Everyone's just like, they're fine, and when in reality, are we? Stories about recess from children experiencing disability

by

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Abstract

Recess can be a valuable and significant experience in children's lives that provides opportunities for outdoor free play and engagement with peers; however children experiencing disability often withdraw or are excluded during recess. The recess context has received little attention from an inclusion perspective and the voices of children experiencing disability remain marginalized in the literature. The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of children experiencing disability regarding inclusion during recess using qualitative multiple-case study informed by narrative approaches. Inclusion was defined as (a) a sense of belonging, acceptance, and value, (b) a respectful response to diversity, and (c) a space of encounter with the aim to conceptualize inclusion beyond the inclusion/exclusion binary. Theoretically, the study was guided by a relational ethics framework, highlighting the importance of social relations within physical spaces for maintaining inclusionary and exclusionary practices. Three children experiencing disability, ages 8, 9 and 11, attending integrated primary schools, participated. Data were generated through audio recorded one-on-one semi-structured interviews in the form of in-situ guided tours, drawings, photo taking, mind-mapping, field notes, and reflexive journaling. An inductive thematic within-case analysis was conducted, followed by a cross-case analysis. The findings are presented as a collection of poems, vignettes, and short stories that bring together shared themes, while honouring the unique and nuanced differences of each participant's experiences. The discussion focuses on the following questions: (1) What is recess truly about?, (2) Who is recess for?, (3) How do peer relationships come into play?, and (4) What remains inaccessible?. The findings encourage dialogue and reflexivity on the socio-spatial factors that contribute to feelings of inclusion at recess for children experiencing disability. This work contributes knowledge to developing supportive environments and

practices in recess and free play that resonate with the desires and needs of children experiencing disability.

This thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter One offers an introduction to the topics of this thesis with emphasis on research paradigms and positionality. Chapter Two is a comprehensive review of literature. Chapter Three contains the study, as described above, and is a self-contained manuscript. Chapter Four is comprised of additional reflections on the methods used in this work. Finally, Chapter Five provides a brief conclusion.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Rebecca Rubuliak. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received ethics approval form the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name “Inclusion in recess understood from the perspectives of children experiencing disability”, No. 00084956, approved December 18, 2018.

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Chapter One: Introduction

"What is your favorite thing about school?" I ask. "Recess and playing with my friends!" Her enthusiastic response is authenticated by her callused hands from attempts at the monkey bars, dirty fingernails from digging and molding sand, and laughter as she describes imagined games and adventures. These vivid 8-year-old child recollections highlight the possibilities of recess and the relevance of this experience in her life and possibly the lives of other primary school children.

Recess is a "part of the school day that allows a break from instruction for children to interact and engage in physically active play, free from curricular and grading boundaries" (McNamara, Colley, & Franklin, 2017, p. 393). Recess differs from physical education (PE) in that children can engage in play with little adult interference, direct supervision or control, being one of few opportunities in a child's day for discretionary time (Tremblay et al., 2015). Recess is a significant experience in children's lives as it provides opportunities for socializing with peers (McNamara et al., 2017) and therefore offers a critical opportunity for interaction and relationship. The health and life skill benefits of recess have been explored (Holmes & Kohm, 2017; McNamara et al., 2017), however, there is a need for research that critically examines the contextual factors of recess (McNamara et al., 2017; McNamara, Vaantaja, Dunseith, & Franklin, 2015). Additionally, the context of recess has received little attention within inclusion research as the majority of literature focuses on PE (Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000; Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010).

Various power dynamics exist within children's play (Jeanes & Magee, 2012) and experiences of exclusion and victimization interfere with children's opportunities to connect with

peers (McNamara et al., 2017). Children experiencing disability report more negative affect and victimization, and lower positive affect and belongingness about their recess experiences than their peers (McNamara, Lakman, Spadafor, Lodewyk, & Walker, 2018). Children experiencing disability's play capabilities are limited through disruptions or restrictions to their participation in outdoor play, being offered controlled activities in segregated environments (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010) and having more adult involvement, experiencing less autonomy (Sterman et al., 2016).

Recess can be viewed as a cultural representation of social relations and practices (Sparkes, 1992). A deconstruction of current exclusionary practices within the recess context is required in order to foster inclusion, and this can only be done by consulting children to understand what is essential to the process (Jeanes & Magee, 2012). The stories, perspectives, and experiences of children experiencing disability can disrupt ableist[1] norms and values that exist within educational institutions and boarder society (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013). However, despite recommendations, the voices of children experiencing disability remain underrepresented in the literature (Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000; Leo & Mourton, 2020; Pocock & Miyahara, 2018; Wilhelmsen & Sørensen, 2017).

The purpose of this study was to perform an in-depth exploration of the experiences of children experiencing disability in recess. A multiple case-study approach (Stake, 1995) was used placing emphasis on the children's experiences and perspectives, therefore offering a

[1] Ableism refers to a "network of beliefs, processes and practices' (Campbell 2001 cited in Campbell 2009, 5) that cast 'disability', 'as a diminished state of being human' (Campbell 2001 cited in Campbell 2009, 5). …Ableism constructs bodies as 'impaired' and positions these as 'Other': different, lesser, undesirable, in need of repair or modification and de-humanized. … Ableism creates and sustains the context in which this 'impaired kind of people' is then subject to disablism, 'the differential or unequal treatment of people because of actual or presumed disabilities' (Campbell 2008b, 2)" (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013, p. 312).

deeper and more nuanced understanding of the recess context. As models of disability encompass assumptions and philosophical perspectives of disability, this work was grounded in an experiential model of understanding disability which acknowledges "the wide variety of embodied sensations, social structures, cultural understandings, and identities that may be related to someone's disability experience" (Peers, Spencer-Cavaliere, & Eales, 2014, p. 275). This work was further guided by a relational ethics framework (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005) highlighting the importance of social relations within physical spaces for maintaining exclusionary/inclusionary practices and drawing deeper attention and acknowledgement to relationships and the relational space between people. Specific research objectives were:

1. To explore experiences of inclusion[2] and/or exclusion in recess.
2. To explore children's recess experiences through a relational ethics lens.
3. To provide an opportunity for children to share their thoughts, feelings and perspectives.

This study contributes to the current limited knowledge about inclusion from the perspectives of children experiencing disability. Issues of inclusion need to be addressed through research that is also inclusive. Conducting research *with*, rather than *on*, children addresses issues of marginalization and disability ownership that occur in practice and research (Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000; Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010). The children's experiences and perspectives encourage critical reflection on the socio-spatial factors that contribute to feelings of inclusion at recess for children experiencing disability. This contributes to a critical knowledge gap and offers knowledge to develop supportive environments and practices in recess and free

[2] For the purposes of this study inclusion is conceptualized as (i) a sense of belonging, acceptance and value, (ii) a respectful response to diversity, and (iii) a space of encounter.

play that resonate with the desires and needs of children experiencing disability, taking the responsibility off the child to be included.

This work is formatted as a paper-based thesis. Chapter two provides a review of the literature that informed the study and my interpretation of the findings. This includes the theoretical framework of relational ethics (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005) and its contribution to the study. Chapter three is the complete research study which will be submitted for publication to a research journal (e.g., Sport Education & Society). In chapter four, I elaborate on the methods of the study, providing insight into my decision making and experiences. Lastly, Chapter five is a conclusion which includes my reflections and future directions.

Paradigm

This study was conducted within a critical-interpretive paradigm (Sparkes, 1992). A research paradigm is a basic set of beliefs that guide research action and is defined by three questions: ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011; Mayan, 2009). The ontology question asks *what is the nature of reality and what can be known about it?* The epistemology question asks *what is the relationship between the knower and the known*, and the methodological question asks, *can the inquirer go about finding out whatever they believe can be known* (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 108)? The interpretive paradigm is based within a relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology. Researchers believe multiple realities exist and that they are co-created (Lincoln et al., 2011; Mayan, 2009). The research produced is historically, culturally, and socially constructed (Mayan, 2009). Here, methodologies are dialogic and based on hermeneutics, meaning the research involves dialogue and that the primary aim is to interpret participants' meaning from their subjective experiences (Lincoln et al., 2011; Markula & Silk, 2011). Within a critical paradigm, reality is believed to be influenced by

systems of privilege and oppression based on race, socioeconomic status, gender, physical abilities, or sexual status. Researchers believe that the knowledge produced can change oppressive structures, support social transformation, and/or serve as an examination of human existence. Like interpretivism, methodologies are dialogic (Lincoln et al., 2011).

Within a critical-interpretive paradigm, reality and knowledge are seen as socially constructed, context-specific and value laden (Sparkes, 1992). Attention is given to "the underlying nature of the, 'structural patterns of social relationships (that) … generate specific forms of social consciousness'" (Sparkes, 1992, p. 39). The critical paradigm supported me to think beyond barriers and facilitators to inclusion experiences. As an interpreter, I linked participant's experiences to broader social attitudes of power and control surrounding the recess context.

Working from a critical-interpretive paradigm, I recognize the weakness of not including the children in the identification of this research topic and the method chosen. Therefore the study is considered to be a 'top down' approach where the "control and power [is] placed in the hands of researchers" (Schinke, McGannon, Watson, & Busanich, 2013, p. 202). A participatory paradigm may have brought forth an alternative research topic and approach, and enhanced the 'co-production' of the research (Lincoln et al., 2011; Svenby, 2016). I worked to ensure the children had a centralized voice in the data generation and final research texts. This supported the production of research that does not speak 'for' children experiencing disability (Granzow & Dean, 2016). Additionally, as relational ethics informed this work, I conducted data generation in relation *with* the children through empathetic, reflexive and empowering approaches.

Researcher Position

Qualitative research calls for reflexivity: critical reflection of the kind of knowledge research produces, how that knowledge is produced, and the need to confront our assumptions and biases (Berger, 2015; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Within our field of adapted physical activity the same call to action has been requested by numerous scholars (Goodwin & Howe, 2016; Peers, 2017; Slife, 1998; Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014). Through reflexivity, researchers situate their identities, biases, and assumptions to better understand and be critical of their role in the research process and outcomes (Berger, 2015; Markula & Silk, 2011). Reflexivity draws attention to power issues in the research, such as the role the researcher's identity and social position play in asking particular questions, interpreting phenomenon, and privileging of choices (Macbeth, 2010). Doing so could result in "narratives and practices that challenge, produce, or perpetuate power structures, which in turn, empower or disempower" (Schinke, McGannon, Parham, & Lane, 2012, p. 37). It has been argued that there is a need for reflexive methodology that

> explicitly incorporates the researcher and her or his experience into the analysis process and into theory-building endeavors, and … demands the conscious and deliberate inclusion of statements and disclosures of ourselves and our personal experiences in written accounts of the research (Dupuis, 1999 as cited in Macbeth, 2010, p. 481).

The appropriate positioning of myself in relation to the study, as described by Thorne (2016), is "that which is explicitly necessary to understand [my] motivations, [my] biases, and [my] consequent angle of interpretive inquiry" (p. 78). I am a white, middle-class cis-gendered settler woman graduate student studying adapted physical activity with a relativist perspective, and I do not experience disability. This contextualizing recognizes the perspectives and assumptions from

which I work, represents places of privilege, and positions me as an outsider to the phenomenon being explored.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

Inclusion

It is about a way of seeing that requires humility, so that one can recognize sameness of self in the other. It is about the mutuality that can exist between us, if we so choose

(James Orbinski, 2009, p. 4 as cited in Slee, 2011, p. 120)

A conceptual divide exists regarding the concept of inclusion (Graham & Slee, 2008) and the distinction between inclusion and exclusion is discursive (Nilholm & Göransson, 2017). Nilholm & Göransson (2017) conducted a literature review to analyze what is meant by inclusion in educational research, and categorized four different understandings of inclusion in the literature: (a) a placement definition, used synonymously with mainstreaming and/or integration; (b) definitions that involve social/educational outcomes for pupils experiencing disability (c) or all pupils; these are concerned with adequate support and barriers to inclusion; and (d) a community definition where inclusion is about all pupils' right to participate. This review highlights the obvious lack of clarity concerning the definition of inclusion and the necessity to be clear in research about what is meant by this concept (Nilholm & Göransson, 2017). Rather than clarifying the meaning of inclusion, theories of inclusive education too frequently commence with technical considerations of the means for achieving inclusion, reducing it to a list of policies, strategies and resources but do not recognize the unequal social relations that produce exclusion (Slee, 2011). An additional concern is that the various definitions of inclusion

have rarely been informed by individuals experiencing disability (Graham & Slee, 2008; Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010).

Ideological intentions of inclusion are entrenched within various assumptions, biases and practices. Graham & Slee (2008) argue that the term inclusion implies a 'bringing in' by "discursively privilege[ing] notions of the pre-existing by seeking to include the Other into a prefabricated, naturalised space" (p. 278). Hausstätter (2014) argues that

> inclusion has been designed as an initiative for a specific group of children[1]. … The result is that the school – not as a system, but as a single case – needs only aspire to the goal of creating an inclusive setting when it is faced with children with specific needs. In these cases, inclusion becomes a measure of the school's ability to facilitate and encourage the participation of this specific group of children (p. 430-431).

This is an example within education of how the intention of inclusion is reactive and implies a 'bringing in'. This interpretation moves us beyond the question of how do we move towards inclusion ('including') by requiring the disruption of normative assumptions that construct the naturalized space from which exclusion derives (Hausstätter, 2014), recognizing that "talk of 'including' can only be made by those occupying a position of privilege at the centre" (Graham & Slee, 2008, p. 289). Inclusion researchers must work to dismantle these power relations and consider the participants as experts of the phenomenon being explored; bringing awareness to the asymmetries of power and projections of the social context in which the research takes place (Svendby, 2016). In a keynote address to the Leadership Conference of the Elementary

[1] The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of children experiencing disability as it relates to their experiences of inclusion in recess. However, it is important that we are mindful that when we label, and identify groups, the narrative of inclusion risks being designed for a specific group. Also, most people hold multiple intersecting identities. With that said, it is critical that the perspectives of children experiencing disability contribute to conversations and understanding of inclusion in recess.

Teachers' Federation of Ontario in 2006, George Dei said, "Inclusion is not bringing people into what already exists; it is making a new space, a better space for everyone." But *who* contributes to the creation of a new space?

For the purposes of this research study, inclusion is defined as (a) a sense of belonging, acceptance, and value, (b) a respectful response to diversity, and (c) a space of encounter; the aim is to conceptualize inclusion in a way that moves beyond the inclusion/exclusion binary and positions the concept in a way that is *unfinished,* continually evolving (Hausstätter, 2014). Inclusion cannot be reduced to an empirical object (Hausstätter, 2014).

An understanding of inclusion as *a sense of belonging, acceptance, and value* positions inclusion as a subjective experience which supports the need to provide children opportunities to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010). This conceptualization of inclusion views the child as the expert of their experiences and for children experiencing disability, helps to mitigate notions of 'otherness', placing significant importance on their perspectives (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010). Feeling included as a child provides a sense of belonging and self-worth which later influences their attitudes towards participation and citizenship (Dunn & Moore, 2005). Therefore, inclusive recess and schooling "requires that we seek understandings of exclusion from the perspectives of those who are devalued and rendered marginal … by the dominant culture of the regular school" (Slee, 2011, p. 107).

Inclusion, in this research, is also understood as *a respectful response to diversity*:

> Diversity is regarded as an asset from which various cultures, human interests, skills, abilities, life perspectives and life experiences contribute to the rich fabric of culture that forms a community. Respect for difference and relationships that are able to foster a

> dialogue of difference are features of an inclusive community. Inclusion, therefore, reduces the singular power and status quo of the dominant culture to validate and legitimise the way all groups belong within a society (Keefe, 2007 as cited in Burke, 2013, p. 84).

Inclusion can be viewed as a valuing of difference, equity and social justice (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017). Accordingly, responding to diversity is about listening to the unfamiliar, being open, and celebrating difference in dignified ways (Nilholm & Göransson, 2017), promoting it as an educational and social asset (Slee, 2011). It also requires an acknowledgement that responses to difference refer primarily to one's worldview, expectations, preferences and fears *in relation to the other*. Therefore, "perceived otherness always refers back to the perceiver as well" (Bos & Kal, 2016, p. 134). A response to diversity is thus part of something that happens *between people* (Bos & Kal, 2016). Through this conceptualization of inclusion we come to recognize the categorization and labeling of differences as social constructs, and how they become normalized by influences of broader socio-political and cultural conditions (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017);

> normativity results in compulsive passing, wherein there is a failure to ask about difference, to imagine human be-ingness differently'. Through the exploration of difference we can also deconstruct the concept of the Inferior Other to reveal the shared identity of being human: although we are different we are also the same (Hodge and Runswick-Cole, 2013, p. 320).

Lastly, inclusion can be conceptualized as *a space of encounter*. This emerges from Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia (Meininger, 2013). Heterotopia refers to 'other spaces', a space of encounter, "a social space consisting in a continuing dialogue between the 'normal' and the 'abnormal', the familiar and the strange" (Meininger, 2013, p. 26). It is not merely a

physical space, but a social, relational, cultural, and spiritual reality: “they are spaces in which ‘we’ and ‘the others’ meet, in which the participants are willing to be confronted with and changed by one another’s otherness” (Meininger, 2013, p. 33). Exclusionary practices cannot be overcome simply by sharing spaces (integration). We must actively engage in spaces of encounter. Through engaging in spaces of encounter we may create possibility “to discover what is unknown, what is different, what connects us to others and others to us” (Caine & Steeves, 2009, p. 6).

Through deconstruction of current exclusionary structures and practices, an open space can be created for reconsidering the underlying norms (Bos & Kal, 2016). In this space, ‘working with’ individuals experiencing disability would then be emphasized, rather than ‘doing something for’ them (Meininger, 2013). This relational conceptualization, a “‘continuous active process of insiderness and proximity’ [has] the potential to gradually dismantle society’s deep-rooted structures of exclusion” (Meininger, 2013, p. 38), taking the responsibility off the individual to be included. Fostering inclusive environments, school contexts included, is a moral obligation (Svendby, 2016). Inclusive education “values community, the recognition and representation of difference, and fosters interdependence” (Slee, 2011, p. 155).

