



vlaamse dienst
speelpleinwerk

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PLAYING A LA CARTE IN AN OPEN SYSTEM

IPA GLASGOW 2023

SPEAKERS OF THE DAY









- ✓ Unique form of **youthwork**
- ✓ By and for young people
 - ✓ Children (4 – 24 years old)
 - ✓ Youngsters (5 – 30 years old)
- ✓ Flemish Playground Service
(NGO)
 - ✓ Inform and support all playgrounds in
Flanders and Brussels
- ✓ 628 playgrounds (2021)
- ✓ 39.000 animators

ANIMATED PLAYGROUND

ANIMATED PLAYGROUNDS

COMMON	DIVERSITY
Playing is the main goal	Organising party (communal; private, school...)
Children as the target audience	Participants (toddlers, teens, children with handicaps...)
Young people carry out the playing system and are involved in shaping it	Animator statute
Participants choose how long they participate	Playing system (open, closed, mixed form...)
Active in holidays, mostly without sleeping over	...

NOT JUST PLAYING ON THE PLAYGROUND

- ✓ It's a system, it's organised
 - ✓ Creating a variety of different games and choices
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- ✓ Youth workers prepare all activities
 - ✓ Not a unique system, all playgrounds are different in their best possibility



FREEDOM OF CHOICE

- ✓ How many activities does your playground offer?
- ✓ What kind of activities are there?
- ✓ Can children choose between different activities?



The choice between organized
play and spontaneous play at
any time



Obligated to follow the (only)
activity of the group

DIFFERENT ROLES OF AN ANIMATOR :

- ✓ LEFT: dress up, change roles, start a game or just play along and trigger/excite the game with all kinds of stimuli
- ✓ RIGHT: prepare a game well upfront (theme, clothing, surroundings, decor ...) but leave gaps open for inspiration from children

(IMPULSES: see also our playbreak thursday)



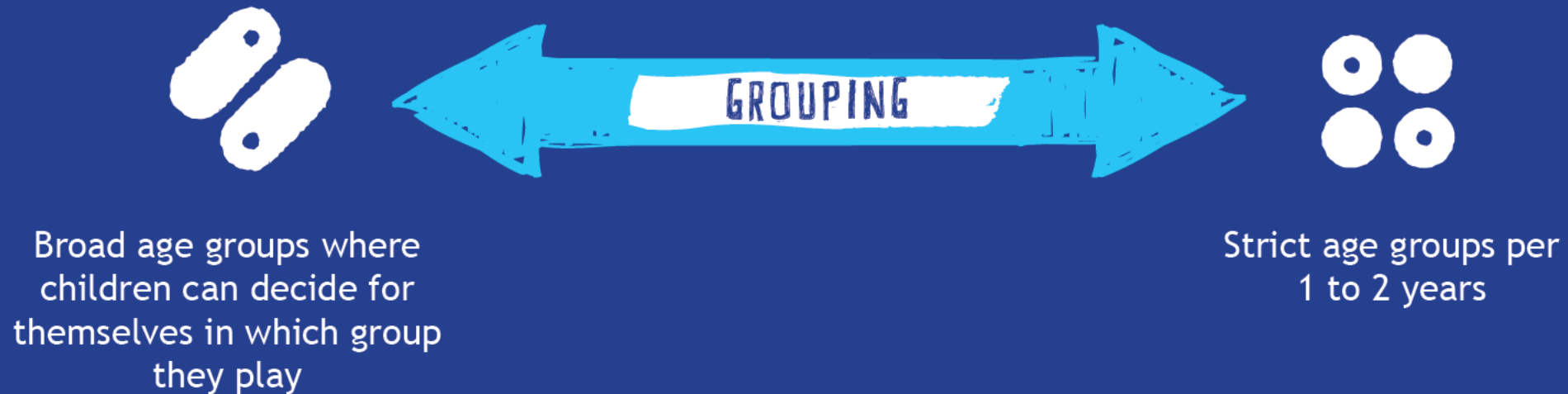
The choice between organized play and spontaneous play at any time



