Halo
Highland Action for Little Ones

Bright Futures Impact Report 2025

Bright Futures is a peer support project for young mums under 25 and their babies. The project provides safe, welcoming spaces where young mothers can connect and make friends, build confidence and access support.







Why the groups exist

The Bright Futures Young Mums groups exist, first and foremost, to support young mums' **mental health** and **wellbeing** at one of the most vulnerable times in their lives. Becoming a parent at a young age can be isolating, and many of the mums who come through Halo's doors arrive feeling anxious, unsupported, or cut off from friends who aren't yet going through the same experience. The group is built around peer-to-peer support: Mums sitting alongside other Mums who understand exactly what they're going through, sharing what's worked, listening without judgement, and building genuine friendships that carry on well beyond the session itself.

Alongside this peer support, the groups act as a trusted, informal route into wider help. External agencies, including **welfare** and **housing teams** and **further education services** are invited in to speak with mums directly, in a relaxed setting where they feel comfortable asking questions they might otherwise avoid raising. This has helped mums access entitlements, navigate housing difficulties, and **get in front of the right support at the right time**, often well before a situation becomes a crisis.

The groups also offer a varied programme of activities designed to support mums' own wellbeing, not just their parenting. Sessions and outings have included yoga, swimming, flower arranging, and trips out as a group, giving mums a rare chance to focus on themselves, **build confidence in new settings**, and simply enjoy some time away from the pressures of everyday life. For many, these are the first new things they've tried since becoming a parent.

The cumulative effect of this support is a marked **growth in confidence** among the mums who attend, and that confidence is increasingly translating into real, tangible next steps. Several mums have **gone on into further education and employment** after attending the group: two have been accepted into **university**, four are currently attending **college courses**, and others have moved into **part-time employment**.

These outcomes sit at the heart of what Bright Futures is trying to achieve: **not just a better start for the children who attend, but a brighter, more confident future for the Mums themselves.**

About this report

This report summarises feedback collected from parents and carers attending Halo's Bright Futures Young Mums groups during 2025 and 2026. The groups run weekly in both Inverness and Alness, meeting once a week throughout the year except during Scottish school holidays (approximately 40 sessions per group each year). The Alness group draws attendees from across the wider area, including young mums travelling from Invergordon, Dingwall, Evanton and Muir of Ord as well as Alness itself.

Responses have been gathered via an online SurveyMonkey questionnaire with paper-based responses collected in person, combined here into a single dataset of 34 respondents.

The questionnaire covered five broad areas: **parent-child attachment and emotional wellbeing; language development; physical development, sleep and nutrition; parental confidence and learning; and social connection and mental health.** Open comments and demographic information (child's age and gender, parent's year of birth, ethnicity, postcode and number of children) were also collected.



100% of parents say the group is beneficial or very beneficial for their mental health & wellbeing