Outdoor Play

For the purposes of this study active outdoor play is defined as “unstructured physical activity that takes place outdoors in child’s free time” (Tremblay et al., 2015, p. 6478) and is also referred to as active free play or self-directed play. Outdoor free play is one of the most consistent predictors of children’s physical activity levels (Watchman & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2017). When children play outside, as compared to indoors, they are more active and play longer; these behaviors are associated with improved physical, mental and social health

(Tremblay et al., 2015). Outdoor play has significant importance for children's development and children report being happiest when at play (Brussoni, Olsen, Pike & Sleet, 2012; Tremblay et al., 2015). Play that occurs in natural environments are sensory-rich, prompt creative play and imagination, and contribute to environmental awareness, resiliency and self-regulation (Brussoni et al., 2012; Tremblay et al., 2015).

Major evidence reviews, position statements, and policies have demonstrated the value of outdoor play for Canadians and the "urgent need to reintegrate outdoor nature play into the lives of children by facilitating 'a recalibration of attitudes, practices, policies, and ultimately normative behaviors to promote healthy child growth and development' (Tremblay et al., 2015, 6493)" (Tink et al., 2018). Most notably is the 'Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play' for children aged 3-12 years (see Tremblay et al. 2015 for a full overview) informed by two systematic reviews and stakeholders, which was then endorsed by ParticipACTION and released as part of the '2015 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth' (see ParticipACTION 2015) (Tink et al., 2018). On June 1, 2018 Canada's Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health (CCMOH, 2018, para. 1) released a statement also supporting and endorsing Tremblay et al.'s (2015) position statement on active outdoor play, further creating a discourse of public health importance around active outdoor play in Canada (http://www.phn-rsp.ca/aop.php). This was shortly followed by the release of ParticipACTION's '2018 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth'. The report outlined future directions and research gaps; among these were the need for active play research that uses both objective and subjective measures and the need to explore the impact of physical activity on social inclusion (ParticipACTION, 2018).

Through play children express and experience emotions and feelings using non-verbal and verbal communication (Castro, 2012). Minimally structured and accessible environments for

outdoor play facilitate socialization with peers, reducing feelings of isolation (Tremblay et al., 2015). Outdoor play positively influences and maintains children's relationships, supporting development of a sense of belonging, security and acceptance (Brussoni et al., 2012) as well as empathy and understanding of cooperation, negotiation, and peer perspectives (Castro, 2012). While interacting and engaging with peers in outdoor play, children construct meaning to satisfy curiosity, learning occurs, and they develop self-efficacy and problem-solving skills (Brussoni et al., 2012; Castro, 2012; Tremblay et al., 2015).

Recent decades have seen a significant decrease in children's play, and opportunities have become more structured and occur increasingly indoors (Tremblay et al., 2015; Watchman & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2017). Today, half of Canadian children play actively outdoors fewer than 3 hours per week (Tremblay et al., 2015). There are several strong influences on children's opportunities for outdoor play including parental and societal attitudes and anxieties, technological advances, children's over scheduled lifestyles, lack of play space, and perceptions of the value of free play (Brussoni et al., 2012; Holmes & Kohm, 2017; Tremblay et al., 2015; Watchman & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2017). Play is undervalued for school-aged children and its benefits are not well understood; life skill benefits such as independence, confidence and decision-making are among these (Watchman & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2017). Societal perceptions of children's competencies and resilience have shifted from once considering children as actively responsible and capable, to inadequate, requiring protection. This change in perceptions have contributed to placing limits on children's exploration and access to outdoor play opportunities (Brussoni et al., 2012).

Research affirms children experiencing disability's right to outdoor play (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010). A large portion of the play literature has focused on structural barriers to

participation, and as a result the focus has shifted to inclusive play spaces for research and revision of practice (Dunn & Moore, 2005; Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010). Despite the focus on accessible play spaces, children experiencing disability continue to face discrimination within these spaces (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010). The hesitations and anxieties around active outdoor play by contemporary society are recast to emphasize perceived vulnerabilities of children experiencing disability (Horton, 2017). The risk-averse narrative particularly appears more acute in much of the literature regarding children experiencing disability and play and recreation (Barron et al., 2016; Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013). Over-protective attitudes are perceived as a significant barrier to participation in leisure by children experiencing disability (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013). Health and safety concerns, which have been termed 'polite discrimination', restrict children experiencing disability from participating in play or leisure activities deemed too risky due to fears of getting dirty or hurt (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010; Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013). "These 'polite discriminations', the framing of 'othering' as an altruistic act for the benefit for the segregated group, often disguise quite different, less palatable and therefore largely unspoken reasons for exclusionary practices" (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013, p. 315).

Accessible play and inclusive play are not the same thing. Removing environmental or structural barriers helps to make play spaces accessible, and can contribute to inclusive play, however social barriers must also be dealt with (Dunn & Moore, 2005); ableist[2] practices in children's play, leisure and recreation maintain exclusion (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013).

[2] Ableism refers to a "network of beliefs, processes and practices' (Campbell 2001 cited in Campbell 2009, 5) that cast 'disability', 'as a diminished state of being human' (Campbell 2001 cited in Campbell 2009, 5). …Ableism constructs bodies as 'impaired' and positions these as 'Other': different, lesser, undesirable, in need of repair or modification and de-humanized. … Ableism creates and sustains the context in which this 'impaired kind of people' is then subject to disablism, 'the differential or unequal treatment of people because of actual or presumed disabilities' (Campbell 2008b, 2)" (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013, p. 312).

Children experiencing disability and their families discuss how they experience the exclusionary practice of attitudinal discrimination more often than physical access issues (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010; Jeanes & Magee, 2012). In a systematic review of outdoor play decisions by caregivers of children experiencing disability (Sterman et al., 2016), seven studies discussed attitudes beyond those of the caregiver and child dyad as an important consideration for participation in outdoor play. Six of the studies framed social attitudes as a barrier and one as a barrier or an enabler. A case study conducted by Sterman, Naughton, Bundy, Froude & Villeneuve (2018a) in Australia found that local government continues to focus more on physical access to outdoor play for children experiencing disability than social inclusion, while meeting only minimal requirements with little engagement with families. Sterman et al. (2018a) conclude there is a need for local governments to improve understandings of family values, and interaction between individuals, play, disability, and outdoor play environments. Creating inclusive play spaces is about overcoming fears and building understanding and relationships (Burke, 2013).

Horton (2017) suggests that families' narratives complicate the presumption of barriers to accessibility for play spaces as the principal way these spaces are encountered. Questionnaires were completed by 60 North London families with children aged 5-16 experiencing disability on their experiences visiting designated, purpose-refurbished accessible natural play spaces in two local country parks; 12 families also engaged in semi-structured interviews. Four key themes emerged:

> parents/carers discussed multiple social-material 'barriers'. …emotions (such as 'dread' or 'resignation') which often recurred in the narratives. …narratives were often suffused with a sense of 'failing to live up to' normative ideals of outdoor/natural family play.

> …[and] sometimes ‘joyful’, ‘hopeful’ and ‘hard-won’ narratives of engagements with outdoor play (Horton, 2017, p. 1160).

Horton (2017) also highlights that outdoor play mattered and was deeply cared-about by the responding families. This work re-presents the “multiple ways in which diverse mind-body-emotional conditions intersect” (Horton, 2017, p. 1170) with play practices and spaces, further supporting experiences of inclusion as subjective, diverse, and relational.

Spencer-Cavaliere and Watkinson (2010) explored inclusion in physical activity from the perspective of children experiencing disability. Three themes emerged: (a) gaining entry to play, (b) feeling like a legitimate participant, and (c) having friends (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010, p. 281). These themes demonstrate the important role people play – social interaction and relationships – in the experiences of children’s inclusion in physical activity (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010).

Disabling practices cannot be overcome simply by sharing of spaces. Hodge & Runswick-Cole (2013) argue that it is necessary to actively ‘confront, contest and transform’ how identities are produced and reproduced within these settings; “changing the social settings that surround children, as highlighted by Yonezawa et al., mediates the way that children interact in those settings” (McNamara et al., 2017, p. 397). Unsupported or unchanged, difference remains a catalyst for negative social patterns such as exclusion (McNamara et al., 2017).

Recess

In Canadian primary schools, recess is understood as a “part of the school day that allows a break from instruction for children to interact and engage in physically active play, free from curricular and grading boundaries” (McNamara et al., 2017, p. 393). Recess differs from PE in that children can engage in unstructured play activities with little adult interference, direct

supervision or control. Policies on recess vary across and within school districts. For most schools, recess takes place outdoors and varies in frequency and duration, traditionally 10-15 minutes two to three times a day. Though typically the shortest period in their school routine, some children view recess as the best time of the school day (Holmes & Kohm, 2017) and it holds significant importance in their lives (McNamara et al., 2015). With few studies on recess in the literature, within Canada there is a need to explore this context (McNamara et al., 2015). Additionally, the recess context has received little attention from an inclusion perspective as the majority of literature has focused on PE (Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000; Leo & Mourton, 2020; Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010).

Similar to outdoor play, there is empirical evidence supporting the benefits of recess for children. These include the development of social skills, social competence, conflict resolution, and emotional development (Holmes & Kohm, 2017; McNamara et al., 2017). Regularly scheduled physical activity breaks contribute to short- and long-term health benefits, specifically reducing stress and enhancing feelings of well-being (McNamara et al., 2017).

Children today have little discretionary time for self-directed play (Tremblay et al., 2015). Recess may be the only time during the school day that children are free to explore, socialize and play. This is heightened by the decline in neighborhood outdoor play and the significant responsibility parents place on schools to provide opportunities for free play for their children (Watchman & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2017).

A developing body of research suggests the benefits of recess, similar to outdoor play, are not being realized (McNamara et al, 2017). In recent decades, social conflict, limited resources, increased pressure to improve school achievement and test scores, and maximizing classroom time and learning have resulted in school administrators and districts reducing or eliminating

recess time (Holmes & Kohm, 2017; McNamara et al., 2017). The National Association for Early Childhood found that nearly forty percent of 16,000 school districts in the United States have either modified, eliminated, or are considering removing recess from children's school routines (McNamara et al., 2017) despite a policy statement by the American Academy of Pediatrics and evidence-based guidelines by the United States Center for Disease Control and SHAPE America citing recess' crucial role within schools (Massey, Stellino, Mullen, Claassen & Wilkison, 2018). This is concerning considering the decrease in neighborhood outdoor play and free play in general.

An association exists between children's friendships and play. Relationships and connectedness are central to all major theories of children's development, however, making and maintaining friendships becomes progressively more challenging as children grow (McNamara et al., 2017). Recess provides opportunities for participation with peers that develop and maintain positive peer relationships, reinforcing children's sense of belonging, leading to confidence and higher self-esteem (Holmes & Kohm, 2017; McNamara et al., 2017). Empirical evidence demonstrates very low levels of aggression in the open setting of play spaces during recess as children have the freedom to enter or leave play activities and negotiate conflict (Holmes & Kohm, 2017).

McNamara et al. (2017) used the concept of belonging to illustrate the dynamic impact recess has on children's emotional and physical well-being. The spaces where recess takes place, such as playgrounds, are often child-identified social spaces (Burke, 2013). Recess is viewed as a primarily social time and "the concept of belonging provides a framework for highlighting the importance of connecting with others, establishing friendships and maintaining relationships" (McNamara et al., 2017, p. 394). McNamara et al. (2017) present the need to critically reflect on

the cultural, social, and contextual factors of recess, suggesting the following areas of further research and practice:

> (i) [children need a] culture of recess … that recognizes and promotes the value of play and social connectedness. (ii) Providing *guidance* instead of 'supervision' … to foster compassion, empathy and negotiation—and stimulate culture change. (iii) Opportunities for play and socializing: children need an array of opportunities to interact with their peers in a *supported space* … (iv) *Thoughtful design of play spaces*: children need space, and spaces designed to encourage play and positive social interactions (p. 397).

Children are active agents in their social worlds and childhood must be understood as a social construction that cannot be separated from "other variables such as class, gender or ethnicity, or indeed (dis)ability" (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010, p. 506). Similarly, there is little research on "how the *context* might contribute to a recess culture that fails to support meaningful interactions and positive, active, healthy play" (McNamara et al., 2015, p. 50). McNamara et al. (2015) suggest that children require well-supported opportunities to connect, that

> the vast array of differences among the students, when unsupported, tends to complicate children's ability to play and interact in ways that allow them to connect positively with one another, setting in motion dysfunctional patterns of social interactions that can lead to isolation, exclusion, victimization, and loneliness (p. 63).

Various power dynamics exist within children's play and these result in exclusion and marginalization for children who do not reflect dominant cultural norms (Jeanes & Magee, 2012; Massey, Neilson, & Salas, 2019). Social exclusion is perceived to be a challenging aspect of recess time by children; experiences of alienation, exclusion and victimization interfere with

children's opportunities to connect with peers, resulting in loneliness, isolation and self-doubt (McNamara et al., 2017). For many children experiencing disability participation in outdoor play is restricted and disrupted. Children experiencing disability are much more likely to be offered controlled activities in segregated environments (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010) and tend to have more adult involvement, experiencing less autonomy (Sterman et al., 2016). Often withdrawing or excluded, children experiencing disability are more likely to spend a large proportion of recess time alone, watching other children play, and do not engage in activities or games (Watkinson et al., 2001). As outlined by Jeanes & Magee (2012), exclusion of children experiencing disability contributes significantly to the process of 'othering' resulting in children feeling abnormal and different. Positive peer interactions and opportunities to develop social relationships is critical to inclusive play and playing together can support altering children's perceptions of disability (Holt, 2003; Jeanes & Magee, 2012).

Physical activity at recess remains the primary outcome of interest to researchers, while the associated environmental and social outcomes are often ignored (Massey et al., 2018). Evidence-based guidelines for recess strategies to enhance children's social and emotional development were generated primarily with data from studies aimed at increasing physical activity, rather than social and emotional health outcomes (Massey et al., 2019). Additionally to date, research on recess and children experiencing disability has predominantly focused on quantitative measures, primarily of physical activity levels and school-based intervention studies (Lang et al., 2011; Machalicek et al., 2009; Mason et al., 2014; Pan, 2008; Pan, Liu, Chung & Hsu, 2015; Sit, McKenzie, Lian & McManus, 2008). The perspectives of children remain underrepresented in the recess literature, highlighting a "need to critically examine a child-centered view of recess" (Massey et al., 2019, p. 2) as children are the primary stakeholder in

recess: “recognise students as partners, as they play a key role in contributing to reimagining practice when given the opportunity” (Petrie, Devcich & Fitzgerald, 2018, p. 354).

McNamara et al. (2018) conducted a mixed-methods pilot study looking at recess and children experiencing disability. The on-line survey responses of 44 students in grades 4-8 identified as experiencing disability were analyzed. These children reported more negative affect and victimization, and lower positive affect and belongingness about their recess experiences. McNamara et al. (2018) concluded that further research is warranted exploring the context of recess.

Sterman, Naughton, Bundy, Froude & Villeneuve (2018b) conducted a multiple-perspectives case study of educator play decision-making on the school playground for children experiencing disability within a low socioeconomic status and culturally and linguistically diverse community. Nine school staff (4 teachers within the special education programme, all four teaching assistants, one mainstream teacher, and the vice principle) participated in the study. Data collection strategies included playground observations, interviews, video-assisted recall, and a document review. Three major findings were “that the children were not valued as playmates, learners, or community members; adults described low play and learning expectations; and despite formal and informal efforts to support the play space, the children ultimately did not have valued play choices” (Sterman et al., 2018b, p. 12-13). Educators’ valuing and expectations of children experiencing disability, as well as structural factors, were reflected in their playground decision-making, limiting children experiencing disability’s play capabilities (Sterman et al., 2018b).

There is a need to challenge the dominant discourses within physical activity and PE that permeate into the recess play context. These socially constructed discourses reproduce social

norms and values around competition, performance, and body-perfection codes (Svenby, 2016). Within educational environments there is a clear emphasis on age-related expectations (Holt, 2007). Despite critique of age-related development models they remain pervasive in educational policies, "schools as organisations … are designed around a socially constructed 'norm' based upon expectations of age-related stages of competence development" (Holt, 2003, p. 121) and "these hegemonic representations of childhood, as expressed in educational discourses, mediate understandings of disability" (p. 121). Goodley & Runswick-Cole (2010) describe how play "allows educational professionals to separate able and disabled children" (p. 500), marking bodies as competitive or dull, thereby centering the normal and pushing children experiencing disability to the periphery (Mindes, 2015). These performance and body-perfection values put play in danger of becoming a "discursive practice of assessment, categorization and treatment, where creativity is lost to a focus on understanding the different and disruptive" (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010, p. 500). Recess then can be viewed as a cultural representation of social relations and practices that embody dominant meanings and values which create and maintain hegemonic social relationships (Sparkes, 1992).

A study conducted by Holt (2003) interviewed 20 teachers from two 'physically inclusive' primary schools in England to explore the re-production of discourses of inclusion and disability. Teachers cited issues such as caring, acceptance and/or tolerance when discussing within-school practices of inclusion. Teachers' interpretations of inclusion were frequently dependent upon representations of disability, constructing disability as deviant or 'abnormal' and located within the individual child "rather than emphasising the role of disablist socio-spatial relations (c.f. Imrie, 1996)" (Holt, 2003, p. 125). The findings demonstrated that

> discourses of inclusion are frequently based on educational-medical models of disability,

> and can serve to exclude some children from mainstream schools. … highlight[ing] the value of a spatially sensitive evaluation of inclusion, that emphasises the importance of schools as unique moments in space and time to everyday practices of inclusion and disability (Holt, 2003, p. 119).

