PLAY IN A COVID FRAME

EVERYDAY PANDEMIC CREATIVITY IN A TIME OF ISOLATION

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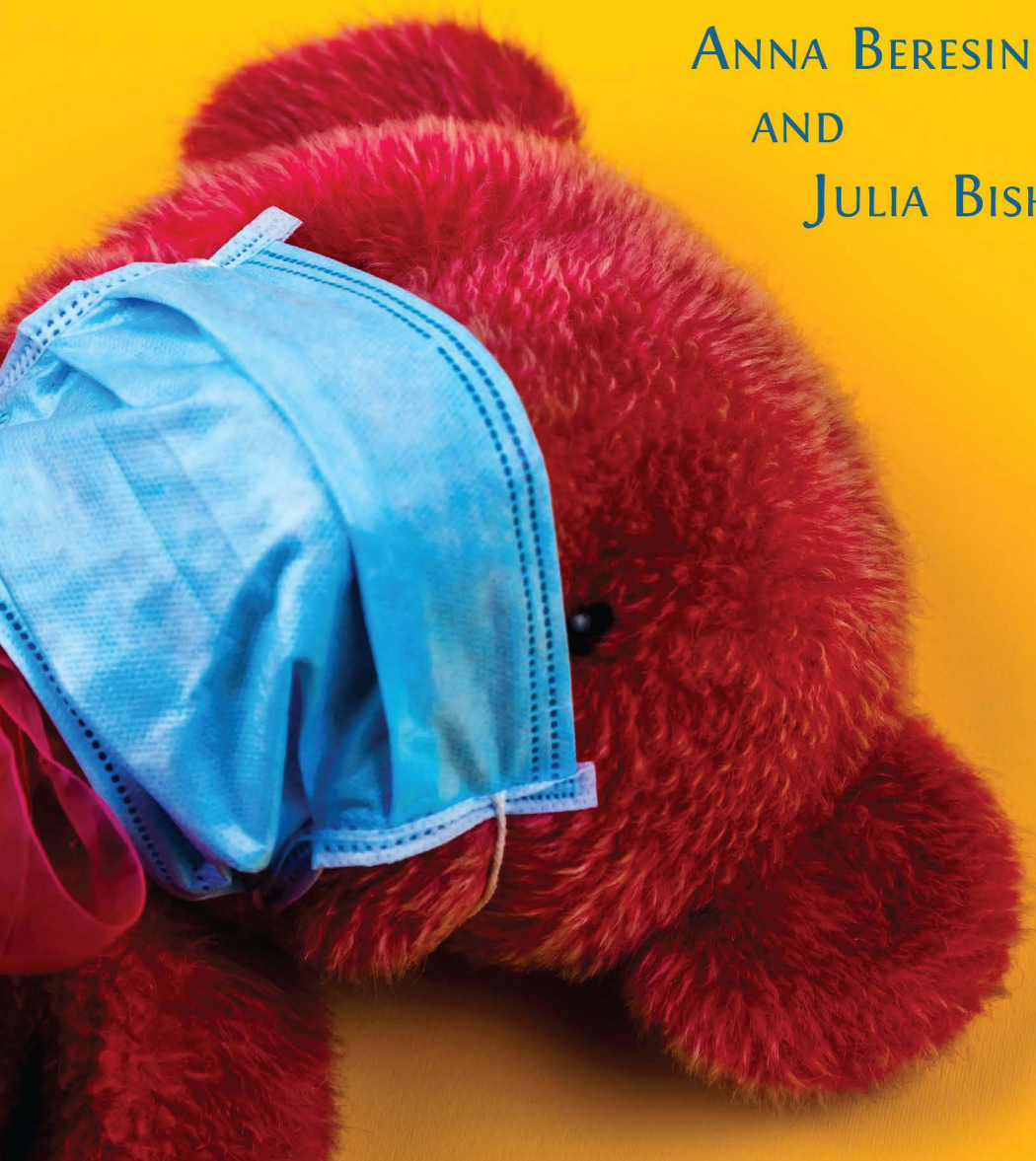

