Towards an Inclusive Play Culture for Children of All Abilities:

Qualitative Research on Dutch Parents' Experiences at Local Playgrounds

Emma Julianna van Heusden (6020558)

Dept. of Pedagogical and Educational Sciences, Utrecht University

Commissioning party: Het Gehandicapte Kind

Youth, Education and Society 07: Master's thesis

Dr. P. Baar

Dr. M. van Londen

June 21, 2021

Abstract

Children have the right to participate in outdoor play with peers. In most playgrounds, children with a disability lack opportunities for social interaction and social inclusion. Globally, a lack of policy and very little research has been done into the experiences of parents in play at local playgrounds. For this qualitative study, 15 parents of children both with and without disabilities were interviewed in depth. The aim was to increase knowledge on inclusive play, to illustrate good existing practises and to formulate recommendations towards an more inclusive play culture in the Netherlands. Parents and their children with disabilities generally have less positive experiences at local playgrounds than those without disabilities. Besides the physical environment, the social environment must also be adapted to suit the possibilities and wishes of all children in play. This study underlines the need for more social inclusion and societal acceptance towards children with disabilities and the need for community-oriented approaches. This can only be made possible if municipalities, educational institutes and professionals work together with parents and the children themselves. By making the broader social environment welcoming and suitable for all children, differences and vulnerabilities can transform into possibilities and strengths.

Keywords: inclusive play, local playgrounds, parents, disabilities, experiences

Samenvatting

Kinderen hebben het recht om te participeren in buitenspel met leeftijdsgenoten. In de meeste speeltuinen hebben kinderen met een beperking vaak echter geringe kansen voor sociale interactie en sociale inclusie. Wereldwijd is er beperkt beleid en weinig onderzoek gedaan naar de ervaringen van ouders in spel in lokale speeltuinen. Voor dit kwalitatieve onderzoek zijn 15 ouders van kinderen met en zonder beperking geïnterviewd. Het doel was om kennis over inclusief spel te vergroten, goede praktijken te illustreren en aanbevelingen te formuleren die waardevol kunnen zijn bij de realisatie van een inclusieve speelcultuur in Nederland. Ouders van kinderen met een beperking hebben vaak minder positieve ervaringen in spel in lokale speeltuinen. Naast de fysieke omgeving moet ook de sociale omgeving worden aangepast aan de mogelijkheden en wensen van alle kinderen. Deze studie benadrukt de noodzaak van sociale inclusie en maatschappelijke acceptatie van kinderen met een beperking en het belang van een gemeenschapsgerichte benadering. Dit kan alleen mogelijk worden gemaakt als gemeenten, onderwijsinstellingen en professionals samenwerken met ouders en de kinderen zelf. Door de bredere sociale omgeving en geschikt en verwelkomend te maken voor alle kinderen, kunnen kwetsbaarheden transformeren naar mogelijkheden en krachten.

Kernwoorden: inclusieve spel, lokale speeltuinen, ouders, beperkingen, ervaringen

Towards an Inclusive Play Culture for Children of All Abilities: Qualitative Research on Dutch Parents' Experiences at Local Playgrounds

By stimulating intellectual, emotional and social development through play, children are able to explore the world in interaction with others (Youell, 2008). Play is shown to be of great importance for children's physical health, cognitive functioning and social-emotional well-being (Pellegrini et al., 2007). Through play, children are able to gain a deeper knowledge about oneself and the world (Bento & Dias, 2017). In the Netherlands, children are encouraged to engage in outdoor play on public playgrounds that matches the child's level of development (Snoek et al., 2020). Playgrounds are public outdoor recreation areas that are designed with play equipment for children and are often managed by the local government (Bento & Dias, 2017). The purpose of a public playground is to provide children a safe and fun area in which they can play with peers (Kemple et al., 2016). The combination of exercise, the benefits from natural elements such as sunlight and fresh air and the (partly) unstructured and uncontrolled nature of outdoor play are beneficial for children's development (Dyment & Bell, 2008).

However, for children with a disability, most outdoor playgrounds are not physically accessible (Van Melik & Althuize, 2020). The inaccessible environment of a playground can prevent children with a disability to participate in outdoor play activities with peers (Prellwitz & Skär, 2007). In addition, many children with a disability experience social and emotional barriers when playing in playgrounds with peers (Jeanes & Magee, 2012). Children with a disability and their parents often experience a sense of unwelcomeness or non-belonging in outdoor playgrounds (Burke, 2013). Due to these barriers in play, children with a disability are often forced play alone (Margalit, 2012). The consequences are dire. These children are missing out on opportunities that are important for healthy development and often lack in a sense of belonging (Van Melik & Althuize, 2020). As a result, many children with a disability – both physical as well as cognitive – experience long-term loneliness and even social isolation (Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2014). Loneliness can be defined as the painful feeling of disconnectedness and non-belonging that arises when people experience their social relationships to be lacking in an essential way (Maes et al., 2017). This is problematic, since enduring feelings of loneliness and social isolation are harmful for the development and well-being of children. Long-term loneliness in children is highly aversive and can result in mental and physical health difficulties such as depression, social anxiety and a low self-esteem (Maes et al., 2017; Masi et al., 2011).

Inclusive Play

Globally, there appears to be increasing interest in the concept of inclusive public playgrounds that are intended to offer play experiences for all children (Burke, 2013). Inclusive play can be defined as sensory-rich and engaging play among children both with and without a disability (Casey, 2010). An inclusive playground is a consciously designed play environment that empowers children of all abilities to develop physically, socially and emotionally in interaction with peers (Woolley, 2013). Additionally, inclusive playgrounds recognize all children's right to participate in outdoor play (Stafford, 2017). Inclusive play environments intentionally provide equitable opportunities for physical, cognitive, social-emotional and sensory development, regardless of children's (dis)abilities (Brannan et al., 2016). Thus, well-designed inclusive playgrounds should be accessible for all children and should allow children of all abilities to learn and grow together through play (Casey, 2010). However, it should be noted that an accessible playground is not necessarily an inclusive playground, it involves more than just the physical and environmental aspect of inclusive play. Inclusive playgrounds intend to provide children and their families with opportunities for social interaction and social inclusion (Fernelius & Christensen, 2017). For instance, children with a cognitive disability might need an area to withdraw in to process intense stimuli, without feeling socially excluded (Wenger et al., 2021).

Parents' Experiences in Play

Local playgrounds are intended to offer play opportunities for children, but are also shown to be important areas that facilitate social interaction between parents (Butler, 2016). A local playground is therefore not only a great place for children to play with peers, but it can also be an unique opportunity for parents to unite. The social interactions that take place in local playgrounds between parents often positively contribute to social cohesion, social integration and community building (Aarts et al., 2012; Bennet et al., 2012). Moreover, inclusive play at local playgrounds could support the participation, wider acceptance and social inclusion of families with disabilities in society (Wenger et al., 2021). In order to achieve an inclusive play culture in the Netherlands, it is thereby essential that all parents and their children feel welcome at local playgrounds.