Research is needed that challenges traditional definitions of disability in order to foster social acceptance. A deconstruction of current exclusionary practices within children's play spaces is also required in order to develop inclusive opportunities, and this can only be done by consulting children to understand what is essential to the process (Jeanes & Magee, 2012). The stories, perspectives, and experiences of individuals experiencing disability "can challenge the apocrypha of ableism by emphasising the shared experiences of being human" (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013, p. 322). Through these narratives physical activity and play be-ingness can be imagined differently, and through relational ethics, foster self-reflection, empathy, and understanding and appreciation of diversity (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013).

Conceptual Framework

> *'Ethics requires us to risk ourselves precisely at moments of unknowingness, when what forms us diverges from what lies before us, when our willingness to become undone in relation to others constitutes our chance of becoming human' (Butler, 2005, p. 136). In facilitating a process that spans accountability, insight and growth, theories of relational ethics and the territory of moral imagination offers much to enhance ... practice*
>
> (Shaw, 2011, p. 13)

Relational Ethics

This research study was guided by a relational ethics framework. A conceptual framework is "a logical grouping of related concepts or theories, usually created to draw several

different aspects together that are relevant to a complex situation, such as a practice setting or an educational program" (Chinn & Kramer, 2008, as cited in Wu & Volker, 2009, p. 2720). The conceptual framework of relational ethics supported the philosophical underpinnings of the study and the methodological approach (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Wu & Volker, 2009). It is important to think with relational ethics when engaging in participant-centered research and thinking narratively about a phenomena (Clandinin, Caine, & Lessard, 2018, p. 22); relational engagement is "the shared moment in which people have found a way to look at something together" (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005, p. 103).

Relational ethics emphasizes building relationships, contextualizing our actions and reconceptualizes ethics to reflect our deeply interdependent existence (Goodwin, Johnston, & Causgrove Dunn, 2014). Through relational ethics we can explore the relational space between people and the relationships that contribute to their knowledge narratives. Relational ethics draws a deeper attention and acknowledgement to relationships and the relational space between people. This relational space is described by four ethical themes: (a) engagement, (b) mutual respect, (c) embodiment, and (d) environment (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005).

Engagement. The theme engagement "requires facing both rational and emotional aspects of others' lives" (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005, p. xii). It refers to authentic connections, engaged interactions with others, personal responsiveness, true presence and empathy (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Goodwin et al., 2014).

Mutual respect. Mutual respect "provides the ethical space to explore with empathy differences between individuals, views, cultures, kinds of knowledge, and systems" (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005, p. xiii). Mutual respect occurs in a space that acknowledges and appreciates difference and interdependency (Goodwin et al., 2014).

Embodiment. Embodiment focuses on knowing the world through your own body and experiences; an interconnectedness of thinking mind and feeling body. It acknowledges that people live in diverse social contexts and enables us to be with each other in deep and meaningful interaction (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Goodwin et al., 2014). This theme calls for a need to value embodied knowledge as much as theoretical knowledge is valued (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005).

Environment. The final theme refers to the creation of an ethical environment within a web of relations which are deeply interdependent, rejecting individualistic frameworks (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005).

A conceptual framework that attends to relational space was well suited for this study. Jeanes and Magee (2012) used a socio-spatial analysis to examine the views of young people experiencing disability and their families regarding what makes a play facility inclusive. A socio-spatial analysis highlights the importance of social relations within physical spaces for maintaining exclusionary/inclusionary practice. It is only through contact and relationships that understandings of disability can begin to be dismantled (Jeanes & Magee, 2012). Bergum (2002) when discussing ethical challenges of the 21st century describes the need to nurture the space between us with

> the intention is to build understanding, not judgement. … to create opportunities for understanding who we are, as well as the sharing of ideas, hearing different points of view, valuing all points of view as worthy of attention. These opportunities for understanding can lead to greater responsibility for all (p. 13).

Relationship based ethical approaches challenge the individualistic dominant discourses which have "left out the moral wisdom of narrative, interpersonal and community elements"

(Shaw, 2011, p. 2). Efforts toward community and connectedness must recognize relational otherness (Bos & Kal, 2016); "during relationship-building, a relational narrative is co-constructed" (Cloutier, Martin-Matthews, Byrne & Wolse, 2015, p. 779) and creates a space for those in relation to explore difference. Relational ethics is a valuable lens to explore the ways in which engagement, mutual respect, embodiment, and environment contribute to experiences of inclusion in recess.

Through a relational ethics lens there is a recognition of uniqueness, acknowledging and appreciating difference, but a valuing and respect for difference which is mutual, interactive and reciprocal (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). Therefore, relational ethics compliments this study's conceptualization of inclusion as a respectful response to diversity and a space of encounter. Mutual respect refers to,

> "unconditional acceptance, recognition, and acknowledgement" of all persons… . People who respect each other in relationship continually help us all to confront prejudices, ignorance, misunderstanding, and negative attitudes – about ourselves and about others. It is only through encounters with others that we can understand the complex ways in which culture, race, class, and identities find expression in our lives (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005, p. 86).

Similarly the theme of embodiment addresses how spaces of encounter attend to inclusion:

> this bodily experience, the resistance felt in bumping into someone, raises awareness of what is "I" and what is "not I", as Macmurray puts it, and makes the person present in a way that a thinking mind cannot capture. This is an awareness of both the self, as a person, and the other, as a person, at the same time showing the common boundary shared by both. Embodied knowledge of both self and others lessens the possibility that

> we can ignore or be immune to the effects of the actions that are produced (Bergum & Doessetor, 2005, p. 152).

In a relational space we can be together in difference and diversity (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005, p. 159).

Autonomy in Research with Children

Contemporary literature has moved from a traditional assumption of children as passive and dependent beings, to autonomous and intentional individuals (Meloni, Vanthuyne, & Rousseau, 2015). However, some argue this conceptualization of autonomy ignores "the interactional context in which [children] are so deeply entangled: family stories, social landscapes, and relationships of trust" (Meloni et al., 2015, p. 107). Wakefulness to cultural praxis and interactional contexts calls for a reconceiving of autonomy and ethics as a relational experience (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Meloni et al., 2015). This wakefulness in research contributes to a reflexive practice. When we think about the relationship between adults and children and the power differentials that exist, we should aim to understand ethics as a dialogical encounter; how we come to recognize ourselves and each other within communities of belonging and interdependence (Goodwin & Rossow-Kimball, 2012; Meloni et al., 2015). Understood as a dialogical encounter, relational ethics is well positioned within the interpretive paradigm:

> a dialogue between researchers and youth, and between youth and adult networks, now epistemic partners and meaning-makers, who together co-construct a third space – that is the very space of a mutual ethical encounter. It is in this dialogue that we will be able to experience and trust one another, recognizing that 'there is no innocence only the navigation of ambivalence' (Butler, 2000: 26) (Meloni et al., 2015, p. 119).

This framework helps to mitigate issues arising from the paternalistic notion of 'giving' voice to children, and instead work in solidarity toward social change (Schinke et al., 2012). Mutual respect "can be expressed only in a space or moment that gives equal attention to the needs, wishes, expertise, or experience of both parties to the relationship" (Bergum, 2002, p. 11), supporting dialogic methodologies.

Mutual respect protects against paternalism, where "a relational personhood, an interdependent personhood, fosters, rather than assumes, autonomy" (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005, p. 79). The relational space is a space "characterized by interdependence and interconnection, is, *at the same time*, a space where autonomy and independence can also exist" (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005, p. 139); the self is experienced through relationships with others and informed by individual decisions. Within educational contexts "human connection is dismantled in preference to competitive individualism" (Slee, 2011, p. 39) and this continues to saturate education policy discourse, leading Slee (2011) to argue for a shift in the conceptualization and understanding of inclusive education toward one that is relational.

How did I get here?

I originally came to relational ethics as a solace from the ethical tensions I experience as a student, researcher, and practitioner in adapted physical activity. Relational ethics encourages raising ethical questions and relational engagement in carrying out research (Goodwin & Rossow-Kimball, 2012): "[it] recognizes and values mutual respect, dignity, and connectedness between researcher and researched, and between researchers and the communities in which they live and work (Lincoln, 1995, p. 287; see also Brooks, 2006; Reason, 1993; Tierney, 1993)" (Ellis, 2007, p. 4). Therefore, though a lens by which I interpreted the phenomenon, relational ethics also guided me, as a human in relation with the children and their families, through the

research process; “it is in, and through, the bumping places that we are called to attend to what is relationally ethical in the living of [qualitative] inquiries and in the ways that we live in different places, including schools as institutions” (Clandinin et al., 2018, p. 10). Relational ethics requires researchers to “acknowledge our interpersonal bonds to others, and take responsibility for actions and their consequences” (Ellis, 2007, p. 3).

As researchers and practitioners we can also engage in relational reflective processes (Briscoe & Arai, 2015). A relational approach to reflection can support us in (a) understanding our obligations and responsibility to ourselves and others, (b) raising ethical questions in research and practice, and (c) moving past guilt with informed action, no longer protecting ignorance (Erevelles, 2014; Goodwin & Rossow-Kimball, 2012; Shaw, 2011). I aimed towards conducting this study with the children as an ally, “an ally has to find ways of using all their skills, knowledge and abilities without taking over and without taking power away from disabled people” (Holdsworth, 1993 as cited in Shakespeare, 2006) with the intention of producing research that does not speak ‘for’ children experiencing disability. This process requires “rationality, attunement to feelings and intuitions, and attention to care-in-relationships” (Shaw, 2011, p. 2). Critical to ally-ship and relational ethics is a sense of living and continuous embodiment which opens up spaces of possibilities and “spaces for generative ways of being and thinking” (Clandinin et al., 2018, p. 23).

Chapter Three: Research Study

Everyone's just like, they're fine, and when in reality, are we? Stories about recess from children experiencing disability

Abstract

Recess can be a valuable and significant experience in children's lives that provides opportunities for outdoor free play and engagement with peers; however children experiencing disability often withdraw or are excluded during recess. The recess context has received little attention from an inclusion perspective and the voices of children experiencing disability[1] remain marginalized in the literature. The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of children experiencing disability regarding inclusion during recess using qualitative multiple-case study informed by narrative approaches. Inclusion was defined as (a) a sense of belonging, acceptance, and value, (b) a respectful response to diversity, and (c) a space of encounter with the aim to conceptualize inclusion beyond the inclusion/exclusion binary. Theoretically, the study was guided by a relational ethics framework, highlighting the importance of social relations within physical spaces for maintaining inclusionary and exclusionary practices. Three children experiencing disability, ages 8, 9 and 11, attending integrated primary schools, participated. Data were generated through audio recorded one-on-one semi-structured interviews in the form of in-situ guided tours, drawings, photo taking, mind-mapping, field notes, and reflexive journaling. An inductive thematic within-case analysis was conducted, followed by a

[1] An experiential model of disability was used in this study which acknowledges "the wide variety of embodied sensations, social structures, cultural understandings, and identities that may be related to someone's disability experience" (Peers, Spencer-Cavaliere, & Eales, 2014, p. 275). Inconsistencies of disability language within this text represents direct quotes from the literature or the study participants.

cross-case analysis. The findings are presented as a collection of poems, vignettes, and short stories that bring together shared themes, while honoring the unique and nuanced differences of each participant's experiences. The discussion focuses on the following questions: (1) What is recess truly about?, (2) Who is recess for?, (3) How do peer relationships come into play?, and (4) What remains inaccessible?. The findings encourage critical reflection on the socio-spatial factors that contribute to feelings of inclusion at recess for children experiencing disability. This work contributes knowledge to developing supportive environments and practices in recess and free play that resonate with the desires and needs of children experiencing disability.

Introduction

Recess provides opportunities for child-directed unstructured free play and can contribute critically to children's daily physical activity and time spent socializing with peers (McNamara, Colley, & Franklin, 2017; Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010). Recess is a valuable and significant experience in children's lives, however often withdrawing or excluded, children experiencing disability are more likely to spend a large proportion of recess time alone, watching other children play, and not engaged in activities or games (Watkinson et al., 2001). The recess context has received little attention from an inclusion perspective as the majority of literature has focused on physical education (PE) (Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000; Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010). Furthermore, despite recommendations, the voices of children experiencing disability remain underrepresented in the literature (Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000; Leo & Mourton, 2020; Pocock & Miyahara, 2018; Wilhelmsen & Sørensen, 2017).

Outdoor Play

For the purposes of this study active outdoor play was defined as "unstructured physical activity that takes place outdoors in the child's free time" (Tremblay et al., 2015, p. 6479) and is

also referred to as active free play or self-directed play. Outdoor play has significant importance for children's development and children report being happiest when at play (Brussoni, Olsen, Pike & Sleet, 2012; Tremblay et al., 2015).

Major evidence reviews, position statements, and policies (see ParticipACTION, 2018; http://www.phn-rsp.ca/aop.php; Tremblay et al., 2015) have demonstrated the value of outdoor play for Canadians (Tink et al., 2018). However, recent decades have seen a significant decrease and opportunities for play have become more structured and occur increasingly indoors (Tremblay et al., 2015; Watchman & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2017). Play is undervalued for school-aged children and its benefits are not well understood; benefits such as independence, confidence, decision-making (Watchman & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2017), empathy, cooperation and negotiation (Castro, 2012) are among these. Societal perceptions of children's competencies and resilience have shifted from once considering children as actively responsible and capable, to inadequate, requiring protection (Brussoni et al., 2012). This change in perceptions have contributed to placing limits on children's exploration and access to outdoor play opportunities (Brussoni et al., 2012).

Research affirms children experiencing disability's right to outdoor play (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010). A large portion of the play literature has focused on structural barriers to participation, and as a result the focus has shifted to inclusive play spaces for research and revision of practice (Dunn & Moore, 2005; Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010). Despite the focus on accessible play spaces, children experiencing disability continue to face discrimination within these spaces (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010). Accessible play and inclusive play are not the same thing. Removing environmental or structural barriers helps to make play spaces accessible, and can contribute to inclusive play, however social barriers must also be dealt with (Dunn &

Moore, 2005; Horton, 2017); ableist[2] practices in children's play, leisure and recreation maintain exclusion (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013).

Recess

In Canadian primary schools, recess is understood as a "part of the school day that allows a break from instruction for children to interact and engage in physically active play, free from curricular and grading boundaries" (McNamara et al., 2017, p. 393). Recess differs from PE in that children can engage in unstructured play activities with little adult interference, direct supervision, or control. Policies on recess vary across and within school districts. For most schools, recess takes place outdoors and varies in frequency and duration, traditionally 10-15 minutes two to three times a day. Though typically the shortest period in their school routine, some children view recess as the best time of the school day (Holmes & Kohm, 2017) and it holds significant importance in their lives (McNamara, Vanntaja, Dunseith & Franklin, 2015).

Children have little discretionary time for self-directed play (Tremblay et al., 2015). Recess may be the only time during the school day that children are free to explore, socialize and play. However, in recent decades, social conflict, limited resources, increased pressure to improve school achievement and test scores, and maximizing classroom time and learning have resulted in reductions or elimination of recess time (Holmes & Kohm, 2017; McNamara et al., 2017). This is concerning considering the decrease in neighborhood outdoor play and free play in general.

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[2] Ableism refers to a "network of beliefs, processes and practices' (Campbell 2001 cited in Campbell 2009, 5) that cast 'disability', 'as a diminished state of being human' (Campbell 2001 cited in Campbell 2009, 5). …Ableism constructs bodies as 'impaired' and positions these as 'Other': different, lesser, undesirable, in need of repair or modification and de-humanized. … Ableism creates and sustains the context in which this 'impaired kind of people' is then subject to disablism, 'the differential or unequal treatment of people because of actual or presumed disabilities' (Campbell 2008b, 2)" (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013, p. 312).

Children are active agents in their social worlds and childhood must be understood as a social construction that cannot be separated from "other variables such as class, gender or ethnicity, or indeed (dis)ability" (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010, p. 506). Various power dynamics exist within children's play and these result in exclusion and marginalization for children who do not reflect dominant cultural norms (Jeanes & Magee, 2012; Massey, Neilson, & Salas, 2019). Social exclusion is perceived to be a challenging aspect of recess time by children; experiences of alienation, exclusion and victimization interfere with children's opportunities to connect with peers, resulting in loneliness, isolation and self-doubt (McNamara et al., 2017). For many children experiencing disability, participation in outdoor play is restricted and disrupted. Children experiencing disability are much more likely to be offered controlled activities in segregated environments (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010) and tend to have more adult involvement, experiencing less autonomy (Sterman et al., 2016). As outlined by Jeanes & Magee (2012), exclusion of children experiencing disability contributes significantly to the process of 'othering' resulting in children feeling abnormal and different. Positive peer interactions and opportunities to develop social relationships is critical to inclusive play and playing together can support altering children's perceptions of disability (Holt, 2003; Jeanes & Magee, 2012).

A deconstruction of current exclusionary practices within children's play spaces is required in order to develop inclusive opportunities, and this can only be done by consulting children to understand what is essential to the process (Jeanes & Magee, 2012). The stories, perspectives, and experiences of individuals experiencing disability "can challenge the apocrypha of ableism by emphasizing the shared experiences of being human" (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013, p. 320). Through children's narratives, physical activity and play be-

ingness can be imagined differently, and through relational engagement foster self-reflection, empathy, and understanding and appreciation of diversity (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013).

Inclusion

A conceptual divide exists regarding the concept of inclusion (Graham & Slee, 2008) and the distinction between inclusion and exclusion is discursive (Nilholm & Göransson, 2017). Rather than clarifying the meaning of inclusion, theories of inclusive education too frequently commence with technical considerations of the means for achieving inclusion, reducing it to a list of policies, strategies, and resources but do not recognize the unequal social relations that produce exclusion (Slee, 2011).