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2. Gathered in Play: Play as the Common Space during the Covid-19 Lockdown in Serbia

Živka Krnjaja and Nevena Mitranić

Introduction

The devastating effects of Covid-19 led to health, economic and social crisis, threatening all aspects of life and the basic norms of the functioning of human society (Krnjaja 2021). It is unpredictable for how long the crisis might continue and whether life will ever return to 'life as we know it'. A particularly troubling question is how current conditions might impact future generations. Although children were not so heavily influenced by the first waves of the virus, mental health specialists warned that they were all—or soon would be—psychologically suffering from the consequences of the pandemic (Villarreal 2020). Experts of various profiles warn of increased depression, anxiety, aggression and dependence on digital technologies, even among the youngest (Fegert et al. 2020; Montag and Elhai 2020). The most endangered group might be children of preschool age, whose learning and development are conditioned by opportunities to achieve quality relationships with peers and adults, to participate and contribute in their close environments, to create purpose in joint activities with others and to playfully research, develop and express their ideas (Pavlović Breneselović 2010)—all of which was denied to them in the conditions of a pandemic.

Families, especially the guardians of small children, experienced great social pressure. A review of the available texts created for families

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during the Covid-19 crisis indicates that the responsibilities they took on focused on issues of physical health and hygiene, mental health of the child and the entire family, compensation for the lack of social relations and occasions, and educational progress through joint participation in educational activities (Purešević 2021). Knowing that a lot of families have more than one child and that most of the guardians still had their own jobs to attend to, at least remotely, it is clear that the task of 'keeping it together' in a time of crisis was not easy—and still is not so.

During 2020, families and children in Serbia were faced with the same challenges mentioned above. On 16 March 2020, a state of emergency and physical isolation was declared in Serbia. Nationwide lockdown followed with the closure of all non-essential businesses and all educational institutions. However, it was imperative to maintain education in any manner possible, so it was transferred in Serbia (as elsewhere) to a digital environment. This sudden shift to distance learning proved to be a challenge, revealing a lack of digital competencies more amongst adults than amongst children, and a lack of devices in many homes, but mostly revealing confusion as to where the sudden changes were leading us, and which educational values we should strive to cherish (Miškeljin 2021).

In view of the need to establish remote support for children, families, and practitioners in education, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development (MOESTD), working together with the Department of Preschool Pedagogy (Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade), determined the priorities of the preschool education system in the publication *Preschool Upbringing and Education during the Covid-19 Epidemic* (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development 2020). As in many other countries (see, for example, Pramling Samuelsson, Wagner and Ødegard 2020), maintaining communication and supporting children and families was considered a top priority during the closure.

According to the National Preschool Curriculum Framework *Years of Ascent* (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development 2018), the family is considered the primary educator of a child and the first context in which a child's learning and development take place. During lockdown, the preschool education system was responsible for empowering families by offering information, advice, and ideas for joint participation of children and adults in different activities, promoting

a sense of belonging, togetherness, and the development of creativity as main priorities (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development 2020). Preschool teachers were encouraged to communicate with children and families through different available means and media (such as Viber, YouTube, and Facebook), offering them new resources, useful information, and a platform for mutual communication and exchange. Suggestions for resources and information, as well as proposals that might be made or given, resolutely stress the importance of common play between children and adults.

As a priority for its actions, the MOESTD declared the mobilization and activation of all theresources available in the system of preschool education to competently respond to the challenges society was facing (Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development 2020). Through joint action of different partners in the preschool educational system (educational policymakers, researchers, practitioners), the MOESTD established the website *Let's Connect, Let's Empowerin the Covid-19 Crisis* as a public digital repository of relevant information and inspiring materials for guardians and practitioners. One of the sections on the website is specifically intended for suggestions for common play created by the Department of Preschool Pedagogy and various practitioners who work in preschool institutions (preschool teachers, pedagogues, and psychologists).

