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LET'S TALK ABOUT INCLUSIVE CIRCUS PRACTICE

Functional Juggling NETWORK



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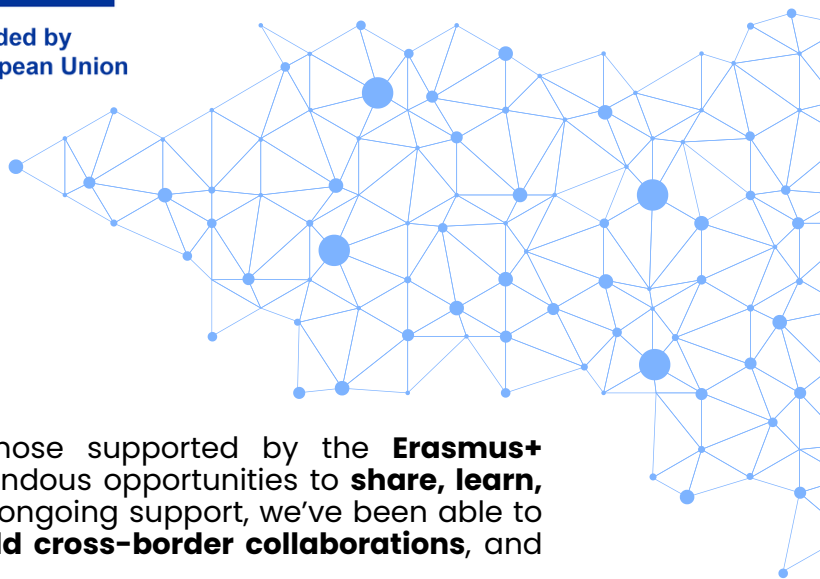
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Erasmus+



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European projects—especially those supported by the **Erasmus+ programme**—have given us tremendous opportunities to **share, learn, and grow together**. Thanks to this ongoing support, we've been able to **discover new methodologies, build cross-border collaborations**, and bring dreams into reality.

The circus sector is evolving dynamically. Through **personal meetings, regular online exchanges**, and deep collaboration, we've all grown—not only as professionals, but also as human beings. These shared experiences have a lasting impact on our **daily practice**, our **values**, and our **vision** for what circus can be.

This current project, **“Creative Inclusion of Special Need Groups – Much More Than Circus”**, spanned one year and brought together five core organisations from across Europe. Together, we delivered:

- **Three international in-person events:** a convention, a conference and a training
- A series of **online symposiums**
- And this present **Book of Case Studies**

We also invited **guest organisations** to contribute, offering a **broader and more diverse picture** of inclusive circus practices. With this, we aim to contribute to something much greater: the growing work of the **Functional Juggling Network**, and the future of a **truly inclusive international circus community**.

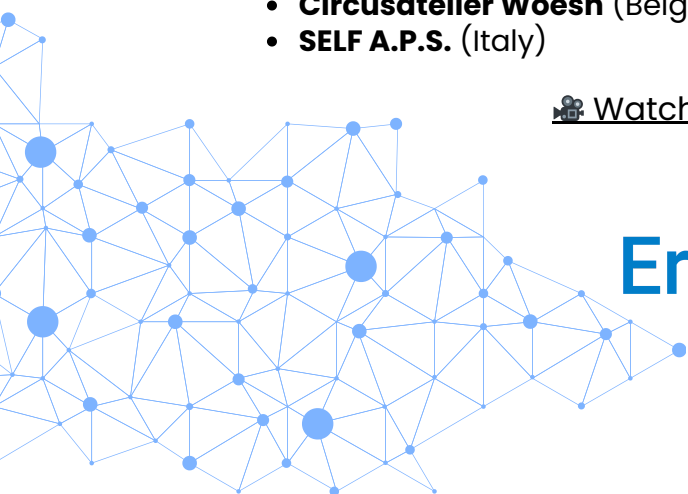
We hope the seeds planted here will grow into many beautiful collaborations to come.

Participating Organisations:

- **Hungarian Juggling Association – Inspiral Circus Center** (Hungary)
- **Monokyklo** (Greece)
- **Odkocznia Studio** (Poland)
- **Circusatelier Woesh** (Belgium)
- **SELF A.P.S.** (Italy)

 [Watch the symposium here](#)

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PROLOG

The world of circus pedagogy is in the midst of a quiet but powerful shift. For a long time, circus in education was seen as something mostly for kids—playful, physical, and rooted in learning a specific set of technical tricks.



But across the globe, a growing wave of practitioners is pushing beyond that narrow frame. They're showing that circus can be something much more: a tool for inclusion, for connection, and for deep personal and social transformation.

This publication offers a window into that evolving landscape. It brings together case studies from educators and facilitators across Europe who are reimagining what circus can look like—and who it can be for. Through their stories, we see how movement, play, and presence are being used to open new doors for learning, healing, and community building.



The case studies that follow are more than workshop summaries. They're reflections of this cultural shift. They offer windows into how these methods come alive—in kindergartens, in care homes, in refugee shelters, in classrooms, in gymnasiums. And they remind us, again and again, what becomes possible when we shift the question away from performance and toward presence. From “can they juggle?” to “how can we meet them where they are?”

This book is a collection of those moments. And maybe, if we're lucky, an invitation to create more of them.

Supporting Wrist Fracture Rehabilitation with Functional Juggling Tools

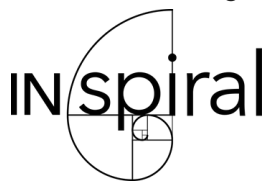
Written by Veronika Gallyas, Hungarian Juggling Association, Hungary

Inspirál Circus Center

Inspirál Circus Center in Budapest is the melting pot and meeting point of the Hungarian new circus scene. It is a space for artistic creation and for education, open to both professionals and amateurs. It is a community space founded and run by the Hungarian Juggling Association.

Over the last 20 years, they have developed a wide range of inclusive and social activities. Their approach builds bridges between contemporary circus, education, and community development.

Their YouTube channel is an open and growing resource, offering many videos for learning about Functional Circus and inclusive methodologies.



INspirál Cirkuszközpont



@inspiralcircus



@MZsonglorEgyesulet

www.zsonglor.hu



www.inspiralcircus.hu



Hungary

INTRODUCTION

This case study explores the use of **Functional Juggling** to support the rehabilitation process of a **70-year-old woman** recovering from a **wrist fracture**. The work was carried out over a **three-month period** in Budapest, Hungary, as a collaboration between the patient and a juggling educator trained in adaptive circus arts. The aim was to use juggling-inspired tasks to increase mobility, reduce frustration, and create enjoyable, repetitive motion-based exercises that **complemented physiotherapy goals**.

BACKGROUND AND APPROACH

Wrist fractures, particularly of the **carpal bones**, are common in older adults due to falls. Recovery is often slow—**regaining fine motor control** can take **six months or more**. As a juggling educator with almost **30 years of experience** and formal circus training, I was intrigued by the challenge of adapting circus tools to support this kind of rehabilitation.

I began by reviewing the physiotherapist's diagnosis and recommended exercises. My goal was to “dress” these tasks in **playful and engaging formats**—what I call “putting them in juggling clothes.” At the same time, I wanted to **introduce original movement sequences** drawn from my years of experience teaching Functional Juggling.





Supporting Wrist Fracture Rehabilitation with Functional Juggling Tools

Written by Veronika Gallyas, Hungarian Juggling Association, Hungary

METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS

The work started while the client was **still wearing a cast**, using soft objects to encourage **gentle finger movements**. Later, we progressed to more complex tools and dynamic activities. I brought a **wide range of props** to each 1:1 session, selecting tools that could **stimulate wrist motion** without overloading it.

Key tools included:

- **Soft balls:** rotating two balls in the palm stimulated **finger mobility**, both during and after the cast phase.
- **Poi:** used for **multi-directional wrist movement** and micro-corrections in later stages of recovery.
- **Juggle Board:** allowed for **open-state sequences** and adaptations like **rolling with palms facing upward** to stimulate wrist rotation.
- **Floating stick:** ideal in the early phase due to limited mobility; it offered a **sense of success** and **gentle stimulation**.

All tools were left with the client between sessions to **encourage daily practice**.

CREATIVE STRATEGIES

Inspired by **social circus methodologies**, I introduced a **mini-performance element**. Together we choreographed a piece titled **“Flea Circus”**, set to music, where two fingers portrayed elephants balancing on a ball. This playful framing **increased repetition**, sparked imagination, and made the practice more **emotionally rewarding**.

The sessions were hosted at the client’s home, though we recognized the value of the **Inspirál Circus Center’s group setting**, where community presence and varied stimuli can be highly motivating.



Supporting Wrist Fracture Rehabilitation with Functional Juggling Tools

Written by Veronika Gallyas, Hungarian Juggling Association, Hungary

KEY OBSERVATIONS

Several factors contributed to the success of this process:

- The **therapeutic power of conversation**: being able to share frustrations and triumphs proved emotionally supportive.
- Bilateral engagement: we worked with **both hands**, even though only one was injured. This created opportunities for comparison and **cross-lateral activation**.
- **Video documentation** of sessions boosted motivation by visibly tracking progress.
- The juggling tasks helped **identify and undo compensatory movement patterns**, such as initiating wrist motions from the shoulder instead of the forearm.
- The **poi tool** initially caused frustration—its difficulty and occasional contact with the body challenged the client. We adapted by switching to a poi with **finger loops** for better control.

CHALLENGES AND REFLECTIONS

One major challenge was my **limited anatomical knowledge**—while I could design effective movement sequences, I lacked a full understanding of the **complex musculoskeletal architecture** of the wrist. This at times made me feel uncertain.

For the client, the biggest challenge was **not performing the tasks well**. Yet the sense of joy and purpose she felt through **ball manipulation**—where success was tangible—offered a powerful **emotional counterbalance**.

An important element of our process was exploring the **personal significance of injury**. We discussed how the fracture might symbolically reflect **boundaries, pace, or life redirection**. This brought **meaningful depth** to our work beyond physical recovery.



Supporting Wrist Fracture Rehabilitation with Functional Juggling Tools

Written by Veronika Gallyas, Hungarian Juggling Association, Hungary

Photo: Zbyszek Malewski

CONCLUSION

This collaboration demonstrates how **Functional Juggling** can effectively support rehabilitation in a **flexible, adaptive, and emotionally resonant** way. It's not a substitute for clinical care, but a **vital complement**—inviting joy, story, and play into the healing process. The client now continues her progress **independently** with her own poi and soft balls, having discovered new motivation and creative tools for self-care.



The Juggle Board in Kindergarten

*Written by Zsuzsa Székely, Somatic Education Specialist
Almáskert Kindergarten – District III, Budapest, Hungary*

INTRODUCTION

A few years ago, at **Almáskert Kindergarten** in Budapest's 3rd district, we hosted a short workshop where special education teachers, development specialists, and interested kindergarten educators could learn the basics of **Juggle Board**. I participated in that training as a special education teacher, and those few days turned out to be energizing and deeply motivating. Soon after, the kindergarten leadership purchased a Juggle Board for each of the institution's three branches. This is how my journey began—working with the Juggle Board in a kindergarten that includes children with a **wide range of needs and special educational profiles**.