In the Netherlands, municipalities differ in their policy approach to facilitate children with outdoor playgrounds. Many municipalities are more reticent and therefore opt for an approach based on citizen's initiatives, while other municipalities take the initiative themselves (Van Melik & Althuizen, 2020). It can be argued that awareness and implementation of inclusive play in the Netherlands can only be made possible if

municipalities, educational institutes and professionals work together with parents and the children themselves (Casey, 2010). However, there is a lack of policy and research dealing with the experiences and opinions of parents, especially those of children both with and without disabilities. The current emphasis in research seems to be on the physical (e.g., competences) and environmental aspects (e.g., design of the playground) of play. Knowledge is lacking on the social (e.g., social interactions) and emotional aspects (e.g., feeling of acceptance or belonging) of play and to whether inclusive play can actually lead to more social inclusion and community belongingness for all families (Prellwitz & Skär, 2016). Insight in the experiences of parents could be valuable in the realization an inclusive play culture in the Netherlands in which all children are given the opportunity and are welcome to play with peers in their neighbourhood. This current study therefore actively explores the experiences and opinions of parents in play at local playgrounds, both of children with and without disabilities.

Human Needs in Inclusive Play

Deci & Ryan's (2000, 2008) self-determination theory is currently one of the most dominant theories of human motivation and wellbeing. Self-determination theory provides insight in human motivation and the necessity of psychological needs for *autonomy*, *competence* and *relatedness*. These psychological needs emphasize the essential conditions for psychological growth, integrity and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Since failure to meet these needs are associated with deficits in well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000), it is essential to emphasise these needs within play. It is therefore important to study how these needs are experienced in different aspects of play at local playgrounds. Competence can be defined as the ability and efficacy in the activities one engages in, such as play (Martela & Riekki, 2018). For children with a disability, the accessibility of a playground can therefore be seen as essential to feel competent in play (Brennan et al., 2016). Moreover, autonomy can be defined as sense of self-governance or self-regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2006). In order to satisfy this need, children should have the (relative) freedom of choice in inclusive play activities within the context of the environment and without the constant intervention of adults (Habibe, 2014). Concerning the interpersonal dimension, the need for relatedness entails the degree to which one feels a sense of belonging or connection to others in meaningful relationships and to their community (Martele & Riekki, 2018). In contrast to social isolation, belongingness can be defined as being accepted as a member of a group and as experiencing attachment to other people (Malone et al., 2012). Establishing caring and meaningful social connections with others is thus an essential element of human nature. Relatedness is critical to humans

emotional health, behavioral adjustment and cognitive development (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008). A lack of belonging often results in an impaired social functioning, such as little peer acceptance, little peer support and lower quality friendships (Pinquart & Teubert, 2012; Rubin et al., 2015).

Social Acceptance

In order to make inclusive play work, it is necessary that children with a disability are accepted by themselves and others (Jeanes & Magee, 2012). In general, a distinction can be made between three forms of acceptance: (1) self-acceptance; (2) acceptance of the family and (3) societal acceptance (Solomon, 2012). For children with a disability, it can be difficult to accept themselves (Ison et al., 2010), just like it can be hard for their families to accept them (Whittingham, 2014). Moreover, it can be challenging for the larger society to accept these children and their parents (Koller et al., 2018).

According to Solomon (2012), a distinction can be made between two types of identities, namely vertical identity and horizontal identity. Vertical identities can be defined as identities that are inherited from parent to child through genetics or shared cultural norms, such as ethnicity, language and religion. Horizontal identities are traits that are not directly generationally inherited from parents. Physical and cognitive disabilities tend to be horizontal identities. Whereas most parents have a tendency to strengthen vertical identities in their children's upbringing, they often resist horizontal identities. In other words, vertical identities are generally accepted and respected as identities, while horizontal identities are often seen as weaknesses. However, without familial and societal acceptance of children with disabilities, injustices will not be rectified. In the process of social inclusion, we must therefore aim to make the environment welcoming and suitable for all children, regardless of their (dis)abilities (Lynch et al., 2018).

Normalisation

Children with a disability and their families are often seen within the 'at-risk' model, also known as the 'disease model'. The at-risk model main focus is on the identification and treatment of health risks through specialised care and support services (De Winter, 2012). The current youth care system often describes children with a disability as vulnerable. However, vulnerability within families and the need for care and support are strongly related to the social environment (RMO, 2012). Vulnerability should be normalized and supported within and by society by stimulating, utilising and strengthening the strengths of families and the broader social environment (De Winter, 2012).

This social environment of children is portrayed in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of childhood within five interconnected levels of social relationships. In this model, successful development is seen as a function of the individual in continuous interaction with these interconnected and supporting ecologies (Magasi et al., 2015). The theory emphasizes the importance and impact on the development and well-being of children of both the immediate environment as well as the more distant social environment. The broader social environment of a child, such as their community and attitudes and ideologies of the culture, can be seen as a crucial mechanism in child development and wellbeing.

In inclusive play, the social and physical environment should be adapted to suit the possibilities and wishes of all children in play, both with and without disabilities. Inclusiveness comes with the belief of social equality and the view that all groups belong within a community (Jeanes & Magee, 2012). By making the broader social environment welcoming and suitable for all children, differences and vulnerabilities can transform into possibilities and strengths.

De Speeltuinbende

This current study is commissioned by *de Speeltuinbende*, an initiative of the Dutch organization for the Disabled Child (*Het Gehandicapte Kind*). The initiative emphasizes the importance of public playgrounds for the physical, cognitive and social development of all children. In addition to their goal to make playgrounds more physically accessible for children with a disability, they aim to help remove the social and emotional barriers that parents and children both with and without a disability experience in inclusive play. The organization emphasizes the importance of the social environments of families and the societal acceptance of children with a disability (Het Gehandicapte Kind, 2019). Families with disabilities often find supportive communities of parents and caretakers who are in similar situations (Bourke-Taylor et al., 2010). Some of these parents are inspired to become advocates and activists for their children (Solomon, 2012). De Speeltuinbende supports bottom-up citizen initiatives, in which parents and their children are empowered to focus on opportunities, connections and well-being (Moritsugu et al., 2015; De Winter, 2012).

Current Research

This current exploratory study was broadly aimed at gaining insight into the physical, environmental, social and emotional aspects of play at local playgrounds from a parents' perspective. The aim was to increase knowledge on inclusive play and formulate opportunities of improvement, which can be valuable in the realization of an inclusive play culture in the Netherlands. The main question was: *How do parents and their children, both with and*

without disabilities, experience (inclusive) play at local playgrounds?. Several research questions have been formulated in order to answer this question.

The first research question was: *How do parents' and their children generally experience play on local playgrounds*? Playgrounds are designed to promote an enjoyable experience that is beneficial to children's development and wellbeing (Kemple et al., 2016). However, most outdoor playgrounds offer little play opportunities for children with a disability (Prellwitz & Skär, 2007; Van Melik & Althuize, 2020) and thus lack opportunities for social interaction and social inclusion (Burke, 2013; Jeanes & Magee, 2012). Parents of children without disabilities are therefore expected to have generally more positive experiences in local playgrounds than parents of children with disabilities (Bento & Dias, 2017; Dyment & Bell, 2008; Pellegrini et al., 2007). In contrast to the parents to children without disabilities, parents of children with disabilities are expected to experience several barriers in play, both in the physical environment as in the social environment (Jeanes & Magee, 2012).

