SUMMARY
NATIONAL IMPACT EVALUATION

The Research Institute at Nationwide Children's Hospital conducted a study to evaluate the impact of the A Kid Again Adventure program on families raising a child with a life-threatening condition.

The study, "A Kid Again: Evaluation of a Community-Based Therapeutic Recreation Program for Children with Life-Threatening Conditions," represents one of the most comprehensive program assessments to date.

Findings demonstrate widespread positive outcomes across the entire family, with particularly strong improvements in emotional well-being. Families reported more joy, more hope and stronger connection as a result of participation, and results show that greater engagement in Adventures is associated with greater impact.

WHY WE DID THE STUDY AND HOW WE ACCOMPLISHED IT

PURPOSE

The goal of the evaluation was to examine how participation in A Kid Again Adventures influences psychosocial and physical outcomes for the entire family, including caregivers, enrolled children, and siblings. The study also explored how participation patterns relate to perceived impact and whether findings align with prior evaluations conducted in 2012–2014.

METHODOLOGY

Nearly 10,000 eligible families nationwide were invited to participate. A total of 3,661 families responded. Participants completed a 30-item impact survey measuring outcomes across six domains: Emotional Well-Being, Social Well-Being, Enrichment, Resilience and Coping Ability, Health Choices and Health and Physical Condition.

MEASURED IMPACT ACROSS SIX DOMAINS

Emotional Well-Being
92% average across caregivers, child and siblings.

Social Well-Being
92% average across caregivers, child and siblings.

Enrichment
97% average across caregivers, child and siblings.

Coping Ability
91% average across caregivers, child and siblings.

Physical Condition
71% average across caregivers, child and siblings.

Health Choices
78% average across caregivers, child and siblings.

KEY FINDINGS

3,661 FAMILIES PARTICIPATED — WIDESPREAD POSITIVE IMPACT ACROSS THE ENTIRE FAMILY

High levels of perceived impact were reported by all respondent groups, confirming that A Kid Again effectively supports not only the child with the diagnosis but also caregivers and siblings.

95% REPORTED MORE JOY — EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING DEMONSTRATES THE STRONGEST OUTCOMES

Across respondents, families reported substantial improvements in psychosocial health. 95% reported more joy, 85% reported more hope, 80% reported better self-esteem, 79% reported less depression and 73% reported less fear. Families also reported increased family closeness, stronger relationships and meaningful opportunities for connection with others facing similar challenges.

BENEFITS EXTEND ACROSS DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Positive outcomes were observed across diagnoses, income levels, and backgrounds, with particularly strong effects among families with lower income and children with cancer diagnoses.

GREATER PARTICIPATION, GREATER IMPACT — AVERAGE OF 2 ADVENTURES ATTENDED IN 2024

Families attended an average of two Adventures in 2024 and were involved for an average of three years. Children and families who attended more Adventures consistently reported stronger benefits, highlighting the importance of sustained engagement rather than one-time experiences.

FINDINGS CONSISTENT WITH PRIOR RESEARCH

Results align with earlier evaluations conducted in 2012–2014, demonstrating sustained program effectiveness over time as the organization has expanded nationally.

COMPLEMENT TO MEDICAL CARE

SIGNIFICANCE

Families raising children with life-threatening conditions face elevated risks of social isolation, emotional distress and caregiver strain. The findings indicate that A Kid Again's therapeutic recreation model meaningfully improves emotional well-being, resilience, and family connection, complementing medical care by addressing psychosocial needs.

IMPLICATIONS

The results provide strong evidence to support continued investment, program expansion, and strategic growth. Increased access to Adventures — particularly through frequent participation — is likely to amplify impact and reach more families nationwide.

GREATEST BENEFIT FOR FAMILIES WHO:

- Attend more Adventures
- Have lower income
- Have a child with cancer
- Are non-white
- Are Hispanic
- Have an enrolled child who is younger