HOW IT STARTED

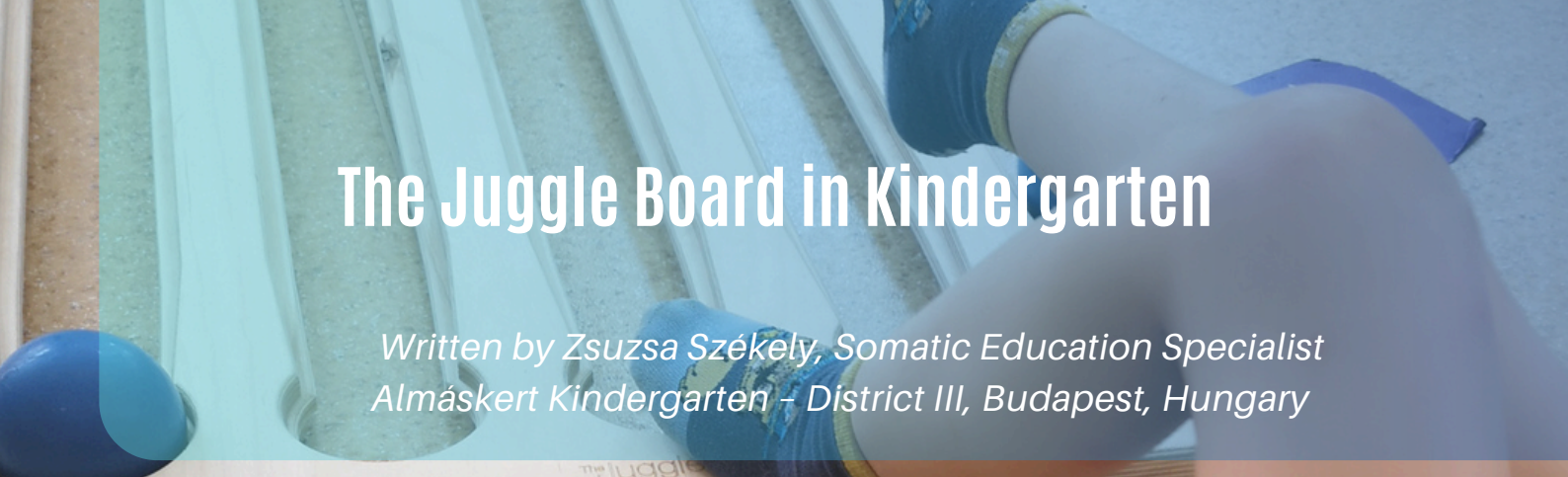
I began by integrating the Juggle Board into **individual or small-group movement development sessions**, conducted in a separate room during the morning hours. These sessions were offered to children whose personalized education plans (as prescribed by the expert committee) included movement development or therapy—sometimes as a **complementary therapeutic tool**.

EARLY EXPERIENCES AND FUNCTIONAL USE

I first used the Juggle Board with **children with physical disabilities**, specifically to support **functional improvement**. For one girl, both upper limbs were affected due to central nervous system impairment, making **shoulder and hand flexion movements extremely difficult**. The Juggle Board proved to be an exciting new tool for her.

Even though the required movements demanded the same amount of **concentration and effort** as with other therapeutic tools, the fact that the balls **rolled within fixed channels** and could be initiated with **small movements** made success feel **more attainable**. This led to a stronger sense of accomplishment.

In this case, I didn't prioritize teaching the board's base pattern. Instead, I focused on her **individual developmental goals**, such as:



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Almáskert Kindergarten – District III, Budapest, Hungary*

- Strengthening and stretching the hand muscles
- Improving posture
- Preventing compensatory movements

I often let her take the lead in the activity. I noticed that this **sense of control** made her more enthusiastic and persistent with the exercises.

ADAPTING FOR LOWER LIMB ENGAGEMENT

In another case, I worked with a child who had significant **leg length discrepancy**. We used the Juggle Board with the **feet**. Our goal was to **activate the shorter leg**, which had limited movement due to an orthosis and was underused in daily life. After we found the right position, the child played using **only the affected leg**.

This wasn't easy—it required intense effort and led to quick fatigue—but it was accompanied by **lots of laughter and small victories**.

BODY AWARENESS AND INTEGRATION

We also played with the Juggle Board **using feet only** with a child who had underdeveloped **body awareness and body image**. This child barely acknowledged the existence of his legs and had difficulty moving them independently. He instinctively tried to **reintroduce his hands** during play, even though the activity focused on the legs.

Helping him develop a sense of his full body—its parts, movements, and position in space—was essential for his overall development. Behind his challenges was a rare genetic disorder that resulted in a **highly uneven cognitive profile**: excellent verbal skills but weak focus and sensory integration.

Eventually, we expanded the play to include **cognitive challenges** using hand-based table play. For example:

- Creating and remembering **color sequences**
- Assigning animal identities to the balls, who had to “come out of their caves” when called—even if they had changed places

These activities proved effective when combined with other tools, contributing clearly to the child's **development and maturation**.



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Almáskert Kindergarten – District III, Budapest, Hungary*

POSTURE AND GROUP WORK

We also use the Juggle Board in **group movement development classes**, particularly for **postural improvement and strengthening back muscles**. In these cases, children play lying on their stomachs.

SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND OBSERVATION

Beyond motor and cognitive development, I began to notice the Juggle Board's potential for enhancing **social interaction**. We introduced it to children who were experiencing **connection difficulties**—those who struggled with mutual attention and cooperation.

During play, I would observe:

- Whether children looked up from the board to their partner
- Whether they requested the ball in any way
- Whether they acknowledged the presence of the other player

For more structured cooperation, we played in **triads**, with two children on one side of the board. The game involved **simple rules** that required **collaborative problem-solving**, such as:

- One child could only roll blue balls, the other only green
- Balls could arrive on any track
- They had to help each other navigate space and timing without blocking one another

These dynamics were **highly informative**, both as a facilitator and as an observer.



The Juggle Board in Kindergarten

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Almáskert Kindergarten – District III, Budapest, Hungary*

A CASE OF CONTROL AND REGULATION

With one child—frequently in conflict with both peers and adults—we used the Juggle Board to observe and gently challenge **control-related behaviors**. This child had a **strong need to maintain control** over daily routines and play.

During board play, he initially attempted to take over the session subtly, then increasingly overtly—even when playing with another child under structured rules, he could take control in a matter of minutes. When playing with me, he would often withdraw quickly if the activity wasn't fully on his terms.

This presented an opportunity: through **micro-adjustments in facilitation**, we began to build moments where he could stay in the game without compromising his sense of autonomy—creating a **balance between structure and choice**.

ONGOING USE AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

We now use the Juggle Board throughout the academic year to assess and strengthen:

- Motor skills
- Cognitive processes
- Social abilities

In every case, I have observed clear signs of growth and development in the participating children.

For me, the ongoing evolution of my Juggle Board work is supported and inspired by participation in professional workshops, where I can share experiences, learn new approaches, and renew my creative toolkit. Whenever I feel stuck or too anchored in familiar patterns, these workshops offer fresh perspectives and new energy—helping me return to the classroom refreshed and re-inspired.

More Than Movement: Long-Term Journey with Functional Juggling

Written by Sara Papadato, Self APS, Italy

SELF APS

SELF APS is the Italian association that promotes Functional Juggling, making it inclusive, adaptive, and accessible to all. With specific activities based on play and interaction, it promotes psychophysical well-being, coordination, body awareness, and relationships, engaging people of all ages and abilities.

An innovative approach derived from the research of Craig Quat, founder of the method, which combines fun and inclusion in every educational, pedagogical, social, and rehabilitation context.



@SelfAPS



@selfapsitalia



Italy

TARGET GROUP

This work focuses on a person with disabilities with high support needs who attends a Disabled Day Center in the North of Italy.

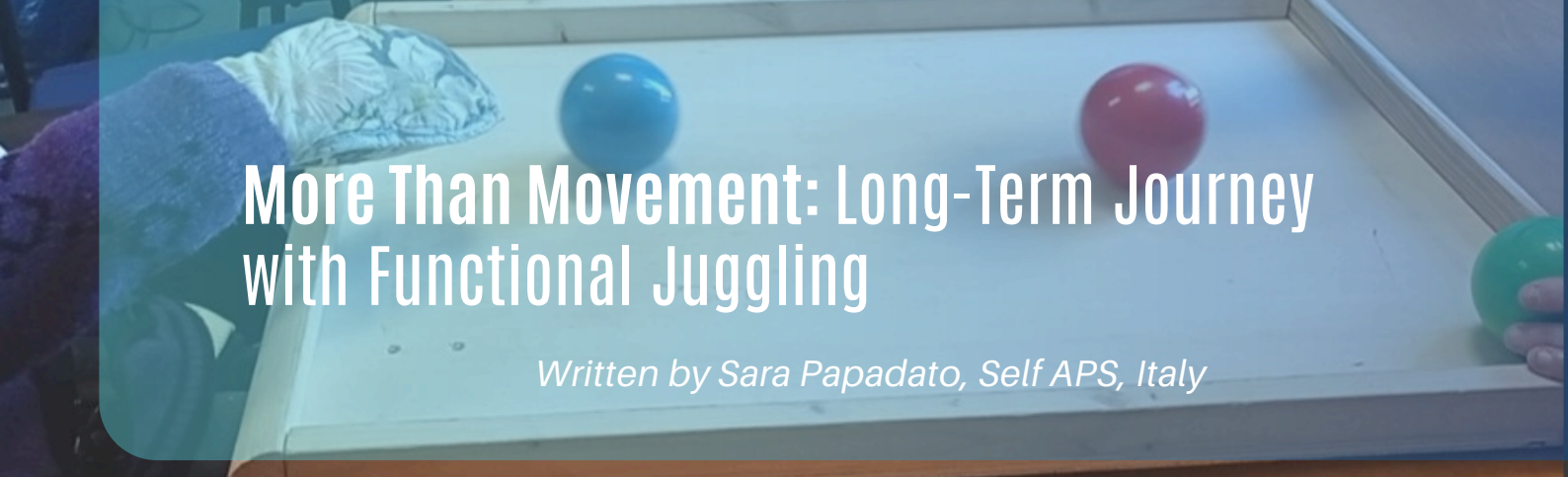
She navigates her environment in a wheelchair and is accompanied by an operator. Her diagnosis often masks her warmth and potential—but beneath it all she is a woman full of energy, joy, and determination.

BEGINNING SITUATION

I hold a degree in **Physical Education and Sport Sciences** and have worked in the field of disability for many years. Since 2011, I have specialized in **circus pedagogy**, and in 2018 I became a certified Functional Juggling facilitator through training with Craig Quat.

I first met this woman in 2016 through a **Motor Activities Training Program (MATP)**, developed in collaboration with **Special Olympics**. The activity took place at a Disabled Day Care Center.

In 2018, we transitioned from MATP to a **Functional Juggling project**, supported by a collaborative and open team of educators and therapists. When she started, her **right hand was tied to the wheelchair** due to self-injurious behavior and object-mouthing. Today, she wears a **protective glove** instead—and has gained far more **freedom** and **control**.