100% say their knowledge of child development has increased



100% say the overall atmosphere in the group is positive



91% now meet other mums outwith group sessions



100% say they've gained friends through the group



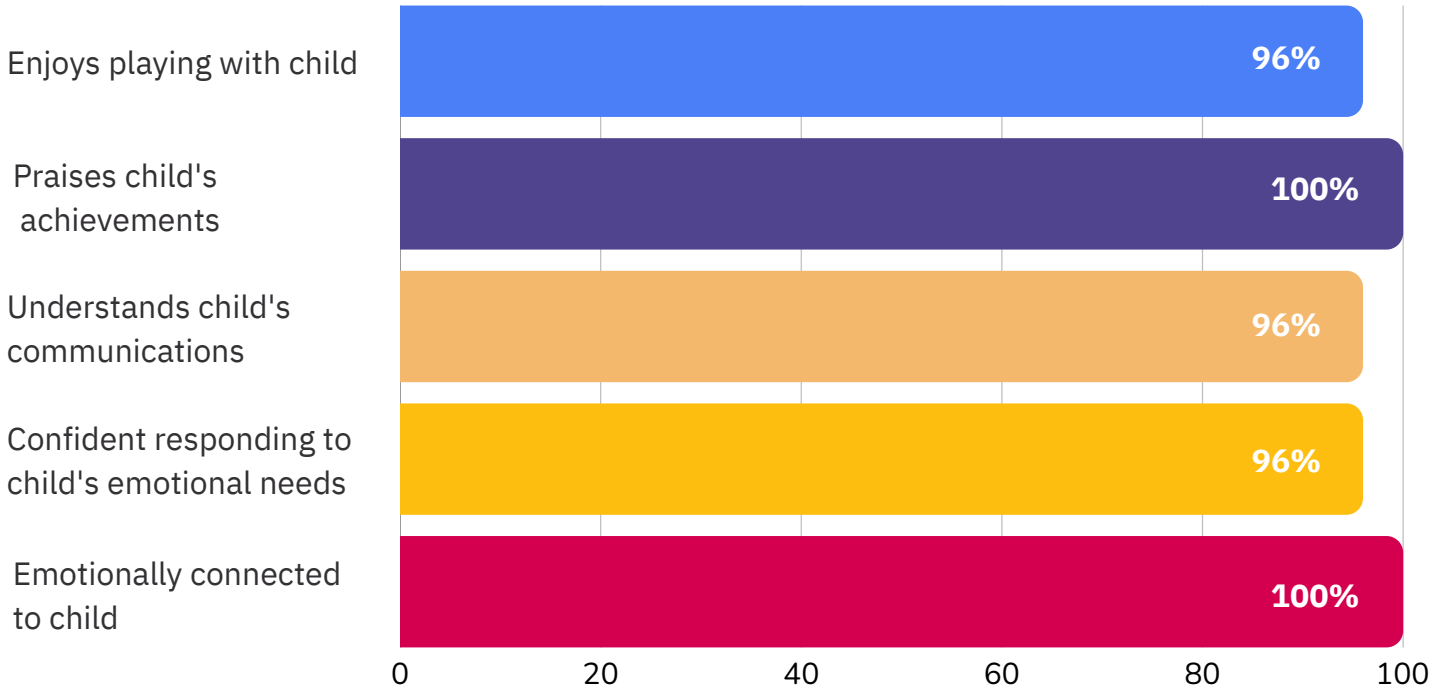
91% feel confident in their parenting abilities

A note on the data: a small number of entries contained minor input inconsistencies (for example, a child's age recorded as "2.5 years" rather than in months, or a year of birth entered as a full date), and the three most recently added paper responses did not record the child's exact age in months. These have been interpreted sensibly for analysis and don't materially affect the headline findings. Not every respondent answered every question — percentages are calculated based on the number of respondents who answered each specific question, not always out of the full 34.

Parent-Child Attachment & Emotional Wellbeing

Secure attachment in the early years underpins almost every other area of a child's development. Parents were asked **how they feel about their emotional connection with their child, and how they perceive their child's emotional security, since attending the group.**

Parent-child Attachment & Emotional Connection



These figures are notably high, with **95-100%** of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing across every attachment measure. Several parents specifically credited the group with restoring their confidence as a parent after a difficult start:

"This group has been amazing and beneficial, can't thank Halo enough for giving me my confidence back."

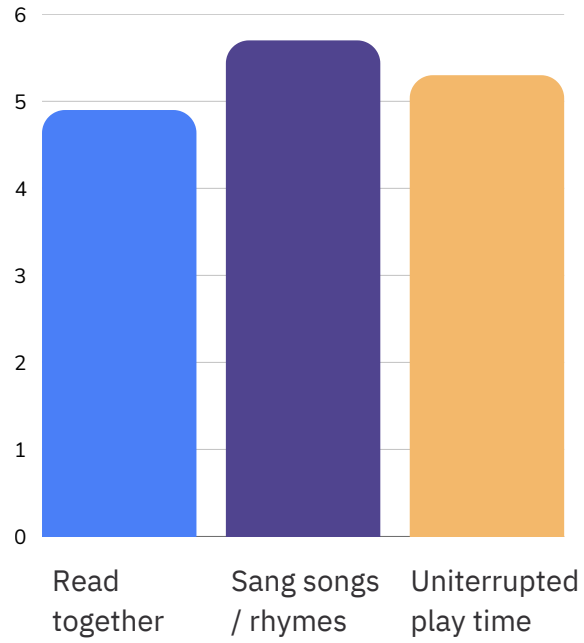
"I have become more confident in my parenting. I have met other parents, my child has become more playful with other people/children."

