



Introduction

The AOTA has identified **play** as the primary occupation for children (1).

- Play provides children with the opportunity to:
 - Use creativity and imagination
 - Improve brain development
 - Promote socialization through interacting with peers
 - Promote functional independence
 - Make decisions
 - Maintain and improve mental, emotional, and physical health and well-being (2).

Children with physical disabilities are **13% - 53% less likely** to engage in physical activity than their typically developing peers and do so at a rate that is **30% lower** than the recommended guidelines (3).

Adaptive Sports: Conventional sports that have been modified to meet the needs of people with both cognitive and physical disabilities of all ages (4) (5).

- The largest barrier to participation in adaptive sports is **lack of awareness/knowledge** of these opportunities by health care providers and families/kids with disabilities (6) (7).

Adaptive Sports New England (ASNE)

- Is a Massachusetts-based non-profit organization dedicated to increasing participation in sports among children and teens living with a visual impairment (VI) or a physical or mobility impairment (PMI) who demonstrate typical cognitive and behavioral development. ASNE collaborates with both adaptive-specific and integrated sports programs to provide **Beep Baseball, Rowing, Track and Field, Swimming, Wheelchair Basketball, Sailing, Nordic Skiing, and Wheelchair Football.**

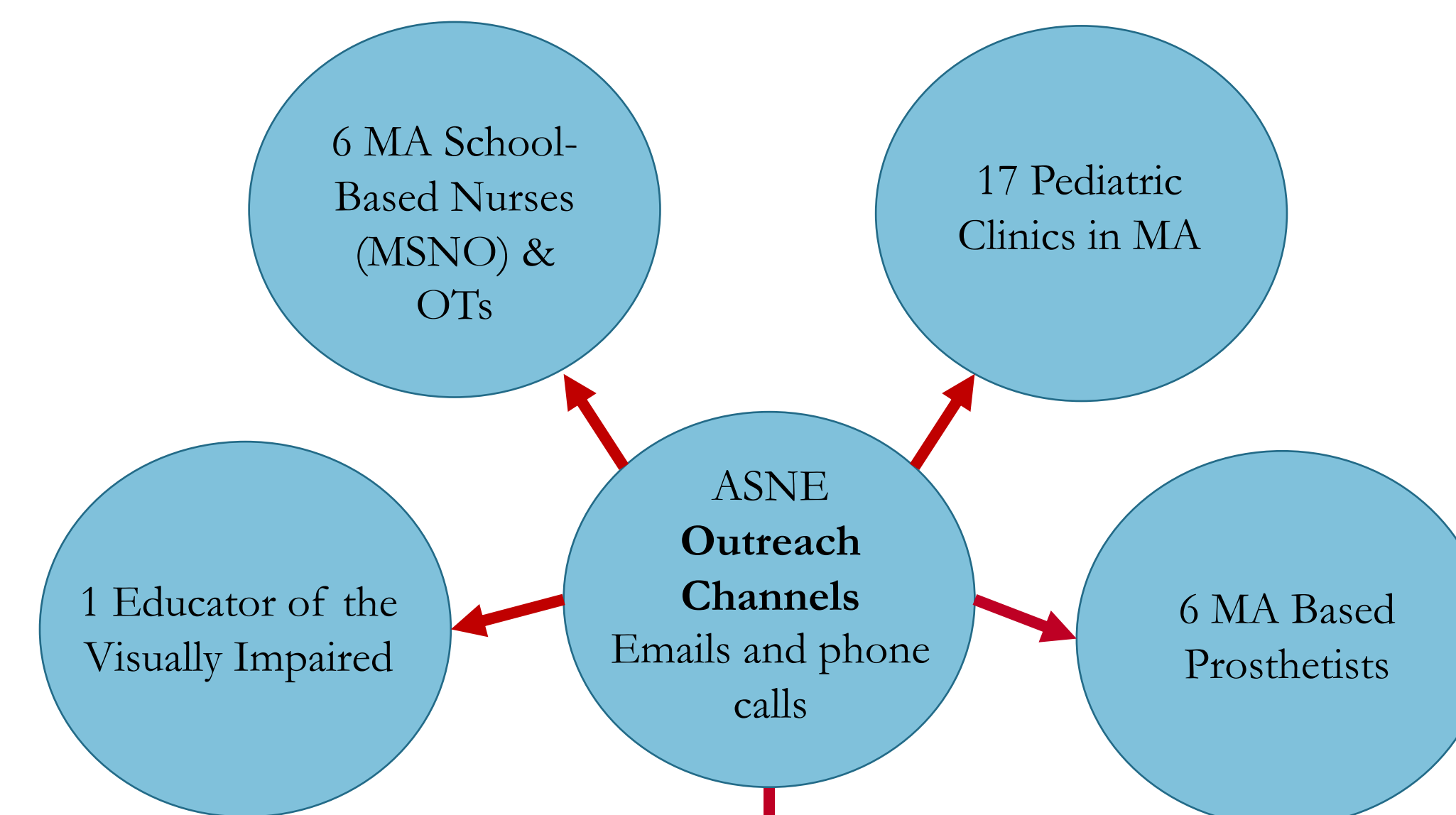
The **purpose** of this project was to address the awareness gap among healthcare professionals and educators through community outreach to therefore increase knowledge about and participation in adaptive sports for youth and teens with disabilities and their families whom they work with.