More Than Movement: Long-Term Journey with Functional Juggling

Written by Sara Papadato, Self APS, Italy

GOALS

Initially, the shared goal was simple but essential:

- **To participate in the activity without enacting dysfunctional behavior**

Over time, with input from the physiotherapist and staff, the goals evolved to include:

- **Stimulating movement in the left upper limb**
- **Encouraging interaction with peers through juggling activities**

SETTING AND TOOLS

Sessions took place in a **multi-use room**, typically used as an office, but reserved weekly for juggling. The **materials were assembled and dismantled** before and after each session, which lasted between **20 and 30 minutes**, depending on the participant's physical condition. All work was conducted in a one-on-one setting.

Props used included:

- Juggle Board (horizontal and inclined)
- Abacus
- Flashcups
- Flowersticks

Juggling rings



More Than Movement: Long-Term Journey with Functional Juggling

Written by Sara Papadato, Self APS, Italy

PROCESS

Since 2018, the client has participated in **weekly sessions** from October to May. Our first steps focused on building **rapport**, discovering her **interests**, and creating ways for her to engage with the activity.

In the early phase, she was always accompanied by an educator who knew her well. As our relationship grew stronger, I was eventually able to work with her **independently**.

Each session followed a consistent structure:

1. **Greeting and welcome** on the ground floor
2. **Activation phase** – often with the Juggle Board
3. **Core work** – combining color association and limb engagement using the board, abacus, and flashcups
4. **Left upper limb activation** using horizontal movement tools
5. **Final phase** – a game of her choice and a summary of the session

The participant was **highly engaged** with the materials and, over time, learned to better **accept and enjoy new challenges**—while still showing preferences. A key strategy was to maintain her attention on **movement-based tasks**, not on self-regulatory or avoidance behaviors, and to **frame activities as games or mini-competitions** to increase motivation.

We discovered that she was able to identify and match colors, especially when using props like the **abacus** and **Juggle Board**. These moments offered valuable opportunities to combine **cognitive stimulation** with **motor play**.

Close collaboration with the **educator team**—and ongoing support from the **physiotherapists**—proved essential in aligning our shared goals and designing effective strategies for **guided left arm activation**.

OUTCOMES

We used **ongoing observation** as our primary method of evaluation, and the progress—although often subtle—proved to be deeply meaningful:





More Than Movement: Long-Term Journey with Functional Juggling

Written by Sara Papadato, Self APS, Italy

- In the beginning, the participant would frequently attempt to bring her right hand to her mouth as soon as it was untied. Today, this behavior appears only once or twice per session, and she is able to redirect herself back to the activity with ease.
- Her right hand is no longer tied down and now only requires a **protective glove**.
- She can now **intentionally reach out with her left arm** up to four consecutive times to interact with props such as the Juggle Board or Flashcups.
- She has played with **peers, family members, and young children**, always accompanied by an educator—demonstrating increasing openness and cooperation.

Perhaps most remarkably, she has become the **“expert”** of the Functional Juggling activity within the center, frequently demonstrating what she has learned to others—with evident pride.

There is still **room for growth**—particularly in implementing more measurable tracking systems. Ideally, future sessions would integrate **video documentation** or **sensor-based tools** to enable deeper layers of reflection and data-informed analysis. These additions could support both real-time facilitation and post-session review, enhancing the clarity and continuity of long-term progress monitoring.

CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

Working long-term with a person with complex disabilities requires **patience, consistency**, and deep **commitment**. At first, I felt uncertain—wondering if any real change was taking place. But slowly, with the attentive eyes of her educator team, I began to see the truth: the **tiny shifts** were in fact **huge steps**.

What we do with Functional Juggling is not just about movement—it’s about **trust, attention, presence**, and creating the conditions for each person to **show us who they are and what they’re capable of**.

It may not always *look* like progress—but when we learn to look differently, we begin to see just how far someone has come.



Rebuilding Grasp – Functional Juggling and Hand Rehabilitation

Written by Lapo Botteri. Delivered by Circo Tascabile at the C.T.E. center in Cinque Vie, Florence

TARGET

This project focused on **adults with severe motor disabilities**, particularly individuals with **impaired hand gripping ability**. The participants—six residents of the C.T.E. center in Cinque Vie, Florence—were all **wheelchair users**, each presenting **complex physical challenges** but maintaining **medium-to-high cognitive functioning**. The initiative was developed in close collaboration with the facility's physiotherapists, with the goal of **supporting rehabilitation efforts through playful, curiosity-driven activities** that promote **neuro-motor adaptation**.

BEGINNING SITUATION

My name is **Lapo Botteri**, and I hold a degree in Physical Education with additional certification as a sports teacher. I first encountered **Functional Juggling** in 2016 through a workshop with **Craig Quat**. The experience **shifted my professional trajectory**. Within weeks, I approached a local therapy center and began integrating the methodology into my practice. I've remained with the same organization ever since, now working **13 hours per week** and developing **long-term, individualized programs**.

The C.T.E. center serves individuals with **complex mobility limitations**, many of whom face additional challenges such as **spasticity, limited range of motion**, or **coordination impairments**. While physiotherapists focus on biomechanical rehabilitation, my role—through Functional Juggling—has been to engage neuromotor programming at the intersection of **play, precision, and movement intelligence**.

GOALS

Each participant had a **personalized set of goals**, defined in collaboration with the center's staff. The primary objective was to **support upper limb rehabilitation** through **sensory-motor exploration**. Secondary aims included:

- **Enhancing grip strength and manual dexterity**
- **Encouraging ambidextrous coordination**
- **Improving attention span and cognitive-emotional engagement**



Rebuilding Grasp – Functional Juggling and Hand Rehabilitation

Written by Lapo Botteri. Delivered by Circo Tascabile at the C.T.E. center in Cinque Vie, Florence

SETTING AND TOOLS

Working Space

Sessions were held in the center's **small gym**, a quiet, adaptable space well suited for sensory-focused activities. Each participant engaged in a **15-minute one-on-one session**, once per week, from October to May.

Working Tools

Materials were selected according to each participant's abilities and goals. These included:

- **Juggle Board**
- **Juggling rings**
- **Stress balls**
- **Finger puppets**
- **Rain sticks**
- **Animal squeakers**
- **Flashcups**
- **Household objects** (cutlery, brushes, bottles)
- **Sensory props tailored** to specific grip types

PROCESS

The program unfolded weekly across **eight months**. Each session followed a structured flow, with content **adapted to each individual's physical and emotional needs**.

Preparatory Phase

We began with verbal check-ins and tactile activation. Questions like "How are you today?" were paired with gentle hand and arm massages to increase body awareness and reduce tension.

Analytical Phase

We explored fine motor skills and targeted movement patterns such as finger isolation, wrist rotation, and bilateral integration. The goal was to refine precision and self-awareness in movement.

Global Phase

Refined elements were combined into integrated tasks, such as controlling ball movement on the Juggle Board or exchanging juggling rings rhythmically. These tasks emphasized functional flow, coordination, and movement confidence.



Rebuilding Grasp – Functional Juggling and Hand Rehabilitation

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ORGANIZATION PROCESS

Two interdisciplinary teams provided essential input throughout the program:

Educators

They offered background on each user's daily behavior, emotional profile, and learning preferences, helping to adjust session pacing and tone.

Physiotherapists

They ensured technical safety, advising on posture, muscular limitations, and safe movement ranges. Their guidance allowed for creative exploration within a safe biomechanical frame.

While we encountered no major obstacles, we did observe unexpectedly high levels of engagement and improvement, surpassing initial expectations.

OUTPUT

Though no formal metrics were used, feedback was collected from across the team:

Physiotherapists

Reported **no measurable biomechanical changes**, but recognized that the work **complemented their sessions meaningfully**.

Educators

Observed **notable improvements in attention, behavioral regulation, and hand coordination**. Participants began **using both hands more naturally** and showed progress in handling tools like **pens, cups, and utensils**.

Music Therapist

Saw **enhanced control and intention** while participants used musical instruments, particularly when **striking mallets on xylophones**.

Speech Therapist

Noted **improved focus** and greater ease in operating **manual communication devices**.



Rebuilding Grasp – Functional Juggling and Hand Rehabilitation

Written by Lapo Botteri. Delivered by Circo Tascabile at the C.T.E. center in Cinque Vie, Florence

Photo: Sarah Vanheuverzwijn

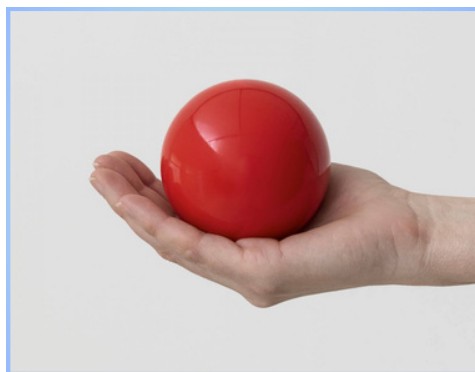
CONCLUSIONS AND REFLECTIONS

Two central questions emerged:

First: Why did the **physiotherapists observe less change** than other team members? Their clinical lens is crucial, yet it may **overlook the subtle functional gains** made through embodied play.

Second: How can we better document this type of change? In future projects, we hope to implement **baseline assessments and post-session comparisons**, using tools like **video analysis or motion sensors**, to more clearly track outcomes.

Functional Juggling may not yield instant results. But it **creates space for small miracles**—like holding a spoon, gripping a pencil, or striking a mallet with **renewed purpose and joy**.



Feeling Safe: A Key for Autism

Eva Parlani, Education member of Monokyklo
Thessaloniki, Greece

Photo: Lia Geroulou

Monokyklo

Monokyklo is a youth and social circus school based in Thessaloniki, Greece, established in 2017. Our main aim is to share the arts of circus, dance, and theatre with children and youth as a means of artistic expression, pedagogical approach, and physical and mental development.

We believe that the circus teaches essential life skills. For this reason, our team is often present in different communities and among socially disadvantaged groups, where we teach circus and co-create performances.



@monokyklo



@monokyklo



@circusdanceyoga2472



circustogether.eu



Greece

THE BEGINNING

The **Monokyklo team** introduced methods of *Functional Juggling* in Thessaloniki, with the primary goal of making **circus arts accessible to people with disabilities**. The team was composed of trainers with backgrounds in circus arts and specific training in Functional Juggling, gained through participation in international seminars and facilitator courses.

The project, titled “**A Rolling Ball**”, was designed as an **integrated intervention** at various **Disability Daycare Centers (DDCs)** in Thessaloniki. It aimed to offer a **creative, inclusive space for expression** through the language of juggling and movement.

As a facilitator with experience in circus workshops and having attended trainings in **Thessaloniki, Budapest, and Milan**, I entered the project with a **deep desire to make circus arts accessible to all**—free of exclusion or discrimination. My focus as team leader was on **strengthening group dynamics** and creating a **safe, supportive environment** in which participants could explore an unfamiliar activity with **confidence and comfort**.