Everyday Bonding & Language Development



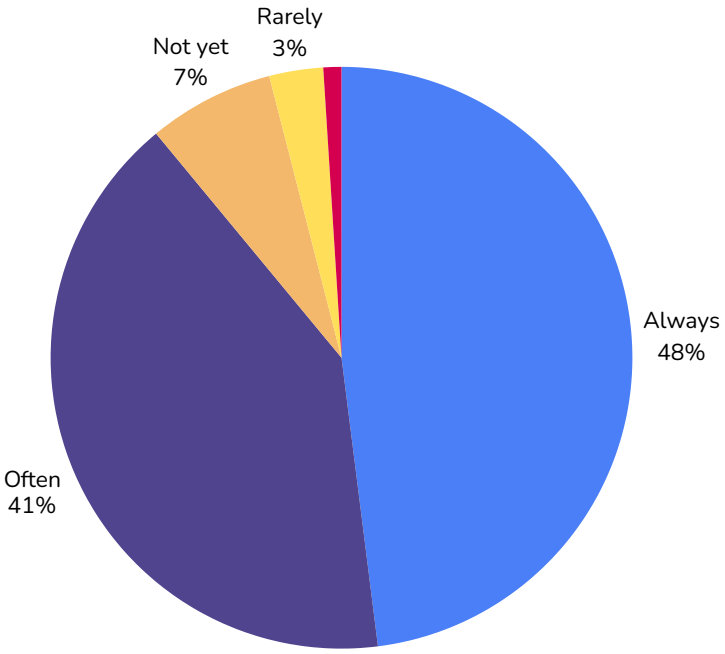
Parents reported on how many days in the last week they **read**, **sang**, or had **uninterrupted play time** with their child, and on their **child's language development.**

Everyday Bonding Activities (average days/week)



On average, parents are reading to their child 4.9 days a week, singing songs or rhymes 5.7 days a week, and having uninterrupted play time together 5.3 days a week — strong, consistent engagement that supports both bonding and early language.

Language Development Observations (responds, copies sounds, points/shows interest)



Across the three language development indicators (responding when spoken to, copying sounds/gestures, and pointing or showing interest), 88% of responses fell into “often” or “always”, with the remainder mostly reflecting children too young for the milestone in question rather than a cause for concern.

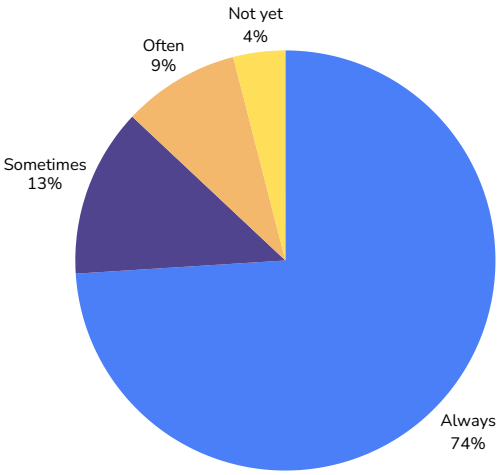
Physical Development, Sleep & Nutrition

Parents were also asked about their child's physical activity, sleep routines, and their own confidence around nutrition.

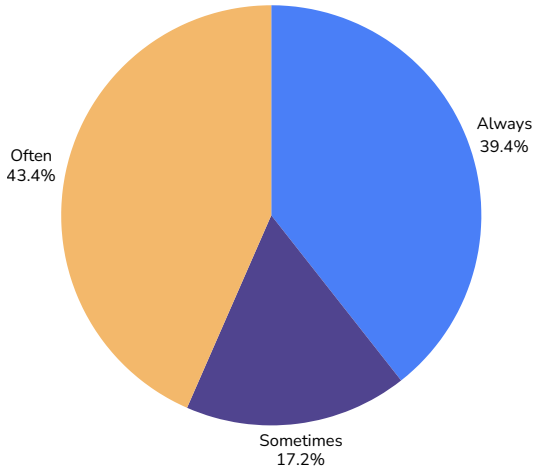
The large majority of children are reported to enjoy active play and to be learning new physical skills “often” or “always”, and most families report a regular sleep routine.