The second research question aimed to illustrate good existing practices, such as De Speeltuinbende: *How do parents and their children experience play on inclusive playgrounds, compared to their experiences on playgrounds that were not specifically designed for inclusive play?* It is expected that parents of children with a disability experience fewer physical and environmental barriers in inclusive playgrounds, since the physical environment has been adapted (Burke, 2013; Casey, 2010; Woolley, 2013). It is also expected that they experience less social and emotional barriers, since inclusive playgrounds intend to provide children and their families with opportunities for social interaction and social inclusion (Fernelius & Christensen, 2017). Thus, parents of children with disability are expected to have more positive experiences in inclusive playgrounds compared to playgrounds that are not inclusive. Because it is expected that parents of children without disabilities experience no barriers in play (Jeanes & Magee, 2012), is also expected that whether or not a playground is inclusive has little impact on the experiences of parents of children without disabilities.

The third research question was: *How can the physical, social and emotional aspects of play can be improved towards an more inclusive play culture*? Parents are expected to see opportunities for improvement in the degree of social acceptance and normalization of disabilities (De Winter, 2012; Solomon, 2012). Parents are also expected to see opportunities for improvement in relation to competence, autonomy and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2008).

Method

Participants

A total of 15 parents of children aged 4-12 took part in this study. In order to fully understand the experiences of parents and their children at local playgrounds, parents of children both with and without disabilities are interviewed. The parents were divided into three groups: (1) Four parents of a child with a disability; Five parents of child(ren) without a disability; (3) Six parents of children both with and without disability. No specific distinction was made between the nature and severity of the disability.

The parents were selected by a convenience sample. This method leads to results that are not representative of the entire population and therefore have a lower external validity. However, this study aimed for an understanding of experiences of parents and their children that are more idiographic rather than general. Moreover, this study strived for substantive generalization through illustrations of good practices. The power of the story is central to this.

In-Depth Interviews

Qualitative research is an suitable method for attaining valuable narratives and understandings of contexts and social interactions (Boeije, 2010). Moreover, it is an appropriate method to understand the perspective of those involved in social situations (Britten, 2011). In this study, parents' experiences and sense making processes in local playgrounds are studied regarding the social, emotional, physical and environmental aspects of play at local playgrounds. Sense making processes can be understood as processes in which people give meaning to their experiences (Schildt et al., 2020). To explore and conceptualize these human experiences, a qualitative approach to inquiry is used.

The participants were invited to participate in an in-depth interview, a research technique used to explore parents' subjective experiences (Boeije, 2010). In order to enhance the reliability and validity of the interview, interview techniques such as probes and paraphrasing were used. The research questions are made operational by corresponding topics in a topic scheme (see Appendix A). The topics consisted of initially open-ended questions. The interview consisted of five topics: (1) participants' general experiences at local playgrounds (e.g., atmosphere, motivations and general obstacles, description of inclusive play); (2) participants' experiences in the physical and environmental aspect of play at playgrounds (e.g., physical and environmental barriers in play, experiences in inclusive playgrounds and opportunities for improvement); (3) participants' experiences in the social and emotional aspects of play at playgrounds (e.g., interaction with other parents, social and emotional barriers in play, experiences in inclusive playgrounds and opportunities for

improvement); (4) participants' personal actions towards an inclusive play culture (e.g., motivations to take part in initiatives that promote inclusive play and the degree of contentment with the approach of these practices); (5) Inclusive play for children of all abilities (e.g., benefits and disadvantages of inclusive play, experiences children without disabilities in inclusive play).

Examples of questions asked to examine how parents' and their children generally experience play on local playgrounds are: "How do you generally experience the atmosphere in your local playground?" and "What are your motivations to visit the local playground?". To examine how parents and their children experience play on inclusive playgrounds, I asked questions such as: "Is that feeling or barrier experienced differently at an inclusive playground?" and "How do you experience meeting other parents at inclusive playgrounds, compared to non-inclusive playgrounds?. Lastly, in order to formulate opportunities for improvement towards an more inclusive play culture, I asked for instance: "Do you see opportunities for improvement in the physical and social-emotional aspects of inclusive play?" and "What would change for your family?".

Procedure

The in-depth interviews were conducted with individual participants. The interviews were consistently held by the same researcher. Interview techniques such as summarization and probes were used to ensure reliability and internal validity. There was also a clear introduction and notes were taken. Finally, a log book was kept. Prior to the interviews, permission for participation and processing data was requested by means of informed content. In the informed consent, the participant stated to be fully informed about the purpose of the study and the manner in which their data will be handled. The participants received information about the study so that the participants knew in advance what their rights were and what was expected from them (see Appendix B). Participants were allowed to stop participating in the study at any time without an explanation and were made aware of their time investment. Moreover, the participants were aware of how the data is handled. To positively contribute to the validity and reliability of the data, confidentiality and anonymity were ensured. The average duration of the interviews was 28 minutes. The interviews were held online (and recorded) via Microsoft Teams. Participation in this study was on a voluntary basis, no financial compensation was given.

The obtained data remained confidential and anonymized and is securely stored on the YODA university server. The recordings were immediately deleted after the interviews were anonymised transcribed. The data will be stored for 7 years. Access to the data will only be

granted to the researchers involved and is therefore not shared with an external party. Furthermore, the UU-SER tool was used to make sure that the research is conducted in an ethical manner before data collection. The study was registered and ethically approved by the Faculty Ethical Review Board (FERB).

Data Analysis

The content of the interviews was analysed using the qualitative analysing method of Boeije (2010). In qualitative analysis, the focus is directed at the understanding of the participants' experiences (Solomon, 2012; Webster & Mertova, 2007). The program Word was used for transcription and analysis. By using indicative coding techniques, explorative categories were created regarding the different research questions. Initially, the interviews were transcribed and examined for recurring patterns. Next, a set of codes was established and assigned to the data. Lastly, categories have been developed based on constant comparison of interview statements via open labelling and encrypting. These categories were further studied for interpretation. The labels remained conceptually near to the original quotations of the participants to contribute to the construct validity of the qualitative analyses. The analysis was completed in collaboration through consultation and agreement with the supervisor of this study to contribute to the reliability of the qualitative analyses.

Results

In this section, I will discuss the main findings for each research question using bold core labels that have been formed during the analysis of the results. The labels are furthermore illustrated with quotations from the in-depth interviews. A distinction is made between the experiences of parents of a child with a disability (4 participants), parents of children both with and without disabilities (6 participants) and parents of children without a disability (5 participants).

General Experiences and Barriers

The main motivation for almost every parent to go to the local playground is **to have fun** or to provide an enjoyable experience for their child. Play is seen by all parents as a fun activity.

> Our daughter really enjoys the proximity with other children in play. Even when she only sits next to another child, each with their own scoop and bucket, she is having so much fun. Her joyful experience is what makes me happy, too. (Mother of a child with disability).