Aims

- Aim 1:** Integrate into organization by volunteering in adaptive sports programming and gaining an understanding of the inner operations of the organization
- Aim 2:** Create deliverable promotional materials for participant recruitment
- Aim 3:** Develop an outreach strategy focused on schools, pediatric rehabilitation centers, and educators of the visually impaired and related service providers to promote Adaptive Sports New England and the power of adaptive sports for children living with disability in the Greater Boston Area

Methods

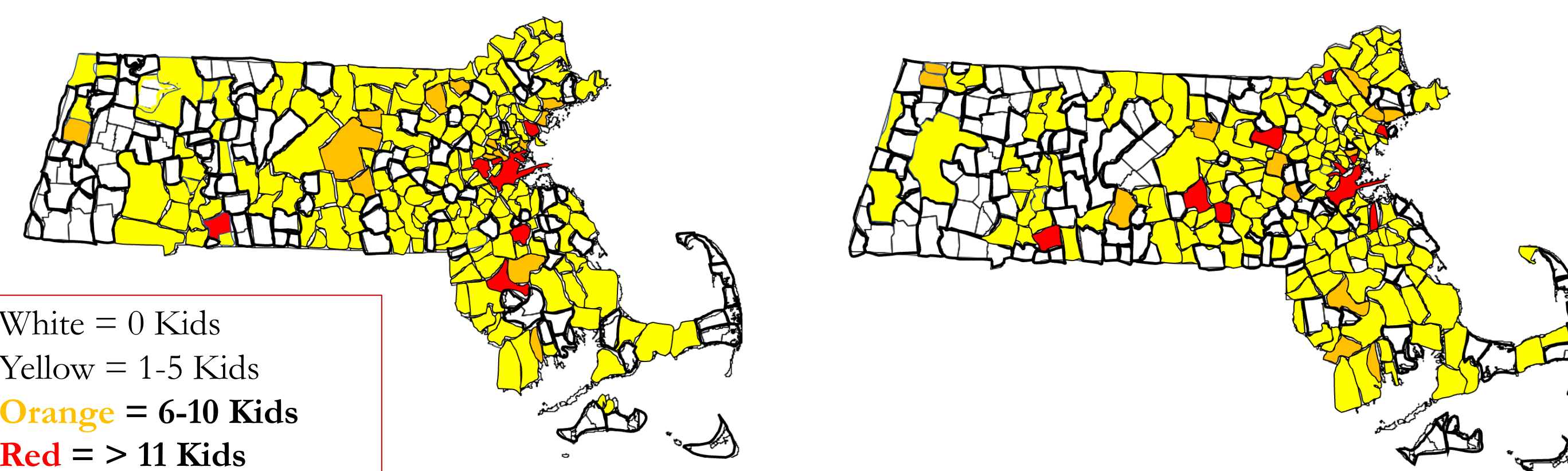
- Inclusion Criteria:** Sites (schools, clinics, organizations) that serve children and youth ages 3-22 with a visual or mobility impairment, living in or near the Greater Boston Area, children who demonstrate typical cognitive and behavioral development
- Exclusion Criteria:** Children with Autism, Intellectual Disability, or medically complex situations, sites and clinicians that do not provide pediatric services



Explore data to identify school districts that have significant # of kids with VI & PMI