With the desire to nurture a sense of togetherness in the ethical and pedagogical relation of joint research and mutual care, the teachers from the Department of Preschool Pedagogy and the students taking the undergraduate course 'Child's Play and Creativity' developed a resource entitled *The Treasury for Common Play between Children and Adults*. The *Treasury* is an illustrated publication with suggestions about different playful situations and activities that children and parents could undertake while isolating at home. The *Treasury* was also meant to serve preschool teachers in communicating suggestions to families and creating new treasuries together with them. In the digital version, the *Treasury* was posted on the *Let's Connect, Let's Empower in the Covid-19 Crisis* website as well as on the official websites of various professional associations and organizations for parents.

In this paper, we will present an understanding of play which serves as a basis for this common action of teachers and students and *The Treasury for Common Play between Children and Adults*. Further, we

will present a study of families' experiences of participation in different situations and activities encouraged by the *Treasury* during isolation.

How We Gathered in Play

Research Context

When the lockdown in Serbia was announced, the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade switched to online classes. Working through digital collaborative and conferencing platforms, we as teachers tried to create space for students to understand their professional role in the conditions of the Covid-19 crisis and to strengthen their competencies to support children and families. It was important for us to model possible ways to connect the higher education community with policymakers and practitioners as a key aspect of the professional engagement of a pedagogue and to provide students with an opportunity to gain experience and learn through active involvement in supporting the preschool education community during the crisis. As a result, we suggested that students jointly prepare a collection of playful situations and activities in which children and adults could engage together during home isolation.

We consider the task of advocating for play and building support for children and adults to play together in times of crisis highly beneficial. Play is recognized as an essential right of every child (United Nations 1989) and promoted as important even in periods of crisis. Through previous research into child's play in different emergency contexts, play's strong potential for the development of rehabilitation and resilience has been well established (Feldman 2019). Play has been seen as a powerful medium through which children manage their emotions, examine difficult situations, experiment with possible reactions and outcomes, and gain a feeling of control (International Play Association 2020; Feldman 2019). But advocating for play in times of crisis is often subordinated to a therapeutic-rehabilitation framework, which uses play as a 'diversion' for rehabilitative and educational activities to orientate children towards certain objectives (Boyd Webb 2015).

In a post-developmental paradigm shift, which we promote through our faculty courses with students, the transformative and creative

potential of play has been positioned as central to its importance. Play drives the capacity for flexibility to act in changed conditions, to look for alternatives and, following them, to act autonomously and competently. Dealing with the experiences and the environment through the acts of play opens up possibilities for the child to twist the boundaries of everyday events, to reinterpret their own and others' deeds, and to create different spacetimes that have the potential to alter previously established meanings (Marjanović-Shane and White 2014).

Krnjaja (2012) outlines that developing the idea of play as the capacity for flexibility in action leads towards understanding and supporting play not as an activity, but as an approach or 'attitude towards life' (Marjanović 1987; Edmiston 2005) or 'existential action of a human being' (Fink 2000)—the very attitude and existential action allowing human beings to work with the tensions affirmatively and constructively, exploring their powers and predicaments and those of the world. It is an attitude based on enthusiasm that moves us to the next experience (Manning 2012), the sensed potential of the beginning (Manning 2009) in which everything is possible, and an attitude based on the exploration of moods, emotions, and different emotional responses through a range of strategies including courage, bravery, resilience, and sociability (Krnjaja 2012a; Fleer 2009; Lester and Russell 2008; Marjanović 1987). It is also an attitude that allows us to use familiar knowledge in new, imagined contexts and manners and connects and reconstructs previous experiences and knowledge (Krnjaja 2012a; Fleer 2009), enabling us to rethink the meaning of the world and to move beyond existing ways of being and understanding, not only in the situations of play, but also throughout our entire experience of life (Lester and Russell 2010).