Ideological intentions of inclusion are entrenched within various assumptions, biases and practices. Graham & Slee (2008) argue that the term inclusion implies a 'bringing in' by "discursively [privileging] notions of the pre-existing by seeking to include the Other into a prefabricated, naturalized space" (p. 278). Hausstätter (2014) argues that

> inclusion has been designed as an initiative for a specific group of children[3]. … The result is that the school – not as a system, but as a single case – needs only aspire to the goal of creating an inclusive setting when it is faced with children with specific needs. In these cases, inclusion becomes a measure of the school's ability to facilitate and encourage the participation of this specific group of children (p. 430-431).

This interpretation moves us beyond the question of how do we move towards inclusion ('including') by requiring the disruption of normative assumptions that construct the naturalized

[3] The purpose of this study was to explore the perspectives of children experiencing disability as it relates to their experiences of inclusion in recess. However, it is important that we are mindful that when we label, and identify groups, the narrative of inclusion risks being designed for a specific group. Furthermore, most people hold multiple intersecting identities. With that said, it is critical that the perspectives of children experiencing disability contribute to conversations and understandings of inclusion in recess.

space from which exclusion derives (Hausstätter, 2014), recognizing that "talk of 'including' can only be made by those occupying a position of privilege at the centre" (Graham & Slee, 2008, p. 289). Inclusion researchers must work to dismantle these power relations and consider the participants as experts of the phenomenon being explored; bringing awareness to the asymmetries of power and projections of the social context in which the research takes place (Svendby, 2016). In a keynote address to the Leadership Conference of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario in 2006, George Die said, "Inclusion is not bringing people into what already exists; it is making a new space, a better space for everyone." But *who* contributes to the creation of a new space?

For the purposes of this study, inclusion was defined as (a) a sense of belonging, acceptance, and value, (b) a respectful response to diversity, and (c) a space of encounter; the aim was to conceptualize inclusion in a way that moved beyond the inclusion/exclusion binary and positioned the concept in a way that was *unfinished,* continually evolving (Hausstätter, 2014). Inclusion cannot be reduced to an empirical object (Hausstätter, 2014)

An understanding of inclusion as a sense of belonging, acceptance, and value positions inclusion as a subjective experience which supports the need to provide children opportunities to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010). This conceptualization of inclusion views the child as the expert of their experiences and for children experiencing disability, helps to mitigate notions of 'otherness', placing significant importance on their perspectives (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010).

Inclusion can be viewed as a valuing of difference, equity and social justice (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017). Accordingly, responding to diversity is about listening to the unfamiliar, being open, and celebrating difference in dignified ways (Nilholm & Göransson, 2017), promoting it as

an educational and social asset (Slee, 2011). It also requires an acknowledgement that responses to difference refer primarily to one's worldview, expectations, preferences and fears *in relation to the other*. Therefore, "perceived otherness always refers back to the perceiver as well" (Bos & Kal, 2016, p. 134). A response to diversity is thus part of something that happens *between people* (Bos & Kal, 2016). Through this conceptualization of inclusion, we come to recognize the categorization and labeling of differences as social constructs, and how they become normalized by influences of broader socio-political and cultural conditions (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017).

Lastly, inclusion can be conceptualized as *a space of encounter*. A space of encounter is "a social space consisting in a continuing dialogue between the 'normal' and the 'abnormal', the familiar and the strange" (Meininger, 2013, p. 26). It is not merely a physical space, but a social, relational, cultural, and spiritual reality (Meininger, 2013). Through engaging in spaces of encounter we may create possibility "to discover what is unknown, what is different, what connects us to others and others to us" (Caine & Steeves, 2009, p. 6). In this space, 'working with' individuals experiencing disability is then emphasized, rather than 'doing something for' them (Meininger, 2013). This relational conceptualization, "[has] the potential to gradually dismantle society's deep-rooted structures of exclusion" (Meininger, 2013, p. 38), taking the responsibility off the individual to be included.

Conceptual Framework

Relational ethics (Bergum & Doesstor, 2005) was used as the conceptual framework throughout this study. Relational ethics emphasizes building relationships, contextualizing our actions and reconceptualizes ethics to reflect our deeply interdependent existence (Goodwin, Johnston, & Causgrove Dunn, 2014). Relational ethics draws a deeper attention and acknowledgement to relationships and the relational space between people. This relational space

is described by four ethical themes: (a) engagement, (b) mutual respect, (c) embodiment, and (d) environment (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005).

Engagement. The theme engagement "requires facing both rational and emotional aspects of others' lives" (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005, p. xii). It refers to authentic connections, engaged interactions with others, personal responsiveness, true presence and empathy (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Goodwin et al., 2014).

Mutual respect. Mutual respect "provides the ethical space to explore with empathy differences between individuals, views, cultures, kinds of knowledge, and systems" (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005, p. xiii). Mutual respect occurs in a space that acknowledges and appreciates difference and interdependency (Goodwin et al., 2014).

Embodiment. Embodiment focuses on knowing the world through your own body and experiences; an interconnectedness of thinking mind and feeling body. It acknowledges that people live in diverse social contexts and enables us to be with each other in deep and meaningful interaction (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Goodwin et al., 2014). This theme calls for a need to value embodied knowledge as much as theoretical knowledge (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005).

Environment. The final theme refers to the creation of an ethical environment within a web of relations, which are deeply interdependent, rejecting individualistic frameworks (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005).

Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative study was to perform an in-depth exploration of the experiences of children experiencing disability in recess. Informed by relational ethics (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005), specific objectives were: (a) to explore experiences of inclusion and/or

exclusion in recess, and (b) to prioritize children's thoughts, feelings, and perspectives as central to understanding and re-envisioning inclusion/exclusion experiences.

Method

Always ask yourself, Who writes the stories? Who benefits from the stories? Who is missing from the stories?

(as cited by Jodi Kantor, 2017)

This study was conducted within a critical-interpretive paradigm (Sparkes, 1992). Within a critical-interpretive paradigm reality and knowledge are seen as socially constructed, context-specific and value laden (Sparkes, 1992). Attention is given to "the underlying nature of the 'structural patterns of social relationships (that) … generate specific forms of social consciousness'" (Sparkes, 1992, p. 39). Qualitative research calls for reflexivity: critical reflection of the kind of knowledge research produces, how that knowledge is produced, and the need to confront our assumptions and biases (Berger, 2015; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Reflexivity draws attention to power issues in the research, such as the role the researcher's identity and social position plays in asking particular questions, interpreting phenomenon, and privileging of choices (Macbeth, 2010). We[4], the authors[5] identify as white, middle-class, cis-gendered, settler, women, and do not experience disability. This contextualizing recognizes the perspectives and assumptions from which we work, represents places of privilege, and positions us outsiders to the phenomenon under exploration.

[4] The paper is written in both the first person and third person for ease of reading and in reflections of the processes that took place.

[5] The first author and primary investigator was also the study interviewer and a graduate student studying in the area of Adapted Physical Activity (APA) at a Canadian University at the time of the study. The second author was an Associate professor who taught and researched in APA and worked alongside the student in a supervisory role.

Research Approach

A qualitative multiple-case study approach (Stake, 1995) informed by narrative approaches (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Riessman, 2008) was the guiding methodological framework for this study. Through a multiple-case study approach, importance was placed on each child's perspectives, experiences and stories, providing an opportunity to explore relationally and in detail, their experiences, as well as analyze within and across the different settings (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Qualitative case studies explore or describe a phenomenon using a variety of data generation methods, "while taking into consideration how a phenomenon is influenced by the context within which it is situated" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 556). In this study each child, complete with their experiences and perspectives of inclusion and/or exclusion in recess, represents a case (see sampling inclusion criteria in The Children) (Stake, 1995).

Narrative inquiry holds to three fundamental aspects of viewing experience – that it is continuous, relational, and social (Clandinin, 2013). Narrative inquiry works from a view of experience that attends to *continuity*– that is, "experiences grow out of other experiences, and experiences lead to further experiences" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 2). The notion of continuity helps us to understand narrative inquiry as *relational*; "we intentionally put our lives alongside an other's life. … As narrative inquirers, our lived and told stories are always in relation to, or with, those of participants and with their, and our, landscapes (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995)" (Clandinin, 2013, p. 23-24). Lastly, there is an emphasis on the *social* dimensions of our inquiries – the context – which explore the stories people live and tell (Clandinin, 2013) within a "historical moment with its circulating discourses and power relations" (Riessman, 2008, p. 8). By also engaging narrative approaches, this study offers a

distinctive lens through which to inquire into children's experiences of recess, in that the children's voices are centralized in the narratives (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007).

Sampling Strategy

Purposeful sampling was used to engage information-rich cases to allow for in-depth exploration and understanding of the research question (Patton, 2015). Once ethics approval (see Appendix A) was received from the University Research Ethics Board, recruitment emails were distributed to various organizations within a large western Canadian city and surrounding area that provide programs and services to children and families who experience disability. Children and their parents or guardians who were interested in participating in the study were asked to contact the first author directly by phone or email, at which time questions were answered and eligibility was confirmed. Using snowball sampling, personal networks were also asked to share the study flyer with anyone they believed would be interested in participating (Patton, 2015). Eligibility criteria included children who (a) were in grades 3 to 6 at the time of the study, (b) were identified as experiencing disability by their parents, (c) attended an integrated primary school at the time of the study, (d) had sufficient English language comprehension skills to understand and answer the interview questions, and (d) were willing to share their experiences and stories regarding their participation in recess.

The Children

Three children assented (see Appendix B) to participate in this study following parental consent (see Appendix C). This number of cases is in line with studies drawing on multiple-cases, as the vast majority of these consist of small sample sizes of typically no more than four or five cases (Stake, 1995). All three children were identified as experiencing disability[6] by their

[6] Coming from an experiential lens of disability, the children's experiences are diverse and unique and may not be attributed to impairment. Decisions regarding representation within final research texts were made to be respectful

parents and attended integrated primary schools at the time of the study. Jayda was 8 years old and in grade 3 at the time of the study. She has an infectious laugh, is full of energy, and loves active play! My fondest memory of our time together was playing frisbee on her front lawn. Caleb was 9 years old and in grade 4. He is one of the most imaginative kids I have had the pleasure of meeting, transforming mundane spaces into play worlds. His sense of humor was clever and had me smiling. Lyla was 11 years old and in grade 6. Lyla loves to draw and has a passion for sports. She is kind and so lovely to be around. I am so grateful to have learned from this strong advocate. The children lived and attended schools within and surrounding the city. Two children had three recess periods per day each school day, and one had two recess periods per day. In order to maintain confidentiality, we have not provided a table cross-referencing pseudonyms and participant descriptions.

Data Generation

In an effort to gain an in-depth, rich, and nuanced understanding of the children's experiences, data were generated using multiple methods including: audio-recorded one-on-one semi-structured interviews and conversations, drawings, photo taking, mind-mapping, field notes and reflexive journaling. These various methods were selected based on their potential to be accessible, fun, and offer choice for each child, being sensitive to diverse ways of communicating and participating (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013; Stafford, 2017).

Before meeting, the children were offered opportunities to identify which of the data generation activities they enjoy doing. Additionally, though the activities were offered during meetings the children had control and choice over which activities they wanted to participate in and how. Therefore, not all data generation strategies were used by each child.

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of how the children represent themselves, attending to their voices. Therefore, in respect for confidentiality and in line with the purposes of this study, diagnoses have not been shared.

Data generation took place at least once at each child's outdoor recess space during after school hours. All other data generation locations were negotiated with the children and their parents. Before conducting data generation activities, the first researcher held a meet and greet with the children and their parents (Stafford, 2017). This enabled the researcher to build rapport and provided an opportunity to gain initial informed consent and assent. The information gathered during the meet and greet informed future data generation sessions; supporting the researcher in maximizing the children's participation and in the creation of a positive research experience (Stafford, 2017).

Semi-structured interviews. Two pilot interviews were conducted with a child, aged 9 years who does not experience disability, to develop and refine the first author's interview skills, confirm accessibility of the questions (see Appendix D), and make adjustments to the interview guide and delivery of methods (Markula & Silk, 2011).

Two one-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with each child. The first interview was conducted in the form of an in-situ guided tour of the children's outdoor recess spaces. In-situ guided tours are mobile interviews carried out by the children (Johnson, Hart & Colwell, 2017; Pyle, 2013). These interviews began with a prompt inviting the children to show the interviewer where they go for recess and to tell them about recess.

Drawing. During the second meeting, the children were given an opportunity to draw pictures of their recess experience or anything they chose (Kortesluoma, Hentinen, & Nikkonen, 2003). Drawings were created by the children in conjunction with conversation with the interviewer, 'talk and draw', to build rapport (Kortesluoma et al., 2003) and lessen the risk of misinterpretation (Bland, 2017).

Field notes. Field notes were collected immediately following interviews. These notes were descriptive and included inquirer observations, insight, and interpretations (Patton, 2015). These notes supported interpretation, verification and analysis of data (Patton, 2015) and researcher reflexivity.

Photo elicitation. Photo elicitation is a participatory research method that uses photographs to elicit responses from participants (Pyle, 2013). During the in-situ guided tours the children were provided a child-friendly digital camera and invited to capture photographs which were personally relevant to their recess experience. The photographs were used to elicit conversations between the first author and the children during the second meeting.

Mind-mapping. The children had the opportunity to create art maps about their recess experiences. Only one child desired to take part in this activity, which involved creating a poster of recess using copies of the photographs along with various craft and art supplies. The activity began with the interviewer asking, "How might we tell other adults about recess?" The child and interviewer discussed each grouping of pictures/drawings and their significance (Pyle, 2013).

Reflexivity journal. Throughout the entire research process the first author took reflexive research notes (Thorne, 2016). The notes included personal and subjective thoughts, feelings, prejudices, biases, and impressions, differing from the field notes (Patton, 2015) and helping to inform the inductive analytic process (Thorne, 2016). The reflective notes were revisited throughout the research process and re-read during analysis, interpretation, and writing. These reflections, thoughts, and questions were shared with the second author as they engaged in critical and reflexive dialogue. Reflexivity can support the research process, "securing that while interpretation of findings is always done through the eyes and cultural standards of the researcher, the effects of the latter on the research process is monitored" (Berger, 2015, p. 221).

This supported the desire not to reproduce or justify the first author's own biases, but to equalize the research relationship and foster an ethos of reciprocity throughout the study (Berger, 2015).

Data Analysis

Case study is not bound to any particular method of data generation or analysis, therefore decisions regarding the chosen methods were made based on the research paradigm and the children themselves (Merriam, 2009). An interpretive approach of thematic analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) was used and brought to the creation of the narratives; this requires ongoing engagement with data as soon as one enters the field (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). "Knowing your data means dwelling in it repeatedly and purposefully and developing a relationship with it" (Thorne, 2016, p. 167).

The children's stories of their experiences generated through interviews and conversations were the central feature of the data. The additional data in the form of field notes, drawings, photographs, mind-map and the reflexive journal provided context, added depth to the interviews and conversations, and contributed to the trustworthiness of the data generated. As transcription is a form of interpretation, the interviews and conversations were transcribed verbatim by the first author (Thorne, 2016).

In analyzing and interpreting the data, the first author was attentive to the three-dimensional narrative inquiry space – sociality, temporality, and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Riessman, 2008). *Sociality* is comprised of the personal and social conditions, as well as the relationship between participant and inquirer (Clandinin et al., 2007). *Temporality* is the temporal transition of the phenomenon under study; events and people always have a past, present and future, and therefore "it is important to always try to understand people, places, and events as in process, as always in transition" (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 23). *Place* refers to the

physical and topological boundaries of place where the inquiry and phenomenon takes place; the "inquirer needs to think through the impact of each place on the experience" (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 23).

An iterative and thematic within-case analysis was conducted by the first author, followed by a cross-case analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Stake, 1995; Stake, 2006). The within-case analysis involved thematic coding of each individual case. Analysis began by reading an individual case's transcripts and field notes several times (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Then a line-by-line analysis, *open coding*, took place, highlighting quotes and making notes about initial thoughts resulting in basic conceptual units and categories (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). *Analytical coding* then followed, which aimed at grouping the open codes by identifying the properties that gave rise to the conceptual categories and the contexts within which they were embedded to find interactions between the codes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). "Analytic coding goes beyond descriptive coding; it is "coding that comes from interpretation and reflection on meaning" (Richards, 2015, p. 135)" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 206). Lastly, subcategories were generated. These represented "incidents of the category from which the category was derived" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 206). Core categories were organized into an Excel spreadsheet and each subcategory was supported with direct quotes from the transcript and researcher notes. The interpretive, analytic conclusions generated within the case were then (re)presented in the form of poems, vignettes, and/or narratives in keeping with the case. This process was then repeated for the following cases. Throughout analysis the second author engaged in conversation with the first author as a critical companion, supporting the reflexive process (Smith & McGannon, 2018).

Following the within-case analysis, and (re)presentation of findings, a cross-case analysis was conducted in order to group core- and sub-categories shared between the cases. Conversations between the authors regarding the core- and sub-categories resulted in four discussion themes to support the findings.

Quality Criteria

Characteristics of good qualitative research include *sensitivity to context, commitment and rigour, transparency and coherence*, and *impact and importance* (Yardley, 2000). These are also indicative of quality case study (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995) and narrative (Riessman, 2008) research.

Sensitivity to context. In addition to the procedural ethics, the first author actively challenged hierarchical relations between them and the children and maintained openness and respect for the children and their parents through all stages of the research (Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014). The researcher brought attention to the context of the inquiry (Riessman, 2008) and existing and relevant literature was related to the findings (Yardley, 2000).

Commitment to rigour. The research approach utilized dialectical methodologies with thorough approaches to analysis, committed to rigorous engagement (Creswell, 2007; Riessman, 2008; Thorne, 2016). Triangulation was used through the use of several data generation methods and a theory, as well as the support of the second author throughout the research process (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995; Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014). Reflexivity occurred in the form of a reflexive journal, reflexive dialogue and the authors situated themselves in the qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2007; Riessman, 2008; Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014).

Transparency and coherence. Transparency was maintained through a clear description of sampling and recruitment, how data generation was conducted, and the steps used in analysis.