A key component of the project was that we **visited participants in their own environments**, bringing all necessary materials with us. This approach, which allowed individuals to remain in **familiar and protected spaces**, proved essential in facilitating their **early engagement and comfort** with the activities. It became clear that **respect for each participant's rhythm and individuality**, along with **active collaboration with on-site educators**, contributed significantly to the project's success.



Feeling Safe: A Key for Autism

*Eva Parlani, Education member of Monokyklo
Thessaloniki, Greece*

Photo: Lia Geropoulou

THE CASE OF NIKOLAS

Among the many stories that emerged, **Nikolas** stood out.

Nikolas, around ten years old, is **on the autism spectrum**. He experiences **limited speech and expressive abilities** and typically **moves through space only with the support** of a special education teacher. He was particularly sensitive to **loud sounds** and **sudden movements**, which made him cautious and hesitant during our initial sessions.

During our **first two visits**, Nikolas remained at a distance. He **did not approach the props**, and although we addressed him with openness and care, he **did not respond to verbal interaction**. His **physical and emotional distance** remained steady.

But something shifted during the **third session**. For the first time, **Nikolas picked up the juggling balls**, made **eye contact**, and **accepted our presence**. From that moment forward, a connection began to form. He started **welcoming us with trust**, helping to set up the space, **trying new combinations**, and **returning to the props independently**.

I believe we were able to offer Nikolas a **non-threatening environment**—a space where he could **experiment, create, try, and even fail** without fear of judgment. It was a **safe space for self-expression** and discovery, where his process could unfold at **his own pace**.

From that point on, Nikolas **never missed a session**. He **remembered the combinations** we practiced, **tried new ones with enthusiasm**, and increasingly showed **independence** in his exploration. Over time, he **reduced reliance on his support teacher**, and in a powerful moment of connection, began to **share personal information** with us—an act that signified deep trust.

Through this process, we witnessed a clear **increase in Nikolas's self-confidence, communication skills, and social openness**. His journey is just one example of the **transformative power of Functional Juggling**, both for **psycho-emotional growth** and **physical activation**.

Feeling Safe: A Key for Autism

*Eva Parlani, education member of Monokyklo
Thessaloniki, Greece*

Photo: Lia Geropoulou

PERSONAL REFLECTION

This experience has been **deeply transformative** for me—not just professionally, but personally. I was able to **apply a method I believe in**, and at the same time, witness how **circus can serve as a tool for inclusion, empowerment, and communication**.

Being in daily contact with participants—their **unique responses**, their **small or big victories**—reminded me of the **power in simplicity**: the simplicity of **movement**, of **play**, of **being present**.

This process **strengthened me as a trainer**, as a facilitator, and as a human being. It reaffirmed my belief that **art can be a bridge**—a tool for **access**, for **connection**, and for **solidarity**.





Colours and Patterns to Unlock Friendly Interactions

*Sofia Apostolopoulou, education member of Monokyklo
Thessaloniki, Greece*

Photo: Lia Geropoulou

STRUCTURE AND SETTING

Each session began with a **brief introduction of the games** to both trainers and participants, followed by **free exploration**. Participants were encouraged to **take initiative**, allowing us to observe which **patterns, colours, or movements naturally attracted their interest**. Facilitators provided **gentle, non-intrusive support**, focusing on encouragement and autonomy.

Sessions took place indoors in **designated recreational areas** of each DDC. Materials were displayed on tables and included:

- The **Juggle Board**
- **Hula hoops, spinning plates, scarves, and juggling balls**

The program ran for several months, with **near-daily visits to five different centers**, creating an opportunity for **longitudinal observation and diverse participant engagement**.

SESSION FLOW AND GAME DESIGN

Each 90-minute session followed a consistent structure:

- Opening **circle game** where everyone shared names and personal updates
- A **main session** with rotating activity stations or small-group games
- A **10–20 minute break** depending on group energy
- Closing **group reflection**, sharing highlights and feedback

The activities rotated through **Functional Juggling games** and other circus-based experiences. Some sessions used a **clock-style layout**, allowing participants to move independently between activities. The structured yet playful design allowed for **adaptation to individual interests and needs**.



Colours and Patterns to Unlock Friendly Interactions

*Sofia Apostolopoulou, education member of Monokyklo
Thessaloniki, Greece*

Photo: Lia Geropoulou

OBSERVATIONS AND OUTCOMES

The central focus—**facilitating social openness and peer interaction**—was clearly met. We observed:

- **Stronger interpersonal connections**, especially among previously withdrawn individuals
- A noticeable difference in **game preferences** based on age and type of disability
- Two participants with hyperactivity displayed **impulsivity**, though it remained **non-disruptive**
- Participants were **drawn to bright colours and structured patterns**, and although creating new sequences was challenging, most persisted and **succeeded with guidance**

Familiar educators played a crucial role. When participants were supported by someone they trusted, **focus, engagement, and joy all increased**. Tools that incorporated **colour and number coding** proved especially effective.

Across all five DDCs, participants showed:

- **Greater behavioral regulation**
- **More consistent participation**
- **Increased openness to trying new things**
- **Heightened social engagement** with both peers and trainers

CONCLUSION

This initiative demonstrated how Functional Juggling can be a **powerful tool for inclusion and connection**. With **more frequent and structured sessions**, we believe it would be possible to achieve even **greater progress in motor skills, cognitive engagement, and social behavior**.

The consistent involvement of **DDC staff was a key success factor**. Their presence helped build a **secure and familiar atmosphere** in which participants felt safe to explore, take risks, and form new relationships. The program not only enriched the daily experience of the participants but also **empowered caregivers and educators** to engage with inclusive pedagogy in a practical, joyful way.

Hidden Therapy Through Play: Functional Juggling with Children with Autism and Their Caregivers

Written by Paulina Chodnicka, Odkocznia Studio, Warsaw, Poland

Photo: Zbyszek Malewski

Odkocznia Studio

Odkocznia Studio offers dynamic circus-pedagogical workshops that unite body and mind through juggling, balancing, and acrobatics using a wide range of props—balls, scarves, hoops, diabolo, rolabola, stilts, unicycles, and more. These engaging sessions are designed for children, adults, schools, businesses, and seniors, promoting coordination, focus, and mindful development, all through joyful play.



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Poland

TARGET GROUP AND PARTICIPANTS

This program was designed for a small group of children with autism and their caregivers. Two groups participated in total—each composed of four children and their respective caregivers—creating a one-to-one dynamic that fostered trust, connection, and shared learning.

INITIAL CONTEXT

Miłosz Goślicki is a **professional circus artist and workshop leader** with years of experience in movement-based education. However, when it came to **Functional Juggling (FJ)**, he was just beginning his journey—having recently completed a training with Craig Quat.

Circus pedagogy remains relatively unfamiliar in the Podbeskidzie region of Poland. Hoping to change that, Miłosz reached out to the **President of the National Autism Society, Bielsko-Biała branch**, and organized an open session for local therapists. The response was immediate and heartfelt—one participant remarked, “It was the first time in a long while that I genuinely had fun.”

PROJECT GOALS

The primary aims of the workshops were:

- To offer **rehabilitative experiences** through movement and coordination
- To create **joyful, meaningful interactions** between children and their caregivers
- To integrate Functional Juggling into local therapeutic practice through demonstration and collaboration

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SETTING AND TOOLS

Workshops took place **indoors**, with two **Juggle Boards** set up on tables and open space around them for movement exploration.

Props included:

- Juggle Boards
- Rings, juggling balls, juggling bags
- Balloons
- Hula hoops
- Spinning plates
- Flower sticks

The space was arranged to offer flexibility—participants could move freely or stay close to their caregiver as needed. This allowed each child to find their own rhythm and level of engagement.

WORKSHOP PROCESS

The program ran for **six months**, with **biweekly 1-hour sessions**. In retrospect, one hour proved a bit long—especially for children who arrived tired after a full day of school and therapy. Based on this, Miłosz now recommends **shorter 40-minute sessions** for children on the autism spectrum, to avoid overstimulation and maintain focus.

In the **first four months**, sessions followed exercises learned in training with Craig Quat (e.g., the **5-Step Juggling Method**) and Jael Rodríguez (Hula Hoop Integral). Activities involved juggling boards, rings, and collaborative tasks. After this foundation was built, Miłosz began to introduce **customized games and variations**, including balloons and themed play tailored to the group's needs.

A key element was the **active participation of caregivers**. Every session was designed as a **shared experience**—not only to support the children but to strengthen bonds between children and parents through play and co-regulation.



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ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS

Each group of **8 participants (4 children from 7 to 14 years old + 4 caregivers)** was supported by Miłosz as the sole facilitator. While there were no additional assistants, the involvement of parents created a rich, co-supported atmosphere.

A surprising and beautiful outcome was the **level of integration** that unfolded. Parents engaged with each other, with staff, and most importantly—with their children in new and joyful ways.

Even beyond the sessions, parents formed a **WhatsApp group**, stayed in touch, and began attending community events together. Though modest in size, this network continues to thrive. The sense of **community-building**—so central to contemporary circus culture—took root organically and powerfully here.

UNEXPECTED OBSERVATIONS

While the sessions were initially planned for every two weeks, occasional **longer pauses between meetings** actually proved helpful. They gave families space to process and return with renewed energy.

Miłosz also received inquiries from an **inclusive kindergarten** and a **local library** seeking similar workshops. Perhaps most surprisingly, this process gave him the confidence to begin working with **children under 7**—something he hadn't considered before discovering Functional Juggling.

RESULTS AND REFLECTIONS

Parents shared enthusiastic feedback—reporting **noticeable improvements in coordination**, especially increased use of the **non-dominant hand** in daily tasks. They also spoke of a **softened resistance** to physical engagement and a growing enjoyment in movement-based play.

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A conversation with the **President of the Autism Society** offered further insight. She emphasized that many children today are overburdened. Their days are full: school, therapy, appointments, rushed meals. The word “therapy” alone can feel heavy. What she valued most about Functional Juggling was that it felt like “**hidden therapy**.” The children didn’t realize they were working—they were just “throwing things with the juggling guy.” And yet, **real developmental outcomes** were being achieved.