As such, the liberatory work of play is central to the democratic project (Khattar and Callaghan 2016; Mitranić 2016), not only as a support in the realization of the rights of the child, but also as a pathway to establishing a just and caring community even in difficult times. Accordingly, the most important argument for our initiative to create a collection of playful situations and activities for children and adults was the relational nature of play—play being the embodied process of becoming together, a space between us: 'above the ground, between goals and between players, around the ball on all sides' (Massumi 2002). The very activity of playing counters disconnection and social isolation,

fostering a sense of belonging, inclusion, and acceptance (International Play Association 2020) and provides players, most notably children, with an opportunity to acquire social capital and enjoy social well-being (Pavlović Breneselović 2010; Lester and Russell 2008). Common play between children and adults additionally carries the strong potential for developing creative ways to think and act together and connecting the community as a whole (Krnjaja 2012b), which we consider to be a priority in times of crisis. This might be a strong opportunity for collaborative work between teachers, students, practitioners, and families, as well as between children and adults in the further development of early childhood practice.

The opportunity for children and adults to jointly create the collection of playful situations and activities in times of crisis provided students with an experiential task, based on active and bold involvement, research and negotiation, critical and ethical thinking, joint endeavour, and mutual trust (Mitranić and Purešević 2021). We instructed students on how to search for and develop different ideas based on the theories of play which we had discussed in the course.

The main principles we established for creating suggestions were: a) to respect play for its own sake (as opposed to subordinating play to a dialectic purpose), b) to encourage togetherness and mutual care through play (as opposed to competition), and c) to respect different family conditions when proposing the space and materials for play. Students worked in small groups and posted their suggestions on Padlet, a collaborative online platform. Groups discussed and adjusted suggestions among themselves. We as teachers also commented, posted our suggestions and ideas, and drew attention to the previously established principles.

After two weeks of collaborative work, we combined a collection of forty proposals and created an illustrated publication called *The Treasury for Common Play between Children and Adults* (Figures 2.1 and 2.2). This publication was sent to the MOESTD and relevant professional associations of preschool education. The *Treasury* was posted on the MOESTD website *Let's Connect, Let's Empower in the Covid-19 Crisis* as well as on the official websites of professional associations, but it soon went viral and was shared via social media, blogs and websites for parents (Figure 2.3).

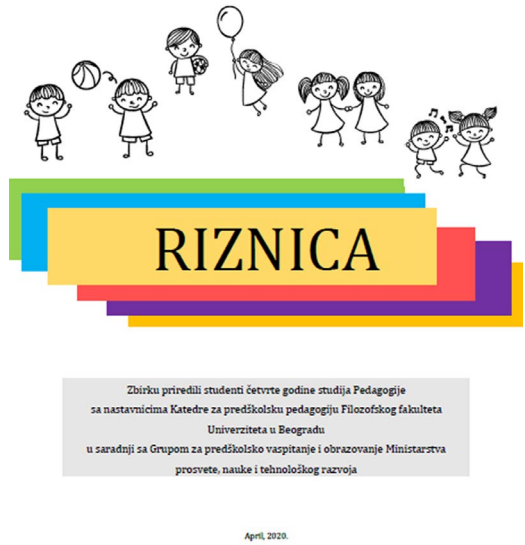

Figure 2.1 *The Treasury for Common Play between Children and Adults* (main page), April 2020. Available on the MOESTD website https://mpn.gov.rs/vesti/riznica-igara-za-decu-i-odrasle/ Created by 4th-year students and teachers in the Department of Preschool Pedagogy, University of Belgrade, CC BY-NC 4.0

Figure 2.2 *The Treasury for Common Play between Children and Adults* (introduction), April 2020. Available on the MOESTD website https://mpn.gov.rs/vesti/riznica-igara-za-decu-i-odrasle/ Created by 4th-year students and teachers in the Department of Preschool Pedagogy, University of Belgrade, CC BY-NC 4.0

