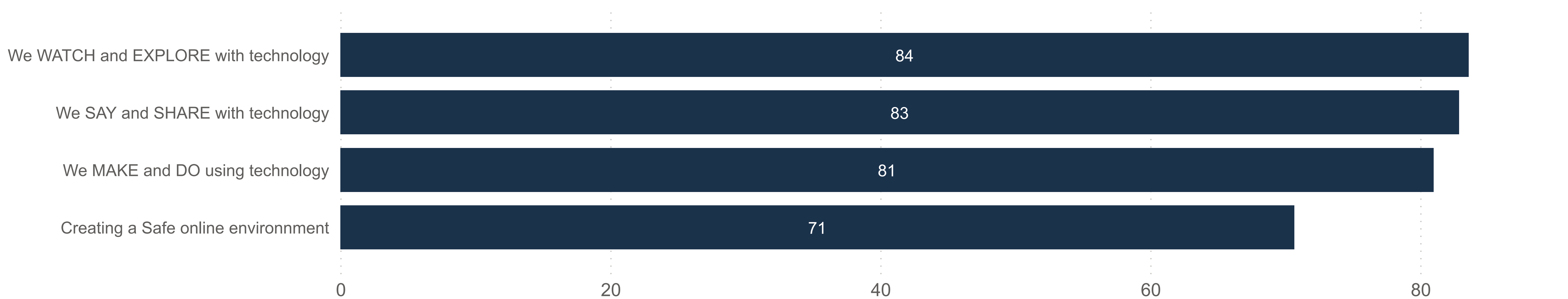


Figure 6: Average likely to use score after module completion (max score = 100)



Booklet reach: views, downloads and orders

This evaluation looked at the number of booklet orders, views and downloads as well as the most effective delivery method. How well the program met the performance standards for each criteria is highlighted in aquamarine in Table 10.

Table 10: Booklet evaluation rubric

Criteria	Excellent	Good/adequate ▼	Poor
Number of booklets ordered	1,500 or more	750–1,500	Less than 750
Number of downloads or views from eSafety website	1,500 or more	750–1,500	Less than 750
Proportion of parents primed to receive online safety information that received a hard copy booklet	0.8%–1% of parents (around 3,264–4,080 parents)	0.4%–0.8% of parents (around 3264–1,632 parents)	Less than 0.4% of parents (around 1,632 parents or less)
Proportion of parents primed to receive online safety information that downloaded or viewed the booklet	0.8%–1% of parents (around 3,264–4,080 downloads and/or views)	0.4%–0.8% of parents (3,264–1,632 downloads and/or views)	Less than 0.4% of parents (1,632 or less downloads and/or views)

Number of booklets ordered, viewed and downloaded. Performance standard met: Excellent

Website monitoring for the six months to September 2020 showed that there were 12,805 booklet views or downloads and 26,519 booklet orders. That is close to 9 times more than the performance criteria considered 'excellent' for views and downloads, and 18 times more than the 1,500 orders that were initially projected at the start of the program.

Proportion of parents and carers who viewed or downloaded the booklet. Performance standard met: Excellent

Of those who viewed or downloaded the booklet and completed the survey, 29% identified themselves as parents or carers of children under 5. When reflecting across the total number of views and downloads recorded in the six months to September 2020 (12,805), it means that 3,713 of them were from the booklet's target audience (+ or -2.6% margin of error). The program has therefore met its highest expectation for this performance standard.

Proportion of parents or carers who received a hard copy booklet. Performance standard met: Excellent

An excellent standard of performance was achieved for hard copy booklets based on the assumption that a proportion of the organisations that made the 26,519 orders passed them on to parents and carers. This assumption is strengthened by the work that these organisations do with parents and carers and by the large average number of booklets delivered for each order – 43.

Aside from meeting performance standards, results also highlight the interplay between the two booklet delivery methods.

As seen in Table 5, 7% of pop-up survey respondents downloaded or viewed the booklet online after an early learning centre referred them to the material. Early learning centres were recipients of an initial run of over 11,000 hard copy booklets and had the greatest number of orders, indicating that making booklets available in hard copy and digital formats improved its circulation overall.

Despite this, there was a clear preference for hard copy booklets (as shown in Table 5). More than twice as many had been ordered as had been viewed or downloaded in the six months to September 2020.

Educators' reactions and completions: professional learning modules

The number of modules completed and their relative popularity as well as the applicability and the relevance of its content. The six-month monitoring of in-progress and module completion rates on the ECA's training platform found that around 29% of those eligible had either attempted or completed a module (3,467 out of an on average 11,881 people). The most popular modules in order were:

1. We SAY and SHARE with technology
2. Creating a Safe online environment
3. We MAKE and DO using technology
4. We WATCH and EXPLORE with technology.

As these modules appear in the same order on [ECA's learning hub website](#), we could expect that website navigation convenience might have something to do with modules' relative popularity irrespective of how participants rated the content. For example, We WATCH and EXPLORE with technology had the lowest completion rates despite being the top-rated module for both parameters.

Overall, all modules were well regarded. Survey participants, reflecting on how likely they were to use what they had learned, gave each module a score of 80 out of 100 or above. Only those completing Creating a Safe online environment online module gave a lower score of 71 out of 100. That module was also the least favoured when it came to reflecting on how applicable the content was. Respondents gave a score of 4.39 out of 5 whereas other modules received scores above 4.5.

These generally strong results suggest that educators completing the modules are likely to find the resources applicable and will make use of what they learned as part of their work. This was true of the experience of a majority of evaluation participants, as noted in Synergistiq's evaluation report.

When looking across the modules, it is likely that Creating a Safe online environment suffered in comparison to others as it's aimed at early learning centre directors and managers rather than for those working in early years education more broadly. The module also advocates for changes at an organisational level, which can be challenging. In line with this, participants' most commonly stated reasons of what would prevent them from implementing what they learned in that module was: a lack of time, lack of training and the staff members existing technology skills.

Limitations

This evaluation faced a number of limitations.

Firstly, it was not possible to confirm whether organisations ordering booklets sent them to parents and carers. This was assumed for the purposes of this evaluation. Our conclusions would have been strengthened if a sample of the organisations making those hard copy booklet orders were surveyed to see if they had actually done so.

A second limitation was the lack of an evaluation framework for the professional learning modules. If this had been established, it would have allowed for the clearer assessment of the modules' performance and matched the assessment tool for the booklet.

Thirdly, the number of questions in the module's post-completion surveys were restricted. This has resulted in a limited understanding of participant's perceptions of the module's applicability and the likelihood that the information would be used in their future work. Asking more than one question for each topic would have added to the findings.

Recommendations

This program has shown that:

1. Distributing resources directly to key target audiences is an effective way to engage them and encourage use. In this case, distributing the booklet to early learning centres, which then shared with parent and carer communities, led to higher-than-expected booklet views and downloads and hard copy booklet orders.
2. Organisations including community groups, primary schools and libraries offer valuable links to target audiences for the early years booklet. When engaging with these stakeholders, it's important to consider the geographic concentration of previously delivered booklets. Priority should be placed on organisations in populous states where booklet orders have been lower than in other states.
3. Continued promotion of the professional learning modules for early years educators is important to ensure ongoing engagement. This includes reviewing in-progress and completion rates on ECA's learning hub. Changing the order in which the modules appear at regular intervals (every 6 months) is advised. Summarising results of this evaluation on ECA's learning hub would also be useful as would a note about the preferred audience for each module at launch point so users can identify relevant content.

References

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