Moreover, many parents talked about the benefits of play for the health and development of their children as a motivation to visit a playground. In addition, all parents of children without a disabilities said that they often go to the playground **to meet neighbours.** The local playground is seen as an enjoyable place where parents can catch up with people from the neighbourhood. This social aspect of play in a local playground has been discussed by almost every parent. In this way, the local playground is seen as an important social environment in the neighbourhood for both their children as well as themselves. Where parents and their children with disabilities feel accepted in the neighbourhood, this is experienced as positive. A mother of children both with and without a disability said: "My family and I really feel welcome there. It is a great playground, with an accepting and supporting community". Furthermore, most parents spoke about the extent to which they experience a feeling of togetherness or belonging on a playground. Many parents of a child with a disability indicated that they experience a **sense of not belonging** in their local playground. This feeling is mainly due to **inaccessibility of playgrounds**. Most parents reported that the local playground is not inclusive or accessible to children with disabilities. A mother of children both with and without a disability said: "Our local playground has not been designed with a view to inclusion. Children with a disability can hardly do anything there". The nature and severity of the disability plays an important role to the extent in which inaccessibility is seen as a limiting factor. Especially for a child with a physical disability, it is reported to be difficult to play in a playground that is not specifically adapted for them. The playground equipment, the material on the ground, the parking spaces and the toilets are most frequently mentioned by parents as inaccessible. Due to the limited accessible play equipment, parents of children with disabilities often feel socially excluded compared to the families without disabilities. For many parents this feeling is seen as a reason to not visit the local playground. However, this barrier is not only experienced by parents of a child with a disability, several parents of children without a disability referred to the material on the ground and the playground equipment as not accessible. A mother of a child without a disability said: "Sometimes I can't get through the sand or wooden chips with my buggy. I can't even imagine how hard that must be for a child who is in a wheelchair". Almost every parent of a child with a disability indicated that there are too little or no accessible play areas in the neighbourhood. Accessible playground are often **too far away**.

> The play areas that are accessible are very far away. I never plan to go to a playground, it is something that you do spontaneously. That is why I almost never go to an accessible playground, it is simply too far from my home. (Mother of children with and without disability).

Almost all parents of a child with a disability indicated that they often **do not feel welcome** in their local playground. This feeling mostly arises when they get looked at strangely by parents and children who are present in the playground. Some parents said that they continue to go to the playground despite feeling unwelcome. A mother of children both with and without a disability said: "We don't hide, that would only exacerbate the problem of unfamiliarity with disabilities in our community". This feeling of being unwelcome was not mentioned by the parents of children without disabilities, nor did any of them speak of hurtful stares. It could be concluded from this that parents of children with disabilities experience social barriers in play that parents of children without disabilities do not experience.

> Every time we go to the local playground, we get those stares again. Even when I kindly greet the parents and their children, they keep looking at us strangely. It's really painful. And as a result, we often do not feel welcome there. (Mother of a child with a disability).

Most parents mentioned their **supportive or facilitating role** in play. The degree and type of support that parents provide to their children differs between parents of children with disabilities and parents of children without disabilities. Parents of a child without a disability spoke of a type of support in which they mostly pay attention from a distance to whether the child is safe and having fun. Parents of a child with a disability spoke about a more comprehensive form of support in which they are intensively involved in play and often provide physical assistance (e.g., lifting, pushing wheelchair). A father of a child with a disability said: "I can't let my daughter play independently in the playground. I will always have to be there to support her in play". Several parents, both of children with and without disabilities, also mentioned that it **consumes a lot of time and energy** to visit a playground. For parents of a child with a disability, the extent of this depends on severity of the disability. The more severe the disability, the more time and energy it takes. For parents of children without disabilities, this varies on the age of the child. The younger the child, the more time and energy it requires. Almost all parents of a child with a disability indicated that they

experience a **lack of support** from other parents in the local playground, even though this is often needed or desired. This lack of support was not mentioned or experienced by the parents of children without disabilities.

Some of the parents of a child with a disability mentioned that they sometimes experience **feelings of shame** about their child's disability. In the playground, parents are confronted with their child being different and limited. Several parents also told that they are **afraid of being socially rejected** in their neighbourhood because of this disability. A mother of a child with a disability said: "There is also shame and fear for the reactions of other children and their parents to your child. These are strong emotions that many parents have a hard time talking about".

Inclusive playgrounds

In in-depth interviews, the parents were asked to compare their general experiences and barriers at inclusive playgrounds with those at non-inclusive playgrounds. Inclusive playgrounds are seen by both parents of children with and without disabilities as **more accessible playgrounds** compared to playgrounds that are not specifically designed to be inclusive. In inclusive playgrounds, much more thought has been given to the accessibility of for instance play equipment, the material on the ground, parking spaces and toilets. Most parents, especially those of children with disabilities, said that this positively contributes to an enjoyable experience for all children and parents. Moreover, at inclusive playgrounds, parents and their children are encouraged to **learning by doing**. There are more play opportunities for every child in inclusive playgrounds compared to non-inclusive playgrounds. This also creates more possibilities to discover and learn whether and how children with and without a disability can play together. In these playgrounds, children and parents are encouraged to experience and learn about inclusive play. Consequently, most parents, both of children with and without disabilities, said that they feel encouraged in inclusive playgrounds to **focus on possibilities** and capabilities, rather than problems or disabilities. Parents and children are stimulated **to be creative** and to find solutions which enable inclusive play.

> I always thought that it was not possible for my child to play with peers in a playground. He is in a wheelchair, so I was convinced it was hopeless. When I was introduced to inclusive play, I was shocked to learn that it is possible to play, regardless of my child's abilities. We love to go to the playground, now we know that it is possible. With a little creativity, anything is possible. (Mother of a child with disability).

As written before, most parents spoke about the extent to which they experience a feeling of togetherness or belonging on an inclusive playground. Almost all parents of a child with a disability said that they experience **a sense of belonging** and are **feeling welcome** in an inclusive playground. This feeling is mainly due to accessibility of playgrounds. In addition, most parents do not experience hurtful stares or are not looked at strangely in these playgrounds. These experiences are considerably differenced compared to the experiences at local playgrounds that are not designed for inclusion. Several parents also said that they receive **more social support** from other parents in an inclusive playground compared to the support in non-inclusive playgrounds. The parents of children without disabilities also indicated that they try to help other parents in supporting their children when visiting an inclusive playground. It seems that parents of children without disabilities are more aware of the need for social support in inclusive playgrounds compared to non-inclusive playgrounds.

Opportunities for Improvement

This research aims to examine how play at local playgrounds can be improved towards an more inclusive play culture in the Netherlands. Parents were asked to think of opportunities for improvement based on their own and their children experiences at playgrounds. Most parents spoke about opportunities for improvement in the playground design. **More attention into the design** of local playgrounds should be paid, so that every child is capable and welcome to play with others. Parents also spoke about the lack of variety in playgrounds.

> I think it is important that much more attention is paid to the design of playgrounds. Not only so that children with disabilities can play along, but in general. The playgrounds all look the same, children get bored of them quickly. (Mother of a child without disability).

According to the participants, there are still too little inclusive playgrounds in the Netherlands. For the realisation of an inclusive play culture in the Netherlands, **more accessible playgrounds** should be created in all neighbourhoods. Several parents, both of children with and without disabilities, spoke about **citizen participation and involvement**. They argued that parents and children should be involved in the design of the local playground. A mother of a child with disability said: "Municipalities should value the voice of parents and children in the design of playgrounds".

Several parents mentioned that **external support** or guidance is desired in inclusive play. Parents of children without disabilities often find it difficult to involve children with

disabilities in play, due to a lack of knowledge, competence and confidence. Many parents of children with disabilities said that external support will motivate them to visit a playground more often. An example of external support that would motivate the parents are workshops that explain how inclusive play can be locally achieved and how they can support their children within inclusive play. Some parents also mentioned a form of support in which professionals or coaches are physically present at the playground. In this way, the parents can learn how to appropriately support their children in inclusive play by observing.

