



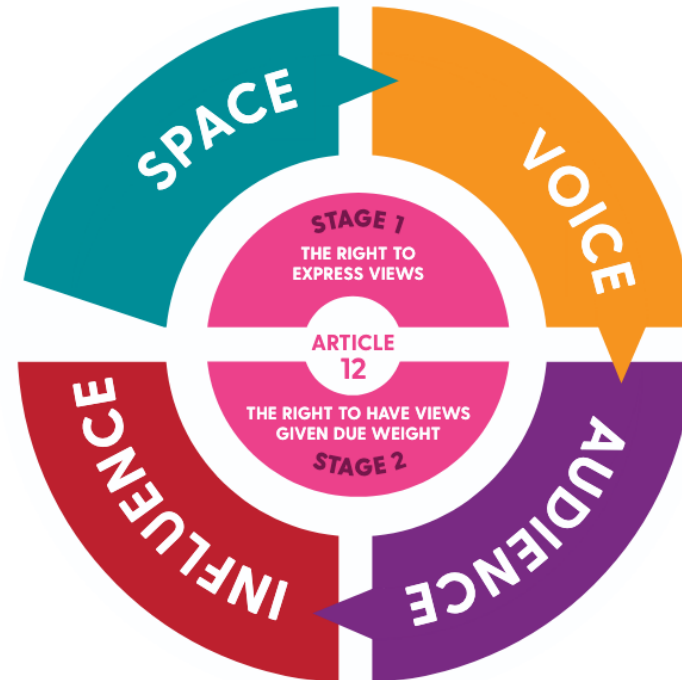
Empowering Children's Voices: Participatory Methods in Occupational Therapy Research

Christina Schulze



Lundy Model

- The right of the child to be heard on matters that affect them (UNCRC, 1989, art. 12)
- Lundy Model (Lundy, 2007) – Participation with a purpose
 - Space: safe, inclusive space for children to have a say
 - Voice: support children in expressing their opinions
 - Audience: listen to children's opinions
 - Influence: incorporate opinions accordingly, provide feedback on how and which of their opinions are used



Methods for Capturing the Child's Voice

Child-Centered Approaches:

- Creative approaches, e.g. drawing
 - Photo-elicitation & storytelling
 - Interviews
 - Participatory observation
-
- Research partnership with children & parents
 - Ethical considerations



Drawings

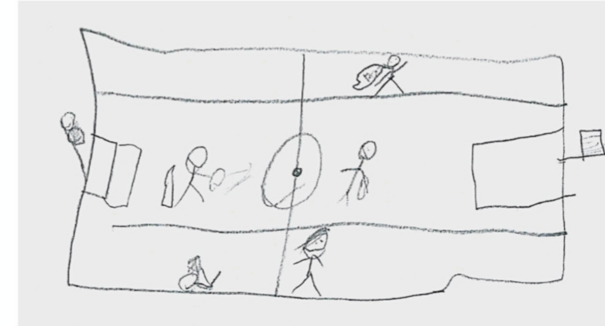
Swiss school class shares their experiences on occupations in their school

Figure 4
Artwork by David from the Drawing and Writing session



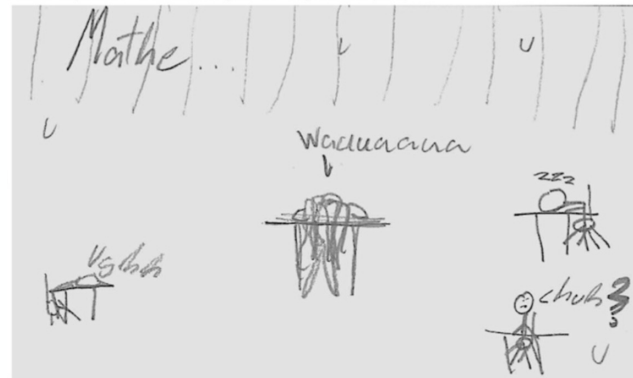
Note: All players of a favorite break time game (Panini) happily participating