These included:

- **Sensory integration**
- **Social skills development**
- **Physical coordination**
- **Expressive movement and creative play**

Miłosz also believes the method touches on elements of **art therapy**—especially when sessions include rhythm, drawing, or music. When participants start to internalize the patterns, **expression becomes intuitive**.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Strong points:

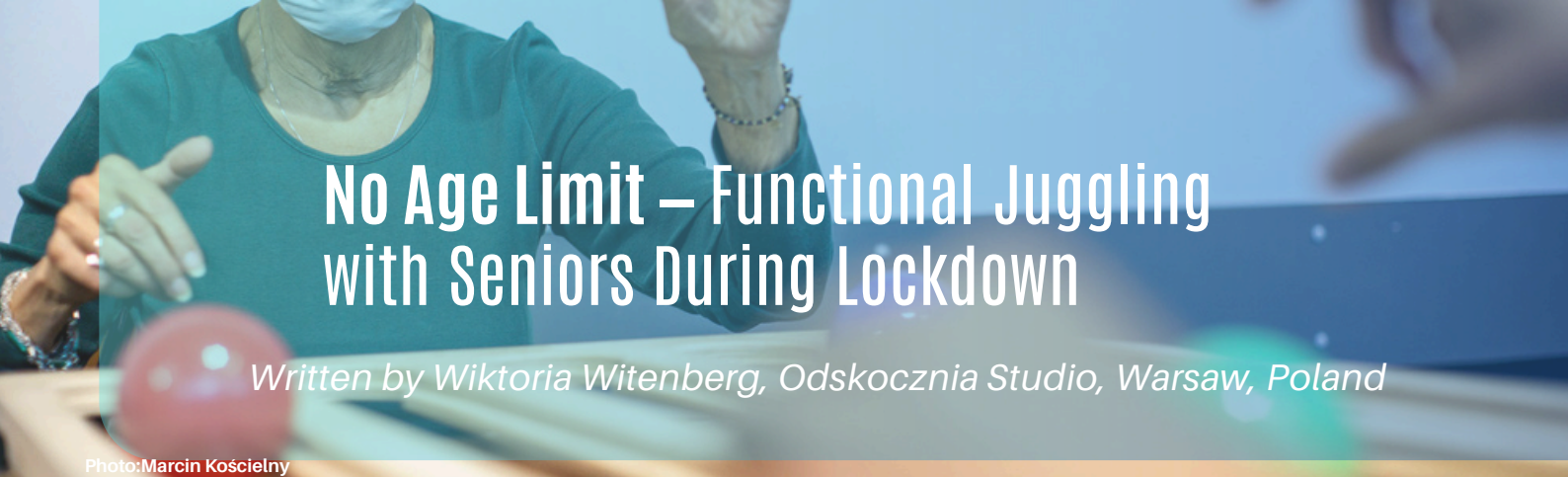
- Extremely high adaptability across ages and needs
- Genuine caregiver–child bonding
- Community engagement and continued connection
- Joyful, meaningful participation without pressure

Weak points or learnings:

- Session length should be adapted to avoid fatigue
- Scheduling and pacing are critical for long-term participation

FINAL REFLECTION

After a full year of applying the method, one truth stands out clearly: **Functional Juggling is genuinely inclusive**. Its flexibility allows for deep personalization—whether someone is highly active, non-verbal, easily overwhelmed, or slow to warm up. With the right rhythm and relationship, everyone can find their own way to participate.



No Age Limit – Functional Juggling with Seniors During Lockdown

Written by Wiktoria Witenberg, Odszkodnia Studio, Warsaw, Poland

Photo: Marcin Kościelny

TARGET GROUP

This project, led by Odszkodnia Studio, was designed for adults aged 65 and older. Through an open call, we invited seniors to join Functional Juggling (FJ) classes hosted at the Centrum Kultury Praga-Południe in Warsaw. The participants were independent, active older adults—capable of registering and attending on their own—whom I would describe as functioning at an average to high level for their age.

ORIGINS AND CONTEXT

The idea for the project emerged in March 2020, during the first COVID-19 lockdown. Paulina, founder of Odszkodnia Studio, reached out with interest in building a circus-based program tailored for seniors. A few months later, as restrictions eased, we began planning the classes. Despite rising case numbers and the looming threat of a second lockdown, we made the collective decision to move forward—carefully.

Our team consisted of four trainers:

- Two **main trainers**, with some prior experience teaching juggle boards
- Two **support trainers**, newly introduced to Functional Juggling

Each group of up to 12 participants was guided by one main trainer and one assistant.

At the time, my own experience included:

- A 3-day workshop with Craig Quat in 2017 (before it was formalized as The Seminar)
- A local pilot with seniors in Warsaw (6 sessions totaling 9 hours)
- Several one-on-one FJ sessions

Kamil, one of the main trainers, had collaborated with me on the pilot project. For Paulina and Julia, this was their first hands-on experience with juggle boards. Before launching NO AGE LIMIT, I conducted a two-hour training to introduce the basic FJ principles and Juggle Board patterns to the support trainers.



No Age Limit – Functional Juggling with Seniors During Lockdown

Written by Wiktoria Witenberg, Odkocznia Studio, Warsaw, Poland

Photo: Marcin Kościelny

GOALS

The project had two primary goals:

1. **Trainer Development**

To offer new trainers the chance to gain hands-on experience facilitating FJ sessions. The aim was to broaden the base of confident, independent Functional Juggling facilitators in our local community.

2. **Participant Wellbeing**

To offer seniors a space for joy, connection, and physical engagement—especially during a time of heightened social isolation and anxiety due to COVID-19. We designed the sessions with a strong emphasis on emotional safety, social interaction, and flow-state movement, all while respecting strict health protocols (distancing, masks, and no physical contact).

SETTING AND TOOLS

Classes took place in a spacious basement at the cultural center, chosen to accommodate safe distancing. Instead of the cozy yoga studio we initially envisioned, the open layout allowed us to divide the space into two areas:

- A **seated circle area** for reflection
- A **Juggle Board area**, where each pair had a dedicated table spaced two meters apart

On the first day, all participants chose to remain seated. Over time, however, more and more chose to stand—an encouraging sign of increasing confidence and comfort. From the beginning, we made sure chairs were always available, so participants could begin where they felt safe and explore from there.

Props included:

- Juggle Boards
- Scarves, balls, rings, clubs, poi
- Peacock feathers
- Hula hoops (introduced during the final session)

In two sessions, we moved into a smaller enclosed gym space to explore feathers and hoops. The intimate setting fostered creative chaos while maintaining group cohesion—something more difficult in the open environment.



No Age Limit – Functional Juggling with Seniors During Lockdown

Written by Wiktoria Witenberg, Odszkodnia Studio, Warsaw, Poland

Photo: Marcin Kosiński

SESSION DESIGN AND FLOW

The program ran for five weeks, with one **90-minute session per week**, always scheduled in the mornings (which we later learned was not necessarily the group's preference—more on that below).

Session Structure:

- Welcome Circle
- Brain Warm-Ups (e.g., two-hand coordination, “pianist” finger exercises for cognitive and wrist mobility)
- First Prop-Based Activity (always Juggle Board)
- Short Break
- Second Prop-Based Activity (rotating: poi, scarves, balls, feathers, hula hoop)
- Reflection and Goodbye Circle

With communicative elder groups, the opening and closing circles naturally extended longer than in other settings. Many participants expressed a strong desire to share, reflect, and connect—an important counterbalance to the isolation they had been experiencing.

Each group (maximum 12 participants) was led by one trainer and one assistant, allowing for attentive guidance throughout.

OUTCOMES AND REFLECTIONS

Trainer Development

Unfortunately, due to the second lockdown, our capacity to mentor the new trainers was limited. Much of my focus as lead facilitator had to remain on managing the sessions and safeguarding the emotional wellbeing of the group. That said, the support trainers gained valuable hands-on experience and a deeper understanding of the foundational FJ patterns.

No Age Limit – Functional Juggling with Seniors During Lockdown

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Participant Wellbeing

This goal was fully achieved. The seniors showed visible engagement and joy throughout the process, and we ended the project with a group of happy, fulfilled participants.

One important reflection emerged around scheduling. We had assumed seniors would prefer early morning sessions, but feedback revealed that many would have favored a later time. This small mismatch reminded us not to rely too heavily on assumptions—even those rooted in well-meaning logic.

To evaluate the experience, we combined verbal feedback with a creative tool: **The Blob Tree**. Participants were asked to color the character that best represented how they felt. Most chose the figure standing in the spotlight on stage. Their comments spoke of feeling seen, appreciated, and connected—after just five sessions.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

In the midst of fear and uncertainty, this project created a small but powerful pocket of community, joy, and meaning. It showed us that even with masks and distance, even during lockdown, it's possible to create spaces of shared presence.

Functional Juggling and social **circus methods** offered not just physical engagement, but emotional resilience and human connection—reminding us all that age is not a limit, but a beginning.



Designing Together - Inclusive Circus Props Through Cross-Sector Collaboration (Belgium)

Written by Elga Pollet, Circusatelier Woesh, Belgium

Circusatelier Woesh

Circusatelier Woesh is a youth circus organisation based in Bruges and Ostend that inspires communities across West Flanders. We believe in the power of circus as a medium that brings people together—regardless of age, background, experience, or talent.

Woesh pays special attention to individuals with specific support needs and is developing itself as an open learning space where artistic experimentation, education, and inclusion go hand in hand.

We do not do this alone: we work in close collaboration with a wide network of partners.



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Belgium

OVERVIEW

This case study explores a multi-year, cross-sector collaboration between **inclusive circus educators, university students, and community organizations** in Belgium. The initiative was spearheaded by me, **Elga Pollet**, together with the dedicated team at **Circusatelier Woesh**, based in the West Flanders region.

With activities spanning **Bruges, Oostende, Roeselare, and Kortrijk**, Woesh has long been committed to blending **artistic circus practices** with a deep **social mission**. The project described here was developed as part of a larger initiative called **Woeshcraft**, a long-term program dedicated to sustainable and inclusive circus development in Flanders and beyond.

In 2019, our team asked a central question: **How can we transform short-term interventions into long-lasting, self-sustaining inclusive programs?**

The result was a dual-track approach combining:

1. The creation of **Customized Circus Assistant roles** for people with disabilities
2. The **collaborative design of inclusive circus props** through academic partnerships

International collaborators such as **Craig Quat**, founder of **Quat Props**, joined us during this process—offering insight, mentorship, and validation that helped shape our work.

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Photo: Sarah Vanheuverzwijn

Track 1: Customized Circus Assistant Roles

In our workshops and outreach programs, we consistently include participants with **physical and intellectual disabilities**. While we saw meaningful moments arise from these encounters, we realized that **short-term inclusion wasn't enough**.

We wanted to go further. So, we asked ourselves: **Could people with disabilities also become facilitators and leaders within our programs?**

To test this, we partnered with local networks to create long-term **assistant positions** within our team. These assistants—adults with disabilities, elderly participants, and youth from vulnerable backgrounds—received ongoing training in:

- **Basic circus pedagogy**
- **Facilitation strategies**
- **Physical expression and sensory engagement**

One of the most effective tools we used was the **Juggle Board** system. Its **non-verbal interaction, rhythmic structure, and accessible entry point** allowed assistants to co-lead from the very beginning.

With time, our assistants took on increasingly meaningful responsibilities:

- Leading sessions in **schools, care homes, and public spaces**
- Collaborating directly with **lead facilitators** and being supported by dedicated coaches
- Learning **symbolic communication systems** or **sign language** to enhance accessibility

One of our assistant groups has now been active for **more than five years**, demonstrating the sustainability and depth of this model. Their presence has enriched our classes and brought new levels of **empathy, diversity, and shared ownership** into our pedagogy.



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Track 2: Inclusive Prop Design Through Academic Collaboration

At the same time, we identified another major obstacle: **most standard circus equipment is not designed with inclusion in mind**. In response, we **launched a design collaboration with HOWEST University of Applied Sciences**, engaging students from the **Product Design** program in a multi-year effort to prototype new, accessible tools.