Many parents also spoke about **societal acceptance and normalisation** of children with a disability. A father of children both with and without disabilities said: "As long as society does not gain experience with people with disability, the ignorance and all the misery that come with it will remain. Disabilities need to be more socially accepted and normalised". Parents spoke about multiple ways to create more societal acceptance and normalisation. For instance by providing information to increase awareness, or by generating a better representation of people with disabilities in popular movies or series. Many parents also spoke about societal inclusion in general, for instance by going to the same educational institute and by having similar work opportunities. Promoting inclusive play so that children are able and welcome to play with peers in the neighbourhood was also often mentioned. All parents talked about **increasing social awareness** about inclusive play.

> Awareness is really necessary. As a parent of a child without a disability, I honestly never dwell on this problem. I think that if more people start to see the need and importance of inclusive play, a difference will be made. But people have to be aware of the problem first. (Father of a child without disability).

Especially parents of children with disabilities spoke about the need to have a **supportive local community** when visiting a playground.

> I think it would be helpful if we as parents of children without disabilities give support to parents of children with disabilities. Like this, every parent can sit on the bench in the sun once in a while, while someone else pays attention to your child. (Mother of child without disability).

On a personal level, some parents of children with disabilities spoke about adjusting their expectations and **remaining realistic**. Inclusive play is certainly possible, but parents of children with disabilities have to realise that there will always be limitations to inclusive play.

> Expectations that you have as a parent of a child with a disability are of great importance. Your child will not be able to participate fully physically or socially. That is an utopia. Nevertheless, if my child cannot participate for a while, but does feel accepted and welcome, I see her enjoying herself on the side. And that is okay, too. (Mother of children with and without disability).

Discussion

This current study explored the experiences and opinions of parents in play at local playgrounds, both of children with and without disabilities. The purpose was to increase knowledge on inclusive play and to formulate opportunities for improvement for existing practices such as *De Speeltuinbende*. Insight in the experiences of parents could be valuable in the realization an inclusive play culture in the Netherlands in which all children are given the opportunity and are welcome to play with peers in their neighbourhood.

General Experiences and Barriers

Parents of children without disabilities were expected to have generally more positive experiences in local playgrounds than parents of children with disabilities (Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2014; Prellwitz & Skär, 2007; Van Melik & Althuize, 2020). This expectation was proven right. While nearly all parents of children without disabilities simply enjoy their experience at the local playground, it is often experienced as a strongly time and energy consuming activity by parents of children with disabilities. Corresponding with the literature on play at local playgrounds, parents and their children with a disability often experience social and emotional barriers in play (e.g., Burke, 2013; Jeanes & Magee, 2012). Unlike the parents of children without disabilities, they often spoke about a feeling of being unwelcome or not belonging at the local playground. This also appears to be strongly related to the environmental and physical aspects of play. The environment is often not accessible for children with a disability, causing them to be physically incompetent in play.

Many parents' and their children without disabilities struggle to involve a child with a disability in outdoor play in playgrounds. A sense of unfamiliarity with disabilities portrays an critical aspect of the social and emotional barriers in play. Therefore, children with a disability often feel stigmatized and different from their peers, which makes belonging to a

peer group even more difficult (Emerson et al., 2016). This all can create social-emotional difficulties for children with a disability and their parents to even visit a local playground in the first place (Het Gehandicapte Kind, 2019).

Only parents of children with disabilities were expected to experience several barriers in play. This expectation was proven wrong. Although less so than parents of children with disabilities, parents of children without disabilities also mentioned to experience barriers in play, such as inaccessible material on the ground equipment that is not suitable for younger children. This confirms how important it is for all parents and their children to be involved in the organization of local playgrounds (Casey, 2010). To this point, more research on citizen participation and agency towards an inclusive play culture is needed. Future research should therefore examine how children and their parents can be best involved in the organization of local playgrounds, so that it accommodates the needs of all families (Woolley, 2013).

Inclusive Playgrounds

Parents initially described an inclusive play culture as a culture in which children, regardless of their abilities, are able to play together. The environment of playgrounds should be adapted so that children of all abilities have the physical possibility to play. When questioned further, the social and emotional aspects were also discussed. In order to achieve an inclusive play culture, all children and their families should also feel socially and emotionally welcome. This description of an inclusive play culture is in correspondence with the literature on inclusive play and inclusive playgrounds, discussed in the introduction of this thesis (Brannan et al., 2016; Burke, 2013; Casey, 2010; Fernelius & Christensen, 2017; Stafford, 2017; Wenger et al., 2021; Woolley, 2013). In an inclusive play culture, both the social and physical environment should be adapted to suit the possibilities and wishes of all children in play.

Parents of children with disability were expected to have more positive experiences in inclusive playgrounds compared to playgrounds that are not inclusive (Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2014; Prellwitz & Skär, 2007; Van Melik & Althuize, 2020). This expectation was proven right. The environment is adapted to be physically accessible for all children. Moreover, in contrast to many non-inclusive playgrounds, they feel more welcome and accepted at these playgrounds. However, it must be said that these playgrounds are often not located in their local neighbourhood. As a result, these experiences do not necessarily contribute to a sense of community-belongingness.

It was also expected that whether or not a playground is inclusive has little impact on the experiences of parents of children without disabilities. Although the impact was less

substantial for this group compared to the parents of children with disabilities, this expectation was proven partly wrong. Parents indicated that they experience the atmosphere in inclusive playgrounds as more pleasant and that they are also more helpful and aware of parents and their children with disabilities at these inclusive playgrounds. Moreover, the barriers that some parents of children without disabilities experience in playgrounds, such as inaccessible material on the ground, are not experienced in inclusive playgrounds. Inclusive playgrounds thus better suit the needs of all parents' and children in play (Burke, 2013).

Inclusive playgrounds generally provide a more enjoyable play experience for all. Yet these playgrounds are still available to a limited extent and many parents' and their children still experience social exclusion. Practices such as De Speeltuinbende do have an positive impact, but there is still a long way to go before an inclusive play culture can be realised.

Opportunities for Improvement

Parents were expected to see opportunities for improvement in the degree of acceptance and normalization of disabilities (De Winter, 2012; Solomon, 2012). This expectation was proven right. Inclusive play at local playgrounds could support the participation, wider acceptance and social inclusion of families with disabilities in society (Wenger et al, 2021). We must aim to create an social environment that is welcoming and suitable for all children, regardless of their (dis)abilities (Lynch et al., 2018). Based on this notion, the nature and quality of inclusive play must be focused on acceptance, possibilities and abilities. Municipalities and organizations such as De Speeltuinbende should further encourage and facilitate inclusive play opportunities, so that more parents and children gain positive experiences and are made aware of the possibilities in play.

Parents were also expected to see opportunities for improvement in relation to competence, autonomy and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2008). This expectation was proven right as well. Children of all abilities and their families should be able to feel a sense of autonomy, competence and relatedness in play at local playgrounds. However, children with a disability often do not receive adequate supported in these needs in non-inclusive playgrounds. Various adjustments in the play environment should be made so that all children are competent to play in a freely chosen way (Brennan et al., 2016). Municipalities and organizations such as *De Speeltuinbende* should also arrange policies and interventions aimed at strengthening the social environment in local communities (De Winter, 2012).