Confidence supporting healthy eating and understanding age-appropriate nutrition was generally high, though this was the one area where a couple of parents reported feeling less confident, **a potential area to explore for future group content.**

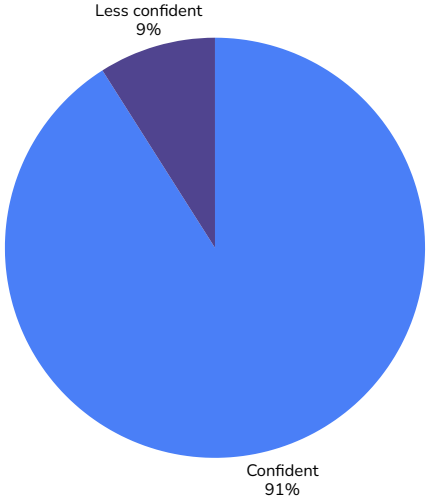
Child Physical Development (active play & new physical skills)



Regular Sleep Routine



Parental Confidence with Nutrition (healthy eating & age appropriate diet)

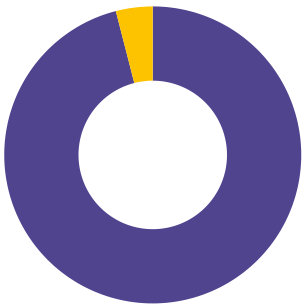


Parental Confidence & Social Connection



Knowledge of child development increased

Yes 100%



No 4%

Learned new ways to parent

Yes 96%



Gained friends through group

Yes 100%



Meets other mums outside of group

Yes 100%

Isolation is one of the most significant risks facing young mums, and the group's role in building social connection comes through clearly: every respondent has gained friends through the group, and **100% now see other mums outside of sessions** - turning a weekly group into a genuine, ongoing support network.

"It's so lovely there is a group for younger mums as it's often quite daunting attending baby groups suited to all ages, and can even be isolating as a young mum, so the fact Halo exists is a lifeline for some families... the support, shoulder to cry on or just an ear to listen when you need to vent is also something that is lacking in most baby groups."

"I live for this group every week."

Mental Health Impact

All 34 respondents rated the group as beneficial or very beneficial for their mental health and wellbeing, **with 87% choosing the strongest possible rating.** Several comments described the group as a turning point during a genuinely difficult period:

"This group has been amazing and beneficial, can't thank Halo enough for giving me my confidence back."

"This group supported my mental health and I don't know what I would have done without it. I learned a lot and my son benefited from it, not just me."

"I was terrified when I first found out I was pregnant, and didn't think I could do this whole mummy thing, but with the support from Mel and Kath I have developed the skills and confidence to be the best mummy I can be. Mental health was rock bottom when I gave birth and this group has helped me massively. I just love the group."

Kim's Story

Like many young mums, Kym faced the challenges of parenthood feeling alone and unsure of herself. Bright Futures helped her build lasting friendships, strengthen her confidence and become part of a supportive community where both she and her daughter have flourished.

When Kym first came to Bright Futures at the age of 20, she arrived with a friend. Like many young mums, she was feeling isolated and felt like she was isolated. She didn't know many other young mums and lacked the confidence that comes from sharing experiences with people who understand the challenges of early parenthood.

Within just a few weeks of attending the group, things began to change. Kym formed genuine friendships with other young mums, creating a support network that has continued to grow over the past year. Today, at 22, she attends the weekly sessions regularly with her daughter, who is now nearly two years old. Both Kym and her daughter have built lasting friendships through the group.

The impact has gone far beyond social connection. Kym says her confidence as a parent has grown significantly, and Bright Futures has given her a safe, welcoming space where she feels supported rather than judged.

Speaking during Halo's STV interview, Kym explained:

"I didn't really know very many young mums before I joined the Halo group. It just gives you a safe space to talk about things, get other opinions and almost a bit of validation as well that you're doing well when sometimes you might think you're not."

For Kym, Bright Futures has become much more than a weekly group. It has helped transform feelings of isolation into friendship, strengthened her confidence as a mother, and provided the reassurance and emotional support that every parent deserves.

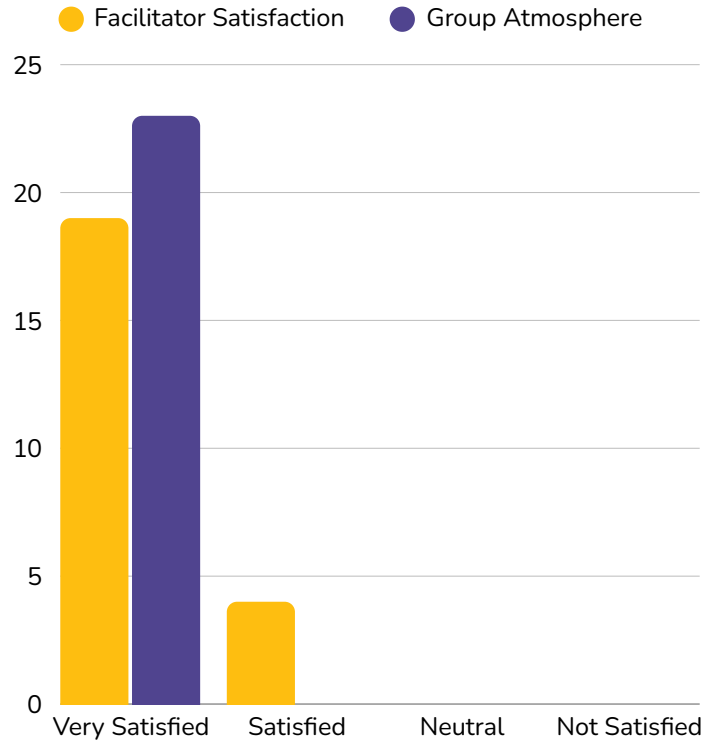
Her story reflects the experience of many young mums who attend Bright Futures, showing how early intervention, peer support and a welcoming community can have a lasting impact on both parents and their children.

