



## EXPLORING THE ROLE OF MOTOR PLAY IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S QUALITY OF LIFE: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

**Spyridon Vrakas<sup>i</sup>**

Physical Education Teacher (MSc),  
Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports,  
Greece

### Abstract:

This study examines preschool teachers' perceptions of the role of motor play in enhancing preschool children's quality of life within public preschool settings in Greece. Motor play is widely recognized as a core component of early childhood education, supporting children's physical activity, emotional expression, social interaction, and holistic development. Although numerous studies have highlighted the developmental and health-related benefits of play, less attention has been given to how teachers themselves perceive the contribution of motor play to children's everyday well-being and quality of life. To address this gap, the present study adopts a qualitative approach focused on educators' perspectives. The research was conducted in public preschools in Thessaloniki, Greece, the second-largest city in the country. A purposive sample of ten female preschool teachers aged between 45 and 55 years participated in the study. Data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of five open-ended questions designed to capture teachers' views, experiences, and reflections on motor play and its role in children's physical, emotional, and social well-being. Participation was voluntary, and ethical principles of informed consent and anonymity were observed. The qualitative data were analyzed using inductive qualitative content analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes. The findings showed that teachers consistently viewed motor play as a powerful source of emotional well-being and joy, enabling children to express emotions, release tension, and experience pleasure in their daily preschool life. Motor play was also perceived as a key context for social interaction and inclusion, particularly for children who may experience difficulties in verbal communication or participation in more structured activities. In addition, teachers emphasized that movement-based play supports children's self-regulation, self-confidence, and overall development. At the same time, participants identified important barriers to the systematic integration of motor play, including limited time, insufficient space and equipment, heightened safety concerns, and increasing curricular demands. These constraints create tension between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and institutional realities. Overall, the study highlights the

<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [spvrakas@yahoo.gr](mailto:spvrakas@yahoo.gr), [spvrakas@gmail.com](mailto:spvrakas@gmail.com)

importance of aligning educational policy and preschool practices with the pedagogical value of motor play in order to promote young children's quality of life.

**Keywords:** early childhood education; motor play; preschool teachers; quality of life; well-being

## 1. Introduction

Motor play is widely recognized as a fundamental component of early childhood education and a primary context through which young children explore their physical and social environments. Through movement-based play, children actively construct knowledge, express emotions, and develop essential cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills (Bae, 2009; Isenberg *et al.*, 2002; Pramling Samuelsson *et al.*, 2006). During the preschool years, play constitutes the dominant mode of learning, as it enables children to engage with their surroundings in meaningful, self-motivated, and developmentally appropriate ways (Bodrova *et al.*, 2003; Duncan *et al.*, 2003).

A substantial body of international research highlights the positive contribution of motor play to children's overall quality of life. Engagement in movement-based play activities has been associated with improved physical health, emotional well-being, and social competence, while also supporting the development of self-confidence, cooperation, and problem-solving skills (Ginsburg *et al.*, 2007; Gray, 2011; Kumar *et al.*, 2022). Through motor play, children experience joy, reduce stress, and learn to regulate emotions such as frustration, excitement, and disappointment—processes that are closely linked to their subjective sense of well-being and quality of life (Burr *et al.*, 2019; Goldstein, 2012).

Despite these well-documented benefits, opportunities for motor play appear to be increasingly constrained in contemporary preschool settings. Structural factors, including limited indoor and outdoor play spaces, insufficient material resources, and heightened adult concerns regarding children's safety, often restrict children's freedom to engage in spontaneous movement-based play (McFarland *et al.*, 2018; Woolley *et al.*, 2013). At the same time, educational policies and curricular reforms in many countries have shifted the focus of early childhood education toward academically oriented outcomes, emphasizing early literacy, numeracy, and assessment-driven practices, sometimes at the expense of play-based learning (Miller *et al.*, 2009; Nicolopoulou, 2010). In parallel, broader societal changes have further contributed to the reduction of motor play in children's daily lives. The rapid expansion of digital technologies and the increasing prevalence of screen-based activities among young children have been associated with more sedentary behaviors and reduced participation in physical and social play (Levin *et al.*, 2001; Tambalis *et al.*, 2018). Although digital media may offer educational opportunities when used in developmentally appropriate ways, excessive screen time has been linked to fewer embodied learning experiences, potentially affecting

children's physical activity, social interaction, and overall quality of life (Masaeli *et al.*, 2021; Wiederhold, 2020).