Limitations

This research has provided a clear picture of the experiences of parents of children with and without disabilities. However, it could be that parents have given socially desirable

answers, in which reality is underestimated. For instance, parents of children without disabilities indicated that they are open to inclusive play. However, parents of children with disabilities said that they are often socially excluded at local playgrounds. Additionally, it is questionable whether inclusive playgrounds actually increase inclusive play, or whether the results relate more to the aspirations of the parents and their children. Efforts have been made to prevent socially desirable answers by guaranteeing anonymity, asking open questions and using interview techniques such as probes. Additional observational research is needed on the prevalence of inclusive play and the attitude of parents and children of all abilities within inclusive play on both regular and inclusive playgrounds (Aarts et al., 2012).

Furthermore, only parents were interviewed in this study. It is not always clear whether the experiences of parents are similar to the experiences of their children in inclusive play. Future research should therefore also focus on the experiences of children themselves.

Implications

In the current Dutch play culture, inclusion is not yet made a priority. Some parents who participated in this study said that the interviews helped them to become aware of the problem in current non-inclusive playgrounds. Awareness of the need and importance of inclusive play is the first step in a process of change towards a more inclusive play culture in the Netherlands (Casey, 2010). Society must be made aware of this problem and the already existing solutions by positively informing people and by encouraging bottom-up citizen participation. Awareness and implementation of inclusive play in the Netherlands can only be made possible if municipalities, educational institutes and professionals work together with parents and the children themselves. As illustrated by practices such as *De Speeltuinbende*, by differences and vulnerabilities can transform into possibilities and strengths by making the broader social environment welcoming and suitable for all children, (RMO, 2012; De Winter, 2012; Moritsugu et al., 2015).

This study is a qualitative investigation into parents' experiences and opinions at local playgrounds. The results provide insight in how play at local playgrounds is experienced from a parents perspective and how we can work towards an more inclusive play culture for children of all abilities. It still remains unclear what exactly is needed so that every child can be involved in inclusive play, regardless of the nature and severity of the disability. It is therefore essential that parents and children contribute to the drafting of new play policies and practices by encouraging citizen participation and agency (De Winter, 2012).

The results of this study suggest that all members of society, regardless of abilities, should be more aware of the process of inclusion and be educated about the possibilities in

inclusive play. In order to realise an inclusive play culture, we should do more than making playgrounds accessible. A more bottom-up, community-oriented approach should be stimulated. Clearly, the tasks awaiting us to spread more awareness so that every parent and child is able to enjoy the wonderful and essential experience of play.

References

Aarts, M. J., de Vries, S. I., Van Oers, H. A., & Schuit, A. J. (2012). Outdoor play among children in relation to neighborhood characteristics: A cross-sectional neighborhood observation study. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, *9*(1), 1-11. https://doi.org/10.1186/1479-5868-9-98

Baumeister, R. F., & Leary, M. R. (1995). The need to belong: Desire for interpersonal attachments as a fundamental human motivation. *Psychological Bulletin*, *117*(3), 497. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.117.3.497

Bennet, S. A., Yiannakoulias, N., Williams, A. M., & Kitchen, P. (2012). Playground accessibility and neighbourhood social interaction among parents. *Social Indicators Research*, *108*(2), 199-213. https://doi.org.10.1007/s11205-012-0062-4

Bento, G., & Dias, G. (2017). The importance of outdoor play for young children's healthy development. *Porto Biomedical Journal*, *2*(5), 157-160. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pbj.2017.03.003

Brennan, A., Blanchard, S., Scharn, B., Milbert, K., & Samuelson, S. (2016). The need for accessibility in playgrounds for children with disabilities. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, *70*(1), 70-86. https://doi.org/10.5014/ajot.2016.70S1-PO6020

Britten, N. (2011). Qualitative research on health communication: What can it contribute?. *Patient Education and Counseling*, *82*(3), 384-388. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2010.12.021

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). Contexts of child rearing: Problems and prospects. *American Psychologist*, *34*(10), 844. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1037/0003-066X.34.10.844

Boeije, H. R. (2010). *Analysis in qualitative research.* Sage.

Bourke-Taylor, H., Howie, L., & Law, M. (2010). Impact of caring for a school-aged child with a disability: Understanding mothers' perspectives. *Australian Occupational Therapy Journal*, *57*(2), 127-136. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1111/j.1440-1630.2009.00817.x

Burke, J. (2013). Just for the fun of it: Making playgrounds accessible to all children. *World Leisure Journal*, *55*(1), 83-95. https://doiorg.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1080/04419057.2012.759144

Butler, C. W. (2016). *Talk and Social Interaction in the Playground*. Routledge.

Cacioppo, J. T., & Patrick, W. (2008). *Loneliness: Human nature and the need for social connection*. WW Norton & Company.

Casey, T. (2010). *Inclusive Play: Practical strategies for children from birth to eight*. Sage.

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2008). Self-determination theory: A macrotheory of human motivation, development, and health. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, *49*(3), 182. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1037/a0012801

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The" what" and" why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, *11*(4), 227-268. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01

De Winter, M. (2012). *Socialization and civil society: How parents, teachers and others could foster a democratic way of life*. Springer Science & Business Media.

Dyment, J. E., & Bell, A. C. (2008). Grounds for movement: Green school grounds as sites for promoting physical activity. *Health Education Research*, *23*(6), 952-962. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1093/her/cym059

Emerson, N. D., Distelberg, B., Morrell, H. E., Williams-Reade, J., Tapanes, D., & Montgomery, S. (2016). Quality of life and school absenteeism in children with chronic illness. *The Journal of School Nursing*, *32*(4), 258-266. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1177/1059840515615401

Fernelius, C. L., & Christensen, K. M. (2017). Systematic review of evidence-based practices for inclusive playground design. *Children, Youth and Environments*, *27*(3), 78-102. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.7721/chilyoutenvi.27.3.0078

Gilmore, L., & Cuskelly, M. (2014). Vulnerability to loneliness in people with intellectual disability: An explanatory model. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities*, *11*(3), 192-199. https://doi.org/10.1111/jppi.12089

Habibe, A. C. A. R. (2014). Learning environments for children in outdoor spaces. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *141*(2), 846-853. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.05.147

Hawkley, L. C., & Capitanio, J. P. (2015). Perceived social isolation, evolutionary fitness and health outcomes: A lifespan approach. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*, *370*(1669), 1-14. https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2014.0114

Het Gehandicapte Kind. (2019). *Jaarverslag 2019: Geen kind zonder vriendjes!*. *Het Gehandicapte Kind.* https://gehandicaptekind.nl/over-ons/publicaties

Ison, N., McIntyre, S., Rothery, S., Smithers-Sheedy, H., Goldsmith, S., Parsonage, S., & Foy, L. (2010). 'Just like you': A disability awareness programme for children that enhanced knowledge, attitudes and acceptance: Pilot study findings. *Developmental*

Neurorehabilitation, *13*(5), 360-368. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.3109/17518423.2010.496764

Jeanes, R., & Magee, J. (2012). 'Can we play on the swings and roundabouts?': Creating inclusive play spaces for disabled young people and their families. *Leisure Studies*, *31*(2), 193-210. https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2011.589864