For three years, multidisciplinary student teams were invited to design **new circus tools** based on a set of criteria we co-created:

- **Ease of use** (solo and group-based)
- **Sensory engagement**
- **Visible learning curves**
- **Emotional expression and flow**
- **Replicability and adaptability**

The students were challenged to move beyond conventional circus shapes and methods. With guidance from our team—and feedback from both educators and participants—they developed **dozens of prototypes**. Some used **low-tech recycled materials**; others explored **3D printing** and **interchangeable systems**.

Notable creations included:

- **Sensory juggling towers**
- **Rolling frames for large-group manipulation**
- **Adapted flower sticks and flipper boards**
- **Ring sticks and “juggle mill” tools**
- **Modular toolkits** that could shift functions depending on user needs

We were also fortunate to host **Craig Quat** as a visiting mentor. He observed presentation sessions, participated in user-testing, and helped students reflect on how to **focus on ability and process**, rather than only compensating for limitations.



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Photo: Sarah Vanheuverzwijn

OUTCOMES

The results of this collaboration have been both **practical and cultural**.

Practically, the project:

- Produced over **15 inclusive circus prototypes**
- Created **10+ long-term assistant roles** for people with disabilities
- Enabled successful testing of new tools in real community contexts

Culturally, the project:

- Built bridges between **art, therapy, and design**
- Offered students and staff **firsthand experiences of accessibility**
- Sparked **interdisciplinary conversations** that continue to evolve
- Strengthened our organization's internal **capacity for inclusion**

Perhaps most importantly, the project shifted how everyone involved—participants, designers, teachers—**saw themselves**. Not just as recipients or observers, but as **co-creators of a shared vision** for an inclusive future in circus.

NEXT STEPS

Our work continues under the banner: **Woeshcraft**—a platform for further development, reflection, and exchange. Our current priorities include:

- Publishing **“Adopt-a-Prop” open-source manuals** for our designs
- Building a **feedback loop** with other practitioners who adapt the tools
- Deepening partnerships with **rehabilitation and care organizations**
- Continuing to integrate assistants into our **regular class programming**
- Publishing a publication about how to work with **groups with special needs** as a circusteacher.
- Structurally coöperate with partners to work with functional juggling in a **therapeutic context** one-on-one.

Designing Together - Inclusive Circus Props Through Cross-Sector Collaboration (Belgium)

Written by Elga Pollet, Director of Circusatelier Woesh, Belgium

Photo: Sarah Vanheuverzwijn

CONCLUSION

This project demonstrated that inclusion in circus requires both **structural adaptation (props, roles)** and **organizational commitment**. We confirmed that when participants are given real responsibility and tools that match their needs, they contribute in meaningful ways—often beyond expectations.

Through the dual approach of training **Differently Abled Circus Assistants** and developing **accessible tools in partnership with HOWEST**, we created new roles and new props that expand participation in concrete ways.

The results were transformative. We now have **long-term assistants embedded in our programs**, a **catalogue of inclusive prototypes**, and a growing network of partners who are rethinking what circus can look like.

This is a **living process**. We're eager to connect with others who are imagining new ways for circus to include everyone—and we hope this work **sparks new ideas and partnerships**, because **circus only becomes truly inclusive when we design it together**.

Movement and Play in Early Childhood Education

Written by Marc Bielert. NICA e.V., Halle, Germany

NICA e.V

NICA e.V. sees itself as a network that disseminates and develops inclusive circus educational methods. Our work is based on project work, research, development and knowledge transfer. We strengthen regional, statewide, European and international networks for inclusive circus education and carry out projects with different target groups.

In collaboration with universities, we evaluate inclusive circus educational methods. We bring together different methods and develop them further. With further training, workshops and integration of the methods into the learning environment, we promote the transfer of knowledge.

We operate both regionally and internationally.



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Germany

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

This case study explores a long-term circus workshop delivered in a **kindergarten located in a socially disadvantaged area of Eastern Germany**. The project became a valued and consistent part of the weekly routine, engaging a **highly diverse group of children aged 1.5 to 6 years**. According to the kindergarten director, approximately **90% of the children spoke German as a second or even third language**. This linguistic landscape created a persistent communication challenge: some children had learned to signal understanding to please adults, even when confused.

This required facilitators to develop **strong sensitivity to both verbal and non-verbal cues**. The team, composed of **two facilitators with 4 to 15 years of experience** in inclusive circus work and academic backgrounds in **Educational Sciences and Social Pedagogy**, encountered a familiar reality in under-resourced communities: a **dedicated but understaffed educational team**. This limited the kindergarten's ability to offer individualized support, making the external workshop a welcomed addition to the children's lives.



Movement and Play in Early Childhood Education

Written by Marc Bielert, NICA e.V., Halle, Germany

PHILOSOPHY AND PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

The project was guided by a **simple yet powerful principle**: children are exposed to a **wide variety of movement experiences in a playful setting**. The pedagogical approach emphasized **equality, eye-level interaction**, and the creation of a **low-pressure, exploratory atmosphere**. Success was defined not by performance, but by **engagement, curiosity**, and the **freedom to try, fail, and try again**.

This gentle environment coexisted with **clear structure and boundaries**. Facilitators maintained **rules and adult authority when needed**, ensuring safety and group cohesion. At the same time, children were encouraged to **navigate minor social conflicts independently**, fostering **negotiation and self-regulation skills**.

MATERIALS AND ENVIRONMENT

Workshops were held in a **small sports room** transformed using both **specialized and traditional circus equipment**, including:

- **Juggle Boards**, enabling structured pattern exploration without scattered balls
- **Newton Devices**, for controlled tossing and coordination
- **Curved Wobble Boards**, for balance, crawling, and rolling
- **Parkour elements**, such as beams and mats for gross motor development
- Later additions: **poi, hula hoops, scarves**, and **spinning plates** to enrich sensory and movement variety

This environment was designed to be both **inviting and developmentally supportive**, allowing children to explore movement freely while fostering key motor skills.



Movement and Play in Early Childhood Education

Written by Marc Bielert, NICA e.V., Halle, Germany

WORKSHOP DESIGN FOR TODDLERS (AGES 1.5-3)

Participation was always voluntary. To ensure fairness, **children were selected through a mix of random choice and educator recommendation**. The team aimed for a low trainer-to-child ratio (ideally 1:4) to provide the individual attention otherwise unavailable.

Each **60-minute session followed a ritualized structure**:

- A **welcome song with movement** created rhythm and psychological safety
- Immediate engagement with **physical play**, including parkour and Juggle Board games
- **Finger-plays and familiar songs** provided structure and focus
- To prevent overstimulation, **no recorded music** was used—only **live group singing**
- A **farewell song** and a **coloring picture** as a participation token closed the session

This predictable sequence offered **comfort and rhythm** to a group too young for complex narrative structures.

WORKSHOP DESIGN FOR PRE-SCHOOLERS (AGES 4-6)

The 90-minute sessions for older children built upon the same foundations but were **enriched with a narrative arc**. Each session was tied to **one of five stories**, each linked to a **puzzle piece** that served as a **motivational and symbolic anchor**.

The activities followed a dynamic flow:

- **High-energy parkour**
- **Focused coordination** with the Newton Device
- **Cooperative, calming play** on the Juggle Boards

As children completed each phase, they **earned a new puzzle piece**, creating a sense of **progression and excitement**. **Recorded music and movement games** like freeze dance were incorporated to sustain energy and enjoyment.



Movement and Play in Early Childhood Education

Written by Marc Bielert, NICA e.V., Halle, Germany

Photo: Zbyszek Malewski

OUTCOMES AND OBSERVATIONS

Short-term outcomes were **consistently positive**. Children were **joyful and deeply engaged**. Facilitators observed improvements in **physical abilities** (balance, coordination), **cognitive development** (concentration, focus), and **social confidence**.

A striking observation was the **sustained attention of toddlers**. Children as young as 1.5 years remained focused for the **entire session**—a fact noted with **astonishment by the regular educators**.

The project's strengths—**eye-level interaction, low-pressure play, and empowerment in conflict resolution**—created a deeply **nurturing environment**. However, the very success of the program posed a challenge: **demand consistently exceeded capacity**. The children's enthusiasm made it emotionally difficult to limit group size, and the **ideal trainer ratio was occasionally stretched**.

EVOLVING PRACTICE AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Over its **seven-year evolution**, the project methodology has continued to adapt. For the older group, facilitators are now **shifting away from rigid narratives** toward **more open-ended, child-led activities**. Traditional circus skills like **poi and plate spinning** are becoming more central.

Additionally, facilitators are **incorporating children's favorite songs** into free-play segments, enhancing **personal relevance and emotional connection**. The project continues to explore how to maintain its **core values of inclusivity and engagement**, while responding flexibly to changing needs and interests.



An Adaptive Circus Pedagogy Workshop for Children with Special Needs

Written by Marc Bielert, NICA e.V., Halle, Germany

PROJECT OVERVIEW AND TARGET GROUP

This case study documents a five-day circus pedagogy workshop for a group of 10 children, aged 7–10 years, from a school for students with intellectual and physical disabilities, held in autumn 2024 in Halle, Germany. The participant group presented a wide spectrum of needs, from significant behavioral challenges to cerebral palsy. This diversity required a highly individualized and flexible pedagogical framework.

The project was staffed to ensure a high level of support, with three professional trainers (from our society NICA e.V.), one volunteer, and 5–6 school personnel (teachers, integration assistants), resulting in a support ratio of nearly 1:1 (roughly 1:3 in regards to our team).

WORKSHOP FRAMEWORK AND TEAM COMPOSITION

The workshop was conducted in a small circus tent on the school grounds, providing a dedicated and protected environment. The daily three-hour sessions were based on circus pedagogy, adapted for an inclusive setting.

The training team's qualifications included extensive professional experience in inclusive circus work (ranging from 4 to 15 years), with academic backgrounds in Educational Sciences and Social Pedagogy. A key structural element was the division of the team: two trainers led group activities while one conducted individualized 10-minute sessions with each child daily.