Within this context, preschool teachers play a pivotal role in shaping children's everyday experiences of motor play. Teachers' beliefs, pedagogical practices, and interpretations of curricular frameworks directly influence the extent to which movement-based activities are integrated into daily classroom routines (Azlina *et al.*, 2012; Ashiabi, 2007). Moreover, educators are uniquely positioned to observe children's responses to motor play and to identify both its developmental benefits and the constraints associated with its implementation. While a growing body of research has documented the developmental value of play, fewer studies have examined teachers' perspectives on the contribution of motor play to preschool children's quality of life, particularly through qualitative approaches that capture educators' lived experiences and professional judgments (Goodley *et al.*, 2010; Hyvönen, 2011).

Addressing this gap, the present study explores the role of motor play in preschool children's quality of life as perceived by preschool teachers. Using a qualitative research design, the study seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of how educators conceptualize the value of motor play, the ways in which it supports children's well-being, and the factors that facilitate or hinder its systematic integration into preschool practice. The study is guided by the following research questions: a) How do preschool teachers perceive the contribution of motor play to preschool children's quality of life? b) What factors do teachers identify as influencing the implementation of motor play in early childhood education?

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Motor Play and Physical Activity in Early Childhood Development

Motor play and physical activity are core components of early childhood development, providing young children with opportunities to engage with their environment through movement, exploration, and embodied learning. Developmental theories emphasize that play, particularly movement-based play, supports the integration of physical, cognitive, emotional, and social domains, thereby fostering holistic development during the preschool years (Caldwell *et al.*, 2011; Lillard *et al.*, 2011). Through motor play, children acquire fundamental movement skills, body awareness, coordination, and balance, which form the foundation for later physical competence and lifelong participation in physical activity (Timmons *et al.*, 2007).

Empirical evidence further indicates that regular participation in physical activity during early childhood is associated with substantial biological and psychosocial benefits. Timmons *et al.* (2007) emphasize that preschool children require frequent opportunities for diverse and developmentally appropriate physical activity to support healthy growth, motor skill development, and psychosocial well-being. When motor play is varied, enjoyable, and child-initiated, it not only promotes physical health but also contributes to attention, executive functioning, and adaptive behavior.

Movement-based play experiences also provide important contexts for cognitive and symbolic development. Pretend and imaginative play, which are often intertwined with motor activity, support higher-order cognitive processes such as planning, self-regulation, and perspective-taking (Lillard *et al.*, 2011). These findings highlight the pedagogical value of motor play as a meaningful learning process rather than a peripheral or purely recreational activity within early childhood education.

## **2.2 Motor Play, Well-being, and Quality of Life in Childhood**

Quality of life and well-being in childhood are multidimensional constructs that encompass physical health, emotional balance, social relationships, and subjective experiences of happiness and satisfaction. Play and recreation have consistently been identified as central contributors to children's well-being and overall quality of life (Caldwell *et al.*, 2011; Kumar *et al.*, 2022). Movement-based play, in particular, allows children to experience joy, autonomy, and competence, which are key elements of psychological well-being.

Research indicates that engagement in motor play supports emotional regulation, reduces stress, and enhances positive affect in young children (Kumar *et al.*, 2022). Through active play, children develop self-confidence, resilience, and a sense of agency, while also strengthening peer relationships and social inclusion. In contrast, limited opportunities for play and physical activity have been associated with increased emotional difficulties, reduced social competence, and lower levels of well-being (Miller *et al.*, 2009).

From a broader public health perspective, play spaces and opportunities for physical activity are closely linked to health, happiness, and well-being across the lifespan. Kumar *et al.* (2022) emphasize that access to safe and stimulating play environments is a fundamental determinant of children's quality of life, particularly in early childhood, when play constitutes the primary mode of interaction with the world. These findings highlight the importance of viewing motor play not only as a developmental necessity but also as a key contributor to children's rights, health, and overall well-being.

## **2.3 Contemporary Challenges and Transformations of Play in Preschool Education**

Despite strong evidence supporting the benefits of motor play, contemporary preschool education faces increasing challenges that limit children's opportunities for movement-based play. One of the most significant concerns relates to the growing academic pressure placed on early childhood education. Miller and Almon (2009) describe a "crisis in kindergarten," characterized by the gradual replacement of play-based learning with academically driven practices, scripted curricula, and standardized expectations. This shift often results in reduced time for free play and physical activity, even in educational contexts traditionally associated with holistic and child-centered approaches.