Direct quotes were used in the (re)presentation of the findings and theoretical claims were supported by the findings (Riessman, 2008).

Impact and importance. The children (research participants) were situated in the presentation of the study and in-depth, vivid descriptions of each case was used with the intention of drawing the reader in (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2007; Riessman, 2008; Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014).

Ethics

Procedural ethics (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). In Canada, ethical research refers to ensuring respect for human dignity (Markula & Silk, 2011). Parents provided informed consent on their child's behalf and each child provided verbal assent and signed an assent document either with their signature or by placing a sticker on the signature box (Phelan & Kinsella, 2013). Before beginning the interviews, the children were given full disclosure about what the research and interview entailed. This was explained in a developmentally appropriate way and the first author ensured, through asking questions that the children knew they had a choice to participate and could withdraw at any time (Kortesluoma et al., 2003). Opportunities for the children to ask questions were provided (Phelan & Kinsella, 2013). Most importantly, it was made clear that the children were not required to participate if they did not want to, that they were not expected to participate by anyone, including the researchers, parents, teachers, etc., and that they would not face any negative consequences if they chose to withdraw from the study at any point (Phelan & Kinsella, 2013).

Participants have the right not to be identified and each participant was assigned a pseudonym. In the preparation of this text, decisions were made regarding participant

demographics (see Appendix E) in order to maintain anonymity and respect. The research information was kept confidential. Only the authors had access to raw data.

Ethics in practice (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). The authors were aware of the asymmetries of power and projections of the social context in which the research took place; the interviewer strived to create a safe, caring, and reassuring environment (Briggs, 2007; Phelan & Kinsella, 2013; Svendby, 2016). This was supported through the use of the reflexive journal and debriefing with the second author.

Throughout the production of this text, the authors attended to reflexivity "recognizing the ethical imperative to represent the child with dignity, and acknowledging that researcher interpretations and representations of a particular child are only one of many possible representations" (Phelan & Kinsella, 2013, p. 86).

Findings

My intention in conducting this study was to bring to the forefront the children's perspectives and experiences. After spending time with the children, I wondered how I would best (re)present their stories. What follows is a collection of poems, vignettes and short stories I constructed from our time together, as we explored their recess spaces, engaged in conversations, drew, and played. As I wrote these pieces, the participants continued to "live" with me and I considered "how [my] way of seeing a story might align with, or differ from" (Clandinin et al., 2007, p. 30) their own. The pieces are arranged to bring together what is similar while maintaining and honoring their uniqueness and the nuanced differences within each of the children's experiences. I did my best to capture their perspectives and experiences and in doing so invite you, the reader, to come alongside them and "to develop relationship [with them], we need more story and less theory" (Bergum & Doessetor, 2005, p. 138).

As I reflect on the decisions we made about writing the findings, I am reminded of Fitzpatrick's (2012) piece on creative forms of (re)presentation in research texts that resonated with me: "A poem, indeed, may allow the light in, as Leonard Cohen avers, which may both elucidate and add to the layers in our writing, not only for its own sake but also to highlight the broader social contexts of our research" (p. 14).

Ring the bell that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in
Leonard Cohen (2009)

Jayda

"This is my school!". She spots it before I do. Pulling into the parking lot I am pleased to find that we have the place to ourselves. It is a gorgeous spring day and the sun is shining. I open the back passenger door and before I can ask for a tour she's sprinting, laughing as she makes her way to the park. Catching up I find her at the top of the slide. Peering down at me she says, "I don't know if we're allowed to do this…". She slides down on her feet – standing – gripping the edge of the slide for support: "Jayda the superhero's gonna save the day! Da nuh nuh nuh!".

"I've never been at the park without a teacher before. Now we're allowed to do whatever we want!" She speeds down the slide again, only to quickly turn around and climb back up; but not before ditching her flip flops in the sand, getting a better grip on the slippery yellow plastic. She loves to climb. And loves to show me how good she is at climbing; giggling at my unpracticed attempts to follow her. "I climb lots of things, I'm not too scared. And besides, I'm big enough for EVERTHING." We climb and chat, exploring the unknown. "We can't climb up the slide, or on those roofs up there, or that little shed over there. And on top of that little playground you know? And we're not even allowed to climb trees. Which is really sad".

Peering through the chain link fence she tells me it's the basketball place. A cement pad with a hoop on either end. As a grade three she's not allowed there during recess. "How come?" I ask. "I dunno. Only grade fours and fives are allowed." I recall how grades came up in our earlier conversations about recess; they were associated with recess periods and territory. "And we have new balls to play with, that we can bring outside, and we can't even go in that area."

A single row of trees separates the playground from a large field. Next, we swing high enough that we feel as though we might be able to see the field from above the trees. She tells me that's where they play sometimes, out in the field. The fence surrounding the field marks the boundaries of their play space. "Staring at the beautiful field. Playing in the beautiful field. BEA-U-TI-FUL!" Near the swing's highest point she takes off and soars, the sand welcoming her as it absorbs her fall.

Caleb

Let me show you. These are the things
I am interested in.

When I play
I act them out
by myself.

Can you see them?

I will show you.
There,
there,
and there.

All the different,
sounds
they make.

Like...

(*listen*).
I make
the sounds.

They could be
over there.
Or on
the side.

I will show you.
Here come on.

Sometimes they tell me to
pay attention.
I don't like that.

Lyla

The bell rings.

15 minutes

Children race to their cubbies, slipping on snow pants and boots, arms shoot into jackets, and snacks discreetly find their way into pockets. Quickly they sprint to the playground; claiming equipment and starting games before the bell rings again, calling them back to class.

13 minutes

She waits till it is nearly clear. The anticipation and excitement of recess makes many of them unaware of their surroundings. She would rather avoid the crowd and commotion; fear of getting bumped or tripped.

12 minutes

Winter gear on, a friend alongside her, they make their way outside. A group of grade twos have discovered that the recent snowfall has turned the ramp into a toboggan run. Patiently, she asks the group to pause their game so that they can make their way down the ramp. She is relieved

when she doesn't receive one of the usual responses: *"You can't tell us what to do"*. The snow is now packed down and slippery. They take their time making their way down.

10 minutes

Around the corner, across the courtyard. The door not accessible, her friend holds it open. She knows her friend thinks nothing of it, but when she sees it she thinks *"How am I going to open that?"*. The scooter is backed out through the door and they're ready to go.

8 minutes

Wheeling and walking, they chat about their morning, taking time to notice how beautiful the trees look when the sun hits their frosted branches. Where might their friends be? They'll try to find them, likely in the usual spot away from the playground – away from the younger grades. They take a different, longer route, she knows the alternative doesn't offer curb cuts. Her friend remarks "*Whoa this is cool, I've never actually been this way before"*. She is amused at her friend's excitement of seeing a place she knew existed but had never explored.

4 minutes

Better start making our way back. They follow the same route back.

1 minute

"Will you pleases help me with the door?". Scooter parked.

The bell rings.

Walking back.

Up the ramp. Slowly.

Return to your seat. Late for class.

Jayda

The bell rings signaling the first recess block. Jayda heads to her cubby where she grabs her jacket and removes her indoor shoes. She doesn't remember seeing Sophie this morning before school. Worried that she might not be at school today, Jayda makes her way to the entrance; students are crowding and pushing as she puts her runners on, making sure to look up every few seconds at the students passing. Jayda should have seen Sophie by now – their classes exit through the same door for recess. Outside there is also no sign of her. A knot begins to form in Jayda's stomach. She waits as the remaining students exit the school, but Sophie is not among them.

'The thing I don't like about recess is that sometimes I don't really have anyone to play with'

Jayda walks past the playground and towards the field. Her 'park recess' – when grade threes are allowed to play on the playground – is during the second recess block; next year it will be the third block, which is the shortest in length. In an open space of grass just past a grove of trees, she spots a group of girls she had been playing with earlier in the year. She hesitates, reluctant to approach them and ask to play. 'They won't let me play with them. Every single time… I don't know why. I've asked lots of times'. Jayda had played with the group when they had been playing tag, but the group had moved on to a different game that they said 'she wasn't involved in'. Jayda sighs heavily and opts to walk around for the remainder of the recess block, passing time till the bell rings.

'I am always included when I play with my best friend Sophie. She never tells me to go away. The only thing she wants is for me to stay'

The bell rings signaling the first recess block. Jayda heads to her cubby where she grabs her jacket and removes her indoor shoes. As she heads to the entryway Sophie, who had spotted her down the hallway, runs to catch up with her. Grabbing their outdoor shoes from the entryway Sophie asks Jayda, 'Do you wanna play with us at recess?'

Together, the girls make their way to the field where their friends play gymnastics and dancing club. They practice things like cartwheels, back bends and somersaults. Sometimes they choregraph dances. Earlier that month Jayda had taught the group how to do a one handed cartwheel. Today they were working on handstands. Jayda partners up with Nia. Taking turns they hold on to each other's feet so they can stay upright on their hands. 'Soon we will all be able to do handstands!', Jayda exclaims to the group. She feels she is part of something. The bell rings and the girls make their way back to the school, creating plans for the second block of recess.

Jayda

What do I like about recess? Well, that we don't have work! I get to play and go outside; but what makes me really happy about recess is seeing my friends.

On the park I play stuff, like maybe I find some friends and we play tag. I really like tag, but I don't do that anymore because my friends stopped doing that; they do gymnastics and dancing club in the field now. It's what they want to do so they do that and I sometimes do that with them instead of going to the park.

I'm one of the only girls who plays soccer with the boys. There's this boy that plays with them and I kind of want to play with him, so then I play soccer with them. I feel included when I play soccer because it's fun and I'm playing with other kids. I sort of like soccer, but I'd rather do hula hooping.

Lyla

Before I got my scooter I used to hate going out for recess. For so many years my friends always wanted to do some sort of physical activity that I couldn't really participate in, like tag. You know, recess doesn't need to be really physical? It can be any movement, an opportunity to be outside and spend time with friends. I love going outside and being in nature. I remember when one of my closest friends asked me *'Lyla, is it okay for recess if we sit at a picnic table and draw?'* I said, *'Yes! Please, I would love that!'* But you know what, sports is also a passion for me, and lots of people think, oh because you're disabled you don't want to play sports. It annoys me that people think this way without even asking me. They just assume my preferences. They just assume what I can and can't do. Even though I have to modify it, I still love participating in sports.

It's difficult at recess, especially with the kids that don't know me. I'll try to join a game or activity and they'll purposely try to get me out, or just exclude me from the beginning. Sometimes I just want to fool around or practice a sport, not like play a real game or anything. Like basketball, I can't make a shot on those high nets, but I just want to practice. Kids will say *'Oh no you can't join us'*… but I really want to play. Sometimes when I approach them they'll start making all these really bad excuses. That's what everyone does. Instead of just being straight up, coming out with it, they just try to find an excuse to get through it...leave me out. What's even more frustrating is that the rest of the kids there, lots of them think it's mean, but they don't do anything to stop it. I just end up leaving. At this point, that feels like the best option. It takes a lot of courage to go up to a random teacher and ask even a simple question, let alone say *'Hey, someone's being mean'*. I know that if I go to a teacher other than my own they might say *'Well did you do something to start this?'*. I don't think that I should have to explain. I

didn't do anything to deserve the way those kids treated me. Also, how do you explain *'Well someone just came up to me and said something really mean'*… it's hard? I'm constantly worrying, will they think that's enough, will they want proof? No one my age is going to say *'Oh yeah I called her that'*. So it comes down to whether the teacher trusts you to tell the truth. I just gave up. Now I'm like, *'Oh you're bullying me? I'll just go away'*.

It's bullying. Not letting someone join a game. Calling people names. Purposely trying to get them out. It's bullying. But I don't think we learn about it enough or how it affects people. It feels meaningless to tell people to stop bullying and putting up anti-bullying posters around the school. At the end of the day that's not going to do enough, it has to be more than that. We have to talk about it, and in a more mature way. I feel that everyone in my class would understand, so why don't we learn about it? Learn about the impact of our actions – negative and positive. You know it means a lot when someone even just stops by and says hi. Being talked to, any sort of communication or interaction, that goes a long way. But also, if you see someone who you think might be by themselves, ask if they're playing with someone, and if they say no, ask them to join your game.

Caleb

We can go in the field or the park.
I play by myself,
or supervise.

Looking
if I see someone that I know.

Hey!
I see someone I know in the park.
That's cool.

I'm too shy,

to ask them
if I can.

Makes me sad.
Those people are together with them.
Makes me sad.
When they make friends, except me.

When people make friends
and I'm not around
I feel sad.
I think about that
and that's not good,
because I don't feel happy.

When I don't know
what to play.
When I don't know
what to act,
what game.

Included
it means two of you
both of you.

Ask me,
ask to play.

Lyla

Grade six, her fifth and final year at the school. During the summer Lyla had received her class list. She was thrilled to see the names on it and even more so by those that were absent. At home she shares about her first day, *"School was good but there's stairs and I don't like that"*. Her classroom is in a portable which is not attached to the school and can only be accessed by stairs. *"It's exhausting."* The exhaustion leads to frustration. Now begins the process of requesting a ramp. There should have been a ramp there long before.

Lyla was so happy when she received her scooter; ecstatic at the freedom and possibility it would afford her. At school her excitement quickly became disappointment when what was intended to provide freedom and access, instead created new barriers. *"Since I got my scooter I realize how inaccessible everything is, and how many problems I never thought of"*. Some spaces require extra time and a separate route to access, some restrict her independence, and others are just not an option. *"I really wish I could go over here during recess".* No curb cuts. When she got the scooter she remembers her first thought being, *"I can go anywhere!"*. Now, disappointed and frustrated she thinks, *"I can't. I need someone to help anyways. I need someone to do something for me anyways. I want to be able to go by myself".*

A ramp to the portable was built. *"There were a lot of problems that happened after the ramp was built."* It is really difficult to get the scooter up the ramp, but there is no point in taking it anyway, there is no room for the scooter inside the portable. *"I have to store it in the school. It's inconvenient, and I'm always late"*. She would take the ramp now by foot, extending the already unnecessary trip between the school and portable. *"The wood was so slippery. It would rain or snow, and every time I walked on it I would fall. If you're going to add something, add something that actually works."* People often tried to help, find solutions, offer suggestions, but she was made to feel lesser by many of them, and the problem was never really solved. Bring a friend. Arrive early. Have a piece of plywood with you wherever you go to make a ramp. *"Yeah that's helpful but why do I have to do that, that's not my job"*. Lyla's lived experience provokes a strong conviction in her for the inequity that exists. Inequities, many of which remain unknown to others. *"It's not right. There should be laws in place. Why am I not allowed to go in the building as easy as everyone else? It's not fair that I have to go the long way to recess, which takes a really long time. I'm always late, and it's really frustrating because it's not my fault.*

Everyone's just like they're fine, when in reality are we? Our perspective isn't heard. If someone was in my shoes for a day they'd realize, oh these are actually really big problems, we need to fix these."

It's hard not to notice when something novel happens at the school; quickly, the ramp became a recess play structure. It afforded opportunities for climbing and running, and in the winter months, something to slide down. *"I'm constantly having to ask people to back up or stop"*. A ramp that barely fits a scooter does not leave much room for sliding bodies and anyone wishing to safely make their way up or down it. *"But what really aggravated me is that they know me, they know that I wanted the ramp, they know why the ramp is there but yet they still do it. How can someone know me, know my needs, and doesn't even respect that?"*

Discussion

I value the interpretive nature of reading (Fitzpatrick, 2012) and wonder what you, the reader, felt, saw, experienced as you read the findings. What follows is a discussion regarding the shared analytic conclusions from across the findings that direct attention to critical issues of inclusion to exclusion at recess for children experiencing disability. These issues are addressed and presented in the form of question themes: (1) What is recess truly about?, (2) Who is recess for?, (3) How do peer relationships come into play?, and (4) What remains inaccessible? The positioning of the discussion themes as questions was deliberate. Our intention here was to explore the recess context critically and to challenge some of the broader commentaries that have contributed to the inclusion and exclusion of children experiencing disability. The discussion is structured through an overarching lens of the importance of children's voices, perspectives, and experiences with the theoretical framework of relational ethics (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005) woven throughout.

What is Recess Really About?

The hidden agenda of physical activity promotion. In line with the literature, recess held importance for the children in the study (Holmes & Kohm, 2017; McNamara et al., 2015). The findings also demonstrated however, that the children's perceptions of the purpose of recess and the kinds of choices they would make for themselves, did not always align with broader narratives that are so often foregrounded in debates about recess. Recess in Canadian primary schools is understood as a break from instruction *for students*, and typically takes place outdoors (McNamara et al., 2017). A decrease in children's active play has resulted in an emphasis being placed on recess to provide physical activity opportunities (Massey et al., 2019; McNamara et al., 2017; Watchman & Spencer-Cavaliere, 2017), but this is not necessarily reflective of the preferences of children. Furthermore, current discourses surrounding physical activity can result in negative experiences, such as exclusion, for children who do not meet 'normative' expectations as certain skills or types of ability or bodies are favored (Svendby, 2016).

Massey et al. (2019) conducted a critical qualitative meta-study of children's perspectives of school-based recess. Of the 22 more recently conducted studies, 18 were driven by a physical activity promotion agenda, suggesting that "physical activity promotion is the primary objective of recess related research" (p. 10). Research shows that physical competence is privileged and promoted at recess, differentiating opportunities, and can be used as a form of segregation and exclusion (Massey et al., 2019). For example, children who do not meet subjective evaluations of skill are excluded from groups as "status within groups is achieved through success" (Rodriquez-Navarro, García-Monge & Rubio-Campos, 2014, p. 356). Children with higher physical competence have been shown to have a higher social status or more authority at recess, with the authority to structure activities and games (Barbour, 1996). Additionally, games often follow a

closed system, meaning once started others cannot join (Ren & Langhout, 2010). “The notion of normalcy permeates school contexts” (Azzairto, 2020, p. 255) rendering bodies as either competitive or dull, thereby centering the normal and pushing children experiencing disability to the periphery (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010; Mindes, 2015).

