LUDI - Play for children with disabilities.
A European network to support the play of children with disabilities

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Summary of this presentation

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LUDI’s contribution to “Play on the move”
Two main contributions
Two main contributions - 1

- Play is a right for all children and should be guaranteed to all children, including those who have some impairments.
IPA Position Statement, May 2015

Keith Towler, IPA UK member, was a speaker at the LUDI Plenary Session in Cyprus, June 2015.
Two main contributions - 1

• Play **is a right** for all children and should be guaranteed to all children, including those who have some impairments.

• This statement implies that play activities **should be accessible and inclusive** with respect to: contexts, tools (toys and other instruments), methodologies (if they occur within educational frameworks), relationships.

• Furthermore, it requires a **radical change in society**, in societal attitudes and scientific approaches, a specific training for educational, health and social professionals, but also new directions in overall policies including the investment of economic resources.
So, LUDI’s first contribution is...

Re-think, re-build the society as a complex, interdependent and coherent system of multiple different ways of functioning, needs and possible answers
Two main contributions
Two main contributions - 2

As researchers and as professionals, we need to clearly distinguish, in our studies and in our (educational, clinical, etc.) work, two different concepts and their related practices:

• the play activities
• the play-like activities
Two main contributions – 2 (bis)

- **Play activities** are initiated and carried out by the player (alone, with peers, with adults, etc.) for the only purpose of the play itself (fun and joy, interest and challenge, love of race and competition, ilinx and dizziness, etc.). They have of course consequences on growth and development, but these consequences are not intentionally pursued. *It’s play for the sake of play*

- **Play-like activities** are initiated and conducted by an adult (with one or more children), in educational, clinical, social contexts; they are playful and pleasant, but their main objective is other than play: e.g., cognitive learning, social learning, functional rehabilitation, child's observation and assessment, psychological support, psychotherapy, etc.
So, LUDI’s second contribution is...

A clear distinction between play and play-like activities will bring to new developments in theory and in practice in play studies
LUDI is an Action (2014-2018) financed within the European COST framework

- a multidisciplinary network of 30 countries and almost 100 researchers and practitioners
- belonging to the humanistic and technological fields
- to study the topic of play for children with disabilities
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Why
LUDI
Children with a disability...

- can not be able to play
- can not want to play
- can not know how to play
- can not recognize a play situation, a play object
- can isolate themselves from the others’ play
- can be scared by a play situation
- can prefer to repeat the same play, in the same way, in the same site...

- because of their impairments
- because playgrounds, toys and other play tools are not accessible and usable
- because environments and contexts are not accessible nor inclusive
- because of a lack of educational awareness and intentionality
- because of a lack of specific psycho-pedagogical and rehabilitative competence
- because of a lack of effective intervention methodologies
Furthermore...

their lives are dominated by medical and rehabilitative practices

and play is always an activity to reach an objective, to provoke an improvement

there is no time for play for the sake of play

play for the sake of play is considered a waste of time
A specific Action is needed

- to spread awareness on the importance of giving children with disabilities the opportunity to play
- to ensure equity in their exercise of the right to play
- to put play at the centre of the multidisciplinary research and intervention regarding the children with disabilities
- to grant this topic the status of a scientific and social theme of full visibility and recognized authority
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LUDI framework
International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (WHO, 2001)

- Impairment to mental functions
- Impairment to voice and speech functions
- Impairment to motor functions
- Impairment to sensorial functions

Health Condition (Disorder or Disease)

- Limitation to communication
- Restriction to interpersonal relationships

Body Structure

- Limitation to mobility

Activity

- Limitation to simple and complex tasks

Participation

- Attitudes
- Products and technologies
- Supports and relationships

Environmental Factors

Services, systems, policies

Personal Factors
ICF (WHO, 2001)

Types of impairment

Body Structure & Functions

Activity

Participation

Health Condition (Disorder or Disease)

Play

Educational and developmental goals

Environmental Factors

Personal Factors

Products and technology
LUDI foundations
Organizational aspects

WG1
Children's play in relation to the types of impairments

WG2
Products and technologies for the play of children with disabilities

WG3
Methods, tools and frameworks for the development of the play of children with disabilities

WG4
Contexts for the play of children with disabilities

Advisory Board of persons with disabilities and families’ representatives
Milestones

- Definition of play
- Classification of impairments (DSM-5, ICD-10)
- Classifications of types of play
  - the cognitive complexity
  - the degree and type of social interaction
- Database of existing and used technologies to support the play of children with disabilities
- Report: Influence of environmental factors on play of children with disabilities - barriers

Play is a range of voluntary, intrinsically motivated activities normally associated with recreational pleasure and enjoyment (Garvey, 1990)
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Expected results
Final works - a

- Theoretical models **descriptive of the development of the play** of children with disabilities
- Theoretical models for the **evaluation of the play** of children with disabilities
- Guidelines for evaluating the **accessibility and usability** of toys and technologies for the children with disabilities’ play
- **Standard rules** for the design and development of technological products and toys for children with disabilities’ play
- **Models for intervention and support** of the development of child with disabilities’ play in inclusive contexts
Last products (2018)

• **Training model** to support play of children with disabilities in inclusive contexts and on strategies of intervention (methods and tools)

• **Guidelines** for the play of children with disabilities. Methodologies, tools, contexts, relationships
Currently ongoing...
LUDI Survey for a Parent of a Child with Disabilities

For those who want to know more: please contact me s.besio@univda.it

Analysis of user needs
CONCLUSIONS...
Open questions

Are there really possible conclusions for a project and a mission, that imply an overall change in societal attitudes and measures, in people’s minds and actions, as well as in the concrete world of objects?

I’ll tell you a short story...
a seismic shift…