

The P4Play Marie Skłodowska-Curie (MSC) Training Network is an innovative European Joint Doctorate (EJD) programme in Occupational Science for Occupational Therapists. This EJD was established in 2020 when 2.2 m was awarded to a consortium of researchers and play advocates, in the highly competitive Horizon2020 scheme. P4play is a collaboration between 4 academic universities in Ireland, Sweden, Scotland, and Switzerland, and 15 partner organisations in Europe and the USA. The P4play programme adopts a child's rights-based perspective and aims to investigate the nature of play through the lens of People, Place, Policy and Practice (P4Play). A refocus on play as a right requires further study as a central concern (or occupation) in children's lives. Occupational Science, a science dedicated to the study of humans as doers or as occupational beings, offers a unique lens to explore play as an occupation. Two research projects in practice focus on implementations of evidence into practice through design of assessment tools and interventions for socio-spatial inclusion.

### Project 7: The user perspective on public playground

#### Background

Public playgrounds built for the purpose of play are considered valuable by children with and without disabilities and their families (4). One way to address socio-spatial inclusion is to involve playground users in the decision-making process (5). Children with disabilities and their families can act as a key reference point for stakeholders to provide for good play environments (6).

#### Aim

To develop and test an evidence-informed instrument to analyse environmental qualities of public playgrounds, from the user perspective.