You can watch Kym's story on ITV News here



Satisfaction with Facilitators & Group Atmosphere

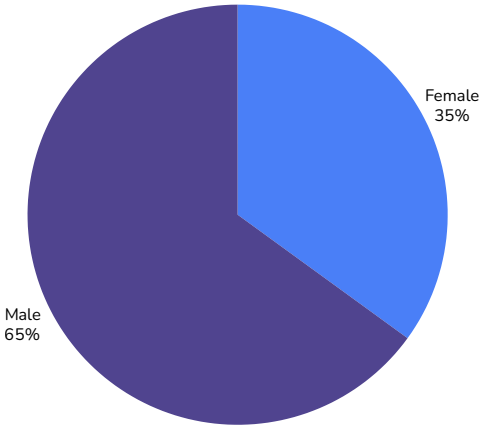
Satisfaction with facilitators and the overall group atmosphere is **exceptionally strong**: every respondent rated the atmosphere as **positive**, and all rated facilitator support as satisfied or very satisfied, with no neutral, dissatisfied, or negative ratings recorded at all.



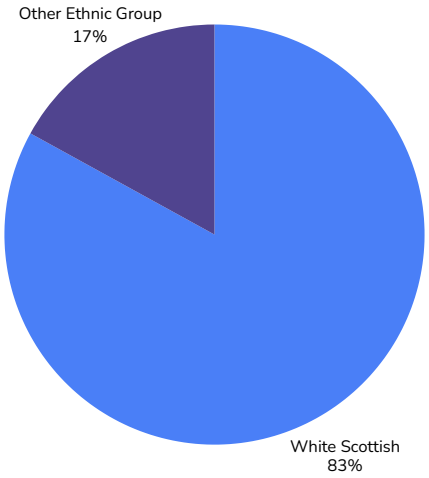
Who we heard from

Responses came from parents/carers across postcodes covering **Inverness (IV2, IV3)**, the **wider Alness/Easter Ross area (IV6, IV18, IV27)**, and **Easter Ross/Tain (IV17)**, reflecting the geographic reach of the Bright Futures groups.

Child's Gender



Mother's Ethnicity



Children ranged in age from 2 months to 2.5 years old, with the majority of respondents having one child. The group continues to support a small number of families from minority ethnic backgrounds, alongside a majority (83%) White Scottish population reflective of the wider Highland demographic.

What mums would like to see

Several mum's used the open comments to suggest future activities:

- A continuation group or activity for children once they age out at 2 years old (mentioned by multiple respondents)
- Bookbug sessions and "moo music"-style sessions
- Messy play sessions
- A summer picnic

These suggestions directly echo Halo's current plans for a toddler continuation group and will be fed into Development Plans.

"Before Bright Futures I felt completely isolated. Cath and Ash never made me feel judged, even on the days I turned up in tears. Slowly I started looking forward to group every week."

"The Halo staff are so patient, they explain things about feeding and
weaning without ever making you feel silly for asking. I've learned more about nutrition for myself and my baby in a few months than in my whole pregnancy."

"The activities are brilliant, proper messy play, music sessions, things you'd never attempt alone with a newborn. My daughter is so much more settled since we started, and I think she can sense I'm calmer too."

"I came along after a rough few months and the facilitators just got it straight away, no awkward questions, just kindness. There's always lunch provided and a chat about looking after yourself too, which I needed more than I realised."

Thank you

For more information about Halo please visit:
www.halohighlands.co.uk

Recognised Scottish Charity – SC052275