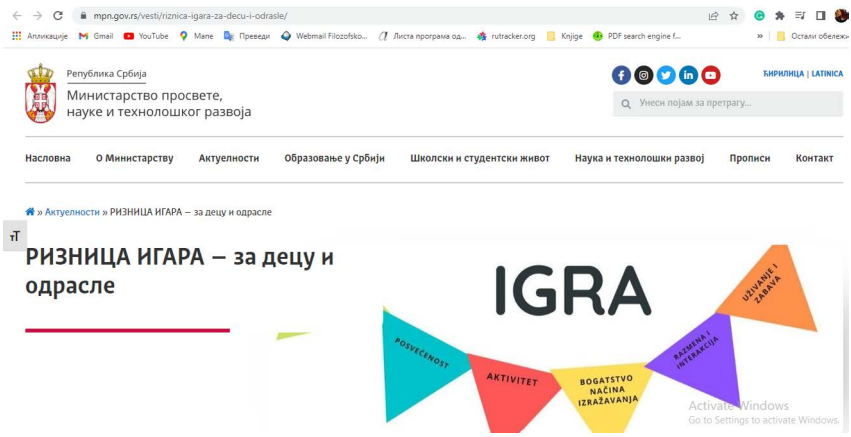

Figure 2.3 Screenshot of *The Treasury for Common Play between Children and Adults* on the MOESTD website https://mpn.gov.rs/vesti/riznica-igara-za-decu-i-odrasle/
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Preschool teachers were encouraged to use the *Treasury* as a resource in their remote work with children and families. The teachers chose several of the suggestions every week. They sent them to families to choose one or more proposals to try out, encouraging them to play and make further suggestions as to what is usually played and enjoyed in their family. Along with the proposals, the teachers asked the parents to send feedback about the play experience with the children, and to share it with other children and families through the established media of communication in kindergarten groups (mostly Viber groups). During the week, each family chose some of the play suggestions offered and exchanged observations and suggestions on how the play unfolded. Based on the feedback and comments of parents and children about their experiences of play, the preschool teachers made compilations of the experiences using the digital tool *StoryJumper*. They supplemented the *Treasury* with new suggestions for common play between children and adults.

Research Method

In the research we present in this paper, we focused on the experiences of families and children for whom the support through play was intended. Our goal was to explore the families' experiences of playing in home isolation, encouraged by *The Treasury for Common Play between Children*

and Adults. In investigating family experiences, we used interpretative phenomenological analysis (Wilig 2013). We worked with the preschool teachers of three kindergarten groups of children aged between two and six years (a total of sixty-seven families were included) at one kindergarten in Belgrade. Together, we collected notes about the experiences of play that parents sent to teachers of kindergarten groups during their first two weeks of using the *Treasury*. All parents were informed about our research and gave consent for their notes and photographs to be used without hiding faces or identities. There were no descriptions that contained negative comments, nor was there a family that did not send a documented experience of play, at least through a photograph or a video. The number of documented contributions sent by families mostly depended on the nature of the parents' work. In this research, we have focused on short textual notes. The analysis did not include photographs and videos sent by parents that did not contain a textual record (twenty-nine attachments) and fourteen notes from parents from all three groups (five in the first group, four in the second group, and five in the third group) in which the term 'task' was used in addition to the term 'play' (so, for example, 'see how successful we were in performing this task'). As a result, we analyzed twenty-four short textual notes, or eight notes from each group. The length of the text of the notes selected for analysis ranged from thirty-one to one hundred and ten words.

After several readings of the collected notes, multiple topics emerged in the analysis. These are further integrated into four main themes considered as reflective of the essence of the experience of play for parents and children in home isolation: 1) feelings related to play, 2) resources and environments, 3) shared experiences, and 4) parent initiatives.

Research Findings

1) Feelings Related to Play

The theme of expressing feelings related to play emphasizes the satisfaction and fulfilment in play as opposed to the dominant feelings of helplessness, fear, and confusion that we have all faced during the Covid-19 lockdown. Parents described play as a way to experience delight and self-satisfaction both for them and their children.

> I've noticed that we are all excitedly waiting for a new proposal. (N1)

In their notes, the parents presented play as an amusement that filled the whole family with pleasure:

> It is creative and interesting to us, we were all happy, playing still goes on! (N7)

> This activity, 'Strange Balloons', brought us great pleasure! (N23)

Parents associated play with a feeling of satisfaction and fulfillment, and as a way to spend quality family time.