Figure 8
Artwork by Mustafa from the Drawing and Writing session



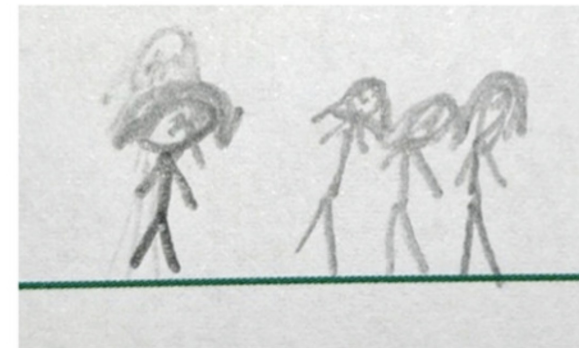
Note: Pupils unhappily watching from the sidelines in a PE ball game

Figure 5
Artwork by Mira from the Drawing and Writing session (Mira)



Note: Working alone during math lessons

Figure 6
Artwork by Masha from the Drawing and Writing session



Note: Feeling sad, being excluded from a girl group

Participation of adolescents on the autism spectrum



'With trams, I always know how they run and where they stop... each one has its own number and colour. I know that.'



'Almost every Sunday I go for a walk with my mum. When we meet people I have to greet, it gets difficult.'



'Once a week, I have to go shopping at [shop]. I know exactly where everything is. On Saturdays, it's always very busy there and my mum talks to everyone.'

Krieger, B., Piškur, B., Schulze, C., Beurskens, A., & Moser, A. (2021). Environmental prerequisites and social interchange: the participation experience of adolescents with autism spectrum disorder in Zurich. *Disability and Rehabilitation*, 43(26), 3789–3802.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09638288.2020.1753248>



Exploring the perceptions of children, with and without disabilities, on playing on inclusive playgrounds



'This playground is really cool, because here you can go higher.'
(Girl, no disability)

'Actually, I can do anything in the playground.'
(Boy with a disability)

'And this is our playground. Ours! They are there, and we are here.'
(Boy with a disability)

'I would set up a small table to eat snacks where wheelchairs can also go (...). I would put a table that is lower for the hand wheelchairs and I would make the one for the electric a bit higher.' (Girl with a disability)

Wenger, I., Schulze, C., Lundström, U., & Prellwitz, M. (2021). Children's perceptions of playing on inclusive playgrounds: A qualitative study. *Scandinavian journal of occupational therapy*, 28(2), 136–146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11038128.2020.1810768>



Walking, talking, playing: Children with disabilities' outdoor play in French mainstream schools

'I can(not) play': Environmental Barriers and Opportunities

'I have an idea': Children's Preferences for Enriching Play and Inclusion

'Learn to Hear Me Out': Strengthening Children's Participation in Everyday School Practices including Playground Redesign.



Figure 1. Picture of a typical French elementary school playground.
Copyright: 'Une cour de récréation d'une école primaire dans le Val-de-Marne en 2000 ©Getty – Lily FRANEY' <https://www.radiofrance.fr/franceinter/podcasts/la-marche-de-l-histoire/la-cour-de-recreation-2597484>.

Orain, C., Morgenthaler, T., & Schulze, C. (2025). Walking, talking, playing: Children with disabilities' outdoor play in French mainstream schools. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 32(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1080/11038128.2025.2459150>

Children`s voices: The Lived Experience of Daily Occupations With Sensory Processing Difficulties

Sometimes it was just hard to listen to my teacher [name] because she speaks really loudly and sometimes it just blocks my ears. (. . .) I kind of couldn't hear well (. . .) that's why I keep getting the attention for not listening. (Maxie)

I can't really get better at it. I would like to learn more about it, but I actually can't. (. . .) I tried like, a lot. But now I kind of just give up. (Leo)

Hidalgo Del Río I, Kramer-Roy D, Schulze C. Children's Voices: The Lived Experience of Daily Occupations With Sensory Processing Difficulties. *OTJR: Occupational Therapy Journal of Research*. 2025;0(0). doi:[10.1177/15394492251385453](https://doi.org/10.1177/15394492251385453)