Environmental and institutional constraints further exacerbate this issue. Limited access to appropriate indoor and outdoor play spaces, insufficient equipment, and

heightened concerns regarding safety and risk management can restrict children's engagement in spontaneous and physically challenging play. Such limitations may inadvertently undermine children's opportunities to develop autonomy, risk-assessment skills, and resilience, which are essential components of well-being.

Technological developments represent an additional dimension of change in children's play experiences. While digital media and video-based tools have been shown to support the development of basic movement skills when used in structured and pedagogically guided ways (Mohammad *et al.*, 2023), excessive screen time has also been associated with more sedentary behaviors and reduced participation in physical and social play. The challenge for early childhood education therefore lies in balancing the educational potential of digital tools with the need to preserve rich, embodied, and socially interactive motor play experiences.

## **2.4 Inclusion, Participation, and the Role of Educators**

Motor play plays a critical role in promoting inclusion and participation in preschool settings, particularly for children with disabilities or diverse developmental needs. Research by Brossman *et al.* (2023) shows that collaborative, participation-based approaches can effectively support preschool children's engagement in physical recreation activities, thereby enhancing both participation and social inclusion. Such approaches emphasize teamwork among educators, therapists, and families, highlighting the importance of shared responsibility in creating meaningful and accessible play opportunities.

Within this context, preschool teachers emerge as key agents in shaping children's everyday experiences of motor play. Teachers' beliefs about play, interpretations of curricular frameworks, and pedagogical priorities directly influence whether movement-based activities are systematically integrated into daily practice. Educators are also uniquely positioned to observe children's responses to motor play and to recognize its impact on well-being, social interaction, and overall quality of life.

Despite the extensive literature on the developmental and health-related benefits of motor play, relatively few studies have focused explicitly on preschool teachers' perspectives regarding its contribution to children's quality of life. Qualitative research is particularly well suited to addressing this gap, as it enables an in-depth exploration of educators' experiences, beliefs, and perceived barriers and facilitators within real educational contexts. Understanding teachers' perspectives is therefore essential for informing educational policy, curriculum design, and professional practice aimed at safeguarding children's right to play and promoting their overall well-being.

## **3. Material and Methods**

### **3.1 Research Design**

The present study adopted a qualitative research design to explore preschool teachers' perceptions of the role of motor play in children's quality of life. Qualitative methodology

is particularly appropriate for examining beliefs, experiences, and professional perspectives, as it allows participants to articulate their views in depth and provides rich, contextually grounded data. Given the exploratory nature of the study and its focus on educators' interpretations and everyday practices, a qualitative approach was considered the most suitable methodological choice.

The study was conducted within the context of the Greek public preschool education system, which operates under a nationally defined curriculum framework and emphasizes holistic, play-based approaches to early childhood education.

### **3.2 Participants**

The study involved a purposive sample of ten preschool teachers working in public preschools in Thessaloniki, Greece. All participants were female and ranged in age from 45 to 55 years. Thessaloniki is the second-largest city in Greece and represents a major urban educational context. The participants were employed in public preschool settings within the Greek educational system and were selected based on their professional experience in early childhood education and their active involvement in the planning and implementation of play-based activities.

The size and composition of the sample are consistent with qualitative research practices, which prioritize depth and richness of understanding rather than statistical representativeness. Accordingly, the aim of the study was not to generalize the findings to a broader population but to identify shared patterns, perceptions, and experiences among practicing preschool teachers.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

Data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of five open-ended questions. The instrument was designed to capture preschool teachers' views, experiences, and reflections regarding motor play and its contribution to children's quality of life in the preschool setting. The questions addressed key thematic areas, including the perceived benefits of motor play, its role in children's physical, emotional, and social development, and factors that facilitate or hinder its integration into everyday educational practice.