> We hid things around the house and mapped places on the plan of the apartment: 'Pirate Alexander (One-eyed Aca) is getting ready to go in search of buried treasure with his map!' The whole family played, and we had such a great and imaginative time! (N8)

> This is how we told our story, and many things came out of it! We started to tell the story 'While travelling, I love to…' and we added objects, toys, drew a little, and it turned out to be very fun and imaginative. Mila was thrilled, her brother is sure to join her, and time has flown by for us in the family. (N13)

Parents described pleasure and fulfillment as their main feelings while playing:

> The proposals are very interesting. It often happens that we adults play and children watch—play is constant, only the audience changes! (N2)

The parents also presented a feeling of satisfaction and fulfillment in play as a way to distance themselves from reality:

> Such fun at home and such gloom all around us. (N12)

> Thanks for the great ideas; play helps us forget a little about these difficult days. (N22)

2) Resources and Environments

We generated the theme of opportunities for playful research from several topics that emerged in the analysis of the notes: an exploration of different materials and objects in the house that families used for play, discovery of the potential of different spaces in the house through play, experimentation with different variations of the suggested proposals, and examination of one's identities and roles as well as power in play.

Parents mentioned the materials and the household items they had used in play which had not been used as a means for play in their house before:

> 'The Magic Line'—We really liked this activity. Dunja makes her path using various decorative ribbons found in the house and even toilet paper. (N2)

> 'Sneak Under the Rainbow'—Check out this art of ours! We are playing with sunlight and colours, and this is a glass of water shining and making a rainbow! (N16)

The different spaces in the house that parents mentioned in their notes show that families discovered the potential for play in different places as places, which they had not used in that manner before.

> 'Spider Web'—I don't know how it works for you, but we made a web out of kitchen towels. The whole corridor is networked. (N15)

> 'Hopscotch'—Here, my friends, see how the entire apartment can be turned into a big hopscotch! (N24)

Almost every day, parents sent new notes about the variations they introduced into the proposals with their children, which opened up new opportunities for experimentation for them:

> 'The Miraculous Glasses'—We played by pouring water from glass to glass with straws, and then we tried with a perforated ladle. Peter says: 'I pour a little water and then it leaks into this, then into that, then into this, each goes into a different glass! Wow, great!' (N9)

> 'Strange Balloons'—We had two balloons. We filled one with flour and one with rice. Then we squeezed them, bent them, made various shapes. The very material with which we filled the balloons took us further into play. We played a game of finding out what was at the bottom of the box filled with flour. Then my child enjoyed dipping his fingers into the flour and making various patterns on it. (N23)

The parents presented their experiences of play as an opportunity to test their physical skills and vitality.

> Marko is delighted with the game 'Ball in the Labyrinth'. He easily led the ball through the maze while my husband and I had difficulties. (O6)

> 'Spider Web'—Playing for the third day in a row, we are more active than ever! (N15) (Figure 2.4)

Figure 2.4 Family photograph of father and child playing Spider Web, May 2020. Reproduced with permission of the family, 2023, all rights reserved

According to the parents' notes, play allowed them to explore different cultural identities and roles with their children:

> 'Hidden Treasure'—Today, we were thinking about how the pirates dressed and why they needed all those things. Here is how we dressed like pirates, setting off in a treasure hunt! (N4)

'Game of Shadows'—Yes, this is a real theatre. It's not difficult; we made various characters, heroes, animals, and some basic shapes which we can turn into a ship or whatever we want. We cut everything out of cardboard trays. And look, the entire stories of shadows! The whole family is having fun! (N20) (Figure 2.5)

Figure 2.5 Family photograph of father and child playing Game of Shadows, April 2020.

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3) Shared Experiences

In the parents' notes, we noticed their need to share the experience of play. Considering the number of notes, photographs, and videos that parents sent to preschool teachers, we tend to conclude that this need goes beyond the domain of 'obligation'. A multitude of collected notes indicates that play functioned as an inspiring and safe space in which to share family experiences and connect different actors of the kindergarten group as a community during the lockdown. Also, as mentioned above in the discussion of the first main theme, parents recognized play as a way for a family to connect, to share, and to spend quality time together:

> This is our treehouse; only Miki can climb there—that's because he practised, but we made it all together. The ideas are great! (N21)