Samples of photographs from participants

A. Fidget toys



B. Pouring a drink



C. Drawing schoolwork



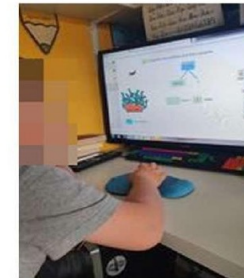
D. Drinking hot chocolate with friend



E. Treasure hunt with friends



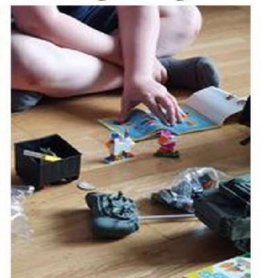
F. Home schooling



G. Modelling



H. Building with Lego



Note. Photographs taken by participants have not been modified and keep their original form, except for image size due to formatting reasons, and anonymization procedures.

Participation in Everyday Life

—

Multi-perspective Insights into the Experiences of Children with Cerebral Palsy in Switzerland

Selina Gredig, Johanna Linimayr, Judith Graser, Hubertus van
Hedel, Anne Tscherter, Sebastian Grunt, Christina Schulze

Methods

Inductive thematic analysis as per Braun and Clarke (2013)

15 children
with CP



29 parents



25 siblings



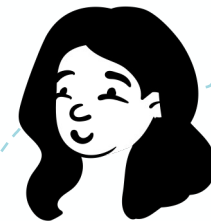
Preliminary results

- Reports on participation experiences vary greatly between families and sometimes also family members
- Participation is experienced in various situations: at home, at school, in therapy, at social events, on holiday...
- Barriers and facilitators are not clearly identifiable



We can't
do
anything

We can do
everything



Siblings



Linimayr, J., Graser, J., Gredig, S., van Hedel, H. J. A., Tschertter, A., Grunt, S., & Schulze, C. (2025). Daily life situations and participation of siblings of children with childhood-onset disabilities: a scoping review. *BMJ paediatrics open*, 9(1), e003189. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjpo-2024-003189>

Doing Siblinghood



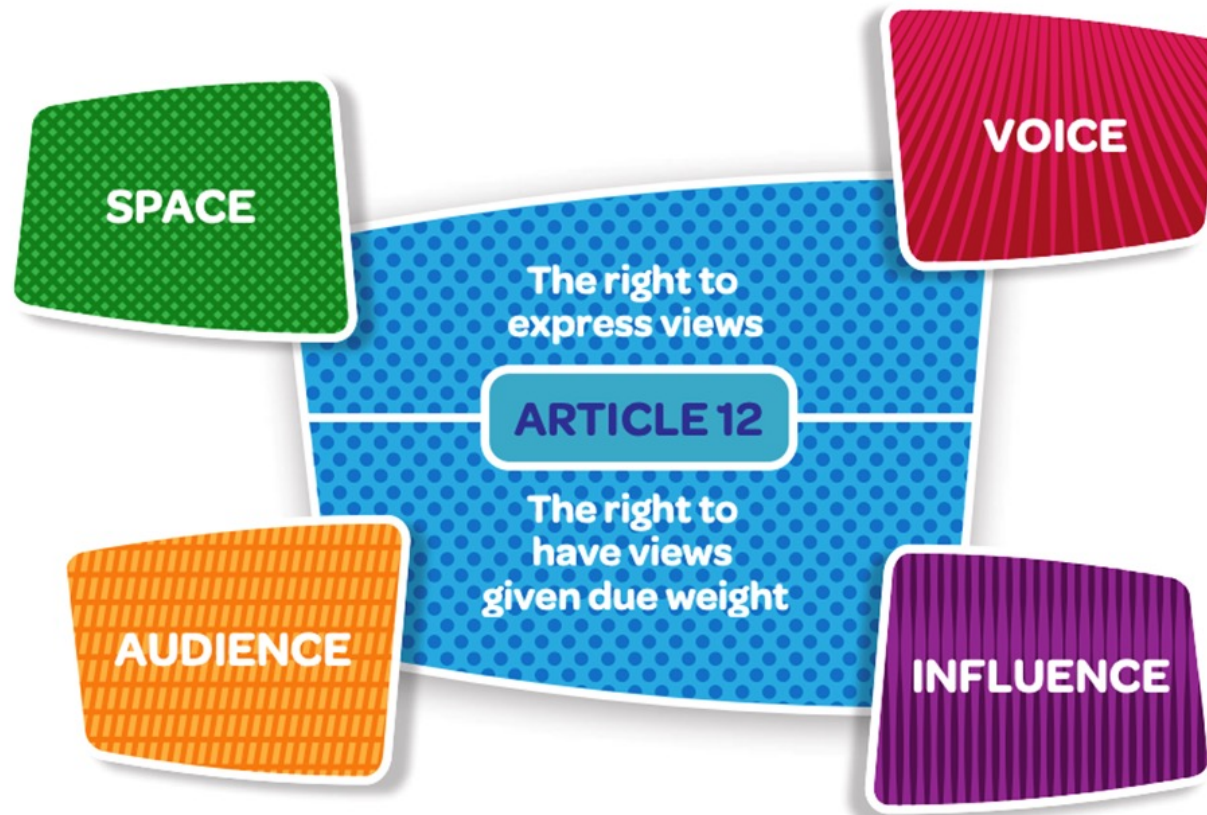
Linimayr, Johanna & Schulze, Christina & Josephsson, Staffan. (2026). "Doing siblinghood": How playing and travelling transform meaning and identity of a sibling of a child with cerebral palsy: A narrative analysis. *Journal of Occupational Science*. 1-20.
10.1080/14427591.2025.2596337