Kemple, K. M., Oh, J., Kenney, E., & Smith-Bonahue, T. (2016). The power of outdoor play and play in natural environments. *Childhood Education*, *92*(6), 446-454. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1080/00094056.2016.1251793

Koller, D., Pouesard, M. L., & Rummens, J. A. (2018). Defining social inclusion for children with disabilities: A critical literature review. *Children & Society*, *32*(1), 1-13. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1111/chso.12223

Lynch, H., Moore, A., & Prellwitz, M. (2018). From policy to play provision: Universal design and the challenges of inclusive play. *Children, Youth and Environments*, *28*(2), 12-34. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.7721/chilyoutenvi.28.2.0012

Maes, M., Van den Noortgate, W., Fustolo-Gunnink, S. F., Rassart, J., Luyckx, K., & Goossens, L. (2017). Loneliness in children and adolescents with chronic physical conditions: a meta-analysis. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, *42*(6), 622-635. https://doi.org/10.1093/jpepsy/jsx046

Magasi, S., Wong, A., Gray, D. B., Hammel, J., Baum, C., Wang, C. C., & Heinemann, A. W. (2015). Theoretical foundations for the measurement of environmental factors and their impact on participation among people with disabilities. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, *96*(4), 569-577. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apmr.2014.12.002

Malone, G. P., Pillow, D. R., & Osman, A. (2012). The general belongingness scale (GBS): Assessing achieved belongingness. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *52*(3), 311-316. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2011.10.027

Masi, C. M., Chen, H. Y., Hawkley, L. C., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2011). A meta-analysis of interventions to reduce loneliness. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *15*(3), 219-266. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1177/1088868310377394

Martela, F., & Riekki, T. J. (2018). Autonomy, competence, relatedness, and beneficence: A multicultural comparison of the four pathways to meaningful work. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *9*, 1157. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01157

Margalit, M. (2012). *Loneliness among children with special needs: Theory, research, coping, and intervention*. Springer Science & Business Media.

Moore, A., & Lynch, H. (2015). Accessibility and usability of playground environments for children under 12: A scoping review. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy, 22*(5), 331-344. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.3109/11038128.2015.1049549

Moritsugu, J., Vera, E., Wong, F. Y., & Duffy, K. G. (2015). *Community Psychology*. Psychology Press.

Reichman, N. E., Corman, H., & Noonan, K. (2008). Impact of child disability on the family. *Maternal and Child Health Journal, 12*(6), 679-683. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-007-0307-z

Pellegrini, A. D., Dupuis, D., & Smith, P. K. (2007). Play in evolution and development. *Developmental Review*, *27*(2), 261-276. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2006.09.001

Pinquart, M., & Teubert, D. (2012). Academic, physical, and social functioning of children and adolescents with chronic physical illness: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, *37*(4), 376-389. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1093/jpepsy/jsr106

Prellwitz, M., & Skär, L. (2007). Usability of playgrounds for children with different abilities. *Occupational Therapy International*, *14*(3), 144-155. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1002/oti.230

Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling (RMO). (2012). *Ontzorgen en normaliseren: Naar een sterke eerstelijns jeugd-en gezinszorg*. Raad voor Maatschappelijke ontwikkeling.

Reichman, N. E., Corman, H., & Noonan, K. (2008). Impact of child disability on the family. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, *12*(6), 679-683. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-007-0307-z

Rubin, K. H., Bukowski, W. M., & Bowker, J. C. (2015). Children in peer groups. *Handbook of Child Psychology and Developmental Science*, 4(1), 1-48. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1002/9781118963418.childpsy405

Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2006). Self-regulation and the problem of human autonomy: Does psychology need choice, self-determination, and will?. *Journal of Personality*, *74*(6), 1557-1586. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2006.00420.x

Schildt, H., Mantere, S., & Cornelissen, J. (2020). Power in sensemaking processes. *Organization Studies*, *41*(2), 241-265. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1177/0170840619847718

Snoek, H. M., Oosterkamp, E. B., & Vaandrager, L. (2020). *Anders buitenspelen: Een onderzoek naar spelen en bewegen in de buitenruimte*. Wageningen University & Research.

Solomon, A. (2012). *Far from the tree: Parents, children and the search for identity*. Simon and Schuster.

Stafford, L. (2017). Journeys to play: Planning considerations to engender inclusive playspaces. *Landscape Research*, *42*(1), 33-46. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1080/01426397.2016.1241872

Townsend, E., & Marval, R. (2013). Can professionals actually enable occupational justice?. *Cadernos de Terapia Ocupacional da UFSCar*, *21*(2), 215. http://doi.editoracubo.com.br/10.4322/cto.2013.025

Van Melik, R., & Althuizen, N. (2020). Inclusive play policies: Disabled children and their access to dutch playgrounds. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1111/tesg.12457

Webster, L., & Mertova, P. (2007). *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching*. Routledge.

Whittingham, K. (2014). Parents of children with disabilities, mindfulness and acceptance: A review and a call for research. *Mindfulness*, *5*(6), 704-709. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-013-0224-8

Woolley, H. (2013). Now being social: The barrier of designing outdoor play spaces for disabled children. *Children & Society*, *27*(6), 448-458. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1111/j.1099-0860.2012.00464.x

Youell, B. (2008). The importance of play and playfulness. *European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counselling*, *10*(2), 121-129. https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1080/13642530802076193

Acknowledgements

Appendices

Appendix A: Informed consent

Proefpersoneninformatie voor deelname aan (sociaal)-wetenschappelijk onderzoek

Naar een inclusieve speelcultuur voor alle kinderen: kwalitatief onderzoek naar de ervaringen van Nederlandse ouders bij lokale speeltuinen

Maart, Amsterdam

Geachte heer, mevrouw,

Middels deze brief wil ik u toestemming vragen om mee te doen aan het onderzoek "Naar een inclusieve speelcultuur voor alle kinderen: kwalitatief onderzoek naar de ervaringen van Nederlandse ouders bij lokale speeltuinen". Dit onderzoek heeft tot doel om meer inzicht te krijgen in de ervaringen van ouders in spel bij lokale speeltuinen.

Achtergrond onderzoek
Samen spelen is niet alleen leuk maar ook heel belangrijk voor de ontwikkeling van kinderen. Helaas zijn veel speelplekken fysiek ontoegankelijk voor kinderen met een beperking. Op initiatief van de Nederlandse Stichting voor het Gehandicapte Kind is in 2011 het project 'De Speeltuinbende' opgericht. Samen met een groep enthousiaste gezinnen met kinderen met én zonder een beperking maken zij veel speelplekken in Nederland toegankelijk voor kinderen met een beperking. Zij zetten zich daarmee in voor een omgeving waar ieder kind onbezorgd buiten kan samen spelen met kinderen uit de buurt. Maar er is meer nodig dan het fysiek toegankelijk maken van speeltuinen, gezinnen met kinderen met een beperking ervaren vaak een hoge sociale en emotionele drempel om naar de speeltuin te gaan. Veel kinderen met een beperking voelen zich daardoor eenzaam of geïsoleerd. Om te zorgen dat kinderen met en zonder beperking in toegankelijke speelplekken samen gaan spelen, moeten deze aspecten van inclusief spel verder worden onderzocht. In dit onderzoek zal er gekeken worden naar hoe ouders van kinderen met en zonder beperking spel in lokale speeltuinen ervaren.