The questionnaire was developed to enable participants to express their perspectives in their own words, allowing for the collection of rich qualitative data. Its content was informed by the study's theoretical framework and relevant literature on play, motor development, and early childhood education, ensuring conceptual coherence between the research aims, the data collection instrument, and the broader focus of the study. A summary of the questionnaire items is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Open-ended questionnaire used in the study

Question No.	Question
Q1	How do you encourage children to participate in motor play activities?
Q2	Which motor play games/activities do you most commonly use?
Q3	How does the availability of psychomotor equipment influence motor play in preschool?
Q4	What benefits do you believe motor play activities offer for children's psychosocial development?
Q5	Do you think that the current national preschool curriculum adequately promotes motor play in preschool education?

The questionnaire was administered to ten preschool teachers working in public preschool settings in Thessaloniki, Greece. Participation was voluntary, and all participants provided informed consent prior to completing the questionnaire. To ensure anonymity, participants were assigned numerical codes (P1–P10), which were used when presenting verbatim quotations. The complete dataset, including participants' demographic characteristics and their verbatim responses to the five open-ended questions, is provided in Appendix A.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questionnaires were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. This approach was selected because it enables a systematic and transparent examination of textual data and is well-suited to identifying recurring patterns, meanings, and perceptions related to the research questions.

The analysis followed an inductive and interpretive process. First, all participants' responses were read repeatedly to ensure familiarity with the data. The analysis was based on the verbatim responses to the five open-ended questions, as presented in the complete dataset (Appendix A). Meaningful units of text relevant to the research aims were then identified, focusing on statements that reflected teachers' experiences and perceptions of motor play and children's quality of life. These units were assigned short descriptive codes that captured their core meaning. Codes expressing similar ideas were subsequently grouped and organized into broader thematic categories, representing shared patterns across participants' responses.

### **3.5 Trustworthiness of the Study**

Several strategies were employed to enhance the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings. First, the use of open-ended questions enabled participants to express their views freely and in their own words, thereby reducing the risk of restricted or superficial responses. Second, the analysis was based on participants' verbatim responses, as presented in the complete dataset (Appendix A), and involved careful and repeated reading of the data to ensure that the identified themes were firmly grounded in the participants' own statements.

In addition, recurring patterns across different participants' responses were examined in order to support the dependability of the findings. The consistency of themes emerging from multiple accounts contributed to analytical coherence. The interpretation of the data was further informed by the study's theoretical framework and relevant literature, strengthening interpretive credibility. Although the study does not aim for statistical generalization, these procedures enhance the transparency, consistency, and rigor of the qualitative research process.

### **3.6 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical principles were observed throughout the research process. Participation in the study was voluntary, and all participants were informed about the purpose of the research prior to taking part. Anonymity was ensured by assigning numerical codes to participants, and no identifying personal information was collected or reported. All data were used exclusively for research purposes, in accordance with established ethical standards for educational research.

## **4. Results and Discussion**

The qualitative analysis of preschool teachers' responses revealed a set of recurring themes reflecting their perceptions of the role of motor play in preschool children's quality of life. The findings highlight both the perceived benefits of motor play for children's well-being and the contextual factors that influence its implementation in everyday preschool practice. The results are presented thematically and are discussed in relation to relevant research.

### **4.1 Motor Play as a Source of Emotional Well-being and Joy**

One of the most prominent themes emerging from the analysis concerned the contribution of motor play to children's emotional well-being. Preschool teachers consistently emphasized that movement-based play enables children to express emotions, release accumulated energy, and experience joy and satisfaction. According to the participants, motor play helps children manage stress, reduce tension, and maintain a positive emotional state throughout the school day.

Teachers described motor play as an activity through which children "feel happy", "relax", and "express themselves freely", indicating that emotional expression and enjoyment are central outcomes of movement-based play. These perceptions are consistent with research highlighting the role of play and physical activity in promoting positive emotions and emotional regulation in early childhood (Goldstein, 2012; Kumar *et al.*, 2022). The emphasis on joy and emotional release further supports the view that motor play contributes directly to children's subjective quality of life, rather than serving solely developmental or instructional purposes.

#### **4.2 Social Interaction and Cooperation through Motor Play**

A second key theme concerned the social dimension of motor play. Teachers reported that movement-based activities provide children with valuable opportunities to interact with peers, cooperate, negotiate rules, and develop social skills. Through group games and shared movement experiences, children learn to take turns, respect others, and work collaboratively toward common goals.

