

## BACKGROUND

- Cerebral palsy (CP) is associated with activity limitations.
- Adolescents with CP may face significant barriers to participation in physical activity (PA).
- There is limited research on the factors that help or hinder physical activity performance in youth with CP from across the functional spectrum.

## PURPOSE

- To consult with youth with CP and their parents to identify what they perceive as barriers and facilitators to PA in order to inform the design of a physical activity intervention.

## METHODS

- Parent and youth focus groups were conducted separately at 6 children's treatment centres in south-western Ontario. Interested people who were not able to attend a focus group participated in a telephone interview.
- Digital audio recordings of the conversations were transcribed and coded using a content analysis approach in QSR NVivo 9 software.

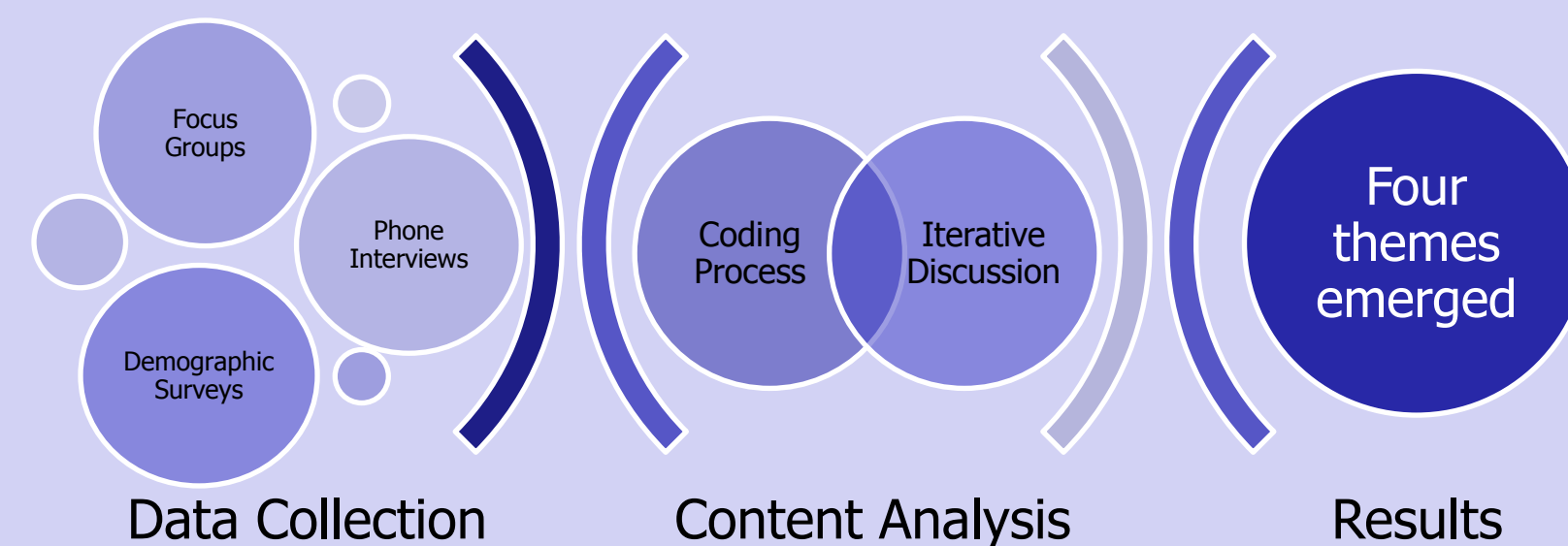


Table 1. Participant Characteristics (17 families represented)

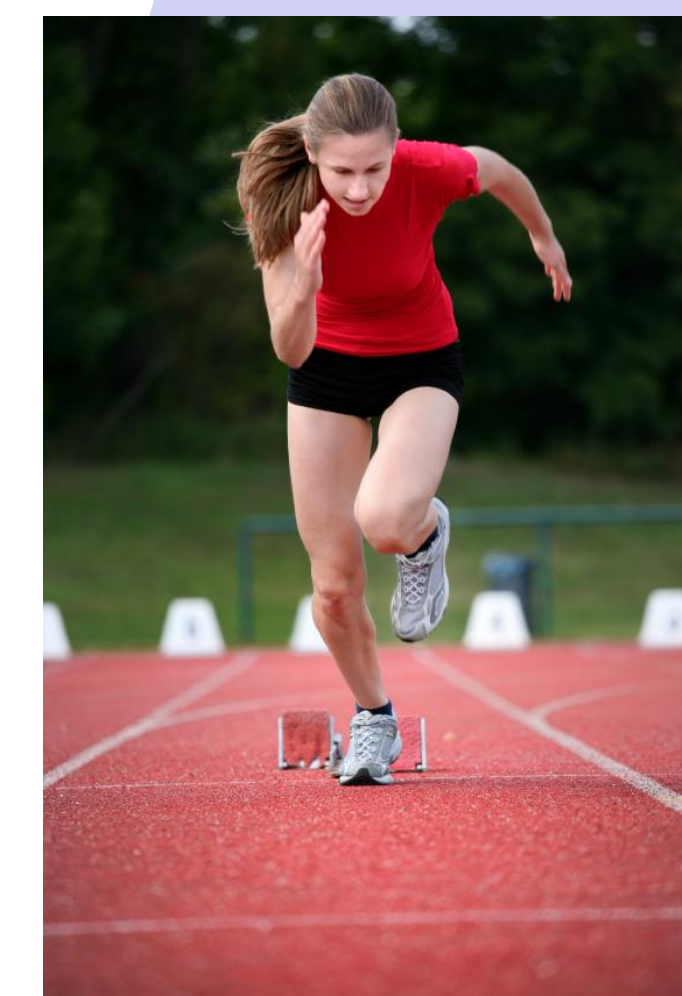
		TOTAL
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	Youth only participated	2
	Parent only participated	4
	Youth and parent participated	11*
GMFCS (of youth represented)	GMFCS I	5
	GMFCS II	4
	GMFCS III	2
	GMFCS IV	3
	GMFCS V	3
AGE (of youth represented)	9-11 years	5
	12-14 years	7
	15-17 years	3
	18-21 years	2
GENDER (of youth represented)	Male/Female	8 / 9