> The shadows are phenomenal—you try to draw a large drawing using a shadow. We line up the animals and draw shadows on the paper on the wall. Then we move the animals away to see how much they have grown! We can't stop playing. (N20)

Parents shared the experience of playing as their children taught them—for instance, games they played in kindergarten and liked to repeat:

> 'Birds in Nests'—We played Miša's favourite game from kindergarten in our yard today. Miša taught us how to play, and we played it together several times. (N11)

According to the parents' notes, the proposals suggested by the preschool teachers contributed to the siblings playing together more than ever before:

> Every day, Marko looks forward to your ideas. His brother is keen on joining him and playing with him. (N10)

> 'My Hidden Space'—Using our curtains, we've separated one part of the room and made our 'universe' in it. The 'universe' is very interesting. Now David and Luka are playing together so nicely, which was not common before. (N14)

According to the parents' notes, the exchange of experiences and proposals with the preschool teacher helped the children to maintain a sense of belonging and connection with the teacher and other children from the kindergarten group:

> My child kisses the photos of his friends while we're watching the photos and recordings shared on the Viber group. (N 17)

> Mine too. (N1; N23)

> Our child became interested in your suggestions only when she saw the photos of her friends playing. (N6)

Not only did the parents send their notes about play to the preschool teacher, but they almost always exchanged them with other parents

via the Viber group. When the teachers suggested 'Fantastic Story' and 'Story from the Family Album', twenty families joined them. Parents filmed the children and themselves as they told stories together, and then the educators made a joint collection of stories and passed them on to each family:

> Now, friends, this is our story. […] (video while the child tells the story) (N19)

> Let's see how Stefan's magic sword defeated the monster! (video) (N11)

Sharing the experiences of play, especially situations based on storytelling, encouraged parents to remember their favourite stories from childhood and not only tell them to their children, but also to record themselves while telling a story and to share the video with the other children and parents:

> Friends, my favourite story is 'Ugly Duckling'. I don't know why it was called ugly because it was not ugly at all; it was just different. One day […] (N11) (Figure 2.6)

Figure 2.6 Family photographs of the whole family engaged in storytelling, May 2020
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Playing and sharing experiences with the other children and families encouraged children and parents to engage in other activities outside of play and to make toys together:

> We played the 'Magic World of Sculpture'. We played with the dough and then we decided to knead and make doughnuts. We used various moulds and made figures. At the end, we ate everything. Here are the photos... We can't wait for new suggestions! (N14)

> We made an hourglass out of cornflour and two plastic water bottles. Lule never puts the hourglass down and measures our time in everything we do. (N4)

4) Parent Initiatives

In the parents' notes, expressions of the initiative to continue playing could be referred to as the initiative to use new materials and objects for play and to find websites with new proposals for playful situations and activities:

> The ideas have never been better! But try it like this, we enjoyed it—spread a net across the middle of the yard or an old table, you can use rackets and balls, but you can also drag below it, throw above it, be as imaginative as we were. (N5)

> We suggest that you take two or three glasses and tie them with straws. [...] (photo). Try it; it's a lot of fun... and it requires concentration. (N8)

A large number of suggestions which the parents devised with their children and proposed to other children and families can be seen in the parents' notes.

> Friends, we came up with the game 'Swing'—it takes two pairs, both of which hold hands. Then the first couple squat and say the name of an animal. Then the other two, the other couple, squat and say something about that animal. The first couple gets up.

> When they come up with a new idea, they say it and squat again. (N3)

> We made a game with four cards with the symbols of pirates (an anchor, a skull, a ship, and pirates). Parents' explanation: 'The game is for three players: two players stand next to the symbol and the third player gives them a sign on which symbol they should stand next to and how many times. The game is played faster and faster. We'll save this game and bring it to the kindergarten when we return so that we can play it all together'. (N10)