Features from physical education additionally reinforce a particular set of movement competencies (Makopoulou, Penney, Neville, & Thomas, 2019) and these socially constructed discourses reproduce social norms and values around competition, performance, and body-perfection codes (Svenby, 2016) which carry over into the recess setting. Jayda enjoyed the physical nature of activities and games, and part of this enjoyment came from demonstrating physical competencies that were valued by her peers (Prompona, Papoudi, & Papadopoulou, 2019). Lyla, however, expressed her dislike for recess due to the physical nature of the games her friends played that she felt she could not participate in.

Recess can be viewed as a cultural representation of social relations and practices that embody dominant meanings and values, which create and maintain hegemonic social relationships. The findings demonstrate the role physical competence played in feelings of inclusion at recess. Performance deemed ‘normal’ or ‘competitive’ was met with acceptance, participation, and inclusion. Norms appeared to win out over creativity, resulting in exclusion for those who did not meet expectations.

The findings also showed that recess provides an opportunity to be outside, to observe and engage with nature, which was enjoyed and valued by the children. When discussed through this lens, recess was viewed by the children as an opportunity for movement – any kind of movement and emphasis was not placed on it being highly physical. The children also referred to recess as an opportunity to take a break from the activities they engaged in during classroom

time (Prompona et al., 2019). In contrast, the recess literature appears to be driven by national policy interests regarding health promotion, "rather than the interests of the primary stakeholders, children themselves" (Massey et al., 2019, p. 7). The findings support the need to encourage and empower students to spend their recess in a way that is meaningful to them; this can include opportunities to rest and release stress or rid of tension (Prompona et al., 2019). While recognizing the role theoretical knowledge has in the recess context to support the wellbeing of children (e.g., school policy, focus on physical activity), we must simultaneously and equally value children's embodied knowledge (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). Children are experts in their own lives and have a right to have a say and contribute to matters that impact them (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1993).

Play is diverse. As demonstrated through the findings, the participants' play preferences were diverse. For example, Caleb cited imaginative and role play as one of his favorite things to do at recess. Responses to and acceptance of diversity play a significant role in experiences of inclusion and how we come to value and legitimize the way all children belong (Burke, 2013); mutual respect provides space to explore and appreciate difference (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Goodwin et al., 2014). Children "learn, (re)produce, accept, and transform norms and expectations through sociocultural exchange with others, both children and adults" (Holt, 2007, p. 798), and educational institutions are one site of this learning. It is known that children's play behaviors are not immune to contemporary ideals and discourses of broader society, which they consciously and unconsciously learn (Holt, 2007). Children then draw on and perform these social patterns through their play (Willett, 2015) and performances of play and activity then become linked to normative expectations (Holt, 2007). Some of the play behaviors in the findings resembled segregations that take place within broader institutions (e.g., education and

sport) such as gender and age segregated activity patterns (Holt, 2007; Pawlowski, Ergler, Tjørnhøj-Thomsen, Schipperijn, & Troelsen, 2015).

Lyla shared how the perspectives of people experiencing disability remain absent resulting in a lack of awareness of physical and social barriers. This is true for much of the active outdoor play literature, which is argued to have led to an idealized notion of outdoor play (Horton, 2017). The findings demonstrated that the children's play choices and preferences were not always valued, and they experienced exclusionary practices linked to recess ideals. This resonates with what was hypothesized by Horton (2017), that those who experience contemporary ideals of outdoor play as problematic or exclusionary are those whose perspectives or experiences are absent from contemporary spaces of play. There is need for more critical theorizations of recess and play which acknowledge multiple perspectives, experiences and identities, drawing greater attention to how normative discourses "serve to marginalize experiences and playing bodies which 'do not live up to' contemporary ideals" (Horton, 2017, p. 1171).

Who is Recess For?

Follow the leader. Even though she would rather play other games or activities, Jayda participated in activities at recess that her friends or peers were doing. Peer influence plays a significant role in children's play choices. When asked why children participate in activities common responses are "'because my friends do' and 'I like being together with my friends'" (Pawlowski, Schipperijn, Tjørnhøj-Thomsen, & Troelsen, 2018, p. 45). For children experiencing disability, it appears they are more likely to follow the lead of other children as it enables them to be able to participate (Graham, Nye, Mandy, Clarke, & Morriss-Roberts, 2016). While there is limited research on why this is, possible reasons could be that children

experiencing disability must navigate "both built structures and their peers in order to become included as equal play participants" (Burke, 2012, p. 977). This relates to the play hierarchies and expectations discussed previously, that in order to participate, children must be able to physically perform the activity (Mundhenke, Hermansson, & Nätterlund, 2010). Those who initiate games have control over the theme, creativity, and content of the activity (Tamm & Skär, 2000). The children often referred to peers, when it came to decision making at recess – what is played, how it is played, and who is welcome to play. Children experiencing disability have discussed feeling marginalized by the rules of games (Holt, 2007) and this was also echoed by the children in this study. At times, they experienced a lack of understanding of the game rules and structures, or experienced rules that were purposeful in their exclusion from the game. Power dynamics and hierarchical positioning within children's play at recess influence the type and structure of games, and this, in turn, influences feelings of inclusion (Holt, 2007; Jeanes & Magee, 2012).

Another aspect of recess contributing to the query about 'who recess is for?' relates to play restrictions tied to the boundaries of the children's recess grounds and areas or activities they were not permitted to play in despite their interest in them. This is supported by literature which shows that restrictive environmental dimensions (physical, social, and organizational) do not support children's play preferences (Aminpour, Bishop, & Corkery, 2020; Knowles, Parnell, Stratton, & Ridgers, 2013). Children find recess meaningful due to the opportunity it affords to act freely and make choices, which is otherwise limited in their everyday lives (McNamara, Lakman, Spadafor, Lodewyk, & Walker, 2018; Prompona et al., 2019). The experience of choice, decision making, and freedom is an integral part of play during recess as expressed by children in this study, and these experiences have become increasingly infringed on due to

physical, social, and organizational rules and boundaries (McNamara et al., 2018; Prompona et al., 2019). The decreased autonomy appears more acute for children experiencing disability and their play choices are often not valued within outdoor play spaces (Sterman et al., 2018).

Furthermore, "research examining the play experiences of children with disabilities and their families' suggests the marginalisation encountered in various play spaces is frequently reflective of their broader experiences in other settings (Atchison, 2003; Petrie & Polland, 1998; Shelley, 2002; Wooley, Armitage, Bishop, Curtis & Ginsborg, 2006)" (Jeanes & Magee, 2012, p. 194). In essence, the experiences shared relative to play structures at recess (e.g., hierarchies, inaccessible games), reflect broader narratives of disability as a marker of deficiency embedded within medical and charitable models that do not position people experiencing disability as equal partners (Azzairto, 2020; Withers, 2012). The play experiences of the children in this study similarly reinforce their positioning as other, rather than leader or partner.

Perceptions of adults' roles. When the children referred to teachers at recess it was in relation to supervision, rules, and managing conflict. Teacher involvement in recess has been cited by children as both positively influencing their levels of physical activity (e.g., support, engagement, and supervision), as well as creating barriers when teachers enforce their perspectives of safe play and rules (Massey et al., 2019). Whether children report welcoming teachers as a part of recess or feeling constrained by them, their "perceptions of teacher's role (e.g. facilitating, playing) may differ from an adult perspective (e.g. monitor, rule enforcer)" (Massey et al., 2019, p. 9). Jayda often referenced recess rules that did not allow her to participate in risky play. The balance between risk taking, encouraging children's independence, and, health and safety is an issue experienced by schools for all children (Woolley, Armitage, Bishop, Curtis, & Ginsborg, 2006). However, this concern is more significant for children

experiencing disability, as they experience greater discrimination due to perceived vulnerabilities (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010; Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013; Holt, 2007; Horton, 2017; Spencer et al., 2016; Woolley et al., 2006). Health and safety issues, which have been termed 'polite discrimination', restrict children experiencing disability from participating in play or leisure activities deemed too risky due to fears of getting dirty or hurt (Goodley & Runswick-Cole, 2010; Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013). "These 'polite discriminations', the framing of 'othering' as an altruistic act for the benefit for the segregated group, often disguise quite different, less palatable, and therefore largely unspoken reasons for exclusionary practices" (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013, p. 315). Spencer et al. (2016) examined teachers' rationalities of risk management in the school playground for children experiencing disability and found "that teachers often 'stepped-in' to prevent any potential harms before they emerged, suggesting a concern about what might happen or what children *might* do, rather than what they did do" (p. 309). These instances also occurred more often when children experiencing disability were interacting with other children than when they were playing by themselves. The result of this teacher intervention frequently led to children being removed from the play area or redirected (Spencer et al., 2016). Educators' valuing and expectations of children experiencing disability are reflected in their playground decision-making, limiting children experiencing disability's play capabilities (Sterman et al., 2018).

Caleb and Lyla both discussed the role of teacher supervision in managing conflict and requesting adult intervention. Lyla also discussed that when experiencing stigmatization or negative behaviors at recess (e.g., others not letting her join in or name calling), she could request adult intervention, however, she chose not to due to fears of not being believed or being held accountable for the problem. Some children experiencing disability do not request adult

support or intervention when experiencing social conflict due to similar perceptions – that they will be held responsible for it (Holt, 2007). A study conducted by Holt (2003) interviewed 20 teachers from two 'physically inclusive' primary schools in England to explore the re-production of discourses of inclusion and disability. Teachers' interpretations of inclusion were frequently dependent upon representations of disability, constructing disability as deviant or 'abnormal' and located within the individual child "rather than emphasising the role of disablist socio-spatial relations (c.f. Imrie, 1996)" (Holt, 2003, p. 125). There is a need to address the impact that educational-medical models of disability have on educational practices and formal policies, and therefore, the inclusion of children experiencing disability.

The context of recess has received little attention within school climate research (London, Westrich, Stokes-Guinan, & McLaughlin, 2015) and how it contributes to recess cultures which do not support meaningful and positive experiences for children (McNamara et al., 2015). The findings of this study also bring attention to the diversity of experiences children had with home room teachers, classmates, or friends versus other teachers and students in the school. For example, teachers or students who knew Lyla supported meeting her access needs or advocated for her, but this was not the case with individuals outside of her immediate circle. A relational perspective supports the need to address diversity and inclusion with the whole group (e.g., class, school) rather than educating on an excluded child (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013; Wohlwend, 2004). This shifts views of difference to existing in relation with others, and not located within an individual (Douglas et al., 2019). The relationships between students, and students and teachers, then becomes "the focus of concern, rather than the identification and remediation of atypicality" (Douglas et al., 2019, p. 14) – which is seen within an educational-medical model of disability (Holt, 2003) as discussed previously. Inclusive education then shifts from asking how

do we include children experiencing disability, to how do we build relationships between us (Douglas et al., 2019, p. 14). This moves us past educating students about a single individual and accommodating their needs to supporting all students in the development of the skills of self-reflection and empathy (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013). What is critical to this process, and in the creation of a recess culture that is inclusive and supports all, is offering opportunities and creating space for students, all students, to express their views and challenge the status quo (Messiou, 2019; Woolley et al., 2006). The students themselves should be central to this process. Relational or experiential models of disability have much to offer in the reconstruction of educational practices and policies that embrace rather than reject diversity.

How Do Peer Relationships Come Into Play?

They're a big deal. The opportunity to be with friends was a critical aspect of recess for the children in this study. Opportunities to be with and interact with peers is frequently cited by children throughout the recess literature (Knowles et al., 2013; McNamara et al., 2018; McNamara et al., 2015; Prompona et al., 2019), and this includes children experiencing disability (Graham et al., 2016; Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010). Social interaction with peers played a significant role in the children's valuing of recess and their experiences of belonging, acceptance and value. Connection with others is a need for all people (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005), however social interaction at recess is cited by children as both a positive and negative experience (Knowles et al., 2013; McNamara et al., 2018; Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010).

The children referred to seeing and playing with their friends as something they enjoyed about recess. Being asked to play or taking part in activities with others contributed to their enjoyment of activities and feeling a sense of belonging (Pawlowski et al., 2018; Prompona et

al., 2019; Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010). As was found by Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson (2010), the children associated feeling like a legitimate participant with inclusion. This was experienced through opportunities to provide support to their playmates, teach or show playmates something novel, or by making contributions to the games or activities. In addition to being asked to play or taking part in activities, the children also shared how being talked to or acknowledged by peers, such as a simple 'hello', contributed to positive feelings at recess. The children also held strong affirmative relationships with a few specific friends. When sharing stories, close friends were referred to by their first names versus 'other kids' or 'friends'. These close relationships were reciprocal, and provided moral and physical support, unconditional acceptance, and entry to play; for example, supporting access needs or feelings of true belonging through genuine invitations to play. Affirmative relationships that children construct, such as the friendships mentioned above, provide "space for recognition and empathy: for positive appreciations of difference" (Holt, 2007, p. 796).

Conversely, the children expressed a dislike for recess as a result of not having anyone to play with or being unable to play with others. Gaining entry to play is a critical aspect of feeling included for children experiencing disability (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010) and is linked to enjoyment of recess (Knowles et al., 2013). Feelings of exclusion shared by the children were attributed to being told they could not take part, behaviors of peers that were intentionally meant to exclude, and not being asked to play. For example, Caleb experienced sadness when seeing peers playing together and he wanted to take part or be included. It is known that children experience frustration and anger due to peer rejection and closed social groups (Wholwend, 2004). At times, the children in this study were unclear about why they could not gain entry to play. There appeared to be avoidance by their peers (e.g., "bad excuses"

or saying “just because”) which left the children feeling frustrated and confused. Additionally, there also appeared to be a lack of understanding about how to gain entry to play and other ways of taking part that did not place the responsibility on the child to be included. For example, Caleb discussed feeling too shy to ask people he wanted to play with if he could join.

Recess affords opportunities for interaction and engagement with peers within the entire school (e.g., different classes and/or grade levels). Lyla shared how she experienced stigmatization and exclusion by children in the school who did not know her. She expressed frustration due to people making assumptions about her without knowing her. Children experience a lack of inclusion when they are underestimated or treated differently (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010). In order to feel psychologically safe at recess, children need to feel accepted (McNamara et al., 2015). Holt (2007) argues that

> children are excluded or included into groups along a variety of axes of difference including age, gender, and, often, ethnicity. … [however] many mundane inclusions and exclusions are frequently not traceable to any evident lines of difference. Rather, who children choose (not) to play with is arguably underpinned by whether intersubjective relationships of recognition and empathy or disassociation (Bondi, 2003; Butler, 2004) are forged (p. 791).

A large majority of children are subject to exclusionary processes during play and recess for a variety of reasons, however, there remains a small minority of children who experience more frequent or total exclusion (Holt, 2007). The children’s experiences and perspectives demonstrate how relationships and social interactions with peers contributes significantly to experiences of inclusion/exclusion at recess.

Students need well-supported environments. Socio-cultural and contextual factors, such as school timetables and policies, limit students' opportunities for peer interaction and relationship building (Prompona et al., 2019). Students need well-supported opportunities to connect with peers during recess in order to develop "positive social competencies such as perspective taking, reciprocity, conflict resolution, emotional regulation, and compassion" (McNamara et al., 2015, p. 63). Support for pro-social skill development can contribute to a higher functioning recess (London et al., 2015) as children view playing as an opportunity to negotiate negative feelings and/or conflict resolution (Prompona et al., 2019).

The recess period presents unique challenges in supporting social relationships amongst peers. Adult intervention, such as initiation of activities or interactions, can comprise feelings of inclusion for children (Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010). Therefore, the socio-spatial and contextual factors of recess, including those beyond the formal period/space, are key considerations for fostering inclusion at recess. Given recess is largely constructed by children, efforts by adults to initiate social relationships between children within that space may not be perceived as genuine or are not sustainable. How to advocate for children's play and autonomy, in essence maintaining and promoting the unstructured, child-directed nature of recess, while at the same time providing support for all students is a significant challenge, particularly at recess. This reinforces the need to include students, as partners, throughout the process in order to find out what they value and what contributes to feelings of belonging and how this may be achieved.

Lyla discussed how she would like to see more opportunities within the school and curriculum to share alternative perspectives and engage in meaningful and critical discussions with peers. There is a need for a greater focus on the attributes of self-reflection and empathy in school curriculum (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013). By accepting different points of view as

invitations for reflection, space for mutual respect can occur (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). As discussed earlier, a relational or socially constructed view of inclusion/exclusion supports the need for intervention or reflection with the whole group (e.g., class, school) rather than an individual child (Wohlwend, 2004), as well as addressing the socio-spatial and contextual factors that influence inclusion at recess. A relational ethics lens can offer us guidance on how we might support students and staff in this endeavor.

What Remains Inaccessible?

Access is more than something to check off a list. Access is an opportunity to gift the best of ourselves to each other. Access for the sake of access is not necessarily revolutionary, but access for the sake of connection, justice, solidarity, love has the power to transform.

(Mia Mingus, 2019)

Within a social relational model understanding of disability it is important to acknowledge how social structures and embodied sensations are related to experiencing disability, and how this experience is unique for individuals. Accessibility is a broad concept that is often discussed within inclusion/exclusion narratives. This discussion theme, that asks after issues of accessibility, emphasizes the physical and organizational barriers that were demonstrated in the findings and in particular as it related to Lyla's recess experiences.

Physical barriers. "There appears to be no framework, even of an indicative nature, or guidelines for schools to work with, with respect to play – and access to or inclusion in play – for disabled children in primary school playgrounds" (Woolley et al., 2006, p. 312). Children experiencing disability have frequently cited structural barriers as contributing to exclusion in PE, play and leisure (Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000; Graham et al., 2016; Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013). Lyla discussed how she could not access spaces where her friends were playing or

hanging out due to physical barriers (e.g., no curb cuts), despite really wanting to be present in these spaces. Furthermore, Lyla experienced a lack of independence and freedom when participating in recess, as a result of these physical barriers. For example, because her scooter did not fit on the ramp to her classroom it had to be stored in a different space in the school. This space could only be accessed through an inaccessible door, meaning Lyla required someone to hold the door for her so that she could back her scooter in and out. How can we work towards dismantling societal perceptions, building relationship, and fostering inclusive spaces if people cannot access and be present in spaces? Addressing physical barriers is an important first step towards creating inclusive play spaces (Dunn & Moore, 2005; Jeanes & Magee) and supporting social interactions (Burke, 2013).