Obliged to follow the (only) activity of the group

GROUPING:

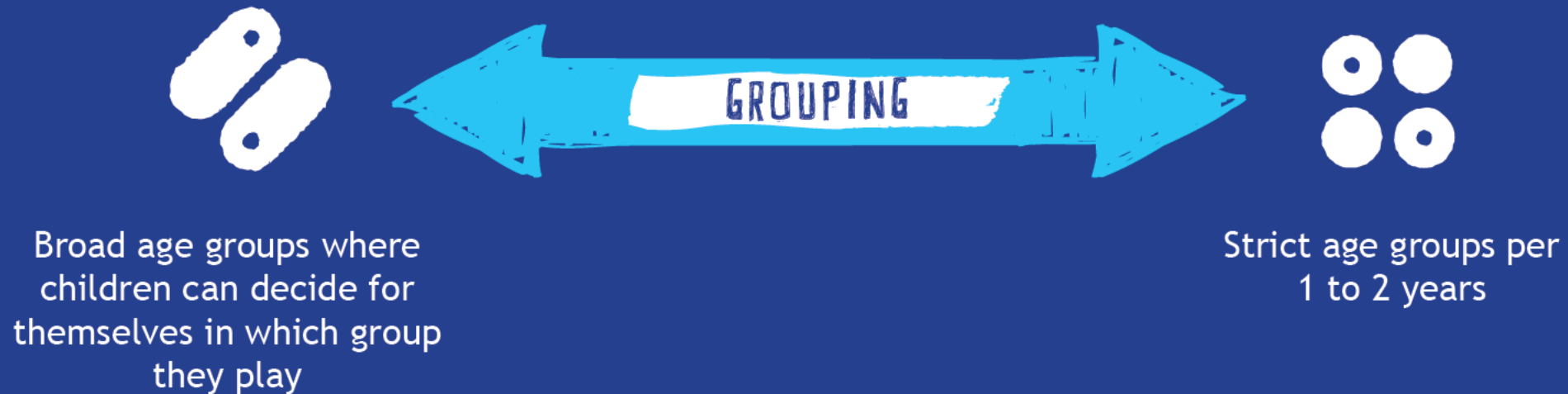
- ✓ (How) do you group children?
- ✓ Mostly by age; what age groups?
- ✓ Can children choose in what group they would like to play?
- ✓ Can children switch between groups?



GROUPING:

Groups or no groups at all:

- ✓ LEFT: children can choose where, how ✓ and with whom they play -> more comfort for children
- RIGHT: children play with their 'equals', focus on connection within groups



DAILY SCHEDULE:

- ✓ When is the playground open/accessible? Can children come and go?
- ✓ Is there a daily timetable?
- ✓ Does the timetable change on a daily/weekly/monthly basis?
- ✓ How fixed are the time blocks during the day?



Large blocks with clear start
and end points



Strict time division
in short blocks

DAILY SCHEDULE:

Different time expectations:

- ✓ LEFT: Only a few important time stamps. Opening, lunch, afternoon snack, small play, cleaning time, closing time ...
- ✓ RIGHT: Delineated time blocks. From then until then you can do this or that



Large blocks with clear start
and end points



Strict time division
in short blocks

OPEN PLAY OFFER

The choice between organized play and spontaneous play at any time



FREEDOM OF CHOICE

CLOSED PLAY OFFER

Obligated to follow the (only) activity of the group



Broad age groups where children can decide for themselves in which group they play



GROUPING



Strict age groups per 1 to 2 years

Large blocks with clear start and end points



DAILY SCHEDULE



Strict time division in short blocks

- ✓ **Open** play offer versus **closed** play offer
- ✓ 99,99% is grey zone
- ✓ Experiments with **all 3 parameters**
- ✓ Both systems work, but **variety and choice** are important. Not all children have the same interests
- ✓ **Role of the animator** is a big part of the key to successful game

MIX AND MATCH



FLEMISH PLAYGROUND SERVICE

www.speelplein.net

vdsinfo@speelplein.net

015 / 28 73 90

#VDSVZW