\*One family had two parents participating in the focus group

## RESULTS

*"That's the big thing that limits [daughter] going into community programs because they might not have enough people and will tell us they can't have her because they can't watch her. She is very independent and everything but when it comes to balance on the stairs, she needs a little bit of help. It's kind of unfortunate I would say, that is why I look at special needs programs where the support is there so she can take advantage of it."*

-Parent of 9 y.o. female



### Environmental and Personal Factors

### Variation in Preferences for the Delivery of Activities

*"But for me I like working alone because that takes away the outside barriers, it's just me and the exercises, there's no people picking me last or anything, it's just I do what I can do until I can't do it anymore"*

- 14 y.o. male



*"Actually, I like to do physical activity, but I like it more when it's fun and I like to do the activity, or else I won't do it. I'll do it just maybe once but I won't like it."*

-11 y.o. male

### Perceived health benefits alone do not motivate youth to be physically active

### Limitations Related to Impairments in Body Structure and Function

*"Well for me, for example, what makes walking hard - well walking independently anyways - is the fact that I have, with CP most of the time you have scoliosis, right? So you have that little bit of a curve in your back that you can't do anything about. So you're a little bit hunched over and you're trying to take more steps and take more steps and set larger goals but you kind of can't because you know that your back is going to be a problem."*

- 17 y.o. female

## CONCLUSIONS

- The themes suggest that youth with CP have varied needs and preferences in relation to PA and may face barriers to being physically active when these personal requirements are not met.
- Interventions to promote PA in youth with CP should address the interactions between personal and environmental factors that act as barriers to participation in PA (Figure 1).
- Service providers and therapists should be aware of youths' preferences when recommending PA programs and encouraging an active lifestyle.

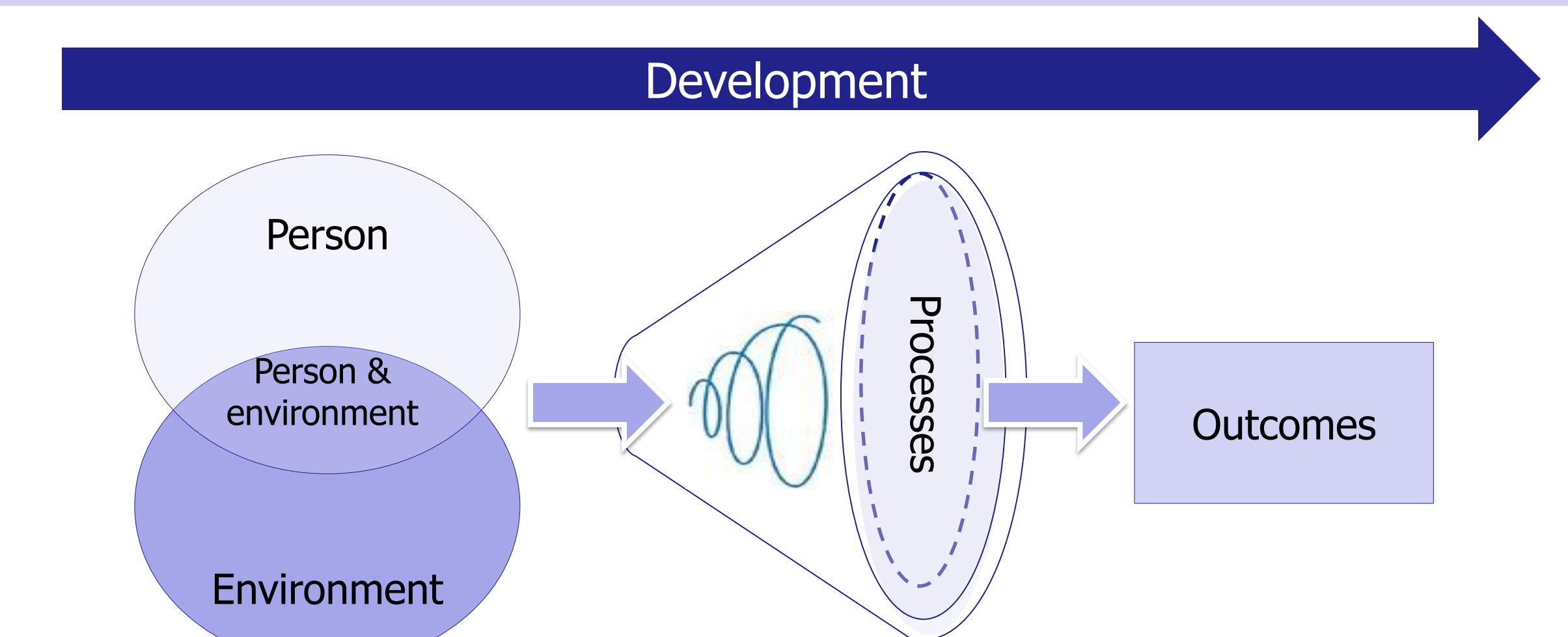


Figure 1. Developmental trajectories are shaped by the interactions between person and environment, which in turn influence processes that lead to outcomes (Gorter et al. 2012).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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