There is limited consideration of disability in the conceptualization of play and leisure spaces (Horton, 2017). Lyla spoke to the need for spaces to be designed with all people in mind. Accommodations are seen as an afterthought (Burke, 2013), whereas accessibility is considered in the creation of spaces with the genuine intention of wanting people there. Accommodations are often made after children experiencing disability are already using spaces (Burke, 2013) rather than considering the children in the design of the spaces. Accommodations can also contribute to stigmatization or the process of 'othering' (Burke, 2013) as was the case when the ramp was built to Lyla's classroom. Additionally, "creating separate playgrounds or purchasing special equipment for disabled children [can lead] to segregation" (Dunn & Moore, 2005, p. 344).

Universal Design (UD) is one way to engage in the creation of accessible spaces.

As a social movement, UD calls for recognition of and catering for human diversity in the design of environments and objects (Connell & Sandford, 1999; Imrie, 2004; Skulski,

> 2007). …the aim is to recognize human diversity and find ways for all people to access and use environments and objects in inclusive ways (Burke, 2013, p. 87).

This approach differs from conventional design which employs narrow and normative guidelines and is featured in most traditional play spaces (Burke, 2013).

Time. Another consideration associated with accessibility is how the concept of time intersects with the recess spaces and structures (physical, organizational, and environmental). Recess is a very short period of time within the school agenda – typically 10 to 15 minutes. Lyla's experience demonstrates how the inaccessible structures she had to navigate in order to participate in recess resulted in her having reduced time for recess. For example, the time required to access her scooter, cut into the already limited time she had for recess. This then resulted in her 'being late' for class, placing responsibility on her to leave early versus a need to change the inaccessible environment or the policies around time (e.g., bell schedules). The concept of time and its intersections with disability have been widely studied (see Baril, 2016; Dolmage, 2017; Kafer, 2013; St. Pierre, 2015). Within the current study, time was highly relevant to possibilities for inclusion and direct attention to key issues around valuing of recess for all students, accessible recess spaces and structures, and expectations of time. As was demonstrated in the findings, navigating inaccessible spaces encroached on the already limited time Lyla had for recess. Furthermore, spaces where her peers were playing or hanging out could only be accessed by her through alternative routes – which also encroached on the time – or were not accessible all together.

The findings showed that time also impacted peer relationships and opportunities to engage and connect, in essence, to feel included at recess. Ren & Langhout (2010) found that once games had begun, they were basically closed off and children who were late to recess or did

not start in games could not join. Similarly, Woolley et al. (2006) found "that it is important for children to be out in the playground at the beginning of play time because it is difficult to join in a game once it had started" (p. 313). Therefore, structures (e.g., rules about when you can leave for recess) partly influenced the extent to which a child could join in a game or play (p. 313). Woolley et al., (2006) identified this issue to be more significant amongst children experiencing disability due to routines (e.g., physiotherapy) that were scheduled for these times that differed from their peers, resulting in the children arriving to recess later than their peers. The recess time-space is "constrained or enabled by formal policy emanating within and beyond the school" (Holt, 2007, p. 792).

Another way to think about and address Lyla's recess experiences of 'being late', having to arrive early, or taking extra time to navigate inaccessible spaces, is through the concept of crip time (Kafer, 2013). As Margaret Price explained:

> Crip time is ex time not just expanded but exploded; it requires reimagining our notions of what can and should happen in time, or recognizing how expectations of "how long things take" are based on very particular minds and bodies. We can then understand the flexibility of crip time as being not only an accommodation to those who need "more" time but also, and perhaps especially, a challenge to normative and normalizing expectations of pace and scheduling. Rather than bend disabled bodies and minds to meet the clock, crip time bends the clock to meet disabled bodies and minds. (As cited in Kafer, 2013, p. 27).

Crip time "involves an awareness that disabled people need more time to accomplish something or to arrive somewhere" (Kafer, 2013, p. 26) and this can be a result of "abelist barriers over which one has little to no control" (p. 26). The notion of crip time (Kafer, 2013) can contribute

towards fostering more inclusive spaces by shifting responsibility to the abelist structures and expectations versus the children themselves.

Where to From Here?

the futures we imagine reveal the biases of the present

(Kafer, 2013, p. 28)

As adults invested in the lives of the children we work with and in our pursuit of a better future for them, are we at risk of assuming children experiencing disability look "forward to, and [struggle] for, a future where they can participate in the same ideal and normal state as 'the non-disabled' already are, supposedly, enjoying" (Smith, 2009, p. 19)? This question addresses two major themes woven throughout this study: (1) that in order to re-shape and/or create inclusive play spaces (social, cultural, physical) we need to deconstruct the current spaces, and (2) this can only be done by consulting and engaging with children experiencing disability as equal partners in this endeavor. "Enabling environments are created when people with disabilities are involved in the 'politics and decision making' to produce re-shaped space that can achieve socio-spatial inclusion" (Jeanes & Magee, 2012, p. 201).

Relational ethics as a lens for research and practice offers insight into engaging in this approach. Mutual respect requires a respecting and valuing of diversity, and this translates into an unconditional acceptance of everyone (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). It is not just by sharing spaces, but through encounters with others that we confront and transform our assumptions and prejudices about them (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013; Meininger, 2013) and begin to "understand the complex ways in which culture, race, class, and identities find expression in our lives" (Bergum & Doesstor, 2005, p. 86).

Greater attention to difference also brings more awareness to the inequalities that exist (Bergum & Doesstor, 2005); through perspective taking we might bring greater awareness to ableism and disablist practices. Embodied knowledge brings awareness to all those, including ourselves, within a relational space; it then becomes difficult to be immune to the effects our actions have on others (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). However, a focus on relationships not only draws attention to how we are different, but also to how we are the same (Bergum & Doesstor, 2005; Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013). Through the exploration of difference, we can begin to deconstruct the notion of the 'other' "to reveal the shared identity of being human" (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013, p. 320), and this exploration, when done together, fosters relational engagement (Bergum & Dossestor, 2005).

The intention of this study was to foster dialogue and reflexivity on the socio-spatial factors that influence experiences of belonging in recess and outdoor play so that we may work towards fostering inclusive spaces for all children.

Limitations

We acknowledge several limitations to the study. The authors themselves are not children, nor do they identify as experiencing disability. The research took place in one geographic location with a small sample size. However, the emphasis on uniqueness and particularization, not generalization, is a strength of case study (Stake, 1995). Lastly, experiences and perspectives of other individuals including teachers, school staff, parents and peers, who may influence the children's recess experience were not captured for the purposes of this study.

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Chapter Four: Reflecting on Methods

The year of courses, a lot of reading, writing and reflecting, and the final milestone, a committee meeting, have led to the pilot interview. I have thought through child-friendly methods, languages, and approaches. For years, I have worked with children in physical activity settings. I think to myself, *"I am prepared"*.

For the pilot interview, I approached someone I have a strong and established relationship with. Having experience building rapport with children, I was seeking an opportunity to explore the different data generation methods, but this would be the first time I would do 'research' with children.

The pilot interview was one of the first experiences – of many – throughout this process where I struggled with my own assumptions of what research 'should look like'; the Research Ethics Board application also very fresh in my mind.

I asked her, *"Would you be willing to do a pilot interview with me for my research study?"*. She reflected on this question, her 9 year old face making an inquisitive expression. I knew she was thinking hard about the question. After a moment she responded, *"Am I going to learn to fly a plane, or are you?"* (reflexive journal).

The most obvious teachable moment was my approach to the language and explanation of the pilot interview in a developmentally appropriate way. However, digging deeper into this experience with a critical friend[1] (Smith & McGannon, 2018), we unpacked a key question which became a theme throughout the research process and which continues to sit with me as I reflect on the study:

[1] Critical friend refers to someone whom with I engaged in reflexive conversations. This experience specifically being my supervisor, Dr. Nancy Spencer.

Who is the pilot flying the plane?

Me, the researcher?

Or the participants, the children?

The intention of this chapter is to share my experiences and perspectives in the creation and conducting of this research study. There is much, I would like to share; I had and still have much to learn. What follows are a few significant moments and learnings. I have many people – the children, my supervisor, academics – to thank for disrupting and challenging my thinking.

Coming to the Approaches that Informed this Work

The axiology within the interpretive and critical paradigms resonated with me and it was the values associated with these paradigms that brought me to graduate studies; I was curious and had much unlearning to do. "Axiology is the study of human values and our processes of valuation (Creswell, 1998; Hart, 1971)" (Peers, 2017, p. 2). Within a critical paradigm researchers

> tend to emphasize – or even celebrate – how research knowledges are co-constructed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) and often explicitly let their axiological commitments to influence their work, for example, by valuing marginalized voices; by arguing that dominant systems of power are bad, unjust, or wrong; and by embracing ethical obligations to challenge these injustices (Atkinson, 2011; Oliver, 1990)" (Peers, 2017, p. 4).

I waffled between several methodologies within the interpretivist paradigm. The methodology that informed this work had to centralize the children's voices, perspectives, and experiences: "People are at the heart of all social science inquiry" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

During my time crafting the research proposal, I was also taking classes, teaching, attending conferences, and working closely with my supervisor and in the community. I feel extremely privileged for these opportunities, and each brought rich learning that informed the approaches that followed. The approach to creating a research proposal takes time and I am grateful for a supervisor who supported and encouraged various ways of learning and knowing to inform this project. From these experiences, three turning points or learnings led to the guiding methodological and theoretical frameworks for this study.

First, in my adapted physical activity (APA) course, we were challenged to think deeply and critically about our field. This shed light on the privileged perspectives in APA and who is positioned as an expert. Children experiencing disability are experts in their own lives and research regarding issues that impact them should be conducted with them, not on them (Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000; Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson, 2010). Second, there are various forms of knowledge that are privileged within research and this largely connects to the former – privileged perspectives in APA. Embodied dimensions of knowing need to be equally valued. In order to actively work against the positions of power and privilege I hold, it was critical that I nurtured spaces that support relational approaches. This also meant being wakeful to stories. Lastly, as I began experiencing the formalistic boundaries within the research project I was creating, I experienced tensions. I reflected on Mary Shuster's experience with formalistic research texts:

> she sense[d] the extent to which her participants, whom she wishe[d] to honor in the research text, would become secondary figures cast in a demonstrative role of social inequality. …a great deal of tension in this because she wishes to both honor her participants and to critique social structures through backgrounding her participants'

> experiences by seeing them only as exemplars of formalistic categories. She needs to find a form to represent their storied lives in storied ways, not to represent storied lives as exemplars of formal categories" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 140).

This work was grounded in an experiential model of understanding disability (Peers et al., 2014). I did not wish to reduce the children's experiences to a single perspective. Rather, I wanted to recognize and explore the heterogeneity of children's lives and disability experiences. This led to pursuing a methodology that allows for the creation of "a research text that illuminate[s] the experiences not only of and for [children] but also of how the discourses of the social and theoretical contexts" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 124) shape experiences of inclusion in recess.

The Joy of Doing Research With Children and a Few – of Many – Things They Taught Me

Relationships: Empowerment, Empathy and Ethics

> *In narrative inquiry, inquirers must deepen the sense of what it means to live in relation in an ethical way …. Ethical considerations permeate narrative inquiries from start to finish: at the outset as ends-in-view are imagined, as inquirer-participant relationships unfold, and as participants are represented in research texts*
>
> (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 483)

Rapport building was a critical piece of this research for me. The children agreed to share their time and stories. I wanted to ensure that it was a positive experience for them and that they had influence and control over how the research unfolded. This is why I opted to request a meet and greet with each child before the data generation started. It was an opportunity to meet one

another, share a bit more about the research, provide opportunities for questions, and build rapport.

I also provided the families with an optional form (see Appendix F) where they could share additional information with me they thought would be important for me to know and helpful to the research process. For example likes and dislikes and what is helpful for communication**.** They could fill in as little or as much as they wished, and only me and my supervisor had access to it. This information parents and the children provided offered insights into how I might create a safe, welcoming, and positive research experience for each child. It also empowered the children to choose from the data generation methods, notifying me of which activities they enjoy. The questions and prompts on this form were designed with an emphasis on strength-based language and supporting access to appropriate information, in order to shape an inclusive research environment. The questions and prompts within the form were informed by conversations with parents of children experiencing disability and practitioners and researchers within inclusive education. Although this research was not conducted within a participatory paradigm, it still remained critical that the perspectives of the participants be captured and integrated into the development and delivery of the research approaches. It is the researcher "who should be *adaptive*, and not the person experiencing disability who should *adapt*" (Goodwin & Howe, 2016, p. 45).

The intention of the various data generation methods in this study was to make them accessible and fun for the children. Having various methods available offered choice for each child and was sensitive to the diversity of the children's ways of communicating and participating (Hodge & Runswick-Cole, 2013; Stafford, 2017). Additionally, I opted to have the children be in control of the audio recorder. The recorder was attached to a children's camera

strap that they could then wear. I showed them how they could tell if the recorder was on and they could hear their voices played back to them.

Asymmetries of power emerge in research. Before entering into the field, I reflected on questions such as how do we work to reduce or eliminate "metacommunicative norms", the researchers control over the content, length and scope of the interaction or interview (Briggs, 2007)? Briggs (2007) describes a critical political issue that was present in this study, in that the interaction is "saturated by images of social dynamics of the [interaction] itself, projections of the social context in which it takes place, the roles and power dynamics of interviewer and respondent" (p. 914). Recess takes place within the school context. When preparing research methods, I further reflected on specifics of this context. For example, what differentiates me, the researcher and an adult, from the others present within this context, such as school staff and parents? Are open-ended questions that seek experiential answers typically encountered in elementary school? Apart from social desirability, what other social dynamics exist within this context that may emerge in the study? How do I reduce their and my impact?

This reflection required bringing awareness to the power I possess, especially when working with children (Paley, 1986). Paley (1986) describes approaches to support this process: "As we seek to learn more about a child, we demonstrate the acts of observing, listening, questioning, and wondering. When we are curious about a child's words and our responses to those words, the child feels respected" (p. 127). I remained conscious of language use, appearance, body language, and how I interacted with the children in order to influence the balance of power in a positive way (Phelan & Kinsella, 2013). Though methodologically dialogical, I was aware that I, the interviewer, ultimately ask the interview questions and ensure the structure and progress of the conversations (Svendby, 2016). The use of in-situ guided tours

supported mitigating this. I also aimed to create a space for 'co-production' and encouraged the children to ask questions and bring up discussion topics, allowing the conversation to develop based on what was shared during the interview and our time together.

I revisited the child's decision to participate throughout the research process by making a conscious effort to become and remain attuned to the child's responses and behaviors in order to recognize when they may be uncomfortable with their participation, understanding "consent [assent in the case of children] as an on-going and relational concept rather than a one-off activity" (Warin, 2011 as cited in Phelan & Kinsella, 2013, p. 87). For example, there was a 'data generation session' that was not included in the study. During that session, the child and I instead opted to play, draw and explore the space we were in.

I experienced various emotions as I approached analysis and writing: "no *doubt*, there is panic, or at the very least, *considerable nervousness*" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 135), "*tension* as we turn inward to think about issues of voice and about *whether we can* capture and represent the shared stories of ourselves and our participants" (p. 139). I felt a strong urge to share verbatim what the children said. When this happened, I re-grounded myself in the paradigm, methodology, and purpose of the study. I had to 'own' the interpretive lens and recognize my influence in the research process – the questions asked, the methods offered, the relational, dialogical approach and therefore, the stories told. Through the process of co-composing research, I came to understand accountability in a different, possibly more personal, way. One example being my position and presence in the final research text. We, as researchers, cannot be bracketed out and therefore the research text is also a reflection of ourselves within the inquiry space. The research is not discovered, but created by participants and researchers (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

The Context

Data generation took place at least once at each child's outdoor recess space during after school hours. Upon reflection, I recognize how critical the context was. For example, it contributed to disrupting power hierarchies between me and the children. The recess spaces were child-identified spaces. This reinforced the children as the experts and knowledge keepers within these spaces. Furthermore, it provided rich opportunities for rapport building – how many researchers get to say they got to sit in the sun under a tree, swing on a swing, and chase storms as part of their research? Lastly, this context appeared to contribute to the children's comfortability. These were spaces familiar to them where they spend time on a regular basis.

As I had prepared alternative methods to the in-situ guided tour and photo taking (e.g., mind-mapping, Lego, drawing, etc.), I negotiated the second meeting space to be indoors. This resulted in two sessions being conducted at the University. This space, both its structures and norms, was not designed for children. As researchers, we must think critically about what research spaces are not only safe and welcoming, but also afford opportunities for children to express themselves in multiple ways.

I also experienced hesitations and moments of tension being in the children's outdoor recess space. I grappled with moments of uncertainty due to safety and risk of physical activities, while at the same time wanting the children to have freedom and choice (reflexive journal). I was also very aware of people in the space, such as other children using the park during after school hours. I thought to myself 'should we keep talking?' and 'what if someone overhears?' while also reflecting on whether these were my decisions to make (reflexive journal). I experienced tensions, such as the example above, around the ethics of care but also did not want to undermine the child-directed nature of the experience.