Discussion

The research findings concerning parents' and children's experiences of play during lockdown can be seen in light of the capacity for flexibility as a key element of play and the backbone of resilience. The openness of play always containing the possibility to 'go beyond' can be recognized in the experiences noted by the parents—an initiative reflected in the new propositions and modifications of proposed suggestions. We can conclude that play functioned as a safe context for families both individually and mutually, eliminating fear of error and evaluation (Marjanović 1987; Lester and Russell 2008). Common play enabled the exchange and creation of novel, original relations (Henricks 2014), and engagement with multiple possibilities of ideas, materials, and spaces for play. In this context, teachers' strategy of suggesting more proposals from which families could choose and encouraging parents to supplement this list with their own suggestions proved to be beneficial for the quality and further development of playful experiences. We noted how common play between children and adults helped families to clarify, reflect on and even transform different feelings they experienced, both within situations of play and outside them. A comparison between the feelings in play and the perception of reality due to the Covid-19 pandemic indicates that, to parents, play was a source of pleasant feelings and relaxation from everyday tension. Almost all parents' notes contain words of gratitude addressed to the preschool teachers and the suggestions for play they have sent, confirming that the experience of

play represented 'a stock of good things' (Vellacott 2007) amidst harsh everyday conditions.

Thus we come to the question of play's creative potential, expressed as a transformative mode of human functioning (Sicart 2014; Krnjaja 2012a; Marjanović 1987), allowing the player to engage as a whole being in understanding and responding to their environment (Krnjaja 2012a). The imagination and transformation that parents write about in their notes are present in the search for new activities and new possibilities for play. Experiences of play enabled families to explore different perspectives and relationships, different roles and imagined contexts, to transform their living space and harmonize their actions, creating a safe space for mutual exchange. Further, the shared experience of playing and exploring possibilities for play, not just between children and adults, but also between families and different professionals in early childhood education, created 'time and space' of its own amidst social crisis and isolation. Thus, common play created new and affirmative possibilities to be and become together in this world.

It is here that the relational nature of play is shown—through mutual connection and togetherness, shared power, and exchange. The relational nature of play is confirmed in the parents' notes on multiple levels: in the family circle, through joint play of children with siblings and parents, and outside of the family circle, through the exchange of proposals and experiences of play with the preschool teacher and other families from the kindergarten group. The expressed need to exchange experiences, to learn from each other in play and to learn about possibilities for play reflects families' desire to stay connected, overcoming isolation and physical distance. Beyond the support for common play, the opportunity for different actors to get involved, to initiate, and to share, supported the sense of belonging and the further development of social capital and social well-being for children and adults as well (International Play Association 2020; Pavlović Breneselović 2010; Lester and Russell 2008). Common play as an experience, as well as a framework for action, enabled families and different professionals to decontextualize the established power relations—between children and adults, parents and teachers, practitioners and experts—and to develop new ones based on sympathy, care, and a joint struggle to thrive together, despite current conditions.

In this manner, we consider it necessary to point out the limitations of our research focused exclusively on families' experiences of play in home isolation. Families and children are active participants in the broader community of preschool education. Their experiences of play are shaped by the support provided during home isolation and by broader interactions with the professional and social communities. Nevertheless, the openness of our research to the experiences of families and children, and their acceptance as active participants of that research, gives us a basis to view the research findings in the context of the values we seek to cultivate in play as well as in preschool education as a whole.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the significance of play, which we discovered in researching the quality of families' experiences of play during the lockdown, as well as our experience as university teachers teaching the course 'Child's Play and Creativity' during the Covid-19 pandemic, we can offer two recommendations for education:

1. **Connecting participants at different levels of the education system** through the interaction of the academic community, educational policymakers, practitioners, families and children contributes to an awareness of the importance of play in education, and rejects its common treatment in kindergarten and school right through to academic studies as something 'trivial' and separate from learning (Reid and Wood 2016).
2. **Education established on creative potential** has the power to function as a deeply responsible social practice, which makes play necessary in further rethinking education in the context of the multiple crises we are facing. The future of education lies in practices that strengthen all of its actors to face the unexpected and to work constructively with challenges. Through joint creation and further practical usage and expansion of *The Treasury for Common Play between Children and Adults*, we are convinced that a learning process based on creative potential encourages cooperation, research, initiative, mutual harmonization, and reflection, thus strengthening the sense of professional contribution.

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