


<p><i>Name</i></p>	<p>Thomas Morgenthaler thomas.morgenthaler@zhaw.ch</p> 
<p><i>Title of study</i></p>	<p>The evaluation of children's outdoor play</p>
<p><i>Supervisor(s)</i></p>	<p>Prof. Dr. Christina Schulze (Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland) Dr. Helen Lynch (University College Cork, Ireland) Dr. Duncan Penland (Queen Margret University Edinburgh, Scotland)</p>
<p><i>Background/Abstract (350 words max)</i></p>	<p>Children acquire life skills through playing outside in their communities, such as sharing, caring for one another, and asking for help. For children with disabilities, who are prone to isolation, social play outdoors is an important way for creating bonds with other children. Outdoor play also has a significant role in children's general health and well-being: access to nature strongly impacts on physical, social, and mental health of children, especially when they are allowed to play freely. Practitioners such as early educators have developed new ways to enhance outdoor play using 'loose parts', reframing risk in</p>

	<p>play, and creating green schoolyards, among other initiatives. So, the study of outdoor places and socio-spatial inclusion is an emerging area of study underpinned by the influence of outdoor play on a healthy childhood. However, studies have found that certain children are experiencing play deprivation more than others, with some children particularly at risk due to social disadvantage, poverty, disability, migration, and gender (girls) (UNCRC, GC no. 17). There is a need to conduct research which aims to improve play provision and diminish play deprivation by implementing innovative evidence-informed solutions in school and community contexts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental characteristics of the built and natural environment will be examined and expected results will include the identification of features that contribute to successful play. This will inform the development of a playspace audit tool to analyse characteristics of playability in places where children play. • Playspaces will be analysed using these pilot tools, to identify what types of play children favour and master, what are the play activities available to them, with whom do they play and how does the environment prevent or enable children's play, • By piloting the audit tool, results will be identified relating to different physical contexts with diverse geographical characteristics including climate. Modern test theory will be applied to play assessments, and outcomes will include the development of evidence to inform good design for play provision
<p><i>Publications (e.g. articles, conferences etc)</i></p>	<p>Ulbrich-Ford, S., Morgenthaler, T., Rathauscher, U., Kastner, H., Eberle, M., & Schönthaler, E. (2019). Positionspapier zur schul- und kindergartenbasierten Ergotherapie: Die Rolle und das Aufgabengebiet von Ergotherapeut*innen in österreichischen Bildungseinrichtungen [Positionstatment School based Occupational Therapy: The role of Occupational Therapy in Austrian educational institutions]. Retrieved from https://www.ergotherapie.at/sites/default/files/schul-und-kindergartenbasierte-ergotherapie-positionspapier-ergotherapie.pdf</p>
<p><i>Link to Orchid Profile/ Research gate profile/Iris profile or website</i></p>	<p>Twitter: https://twitter.com/TomMorgenthaler LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/thomas-morgenthaler-379b93204/ Orchid-ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2511-0092</p>

	<p>Research gate: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Thomas_Morgenthaler2 Austrian Association of Occupational Science: https://austrianoccupationalscience.com</p>
<p><i>Biography e.g. qualification/training/work history (200 words max)</i></p>	<p>Thomas is a trained pre-school teacher and occupational therapist from Austria. His clinical work experience is in different paediatric therapy settings focusing on family-centred practice, child-centred practice and school-based occupational therapy. He obtained his BSc in Occupational Therapy from the University of Applied Science Wiener Neustadt, Austria in 2013. In the year 2020 he graduated with a European Master of Science in Occupational Therapy. In his previous research he investigated environmental adjustment needs of children with special educational needs integrated in the Austrian mainstream school system from the child and teacher perspective. Since 2017 he volunteers in an Austrian school based occupational therapy project group. This group focuses on dissemination of school-based occupational therapy practices in the Austrian context. He further is a elected board member in the Austrian Association of Occupational Science.</p>
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