VI Map

PMI Map

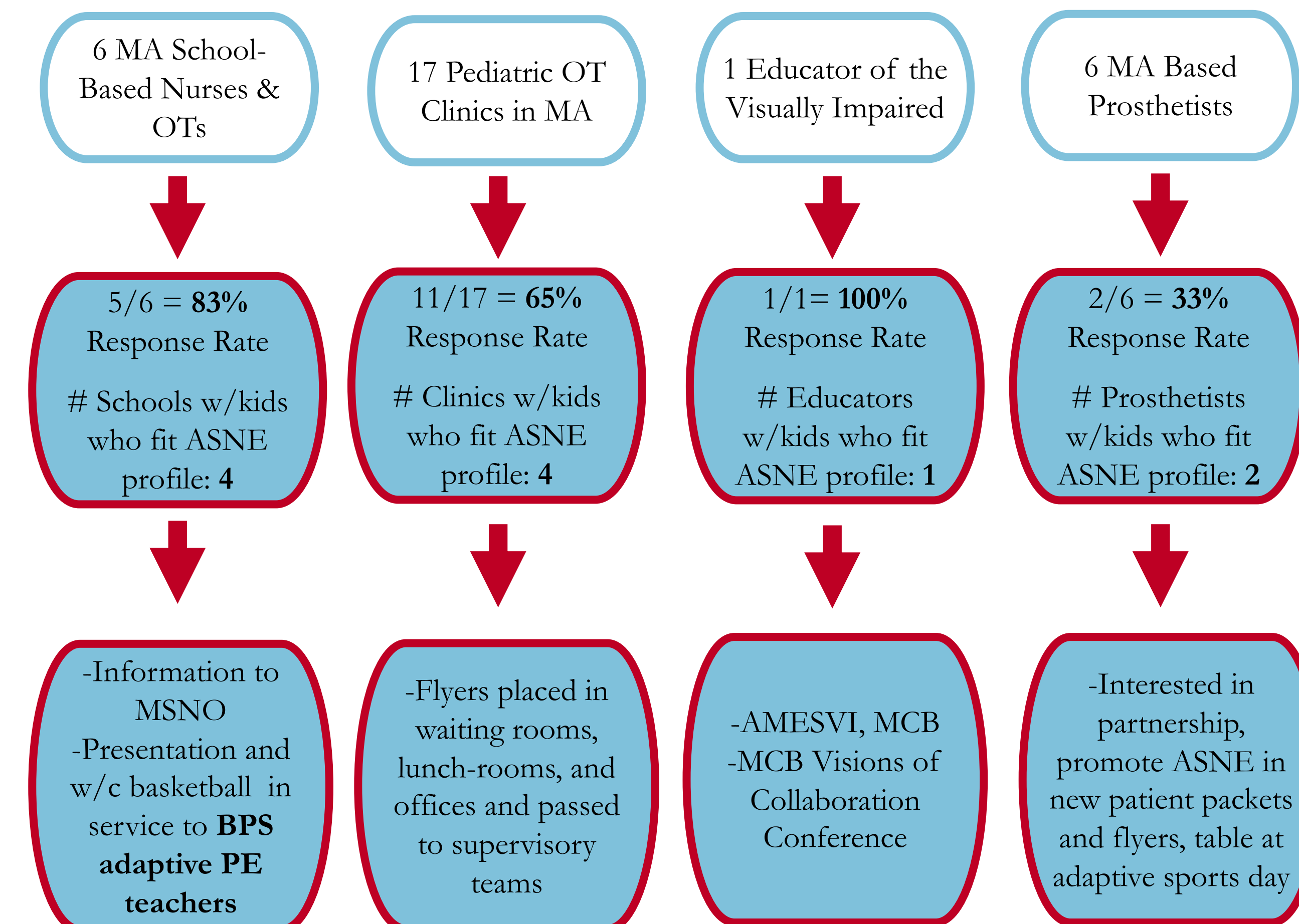


Scan to View Flyer:



Results

ASNE Outreach Channel Results



Discussion

- Emails and phone calls** are effective outreach strategies → **63% Average Response Rate**
- Key stakeholders such as classroom educators, adaptive PE teachers & OTs are **interested** but **unaware** of community-based organizations like ASNE that provide play opportunities.
- Pediatric OT clinics provide services to many children who do not fit ASNE profile, outreach less to these contacts.
- Occupation of **play** achieved via adaptive sports
- ASNE Networking → **Potential for future partnerships and collaborations**
- Participation in ASNE programming is not as high as it could be due to lack of overall awareness by stakeholders who serve kids who meet the ASNE profile.

Conclusion

Recommendations For Increasing Participation in Adaptive Sports Through ASNE:

- Continue outreach to stakeholders via email & phone calls.
- Conduct in-service sessions with adaptive PE teachers (ex: w/c basketball clinic).
- Create marketing materials & deliverables such as videos, flyers, and brochures to **SHOW** adaptive sports rather than **TELL**.
- Use the population density maps to target and focus outreach on school districts labeled in the **orange & red zones** such as Springfield, Taunton, Boston, Worcester, Lynn, Fall River, and Weymouth.

Play is the primary occupation of childhood, and adaptive sports are a great opportunity for youth to access this occupation. ASNE can better serve communities when they focus on the areas with higher populations of children with a visual or mobility impairment.

References:



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