**Call for ERASMUS +**

**ΚΑ220 Youth**

**Proposal Concept Note**

**Proposal title: Right to outdoor play for disabled children**

**Applicant: xxx**

**Date : October 2022**

**Relevance to the ERASMUS + priorities for 2023:**

The ERASMUS programme seeks to promote equal opportunities and access, inclusion, diversity and fairness across all its actions. Organizations and their participants with fewer opportunities themselves are at the heart of these objectives. Moreover, the programme prioritizes projects that offer opportunities for people’s participation in democratic life, social and civic engagement through formal or non-formal learning activities.

In line with the above, the partnership will strive to offer equal prospects to children with fewer opportunities, namely children with psychical disabilities.

The project aims to help addressing specific barriers children with psychical disabilities face such as disability and social marginalization by empowering youth workers to create and enhance outdoor opportunities for play and leisure.

**Background:**

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is an international treaty that sets out universally accepted rights for children. Article 31 states that “That every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. Member governments shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.”

Self-initiated free play experiences are vital for the normal growth and development of **all** children.

The benefits of play are well-established. Play is vital for the physical, emotional, social, cognitive, creative and communication development of children.

Children with physical disabilities are often more dependent on their caregivers and other people than are nondisabled children. Children with physical disabilities, spent more time in self-care and passive activities in their own homes than did nondisabled children (Brown and Gordon, 1987). Moreover, children who are unable to experience normal childhood play because of a physical disability may encounter secondary social, emotional, and psychological disabilities. Increased dependence on others, decreased motivation, lack of assertiveness, poorly developed social skills in unstructured situations, and lowered self-esteem are a few of the difficulties that may be experienced by children with disabilities (Clarke, Riach, & Cheyne, 1977/1982; Levitt & Cohen, 1977; Mogford, 1977; Philip & Duckworth, 1982). These secondary disabilities have an impact not only on the child's play and development, but also on later functioning in the school setting, the community, and the workplace.

Playing outside provides opportunities for young children to experience the world with all of their senses, this does not always have to be in a forest or green grass areas (it can also be playing with loose parts[[1]](#footnote-1)) , children's senses are also heightened in urban spaces where the smells, textures, light, and noise may be different. Young children learn through the type of place or environment they are in. In outdoor spaces children can shout or be noisy, create bigger structures play games which require more expansive movements use their imagination in different ways, be more creative, messier and try out different activities, children learn best through different hand on experiences, exploring, experiencing, experimenting and making new discoveries.

Youth workers should be aware of the importance of outdoor play especially for children with physical disabilities, who have very limited opportunities for outdoor play.

To that end, the proposed project aims at enhancing the knowledge and the skills of youthworkers by capitalizing on existing and building new knowledge and resources on the importance of nature for the development of children. Moreover the project will contribute in raising awareness among youth workers, educators, parents, policy makers and the society at large about the role of the outdoor environment in supporting children with physical disabilities.

**Overall goal and Specific Objectives:**

*Overall objective:*

To promote outdoor play and education for children with physical disabilities in EU Member States by building the capacity youth workers and raising awareness about the importance of outdoor play for their healthy development and social inclusion.

*Specific objectives:*

* *To capitalize on existing and build new resources on the protection of the rights of children with disabilities*
* *To improve the knowledge and develop the capacity of youthworkers on how to better promote outdoor opportunities for children with physical disabilities.*
* *To prevent and combat discrimination by raising awareness among community, policy makers and the society at large about the rights of children with disabilities.*
* *To promote the visibility of EU funding in the area of children’s rights.*

**Proposed Results (provisional):**

Result 1: Mapping and scientific literature review on outdoor play practices and policies for children with physical disabilities

Result 2: Identification of best practices for training of youth workers in providing outdoor play opportunities for children with disabilities

Result 3: Development of an open education resource (OER) for youth workers working with children with physical disabilities

Result 4: Improved capacity among youth workers and stakeholders to promote the right of psychical disabled children in the community

Result 5: Public dissemination and exploitation of the results and good practices, for example through multiplier events, newsletters, social media and/or an interactive digital platform.

**Duration:**

**Max duration:** 24 months

1. Loose parts are materials with no specific set of directions and that can be used alone or combined with other materials. They could, for example, include crates, tires, planks of wood, or even water, sand or mud. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)