Participants also emphasized that motor play facilitates social inclusion, particularly for children who may experience difficulties with verbal communication or participation in more structured classroom activities. Movement-based play was viewed as a natural context in which all children can participate and feel accepted. These findings are consistent with previous research highlighting the social value of play as a medium for peer interaction, inclusion, and the development of social competence (Brossman *et al.*, 2023; Gray, 2011).

#### **4.3 Contribution of Motor Play to Holistic Development and Self-regulation**

Teachers also perceived motor play as contributing to children's holistic development across physical, cognitive, emotional, and social domains. Beyond its physical benefits, participants emphasized that motor play supports children's concentration, self-confidence, and capacity for self-regulation. Several teachers observed that children who engage regularly in movement-based play appear more focused and better able to follow classroom routines.

These perceptions reflect the interconnected nature of development in early childhood, where movement, cognition, and emotion are closely linked. The findings are in line with research indicating that motor play supports executive functioning, self-regulation, and adaptive behavior in young children (Lillard *et al.*, 2011; Timmons *et al.*, 2007). Teachers' observations further reinforce the view that motor play serves as a pedagogical resource that supports learning readiness and overall well-being.

#### **4.4 Barriers to the Implementation of Motor Play in Preschool Settings**

Despite the recognized benefits of motor play, teachers identified several barriers that limit its systematic implementation in preschool education. The most frequently reported constraints included limited time within the daily schedule, insufficient indoor and outdoor space, lack of appropriate equipment, and increasing curricular demands. According to participants, these factors often reduce opportunities for free and spontaneous movement-based play.

Teachers also referred to heightened concerns about children's safety, which may lead to overly cautious practices and reduced exposure to physically challenging activities. These findings reflect broader concerns raised in the literature regarding the marginalization of play in early childhood education and the growing dominance of academically oriented practices (Miller *et al.*, 2009). Overall, the results suggest that, although teachers value motor play, structural and institutional conditions often hinder its full integration into everyday preschool practice.

#### **4.5 Teachers' Role and Professional Responsibility in Promoting Motor Play**

A final theme concerned teachers' awareness of their role in supporting motor play and children's quality of life. Participants acknowledged that their own attitudes, planning decisions, and pedagogical priorities strongly influence the extent to which movement-based activities are incorporated into the preschool program. Several teachers expressed a sense of professional responsibility to advocate for children's right to play, even in the face of time constraints and curricular pressures.

This finding highlights the central role of educators as mediators between educational policy, curriculum, and children's everyday experiences. Teachers' perspectives underscore the importance of professional autonomy and pedagogical awareness in sustaining play-based practices. The emphasis on educators' agency is consistent with research suggesting that teachers are key actors in maintaining play as a meaningful and valued component of early childhood education (Hyvönen, 2011).

#### **4.6 Discussion and Implications**

Overall, the findings indicate that preschool teachers perceive motor play as a vital contributor to children's quality of life, supporting emotional well-being, social interaction, self-regulation, and holistic development. The results reinforce existing evidence that motor play is not merely a supplementary activity but a core pedagogical practice with direct implications for children's well-being and everyday experiences in preschool settings.

At the same time, the identified barriers highlight a tension between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and the structural realities of contemporary preschool education. Addressing this tension requires supportive educational policies, curriculum frameworks that explicitly protect time for play, and adequate material and spatial resources. The findings further suggest that strengthening teachers' professional role and providing institutional support may enhance the systematic integration of motor play as a fundamental element of high-quality early childhood education.

### **5. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

Despite the contribution of the present study, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted with a relatively small and homogeneous sample of preschool teachers, all of whom were female and employed in public preschools in Thessaloniki, Greece. Thessaloniki is the second-largest city in Greece and represents a major urban educational context within the Greek public preschool education system. Although the sample size and composition are appropriate for qualitative research, they limit the extent to which the findings can be transferred to other educational contexts, such as rural areas, private preschool institutions, or different national education systems.

Second, data collection relied exclusively on self-reported responses to an open-ended questionnaire. While this approach allowed participants to reflect freely on their

experiences and perceptions, it is subject to individual interpretation and may not fully capture everyday classroom practices. The use of additional qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews or classroom observations, could provide richer data and enable triangulation of findings.