Be-ing Present

At the beginning of data generation, I struggled with my assumptions and expectations of what 'good' research looked like. As an example, I juxtapose my writing (expectations and assumptions) with my lived experience:

> *Before beginning the interview, the child will be given full disclosure about what the interview will entail. I will explain this in a developmentally appropriate way and ensure that they know they have a choice to participate and can withdraw at any time. I will then offer opportunities for the children to ask questions. The interview will be conducted in the form of an in-situ guided tour of the children's outdoor recess space. The children will guide me through their recess space, describing their experiences within that space.*

> *We arrived at her school and noticed the park was empty. She was excited to play. I could barely get the recorder on before she was off running towards the park. But I haven't finished going through what was going to take place and provide a prompt to begin conversation. When I caught up to her on the playground, she was hanging and swinging from the monkey bars. I watched as the tape recorder she was wearing also swung, hitting each bar as she went. I laughed to myself. I wondered what that was going to sound like when I listened back to the audio later* (adapted from reflexive journal & field notes)

Conducting data generation with the children reinforced the importance of relationship and the children's choice and comfortability throughout the process. I had the research tools and approaches prepared, but they did not have to follow a rigid formula or steps; they had to flex and adapt with each child and within each moment. For example, sometimes we talked about

what was going to take place in the car on the way to their school, sometimes it was while we played on park equipment. I came to recognize that being present and responsive to the children was conducting good research. Ultimately, Clandinin and Connelly (2000) state it candidly and beautifully when they write, “to do good research, one needs to be a good human being” (p. 17).

Normative values and assumptions underpin research approaches and this requires us to be reflexive and challenge the dominant approaches to knowledge generation (Teachman & Gibson, 2018). By not addressing these assumptions and without the ability to be creative, adapt and co-construct methods, we risk excluding or silencing some groups (Teachman & Gibson, 2018).

Chapter Five: Conclusion

As I write the title of this chapter and consider what might follow, I feel stuck. The word ‘conclusion’ feels like an untruth, not a question of truth, but conclusions imply endings and I know this is not an end. What I once viewed as a destination, I have now come to know as a journey – continuously evolving and learning – and, like inclusion, this work and my own learning are unfinished (Hausstätter, 2014). I have chosen to share here some of the hopes I have for how this study continues to live. This is described through impacts this process and work may have through contributions to the field and practice, in the lives of the children that participated, and in the ways I move forward in my work and life.

Research Impact Hopes

> *Parents are sharing experiences and stories of recess in their initial contact email and I perceive a desire for more positive recess experiences for their children. What will the impact of this study be?* (Reflexive journal)

The findings highlighted the significant role and impact others have in experiences of inclusion. Many practitioners express a preference for inclusion "but [claim] pragmatic barriers within the structure of schools" (Lyons, 2013, p. 244), demonstrating a gap between philosophical intentions, research, policy, and practice. Furthermore, within education there is a need for a view of "curriculum, pedagogy, and practice [as] a shared endeavor in which the voices of all participants, including students, are heard" (Petrie et al., 2018, p. 354). When I set out to conduct this study, my intention was that it would inform future practice and research. Critical to this aim was centralizing the experiences and perspectives of the main stakeholders, the children themselves, so that issues of importance and relevance to them, about inclusion and recess, would be foregrounded (Macbeth, 2010). Given the ideographic nature and small sample size, this study is not generalizable, however transferability is possible, in that readers may connect the knowledge and insights shared here to their own contexts, communities, and experiences (Wagstaff et al., 2014). Therefore, my hope is that this research text

> allows audiences to engage in resonant remembering as they lay their experiences alongside the inquiry experiences, to wonder alongside participants and researchers who were part of the inquiry. … These texts are intended to engage audiences to rethink and reimagine the ways in which they practice and the ways in which they relate to others (Clandinin, 2013, p. 51).

"An important appraisal of a research project is 'can it contribute to processes of change which improve people's lives?" (Macbeth, 2010, p. 483). This study has had a profound impact on my own assumptions and practice and has contributed to the completion of a master's degree. As I reflect on this overall process, I am aware of my own feelings of guilt regarding how much I have and will continue to receive from my engagement in this work and do not want this study to

serve “as a means to an end” (Dickson-Swift, James, Kippen, & Liamputtong, 2007, p. 343). This requires a commitment to knowledge mobilization and thinking deeply about my own reciprocity.

The children in this study were willing to share their perspectives and experiences. To ensure their voices are heard, I will share these findings with a wide audience. I intend to publish the study in an appropriate research journal and present at conferences whose audiences are well suited for the findings, for example, gatherings that draw delegates from school communities and organizations as well as leaders in education, active living, recreation, research, and policy. In addition, I intend to engage in dialogue and share the findings with community organizations whose work intersects with children’s outdoor play, school and recess. I hope this work will generate more thinking about inclusion and recess and that it will be taken up, among other works of a similar nature, by both scholars and practitioners, in the re-imagining of more inclusive spaces for all children to play.

This work and the process will continue to stay with me and inform the ways in which I work. For example, seeking creative, empathetic, and reflexive approaches and bringing self-awareness and a critical lens to the contextual nature of my work. I have become more wakeful to the importance of working with community, travelling alongside those we are in relation with, and keeping expertism in check (Goodwin, 2019). Accessibility and inclusion can only be achieved by consulting and engaging with community and those with lived experience as equal partners – their insights are pivotal. We are accountable to the communities with which we work and must actively engage and connect in spaces of encounter – relational spaces; travelling to other worlds with loving rather than arrogant perceptions:

there are “worlds” that we can travel to lovingly and traveling to them is part of loving at

> least some of their inhabitants. The reason why I think that traveling to someone's "world" is a way of identifying with them is because by traveling to their "world" we can understand *what it is to be them and what it is to be ourselves in their eyes* (Lugones, 1987, p. 17).

I truly hope that the children viewed their time as positive and fun, and that participating in this study was a meaningful experience. I am so incredibly grateful to have met them, to have learned from them, and to have explored the concept of inclusion and belonging with them.

Being nice

– Jayda

Making sure everyone has a part

– Lyla

It means two of you. Both of you

– Caleb

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Appendix A: Ethics Approval

Notification of Approval

Date:	December 18, 2018
Study ID:	Pro00084956
Principal Investigator:	Rebecca Rubuliak
Study Supervisor:	Nancy Spencer-Cavaliere
Study Title:	Inclusion in recess understood from the perspectives of children experiencing disability
Approval Expiry Date:	Tuesday, December 17, 2019[1]

Approved Consent Form:	Approval Date	Approved Document
	12/18/2018	Participant Demographics Form.pdf
	12/18/2018	Information Letter.pdf

Sponsor/Funding Agency: NSERC - Natural Sciences And Engineering Research Council

Thank you for submitting the above study to the Research Ethics Board 1. Your application has received a delegated review and been approved on behalf of the committee.

A renewal report must be submitted next year prior to the expiry of this approval if your study still requires ethics approval. If you do not renew on or before the renewal expiry date, you will have to resubmit an ethics application.

Approval by the Research Ethics Board does not encompass authorization to access the staff, students, facilities or resources of local institutions for the purposes of the research.

Sincerely,

Anne Malena, PhD.
Chair, Research Ethics Board 1

Note: This correspondence includes an electronic signature (validation and approval via an online system).

[1] Renewal approved November 1, 2019. Expiry date: October 30, 2020

Appendix B: Children Information Letter

Information Letter

Title of Study: Kids at Recess

Researcher: Rebecca Rubuliak, MA Student 780-953-6787
rrubulia@ualberta.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Nancy Spencer-Cavaliere 780-492-9615
ncavalie@ualberta.ca

My name is Rebecca. I am finding out what it is like for kids to go for recess. This letter tells you what will happen if you choose to help. You do not have to help if you don't want to.

You and I will spend time together, get to know one another and have conversations. I will ask you questions like what do you really like about recess and what do you do at recess? I will ask you to tell me stories about recess. I can tell you some of my stories too if you'd like. I will record your voice on a tape or with my phone when we are talking to each other, but you can ask me to turn it off.

If you'd like to we can also draw pictures. We can go to your school and you can show me where you go for recess. We can take pictures with a camera. All this information will help me write a report that may help make recess better for other kids.

You do not have to do this if you don't want to. It is up to you. No one will be upset if you don't want to do these activities. If you join the study, you can change your mind and stop being part of it at any time. All you have to do is tell me or

your parents. It's okay, I won't be upset and your parents won't be upset. If you don't understand anything you can just ask me what I am doing or saying. No part of this study will hurt in any way. If you get tired, we can take breaks or stop at any time.

I won't use your real name when I write my report. I would like to show your drawings and pictures in my report. You will get to take the originals home. Everything you say, your drawings, and the pictures you take will be kept safely locked up. What we talk about is just between you and me. Except that if I learn that something is happening to you that isn't okay, I have to tell someone.

Sharing your stories with us may help make recess better for other kids. You will help people like your teachers and school staff understand what recess is like for you and they can help more kids have fun at recess.

You get to keep a copy of this letter. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can call me or have your parents call me at (780) 953-6787 or you can send me an email at rrubulia@ualberta.ca.

Rebecca Rubuliak

Letter that Gives My Permission

- I understand what Rebecca is asking me to do.
- I am okay to talk to Rebecca about recess, school, and people at school.
- I am okay if Rebecca records my voice when I talk to her.
- I understand that Rebecca won't use my real name when she writes the report.
- My pictures and drawings get to be in the report.
- If I don't want to do this I don't have to.
- I can stop doing this at any time if I want to.
- It's okay not to answer questions.

☐ ☺ Yes, I will be in this research study. ☐ ☹ No, I do not want to do this.

Child's name	Sticker	Date

Person obtaining assent	Signature	Date

Appendix C: Information Letter

Pat Austin Adapted Physical Activity Lab
Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation
3-149 Van Vilet Complex, University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2H9

Information Letter

Study Title: Kids at Recess

Research Investigator
Rebecca Rubuliak, MA Student
3-149 Van Vilet Complex
Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport,
and Recreation
University of Alberta
rrubulia@ualberta.ca
(780) 953-6787

Research Supervisor
Nancy Spencer-Cavaliere, PhD
3-415 Van Vilet Complex
Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport,
and Recreation
University of Alberta
ncavalie@ualberta.ca
(780) 492-9615

Background

Your child is invited to participate in a research study because of their experience in recess. Their stories, perspectives, and experiences are of great interest and importance to learn more about recess and inclusion.

We would like to hear your child's stories if:

- They are identified as experiencing disability
- Are willing to share their experiences around recess
- Have sufficient English language comprehension skills
- Attend an integrated school
- Are in grades 4 to 6
- Are able to commit a minimum 3 hours of time

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the perspectives of children experiencing disability. Specifically, their experiences of inclusion and/or exclusion from recess. This study will support Rebecca Rubuliak in completing a master's degree under the supervision of Dr. Nancy Spencer-Cavaliere.

Study Procedures

Should your child agree to participate in this study, the following will be completed:

- Participant information form (approximately 10-15 minutes)
- Meet and greet (minimum 10-15 minutes)

- A one-on-one interview (approximately 45-60 minutes)
- Opportunity to provide feedback on the preliminary themes

Additional, but optional, participation includes:

- Drawing activity
- Photo taking activity
- Mind mapping activity with the photographs taken
- Follow up interview(s)

All study procedures can be modified to meet your child's communication preferences and style.

The total minimum time commitment for this study is approximately 3 hours. The meet and greet will take place at a location most comfortable for you and your child. Interviews will be booked at a mutually convenient time. The interview questions will ask your child to reflect upon their experiences in recess and school. The location of at least one interview will be outside your child's school. Each interview will be audio-recorded and typed-out verbatim. The transcripts will be returned to you for review.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to participating in this this study. However, the interviews will provide your child an opportunity to share their stories regarding recess and inclusion. Their stories may contribute knowledge to developing strategies for inclusion in recess. Their stories will contribute to the education of professionals, academics and students.

Risks

There are no physical risks to being involved in this study. Your child may become emotionally or mentally fatigued during the interview. They can refuse to answer any questions they are asked. We will direct you to an appropriate community organization or counselling service if your child would like to discuss further the topics raised. There may be risks to being involved in this study that are not known to us. If we learn anything during the research that may affect your child's willingness to continue in the study, we will tell you right away.

Confidentiality

All efforts will be made to maintain the anonymity of your child throughout the research process. Your child will not be identified in any research presentations or publications. Your child will choose a pseudonym. All audio recordings, transcripts, and related documents will be stored electronically on a password protected device. This device will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in a secured office. Only the researcher, her supervisor, and the Research Ethics Committee will have access to the information.

We will present the research findings at a conference and we intend to publish the study in a research journal. Direct quotations may be used. We would also like to incorporate any materials

your child creates into the presentations. No photographs with your child in them will be used. All original photographs, drawings, and mind maps will be returned to your child to keep. We will make every effort possible to protect your child's identity and privacy.

Voluntary Participation

Your child is under no obligation to participate in this study. Their participation is voluntary. They can refuse to answer any questions. They can refuse to participate in any activities. They can ask for the audio recorder to be turned off at any time. We will obtain your child's assent before beginning the interview.

Freedom to Withdraw

Your child can withdraw at any time during data collection and up to one week following when the preliminary themes are sent to you. There will be no penalty of any kind. If your child withdraws prior to the one-week deadline, all data associated with your child will be removed from the study and destroyed. If your child wishes to withdraw, contact Rebecca Rubuliak or Dr. Nancy Spencer-Cavaliere by telephone, email or in person.

Questions or Concerns?

If you have any further questions regarding this study do not hesitate to contact Rebecca Rubuliak (780-953-6787, rrubulia@ualberta.ca) or Dr. Nancy Spencer-Cavaliere (780-492-9615, ncavalie@ualberta.ca).

The plan for this study has been reviewed by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. If you have questions about your rights or how research should be conducted, you can call 780-492-2615. This office is independent of the researchers.

Consent Statement

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to have my child participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form. I will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

_____
Participant/Child's Name (printed)

_____ _____
Legal Guardian's Name (printed) and Signature Date

_____ _____
Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

Appendix D: Interview Guide

Interview Guide

This interview guide was adopted from Spencer-Cavaliere & Watkinson (2010) and Watkinson, Dwyer, & Nielsen (2005).

Research purpose: Explore children experiencing disability's experiences of inclusion in recess.

Pre-Interview:
Explain:

- the purpose of the interview and the activities to be done during the interview. Show how audio/written recording will be conducted and why
- that they can stop the interview or activities at any time
- that there is no right or wrong answer. Acknowledge the child as an expert on their recess experiences.

Ask if they have any questions or concerns and if they want to do the interview.

Begin rapport building by engaging in conversation around school, recess, and/or their day.

Begin with asking them to show me where they go for recess.

Semi-structured Interview: *as the initial interview is an in-situ guided tour, which will be primarily child-directed, the order of the following questions may change and questions that are not addressed during the tour will be asked in follow-up interviews and conversations.*

<u>Explore the child's personal experiences at recess</u>

1. **Can you tell me about recess?**
   Prompt: What kinds of things do you do at recess? Where do you have recess?

2. **What do you really like about recess? What don't you like about recess?**
   Prompt: How do you feel about recess? What makes you happy at recess? What makes you sad? What makes you in between happy and sad?

3. **What kinds of things happen right before going out for recess? What is like to get ready for recess? Does somebody help you? What happens when it is time to go**

inside after recess?

Prompt: How do you get ready to go out for recess? What happens when recess is over?

Explore social relationships in these experiences

4. **Who else goes out for recess with you?**

   Prompt: What do you do with them?

Explore inclusion and/or exclusion at recess

5. **What does it mean to be included?**

   Prompt: Tell me what you think included means? Can you think of reasons why kids would/wouldn't be included?

6. **What kinds of things do you think make kids feel included/not included in recess?**

7. **Think about a time when you felt included/not included in recess. Can you tell me about it?**

   Prompt: How do you feel when you are included/not included? OR How do you think kids feel when they are included/not included?

The following probing questions will be used to gain clarification and more detail and depth to the children's responses: *Why? How? Can you tell me more about that? How did you feel?*

Appendix E: Participant Demographics Form

Pat Austin Adapted Physical Activity Lab
Faculty of Kinesiology, Sport, and Recreation
3-149 Van Vilet Complex, University of Alberta
Edmonton, AB T6G 2H9

Participant Information Form

Please take a moment to fill in the participant information form. All information collected will support the research outlined in the information letter and will only be seen by the researcher, Rebecca Rubuliak, and her supervisor, Dr. Nancy Spencer-Cavaliere. If you are not comfortable answering any of the questions leave them blank.

Date: _____

Contact Information:

Your Name:

_____

Email:

_____

Phone:

_____

Preferred contact method: [ ] Email [ ] Phone [ ] Other, please list _____

What is the best time/day to reach you: _____

Participant (Child) Profile:

Name: _____

Age: _____ Grade: _____

Gender: _____

Should you feel comfortable sharing, does your child experience disability? *(Circle)* Yes / No

If yes, would you mind providing a description?: _____

_____

School History:

What school does your child currently attend?: _____

How long has your child been attending their current school? _____

Beginning with kindergarten, please list any additional schools your child has attended: _____

_____

_____

Were all the schools integrated or inclusive: *(circle)* Yes / No

If no, please list which schools were not: _____

_____

Did all the schools provide recess: *(circle)* Yes / No

If no, please list which schools did not: _____

_____

Experience(s) in Recess:

Please list how many times a day your child attends recess? How long is each recess break?

_____

_____

Please list all the places your child participates in recess (i.e. *outdoors:* playground, field, etc., *indoors:* gymnasium, classroom, etc.)

_____

_____

_____

Appendix F: All About Me Sheet

Please take a moment to fill in this 'All About Me' sheet. The information you provide will support me in ensuring a positive experience for your child during our time together and will only be seen by me and my supervisor, Dr. Nancy Spencer. You do not need to provide an answer for each prompt; fill in as much or as little you feel is necessary. Thank you!

Hello! My name is and here's a bit of information about me:

I like:

I don't like:

I enjoy:

Taking photos	**YES / NO**
Arts & crafts	**YES / NO**
Drawing	**YES / NO**
The outdoors	**YES / NO**
Building with Lego	**YES / NO**

How I interact and communicate with the world:

When communicating with me it is very helpful when you:

Other things I want you to know…