An Adaptive Circus Pedagogy Workshop for Children with Special Needs

Written by Marc Bielert, NICA e.V., Halle, Germany

Photo: Sarah Vanheuverzwijn

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project was designed to achieve the following objectives:

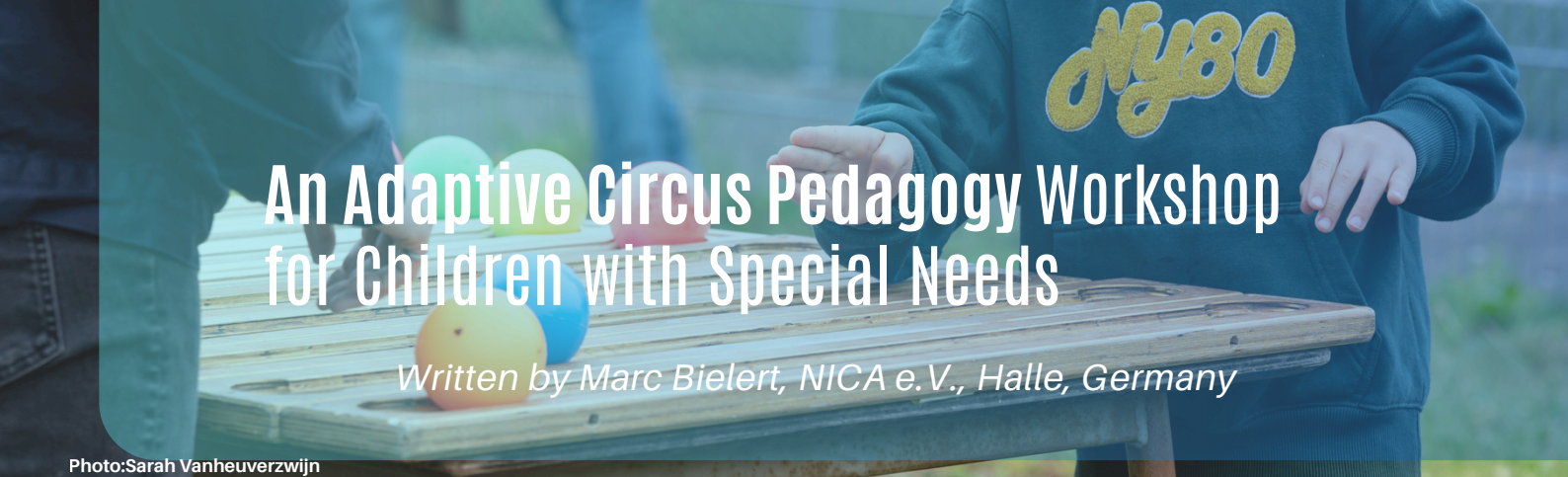
- **Needs-Oriented Experience:** Provide novel movement experiences focused on positive engagement and enjoyment, rather than performance metrics.
- **Accessibility:** Ensure all activities were accessible to every child, regardless of their specific disability.
- **Efficacy Assessment:** Evaluate the potential for observable progress within a short, intensive timeframe of individualized training in a one-on-one session.
- **Systematic Documentation:** Implement a standardized documentation process for individual sessions to track progress and ensure continuity between trainers.
- **Methodological Feasibility:** Demonstrate the viability of integrating resource-intensive, one-on-one training within a group workshop structure and within tight financial constraints.

METHODOLOGIES AND PEDAGOGICAL ADAPTATION

The workshop utilized established inclusive methods such as **Functional Juggling, Spin Poi, and Hula Hoop Integral**, as well as ideas also present in the **IN.ZIRQUE method**. A central part of our work involved adapting activities based on participant responses.

A clear example of this process was the introduction of a **“Tic-Tac-Toe” running game**. Our initial design, which required strategic thinking and multi-step rule-following, proved to be a pedagogical misjudgment, as it was too cognitively demanding for the group. This prompted an immediate methodological shift. We **deconstructed the game into its core competencies: color recognition and spatial organization**, and introduced simpler sorting and pattern-making activities using the same or similar materials.

After building these foundational skills in a playful context, we reintroduced the original game, which the children were then able to engage with successfully. **This incident highlighted the necessity of assessing and building prerequisite skills before introducing complex tasks.**



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Photo: Sarah Vanheuverzwijn

DAILY SCHEDULE

Each day started with a **group welcome and warm-up games** followed by concurrent group activities (acrobatics, balancing, etc.) and **individualized 10-minute training sessions**, as well as **shared breaks** to eat, drink and socialize. Each day ended with **cool-down and massage games**, and a **daily feedback round** to guide the next day's planning.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

Participant Progression: Observable progress was noted across the group. A significant outcome was observed with a **non-verbal child with cerebral palsy** who had previously shown minimal reaction to external stimuli. Through consistent, one-on-one work with a rolling ball, the child began to participate in a **reciprocal back-and-forth interaction** by the end of the week. This demonstrated the potential of targeted, patient intervention.

It is also worth noting that the progress for different children could be dependent on different trainers (some kids only opened up to female trainers, others only to male ones). This highlights that **it's very beneficial to have a diverse group of trainers**, both in gender and other aspects.

The project was characterized by a **high degree of operational fluidity**, largely attributable to extensive **pre-project planning**, including preparatory meetings with the school to understand the specific needs and potential challenges of the participants.

KEY LEARNINGS AND SUCCESS FACTORS

The project's effectiveness can be attributed to several factors:

- **The Value of Real-Time Adaptation:** The "Tic-Tac-Toe" example underscores that success was not contingent on a flawless initial plan, but on the team's ability to recognize a failing approach and restructure it based on direct observation of the children's needs.
- **Structured Individualization:** The systematic documentation of 10-minute individual sessions proved highly effective. It provided concrete data for progress evaluation and allowed different trainers to work with the same child without loss of continuity.

An Adaptive Circus Pedagogy Workshop for Children with Special Needs

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Photo: Sarah Vanheuverzwijn

CONCLUSION

The **high staff-to-participant ratio** and the **open collaboration** between our trainers and the school's staff created a **supportive and responsive environment** for all participants.

The project also illustrates the value of a **highly structured yet flexible pedagogical approach** in working with children with diverse and complex needs. The combination of **proactive planning, systematic individualization**, and the **willingness to adapt methodologies** in response to direct participant feedback were critical to the project's positive outcomes. It demonstrates that even within a short timeframe, **targeted and needs-oriented interventions can facilitate meaningful engagement and observable progress**.



Where Movement Finds Us

Inclusive circus in a Therapeutic Group Context

Written by Jael Rodriguez, Hula Hoop Integral fundator

Hula Hoop Integral

Hula Hoop Integral is a pedagogical and artistic project born in Latin America that explores the hoop as a tool for learning, expression, and social transformation. Its approach combines play, movement, and inclusion, offering accessible experiences for people of all ages and backgrounds. Through trainings, workshops, and community-based actions, the project fosters collaborative networks and sensitive methodologies centered on the body, creativity, and diversity.



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Argentina

CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS

During the second half of 2023, as part of a **pedagogical tour across Europe**, I was invited by colleagues from the field of social circus to participate in a **therapeutic space for neurodivergent youth** between the ages of 8 and 15.

The center, located in Eastern Europe, was made up of an **interdisciplinary team of educators, psychologists, and movement therapists** who carried out individual and group sessions for children and adolescents with **varying support needs**.

At that time, I had been facilitating workshops across several European countries, including in **schools, day centers, and creative settings**, with a focus on **Juggling and Inclusive Hoop Practice**. This methodology promotes **motor, sensory, and social development** through a **playful, expressive, and accessible approach**. It provides tools and object manipulation techniques that are **adapted to the individual and the context**.

In this case, I joined as an **external facilitator** to support an ongoing process, offering a series of **weekly sessions co-led with the local team**.

FRAMEWORK OF THE PROCESS

The sessions were held in a **spacious room with padded flooring** and access to materials such as **mats, ropes, balls, scarves, and hoops**. Each session lasted **one hour**, and the group was composed of five young participants and three adult facilitators. Some of the youth also attended individual sessions before or after the group activity.



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The space was thoughtfully prepared to support sensory regulation, respectful interaction, and the autonomy of each participant. The proposed dynamics included movement circuits, coordination games, object-based exercises, and moments of shared observation, all driven by exploration rather than performance.

OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The overall aim of the process was **to support motor, cognitive, and social development** through play with circus elements. More specifically, we aimed to:

- Stimulate visual-motor coordination and body awareness.
- Encourage interaction among peers in a safe, supportive environment.
- Promote positive, joyful experiences of movement and self-expression.

The *Hula hoop Integral* allowed each activity to be adapted to the group's rhythms and needs, blending structure with flexibility. The goal was not to perform a "correct technique" but to offer meaningful experiences through repetition, spatial perception, rhythmic flow, and creative interaction.

SESSION DYNAMICS AND STRUCTURE

Each session followed a consistent three-part structure:

1. **Welcome and sensory warm-up:** breathing, gentle activation, and simple rhythmic games.
2. Guided exploration with objects: movement circuits, pair games, exchanges, or tossing activities depending on the day.
3. **Closing and farewell:** relaxation, observation, or free expression.

Some examples of activities included:

- Passing scarves in pairs.
- Synchronized walking with hoops placed on different body parts.
- Movement circuits involving balance, jumping, and object manipulation.
- Group improvisations in which each person proposed a movement to be replicated or transformed.

Each session was supported by at least two other adults in addition to myself, ensuring personalized attention and emotional grounding for the group.





Where Movement Finds Us Inclusive circus in a Therapeutic Group Context

Written by Jael Rodriguez, Hula Hoop Integral fundator

OBSERVED CHANGES

Over the course of the process, we observed significant progress in several areas:

- **Motor skills:** improved balance, bilateral coordination, and manipulation confidence.
- **Social engagement:** increased spontaneous interactions, shared attention, and cooperative actions that were initially rare or absent.
- **Expressive capacity:** visible enjoyment, independent play proposals, and growing openness to shared activities.

One of the most valuable aspects of the experience was sustaining a group environment in which every participant could feel included—without pressure, without judgment, and with enough emotional support to explore from a place of curiosity and pleasure.

CHALLENGES AND LEARNING

The process was not without its challenges. Some sessions were affected by fatigue or emotional dysregulation among participants, requiring on-the-spot adjustments to reduce stimulation or simplify the activity. Communication among facilitators also presented obstacles due to language differences, which encouraged us to rely more on visual cues, gestures, and relational presence.

One of the most meaningful lessons was recognizing the importance of the group's inner rhythm and **how each person contributes something essential through their own unique way of being**. I also reaffirmed the value of facilitating without imposing—allowing responses to arise from the relationship itself rather than from instruction.

CONCLUSION

This experience confirmed the potential of Inclusive Circus Spaces as a tool for bridging body, emotion, and connection. Without the need for constant verbalization or standardized goals, the group experienced genuine moments of discovery, coordination, expression, and belonging.

By cultivating a shared movement language and inviting participation without pressure or hierarchy, the group became a space where joy, focus, and connection could take root—offering meaningful support for both individual development and collective well-being.



Weaving Routines in Confinement An Online Hula Hoop Workshop (2021)

Written by Jael Rodriguez, Hula Hoop Integral fundator

PARTICIPANT PROFILE

This experience took place during the global lockdown of 2021. The workshop was delivered online and aimed at a group of ten women between the ages of 20 and 46. Some were independent practitioners, while others belonged to educational or artistic institutions. The common thread was the shared need to reconnect with movement, play and creation in a time marked by isolation.

CONTEXT AND INTENT

As an artist and educator, I have been developing the **Hula Hoop Integral** methodology for over ten years—a practice that weaves together movement pedagogy, inclusive circus, and sensory exploration with hoops. Since 2019, I've also been part of the **Quat Props network**, actively collaborating in the development of Functional Juggling training processes.

At the time, these practices were already being shared and explored in different territories, and their adaptability to digital contexts was part of the learning process.

The intention was not only to learn new skills but to approach technical language through **body awareness, accessibility, and experimentation**. The process invited each participant to explore composition from a space of autonomy and collective sensitivity—reconnecting with the body through play during lockdown.