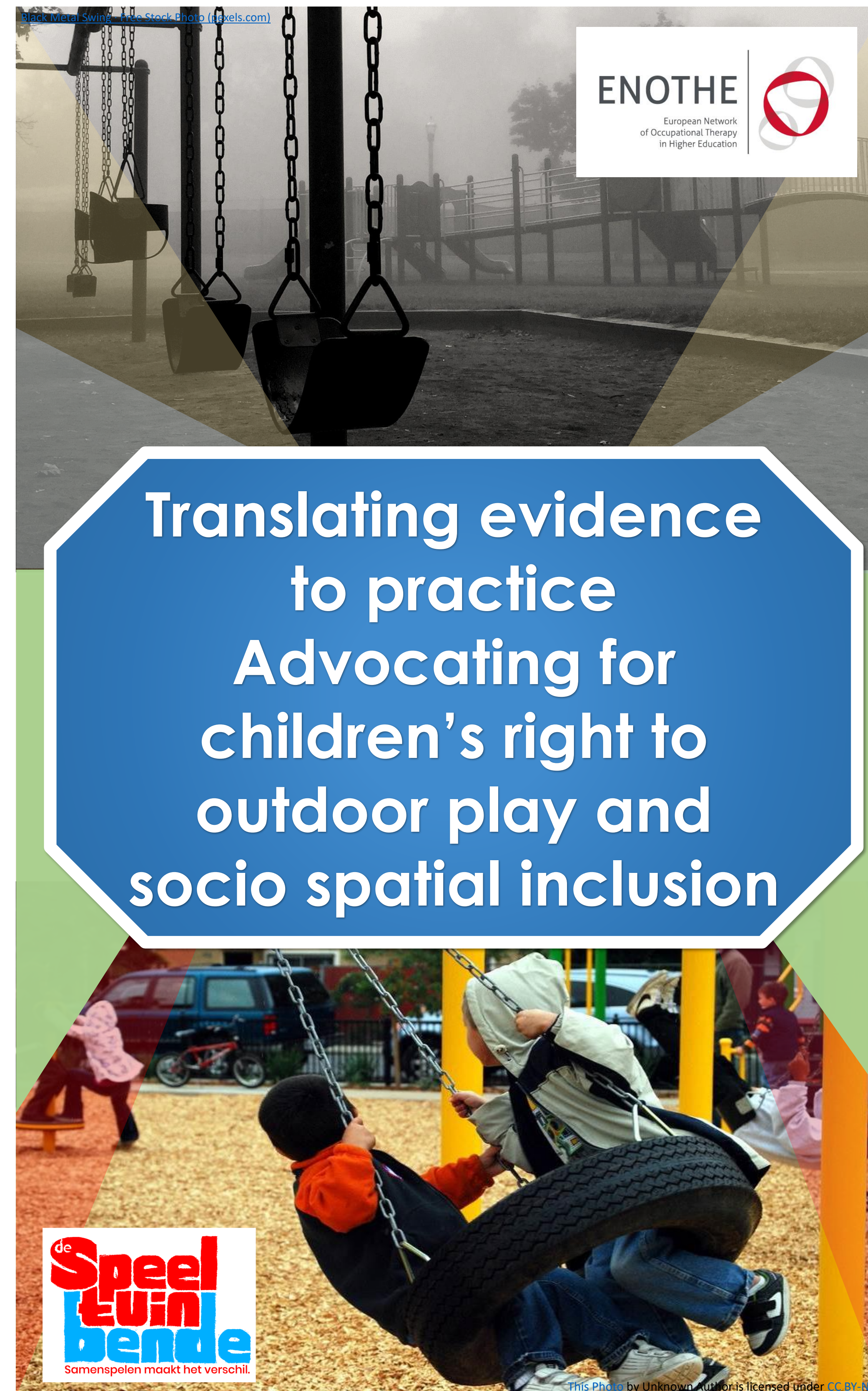
#### Method

By involving children with and without disabilities, parents and experts in outdoor play this research will:

- Synthesise research identifying environmental qualities that maximize the play value of public playgrounds, focusing on the perspectives of children with disabilities and their caregivers.
- Use the Delphi technique to develop a new instrument that analyses the environmental qualities of public playgrounds.
- Pilot the new instrument in cross-cultural settings and conduct Rasch analysis to establish its reliability and validity

#### Anticipated Results

This research will create evidence to inform good design of play provision for children with disabilities and their families. This interdisciplinary tool will allow professionals to understand how the environment influences outdoor play.



### Project 8: Advocating for children's play capabilities

#### Background

The schoolyard is important in the social lives of children (1). However evidence is limited on practices that support play and social inclusion (2). A capabilities approach offers a strengths-based framework that fosters critical reflexivity advocating for play as an outcome and addressing access to resources, opportunities, and environmental supportiveness (3).

#### Aim

To investigate the use of a capabilities approach to understand children's play and identify play supports in schoolyards- with a focus on children experiencing discrimination.

#### Method

Informed by critical and occupational science theory, this research will:

- Map and summarize the literature on Traveller children's play and identify relevant socio cultural, historical, political, and spatial factors.
- Apply child centered participatory methods with Traveller children to gather children's perspectives of schoolyard play and inclusion.
- Use critical narrative theory methods to explore multiple perspectives of schoolyard play and inclusion and Occupational Therapists experiences of applying a capabilities framework to understand children's schoolyard play and plan interventions.

#### Anticipated Results

Findings from this study will generate knowledge on the potential utility of the capabilities approach to support critical reflexivity and rights-based play focused practice for children experiencing discrimination in schoolyards.

References: 1. Baines, E., & Blatchford, P. (2019). *School break and lunch times and young people's social lives: a follow-up national study*. May, 115. [http://ow.ly/gtkn30oHeEO\\_2](http://ow.ly/gtkn30oHeEO_2). Serman, J. J., Naughton, G. A., Bundy, A. C., Froude, E., & Villeneuve, M. A. (2019). Planning for outdoor play: Government and family decision-making. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 26(7), 484–495. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11038128.2018.1447010> 3.Sen, A. (1999). Development as freedom. Oxford, UK: (4) Lynch H, Moore A, Edwards C, Horgan L. Advancing play participation for all: The challenge of addressing play diversity and inclusion in community parks and playgrounds. *Br J Occup Ther*. 2020 Feb;83(2):107–17. (5) Jeanes R, Magee J. 'Can we play on the swings and roundabouts?': creating inclusive play spaces for disabled young people and their families. *Leis Stud*. 2012 Apr;31(2):193–210. (6) Dunn K, Moore M. Developing Accessible Play Space in the UK: A Social Model Approach. *Child Youth Environ*. 2005;15(1):332–54.