In light of these limitations, future research could broaden the scope of investigation by including a more diverse sample of preschool teachers from different regions of Greece, as well as educators working in private preschool settings. Comparative studies across different educational systems and cultural contexts would also be valuable in examining how institutional frameworks and curriculum policies influence the role of motor play in early childhood education. Furthermore, future studies could incorporate the perspectives of children and parents in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of how motor play is experienced and valued by different stakeholders. Longitudinal research designs may also be used to explore the longer-term effects of systematic motor play practices on children's quality of life, well-being, and engagement in learning.

## 6. Conclusion

The present study explored preschool teachers' perceptions of the role of motor play in enhancing preschool children's quality of life. By adopting a qualitative approach, the research provided insight into how educators conceptualize the value of movement-based play within everyday preschool practice and how they perceive its contribution to children's well-being.

The findings indicate that preschool teachers view motor play as a fundamental component of early childhood education, closely linked to children's emotional well-being, social interaction, self-regulation, and holistic development. Motor play was perceived not only as a means of supporting physical development but also as a pedagogical practice that fosters joy, positive emotions, cooperation, and inclusion. These perceptions reinforce the view that motor play plays a central role in promoting children's quality of life during the preschool years.

At the same time, the study highlights a gap between teachers' recognition of the importance of motor play and the practical conditions under which preschool education is implemented. Structural constraints, such as limited time, insufficient space, lack of equipment, and increasing curricular demands, were identified as factors that restrict the systematic integration of motor play into daily practice. This tension underscores the need for closer alignment between educational policy, curriculum frameworks, and teachers' pedagogical priorities.

Overall, the study contributes to the existing literature by foregrounding preschool teachers' voices and emphasizing the significance of motor play as a core pedagogical practice rather than a supplementary activity. By focusing on educators' perspectives, the research offers valuable insights for curriculum designers, policymakers, and

practitioners seeking to enhance children's quality of life through play-based and movement-oriented approaches in early childhood education.

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### **Conflict of Interest Statement**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

### **About the Author(s)**

Spyridon Vrakas is a Permanent Physical Education Teacher in the Greek public education system and serves under the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, Greece. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Physical Education and Sport Science from the School of Physical Education and Sport Science, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and a Master of Science (MSc). His academic training and professional experience span physical education, early childhood education, and health-related physical activity. His professional and research interests focus on motor play, physical activity, psychomotor development, and well-being in early childhood education, as well as the pedagogical role of movement-based learning in supporting children's holistic development and quality of life. He has participated in national and international research activities and has contributed to scientific publications addressing physical activity, health, and educational practice. His work reflects a particular interest in the integration of play-based and movement-oriented approaches within formal educational contexts.

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## Appendix A. Verbatim responses by theme

### Theme 1: Children's engagement in motor play

P1: "Children are encouraged to participate through a variety of interesting and enjoyable activities, supported by the teacher's active encouragement."

P2: "I strengthen children's self-confidence by creating a safe and accepting environment that respects individual differences, encourages free expression, and emphasizes enjoyment rather than performance."

P3: "I use a variety of psychomotor games and materials through fun, group-based, and interactive activities that motivate children to move, express themselves, and cooperate with others."

P4: "I participate in the activities myself, which motivates the children to join in."

P5: "We create a climate of trust and initiative by adapting the level of difficulty, offering alternative ways to participate, promoting mutual support, and providing opportunities for movement both inside and outside the classroom."

P6: "I encourage children to explore new, dynamic ways of playing with movement and peers, recognizing that movement is a fundamental need for children."

P7: "Children are attracted through the use of music and visual stimuli, sometimes combined with team-based competition or rewards."

P8: "I encourage participation through verbal prompts, positive reinforcement, and by demonstrating the movements."

P9: "I design movement activities connected to the learning theme, such as obstacle courses, dancing to songs, group games, and traditional games."

P10: "I provide psychomotor materials for children to organize their own play or, at times, encourage them to invent games without any materials."

### Theme 2: Types of motor play activities

P1: "I use traditional group games, relay races, football and basketball, psychomotor activities with hoops and cones, as well as dramatization and role play related to classroom themes."

P2: "Music and rhythm games, cooperative and competitive group games, and spontaneous child-initiated games with self-defined rules that enhance creativity and imagination."

P3: "Games such as hide-and-seek, hopscotch, chasing games, team movement games, football, and psychomotor and dramatization activities linked to a theme."

P4: "Musical chairs, circuit training, and competitive games such as relay races."