Wat wordt van u als participant verwacht
Als u besluit om deel te nemen aan dit onderzoek, wordt u mogelijk uitgenodigd voor een interview. De onderwerpen hebben betrekking op de eventuele ervaringen, behoeften en wensen van u en uw gezin binnen inclusief spel in toegankelijke speelplekken. De verwachte tijdsinvestering van dit interview ligt tussen de 30 tot 45 minuten. Het interview zal wegens de pandemie online plaatsvinden, via Microsoft Teams of Zoom.

Het interview zal worden opgenomen en uitgeschreven. Deze data zal vervolgens worden geanalyseerd. Hiervoor heb ik uw toestemming nodig. U heeft gedurende de onderzoeksperiode het recht om uw gegevens in te zien en te laten verwijderen. Na afronding van het onderzoek worden de opnames verwijderd. Alleen de betrokken onderzoekers hebben verder toegang tot de opname.

Vergoeding
Deelname aan dit onderzoek is op vrijwillige basis, er wordt dus geen financiële vergoeding gegeven.

Vertrouwelijkheid verwerking gegevens
Voor dit onderzoek is het nodig dat wij een aantal persoonsgegevens van u verzamelen. Deze gegevens hebben wij nodig om de onderzoeksvraag goed te kunnen beantwoorden, dan wel om u te kunnen benaderen voor vervolgonderzoek. De persoonsgegevens worden op een andere computer opgeslagen dan de onderzoeksgegevens zelf (de zgn. ruwe data). De computer waarop de persoonsgegevens worden opgeslagen is volgens de hoogste normen beveiligd en alleen betrokken onderzoekers hebben toegang tot deze gegevens. De gegevens zelf zijn ook beveiligd d.m.v. een beveiligingscode.

Uw gegevens zullen voor minimaal 7 jaar bewaard worden. Dit is volgens de daartoe bestemde richtlijnen van de VSNU. Meer informatie over privacy kunt u lezen op de website van de Autoriteit Persoonsgegevens:
https://autoriteitpersoonsgegevens.nl/nl/onderwerpen/avg-europese-privacywetgeving

Vrijwillige deelname
Deelname aan dit onderzoek is vrijwillig. U kunt op elk gewenst moment, zonder opgave van reden en zonder voor u nadelige gevolgen, stoppen met het onderzoek. De tot dan toe verzamelde gegevens worden wel gebruikt voor het onderzoek, tenzij u expliciet aangeeft dit niet te willen.

Onafhankelijk contactpersoon en klachtenfunctionaris
Als u vragen of opmerkingen over het onderzoek heeft, kunt u contact opnemen met Cerunne Bouts (projectleider Speeltuinbende): cbouts@nsgk.nl.
Als u een officiële klacht heeft over het onderzoek, dan kunt u een mail sturen naar de klachtenfunctionaris via klachtenfunctionaris-fetcsocwet@uu.nl

Als u na het lezen van deze informatiebrief besluit tot deelname aan het onderzoek verzoek ik u bijgevoegd antwoordstrookje te ondertekenen en in te leveren bij de onderzoeker.

Vriendelijke groet,
Emma Julianna van Heusden

Toestemmingsverklaring:

Hierbij verklaar ik de informatiebrief m.b.t. onderzoek *"De sociale aspecten van inclusief spel: kwalitatief onderzoek naar de visie van ouders van kinderen met en zonder een beperking"* gelezen te hebben en akkoord te gaan met deelname aan het onderzoek.

Naam: …………………………………………

Datum: …………………………………………

Handtekening: …………………………………………

Appendix B: Topic list

Respondentnummer:
Naam:
Moeder / Vader:
Gezinsopbouw:
Beperking kind:

Gespreksintroductie
- Doelstelling
- Tijdsduur
- Opbouw interview doorlopen
- Wat gaat er met het materiaal gebeuren
- Legitimeer aantekeningen en opnameapparatuur
- Anonimiteit waarborgen
- Heeft u nog vragen/ is alles duidelijk?
- Start opname

(1) Algemene opvattingen van ouders in (inclusief) spel
- Kunt u iets vertellen over de sfeer in uw lokale speeltuin? Is deze speeltuin inclusief?
- Hoe zou u in het algemeen inclusief spel omschrijven? Wanneer is volgens u een speeltuin inclusief (definitie)?
- Wat stimuleert u om met uw kinderen naar een speelplek te gaan?
- Wat hindert u om met uw kinderen naar een speelplek te gaan?

Samenvatting topic 1.

(2) Ervaringen in het fysieke aspect van (inclusief) spelen in speeltuinen
- Ervaart u fysieke drempels om naar reguliere speelplekken te gaan met uw kinderen? Is dat gevoel anders bij een inclusieve speelplek? Kunt u een voorbeeld geven (denk aan mogelijkheden/oplossingen)?
- Ziet u kansen voor verbetering betreffende fysieke aspecten van inclusief spel? Zo ja, wat zou er dan voor uw gezin veranderen?

Samenvatting topic 2.

(3) Ervaringen in de sociaal-emotionele aspecten van (inclusief) spelen in speeltuinen
- Kunt u wat vertellen over uw ervaringen met ontmoetingen met andere ouders bij een reguliere speelplek? Hoe ervaart u de ontmoetingen met andere ouders bij een inclusieve speelplek? Merkt u daarin een verschil?
- Ervaart uw sociaal-emotionele drempels om naar reguliere speelplekken te gaan met uw kinderen? Is dat gevoel anders bij een inclusieve speelplek? Kunt u een voorbeeld geven (denk aan mogelijkheden/oplossingen)?
- Heeft u als ouder specifieke acties van kinderen waargenomen om alle kinderen in het inclusief spel te betrekken?
- Ziet u kansen voor verbetering betreffende de sociaal-emotionele aspecten van inclusief spel? Zo ja, wat zou er dan voor uw gezin veranderen?

Samenvatting topic 3.

(4) Persoonlijke acties in inclusief spel
- Hoe bent u in aanraking gekomen met de Speeltuinbende? Indien van toepassing: waarom heeft u zich aangesloten bij een lokale Speeltuinbende?
- In hoeverre bent u tevreden over de aanpak van inclusieve speelplekken en initiatieven zoals de Speeltuinbende?

Samenvatting topic 4. Aankondiging laatste topic om abrupt einde te voorkomen.

(5) Inclusief spel voor kinderen zonder een beperking
- Wat zijn volgens u voordelen van samenspel tussen kinderen met en zonder beperking?
- Wat zouden mogelijke nadelen kunnen zijn van samenspel tussen kinderen met en zonder beperking?
- Wat is er volgens u nodig om een inclusieve speelplek beter aan te sluiten aan de behoeften van alle kinderen en ouders die de speelplek bezoeken?
- Indien van toepassing: Hoe denkt u dat uw kinderen zonder beperking het ervaren om te spelen op een inclusieve speelplek?

Samenvatting topic 5.

Afsluiting
- Is er nog een onderwerp dat u aan de orde zou willen stellen, nog vragen?
- Einde opname
- Wat vond u van het gesprek?
- Bedankt voor het gesprek!