OBJECTIVES

- To offer playful and pedagogical tools for composing movement with hula hoops
- To share the conceptual and practical foundations of Functional Juggling adapted for the digital context
- To build a shared time and space for movement, imagination, and creation from home



Weaving Routines in Confinement An Online Hula Hoop Workshop (2021)

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STRUCTURE AND TOOLS

Sessions were held via videoconference. The diversity of domestic spaces and internet conditions required a flexible approach and great creativity. Participants used the materials they had on hand: **hula hoops, balls, scarves, rings, socks, or fruit.**

The virtual space itself became part of the process, with **pauses, improvisations, and adaptations** that enriched the dynamic. There was no assistant in the sessions, but ongoing support was offered via **group chat and email**. The group was closely accompanied in their processes, encouraging **peer exchange and feedback**.

Each session followed a consistent structure:

- Warm-up and regulation using breath, rhythm, and body mapping
- Sensory and technical exploration with hula hoops and/or household objects
- Creative task or compositional challenge
- Group sharing and reflection (when bandwidth and time allowed)

PEDAGOGICAL ADAPTATIONS

Facilitation emphasized accessibility and improvisation. Some of the adaptive strategies included:

- **The Five-Step Learning Model**, applied from the start using 3 objects (e.g. socks or hoops) instead of progressive addition.
- **Tactile and contact-based variations** (rolling, sliding, bouncing) in place of toss juggling.
- **Use of the floor as a base** for creating fixed movement pathways.
- **Spatial sequencing maps**, developed with 2–4 hoops placed on the ground to guide repetition and pattern formation.
- **Camera framing as part of the composition**, encouraging awareness of space, orientation, and gesture.



Weaving Routines in Confinement An Online Hula Hoop Workshop (2021)

Written by Jael Rodriguez, Hula Hoop Integral fundator

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

The initial goal of facilitating an enjoyable and expressive learning space was achieved. Beyond that, several participants who had never used more than one or two objects at once reported breakthroughs with multi-object patterns. Many managed to replicate elements of the methodology in their own teaching or artistic practices.

The creative capacity of the group turned **limitations into possibilities**. This revealed not only the flexibility of Functional Juggling but also the richness of hula hoop as a **vehicle for inclusion and bodily composition**.

Participants developed:

- Increased capacity to explore **multi-object compositions**
- A sense of connection and **collective creativity**, even in a virtual format
- Confidence to integrate new approaches into their own educational or performative work

CHALLENGES AND CREATIVE DEVIATIONS

Unstable internet connections, limited physical space, and improvisation with non-traditional objects were common. But these deviations, far from being a problem, **strengthened collective trust and flexibility**—turning each obstacle into part of the path.

Sometimes a lack of materials led to improvisation. A piece of fruit or a pillow could replace a hoop. A toddler interrupting class became an opportunity for laughter and group bonding. These moments of **relational presence and spontaneity** helped deepen the process.



Weaving Routines in Confinement

An Online Hula Hoop Workshop (2021)

Written by Jael Rodriguez, Hula Hoop Integral fundator

FINAL REFLECTION

One of the most meaningful aspects of this experience was the **possibility of building shared time**, where the body—even at a distance—became a bridge of connection. The screen was not just a limitation; it was also a stage for **mutual listening and observation**.

“I never thought I could juggle with more than two hoops. Now not only do I do it—I teach it to my students.”

— Participant feedback

This case study affirms the capacity of inclusive circus pedagogy to adapt to new formats while maintaining its core intention: to create **sensitive, joyful, and meaningful learning environments**, even under constraint.

Functional Juggling to Support Writing Tool Proficiency in a Child with ADHD

Written by Craig Quat, Quat Props fundator, United States

Quat Props

Quat Props founded by Craig Quat, is an international initiative dedicated to advancing accessibility and inclusion through juggling. By developing innovative tools such as the Juggle Board, the project reconceptualizes juggling as a medium for education, therapy, and social engagement rather than solely performance. Its pedagogical framework emphasizes functional play, adaptability, and emotional learning, enabling diverse communities to use juggling as a pathway for regulation, collaboration, and creative expression.



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United States

INITIAL CHALLENGE

A 9-year-old boy diagnosed with ADHD began attending my circus school in New Jersey, accompanied by his mother, who was seeking support for his struggles with handwriting. Despite being physically capable and cognitively sharp, he found writing frustrating and unengaging. Completing assignments was a battle, and he had developed a strong aversion to the tools themselves. His mother believed his low academic performance was directly tied to his ADHD.

Rather than addressing handwriting directly, I introduced **Functional Juggling** as a way to shift the entire **emotional and sensory relationship** with writing tools. My goal wasn't just to improve motor control, but to reframe how he experienced the activity—transforming it from a task he dreaded into a game he could enjoy.

CREATING PLAYFUL REPETITION

We began with the **Juggle Board**, using its structured rhythm and nonverbal language to spark curiosity. Once he was engaged in that system of play, I replaced the board with a large sheet of paper and swapped the juggling balls for five **colored markers**.

We used the same **sequencing logic**—picking up, passing, and placing the markers—to draw mirrored patterns across the page. Instead of copying letters or words, he was exploring movement through color and shape, with each drawing forming part of a fluid, rhythmic sequence.

Functional Juggling to Support Writing Tool Proficiency in a Child with ADHD

Written by Craig Quat. Quat Props fundator, United States

ENGAGEMENT THROUGH CREATIVITY

He embraced the format quickly—especially when we incorporated **creative themes** like animals, houses, or imaginary creatures. These themes required not only motor coordination, but also **interpretation, adaptation, and collaboration**. They brought the task to life.

We told stories through drawings. We made jokes. We improvised. Sometimes we worked in silence, other times we built elaborate worlds together. His **attention and motivation exceeded all expectations**.

At the end of each session, he took home his drawings with pride—something he could show, share, and revisit.

PROGRESS THROUGH PLAY

What stood out wasn't just the technical progress—it was the emotional shift. During our first session, he told me he thought writing was "stupid." By the end, he didn't want to put the markers down. He was excited to show his work to his sister. That shift was rapid—and real.

Over time, his **motor control, bilateral coordination, and cross-midline movement** improved significantly. His **writing proficiency** surpassed expectations. But more importantly, his relationship to the tools had changed. He no longer resisted. He wanted to engage.





Functional Juggling to Support Writing Tool Proficiency in a Child with ADHD

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REFLECTIONS AND OUTCOMES

His mother was pleased—especially by the academic gains. But for me, the deeper transformation was social-emotional. What had once been a source of stress and shame had become a **point of pride and connection**.

This case reminded me that juggling isn't just about movement. It's about how we relate to objects, to rhythm, to ourselves. In this case, it was about a pencil—or, more precisely, what the pencil had come to represent.

By meeting this child in play, we rewrote his emotional script. We created space for autonomy, expression, and joy. We didn't just train a skill—we **transformed a relationship**.

SCALABILITY AND APPLICATION

This approach requires minimal resources and can be replicated across classrooms, clinics, or home settings. Educators, therapists, and caregivers can adapt the structure using simple tools like markers, paper, or everyday objects—so long as the guiding principles remain:

- **Structured repetition**
- **Embodied rhythm**
- **Playful interaction**

When we offer movement-based learning in a joyful, accessible format, we don't just teach skills—we help build confidence, reshape perception, and create lasting emotional resilience.

Functional Juggling as a Tool for Motor Development and Social Integration in a Job Training Context

Written by Craig Quat. Quat Props fundator, United States

SETTING THE SCENE

A 26-year-old man with Down syndrome was attending a job training center in New Jersey several times a week. His goal: to develop the practical skills needed for employment in a restaurant. One of those skills was pouring water into glasses—a deceptively simple task that, in practice, required a combination of motor coordination, focus, and timing.

The original intervention had him repeat the action with one hand, always from the same side, and without crossing his body or engaging socially. It was rigid, repetitive, and disconnected from real restaurant environments. And crucially—it didn't motivate him.

A FUNCTIONAL JUGGLING APPROACH

That's where Functional Juggling came in.

I introduced a playful, rhythmic system using the **Juggle Board** to create a foundation of patterned, bilateral movement. Once this rhythm was established, we transitioned to **cups of water—five on each side**—exchanging water instead of balls. The goal wasn't just to reduce spillage; it was to build coordination, cognitive flexibility, and the ability to *move while staying socially present*.

This participant was highly social—something that had previously been labeled as a distraction. But in our sessions, his social nature became a strength. The structure allowed him to stay physically active while engaging in conversation. Verbal prompts became unnecessary. He followed the **nonverbal cues and visual rhythms** built into the practice to guide each movement.



Functional Juggling as a Tool for Motor Development and Social Integration in a Job Training Context

Written by Craig Quat. Quat Props fundator, United States

Photo: Sarah Vanheuverzwijn

STRUCTURE AND TRACKING PROGRESS

Each session lasted around 12 minutes and followed a consistent structure. To monitor progress, we filled **five glasses with exactly 5 ounces** of water each (25 ounces total). After each session, we measured how much remained to calculate the amount spilled.

In the **first session**, he spilled nearly half—about 12 ounces. But he remained motivated and fully engaged.

By the **third session**, that loss had dropped to less than 4 ounces.

The improvement wasn't just in the numbers—it was in the quality of movement and joy of participation.

A SHIFT IN REPETITION AND ENGAGEMENT

Before Functional Juggling, traditional sessions involved about **200–300 repetitions over 40 minutes**, often with waning focus. With Functional Juggling, in just 12 minutes, he reached **over 600 repetitions**—not out of pressure, but from continuous, rhythmic play. The high-volume repetition was embedded in a format that felt fun, natural, and self-reinforcing.

Even more significant was the change in *form*. He began to use both hands, work across his midline, and maintain fluidity. He started experimenting—changing timing, alternating patterns, improvising. These were signs not just of improvement, but of ownership. He wasn't just practicing the task—he was playing *inside* it.



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TRANSFER OF SKILL AND RECOGNITION

The transfer to real-world settings was immediate. He was cleared to handle water-pouring duties at the restaurant where he was training.

- His **supervisor** noticed improved posture, confidence, and initiative.
- His **therapist** praised the method and began integrating elements into broader programming.
- His **parents** were amazed at how proudly he demonstrated his new skill at home.

SCALABILITY AND APPLICATION

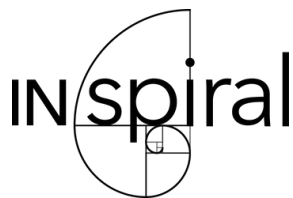
This model of Functional Juggling can be implemented with minimal resources and adapted across many support settings. Therapists and educators can recreate the structure using cups, markers, or other everyday objects—focusing on **high-repetition, low-pressure engagement**.

By maintaining a rhythm-based structure that supports **bilateral movement, social connection, and playful interaction**, the method scales easily for one-on-one or small group use. Its benefits extend to neurodiverse learners and individuals working on **life skills**—offering a pathway to **confidence, autonomy, and skill mastery** through accessible embodied play.





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Erasmus+



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This book explores a growing movement that uses circus reimagined as a powerful tool for human connection. Through real-world stories, discover how adaptive play is unlocking potential and creating moments of joy, healing, and belonging for people of all abilities.

Thank you for the contributors, for the community and for you the readers.