P5: "Open-ended movement activities including jumping, climbing, and balancing, traditional dances with dramatization, group games such as hide-and-seek and blind man's buff, and individual activities like skipping and hopscotch."

P6: "Traditional movement games such as 'Pass the Bee,' 'The Handkerchief Game,' 'Blind Man's Buff,' and other group-based running and chasing games."

P7: "Musical chairs, team challenge games, and chasing games."

P8: "Psychomotor games such as animal imitation, relay races, musical chairs, and different versions of tag."

P9: "Obstacle courses with physical challenges, dance routines based on songs, and story-based movement games."

P10: "Traditional movement games such as 'Land and Sea,' 'Shark,' and various chasing and rhythm-based games."

### **Theme 3: Role of psychomotor equipment and materials**

P1: "Psychomotor equipment makes activities more attractive, but it is not essential, as teachers and children can also create or adapt materials from everyday classroom objects."

P2: "The equipment available in public preschools in Greece is often limited and outdated, which forces teachers to create their own materials in order to meet educational goals."

P3: "Adequate equipment supports the development of balance, coordination, flexibility, and muscle strength, while also encouraging cooperation and social interaction among children."

P4: "When there is a variety and sufficiency of materials, a wider range of games can be implemented; when materials are lacking, children are sometimes less willing to participate."

P5: "A rich variety of equipment stimulates imagination and provides both physical and emotional release, increasing motivation for more meaningful individual and group motor play."

P6: "Psychomotor materials motivate both teachers and children, enhancing creativity, participation, and engagement."

P7: "Materials inspire new ways of playing, and well-equipped schools allow motor games to be better organized."

P8: "Psychomotor equipment is considered essential for motor play."

P9: "Although many preschools have adequate equipment, it is not always fully utilized by teachers."

P10: "Sufficient psychomotor materials support both motor and symbolic play, but their absence does not completely prevent children from engaging in movement activities."

### **Theme 4: Psychosocial benefits of motor play**

P1: "Motor play supports children's physical, cognitive, and social development, helping them follow rules, cooperate, communicate, and experience joy and well-being."

P2: "Children become aware of their bodies and abilities, develop self-esteem and confidence, explore their environment, and improve their social skills, allowing teachers to identify possible developmental difficulties."

P3: "Motor play enhances physical fitness, cooperation, communication, self-confidence, adaptability, and problem-solving."

P4: "Children learn to manage emotions such as anxiety, fear, success, and failure, while developing cooperation, negotiation, and mutual support."

P5: "Through play, children learn empathy, respect for diversity, conflict resolution, role-taking, and emotional regulation, developing social sensitivity and adaptability."

- P6: *"Participation in motor play promotes joy, interaction, self-discovery, entertainment, and the development of spatial and temporal skills."*
- P7: *"Children learn to collaborate, build relationships with peers, and compromise in order to work effectively in a group."*
- P8: *"Motor play contributes to emotional development and strengthens social interaction, with positive effects on children's self-image."*
- P9: *"Children learn to express themselves, understand their bodies, cooperate with peers, and control their movements in space."*
- P10: *"Group work, cooperation, interaction, and conflict resolution are strengthened through motor play."*

#### **Theme 5: National preschool curriculum and motor play**

- P1: *"Although the curriculum includes new programs and initiatives, the overloaded daily schedule often leaves insufficient time for motor play."*
- P2: *"The national preschool curriculum should serve as a guide that inspires teachers to design movement activities adapted to the needs of their class, supporting children's holistic development and counterbalancing physical inactivity."*
- P3: *"The curriculum promotes motor play and organized movement experiences that support children's physical well-being, creativity, and positive attitudes toward physical activity."*
- P4: *"In theory, the curriculum supports motor play, but in practice movement activities are often sacrificed because of time constraints."*
- P5: *"Through play, the curriculum promotes movement, choreography, improvisation, perceptual-motor and basic motor skills, and helps children develop strong movement experiences."*
- P6: *"I am not sufficiently familiar with the national curriculum."*
- P7: *"The curriculum is demanding in academic content, leaving limited time for motor play, even though children have a strong need for physical activity."*
- P8: *"Motor play is not adequately supported due to limitations in space, materials, and specialized staff."*
- P9: *"The curriculum is flexible and supports motor play, but teachers often do not include enough movement activities due to external pressures, such as parental expectations."*
- P10: *"The curriculum supports motor play, but not more than the previous version."*