Applying Participatory Methods and Moving Beyond



Applying Participatory Methods and Moving Beyond



Enable engagement in meaningful activities

Listen and speak

Provide individualized and comprehensive support

This model provides a way of conceptualising Article 12 of the UNCRC which is intended to focus educational decision-makers on the distinct, albeit interrelated, elements of the provision. The four elements have a rational chronological order:

Child`s rights approach



Child rights approach is needed to recognize that children are rights-holders, not just passive objects of care, and to ensure that their voices, needs, and potential are prioritized in decision-making.

Children as research partners: Co-creating stories

- Narrative study & co-creation of a story book and educational material for mainstream school children 9-12
- narratives of a sister's everyday occupations when having a brother with a disability
- research partnership with sister & mother: interviews, interpretation, knowledge translation & co-creation



Children as research partners: Co-creating stories

→ Narrative findings

→ 4 short stories for children:

- Shared occupations (play)
- Peer occupation difficulties
- Speech at school
- Travelling and future occupations

Vanessa und Sven

Vanessa und ihr Zwillingsbruder Sven sind ein Team. Seit ihrer Geburt sind sie fast immer zusammen – so wie es bei Zwillingen eben ist. Sie haben am selben Tag Geburtstag, die gleiche Mama, den gleichen Papa und das gleiche Grossmami. Sie wohnen im selben Haus. Und trotzdem ist bei ihnen vieles anders.

Schon früh bemerkte Vanessa, dass Sven manche Dinge anders machte als sie. Als sie schon längt durch die Wohnung lief, lag er noch auf der Krabbeldecke. „Vielleicht ist er doch mein jüngerer Bruder?“, überlegte sie. Aber dann dachte sie: „Er macht die Dinge eben auf seine Weise.“

Inzwischen ist Sven natürlich auch gewachsen und macht Fortschritte in seinem eigenen Tempo. Spielen? Das geht trotzdem – und zusammen sein sowieso!

Sven liebt Spaziergänge. Wenn Vanessa vorausläuft und singt, lacht er. Und wenn Mama ihn im Rollstuhl über besonders hüblige Wege fährt, hat er riesigen Spass. Sven und Vanessa haben ihre eigenen Spiele. Sven liebt es, Ball zu spielen. Mama hat ihm einen speziellen Stoffball genäht, in dem ein Luftballon steckt. So fliegt er leicht und landet sanft in Svens Schoss. Auch Brettspiele mag er. Vanessa sorgt immer dafür, dass er würfeln darf. Und wenn die Spielfiguren auf dem Boden landen – aus Versehen oder mit Absicht? Egal! Hauptsache, das Spiel geht weiter. Vanessa mag alle Spiele, die sie mit Sven spielen kann, auch wenn die Regeln manchmal ein bisschen anders sind.

Sven hat eine Cerebralparese, hat Mama ihr erklärt. Eine Schädigung des Gehirns. „Sven ist schon so zur Welt gekommen. Und weil das Gehirn mit allem, was man tut, dazu lernt, läuft das Lernen bei ihm einfach anders ab als bei dir.“ So genau versteht Vanessa das nicht. Ein bisschen langsamer vielleicht? Einfach anders eben.

Aber eines weiss sie genau: Sven mag kein Fernsehen. Die schnellen Bilder und lauten Geräusche erschrecken ihn. Dann weint er. Also hören sie lieber Hörspiele. Vanessa weiss auch, dass Sven seinen Rollstuhl braucht, aber trotzdem

laufen kann – wenn ihn jemand ganz fest stützt. Besonders gerne läuft er mit seiner Assistentin herum und lacht, wenn er dabei gegen die Fensterscheibe tritt. Vanessa weiss auch, wie man Playmobil-Pferde repariert, wenn Sven über sie gabelt – ist oder wie man Plastikteile wieder zusammenklebt, wenn Sven ihre Figuren mit einem Lachen zu Boden geworfen hat.

„Lass uns Schule spielen!“ schlägt Vanessa vor. Sie schnappt sich ein Notizbuch und spielt Lehrerin. Sie hält ihm ihr Quiz vor die Nase. „Sven, ist die Antwort ja oder nein?“ Sven nickt. Vanessa kichert. „Richtig, Sven! Sehr gut!“ Gar nicht so anders als in der Schule, findet sie.

Abends spielt Vanessa manchmal die Rolle von Svens Assistentin. „Lass uns alles fürs Bett fertig machen!“ sagt sie in ihrem freundlichsten Assistentinnen-Ton. Sie holt seinen Pjama und putzt ihm die Zähne. Doch als es Zeit ist, seine Windel zu wechseln, zögert sie. „Äh, Mama? Kannst du das machen?“ Mama lächelt. „Natürlich. Du bist ja schon die beste Assistentin. Das übernehme ich.“

Vanessa ist nicht nur Svens Schwester. Sie ist seine Spielkameradin, seine Helferin und seine beste Freundin. „Wir spielen eben unsere eigenen Spiele“, denkt sie.

„Komm, Sven! Ab ins Bett! Deine Kuschelschlange schnarcht schon!“ ruft sie – und Sven lacht.



Supporting participatory methods

- Narrative-in-action framework (interview setting including walks, photography, and games)
- Joint grant application and defined partnership with family
- Home discussion visits for interpretations
- Shared decision-making on product
- Iterative writing and drawings
- Graphical layout: selecting external collaborators, collecting and communicating the child's design ideas
- Pilot in school as part of class work
- **Focus on occupation**



Thank YOU

Many thanks to...

Johanna Linimayr, Angelika Echsel, Beate Krieger, Irene Hidalgo del Rio
Michael Amacher, Maria Prellwitz, Helen Lynch, Debbie Kramer Roy, Thomas
Morgenthaler, Ines Wenger, Clemence Orain, Selina Gredig

...the participating families and children

.....Alison Borda and Andrea Petrig

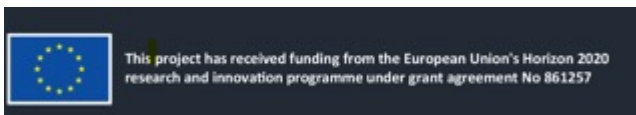
...the Swiss Cerebral Palsy Registry, the Foundation Cerebral
(<https://www.cerebral.ch>), SwissPedRegistry, SwissPedNet

...our colleagues at the Institute of Occupational Therapy, ZHAW

...the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF)



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P 4 PLAY



Swiss National
Science Foundation

parti-cp 



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