

# Guidelines for Implementation in EU countries of the **Motor Activity Training Program (MATP)** and the **Motor Activity Training program** **Training & Coaching Development** **in Europe** **(MATCODE)**

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10-07-2025

Commissioned by the Erasmus Motor Activity Training Program (MATP) Training & Coaching  
Development in Europe (MATCODE)



*"Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them."*

## INTRODUCTION

Persons with Profound Intellectual and Multiple Disabilities (PIMD) are characterized by a combination of profound or severe intellectual impairments and severe motor disabilities (Nakken & Vlaskamp, 2007). Due to these disabilities, individuals with PIMD require intensive and continuous support in virtually all areas of daily functioning, including participation in sports and physical activity (Schalock et al., 2021). Therefore, from now on we refer to these persons as persons with pervasive support needs.

Physical activity has been shown to positively impact, among others, physical fitness, cognitive functioning, emotional wellbeing, and the development of motor, communication, and social skills (Borschneck, & Cairney, 2020; Kapsal et al., 2019; Adolph & Franchak, 2017; Lewis & Hennekens, 2016). It also contributes to a reduced risk of chronic diseases and to improved quality of life (Weggemans et al., 2018). Increasing research has demonstrated that active and equal involvement in sports can significantly enhance the quality of life for individuals with intellectual disabilities (Elipe Lorenzo et al., 2025). These benefits apply equally to individuals with and without disabilities (Dunn & Jewell, 2010), including persons with pervasive support needs. Despite these clear benefits, people with pervasive support needs often do not perform exercise and sports (Prasher & Janicki, 2002; Van der Putten et al., 2017; van Alphen et al., 2021). Currently, no accessible sports program is available for this target group. As a consequence, they risk missing out on the well-documented benefits of physical activity. The MATP program addresses this gap by offering a training program specifically developed for individuals with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities. The Motor Activity Training Program (MATP) was developed to offer sports and exercise specific for persons with pervasive support needs. This program can be fully adapted to each person, offering physical activities to people that cannot access other sports activities. The MATP-program is a well-known program in Europe, but there is no consistency in the implementation of the program or in the prerequisites, such as an official coaching course. Each country does this in its own way and there are differences in how the program is implemented within countries. The official MATP handbook from 2005 by Special Olympics outlines how to offer motor activities to individuals with pervasive support needs. It emphasizes individual adaptation, enjoyment, and participation rather than competition. The handbook provides guidelines, sample activities, and explanations of fundamental skills, however this handbook was outdated, not consistently used, and subject to wide variation in application. There is limited insight into how this program is implemented in the different countries and there are also no guidelines available for implementation. The MATCODE-project was set-up to fill these gaps.

Because individuals with pervasive support needs rely heavily on others to facilitate movement and activity, participation in MATP depends not only on the motivation and capacity of the athlete but also on the supportiveness and engagement of their immediate environment. This interdependence aligns

with Bronfenbrenner's (1977) ecological systems theory, as used in previous MATCODE reports; the Stakeholder Analysis and Best Practices analysis. These systems interact dynamically with the individual and shape their opportunities for development and participation. Understanding the ecological context is therefore crucial in evaluating and improving the MATP.

The core principle of the Erasmus+ MATCODE project is the inclusion of people with PIMD in sports and physical activity. It emphasizes the right of all individuals, regardless of their abilities, to experience the joy of movement, social belonging, and participation in meaningful activity. The project is developing a training method to support professionals in implementing in a structured manner and wants to support a good implementation of MATP in the different countries in Europe, developing coaching courses in these different countries and updating the manual for MATP. For this purpose, exchanges have taken place between the participating project group countries, i.e.; Slovakia, Ireland and the Netherlands. A new manual has been developed and a pilot has been carried out with coach courses. A lot has been learned during this process, namely the handbook, the Best Practices document, the PowerPoint of the training and the Lessons Learned document. Together these tools have led to useful guidelines for implementation to provide guidance for a good and adequate implementation of MATP in various countries in Europe and things to consider when implementing MATP in practice. In this report, the findings of this process regarding guidelines for implementation and the process itself will be described.

## METHOD

### *Design*

Two phases of data collection and analysis were carried out to collect the information needed; 1) A dossier research and 2) Photo Elicitation Interviews (PEI). Based on this information guidelines for implementation of MATP in other EU countries were established.

### *Data collection*

1) During the dossier research the following documents were analysed; the handbook, the Best Practices document, the PowerPoint of the training and the Lessons Learned document. All of these documents have been developed within the MATCODE project and/or are currently being used in practice or have been reported before. The dossier research of the documents was executed from the perspective guidelines for implementation from Wensing et al. (2020). We collected examples of possible guidelines for MATP from the documents named that connected with the theoretical model and connected these examples thereafter to the different layers of the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner 1977).

2) The photos were made by coaches themselves during the program. Most coaches participated in the coach course within the project. Participants can be coaches, family members, relatives, volunteers and/or carers. We collected guidelines and connected these to the different layers of the model.

### *Participants*

In total 30 participants of Photo Elicitation Interviews have been approached. During the PEI 5-10 participants for each country, i.e.; the Netherlands, Slovakia and Ireland, were interviewed based on a self-made and self-chosen photograph. Beforehand the interview, in an e-mail, each participant received information about the interview and the question if they would like to participate. If they were interested, they received a second e-mail with a consent form and as soon as they returned this signed, the interview was planned.

### *Data analyses*

The dossier research were executed from the perspective of guidelines for implementation. To determine the Guidelines for Implementation of the person with PIMD related to sports and exercise and in particular MATP, an analysis according to the ecological model of Bronfenbrenner (1977) has been executed, as can be found in the previous report about the Stakeholder Analysis and Best Practices. This enabled us to describe the context of the person with PIMD regarding sports in general and MATP in particular. Originally the model exists of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. To make this material more accessible, within the MATCODE-project, we added the terms ‘athlete’ for the microsystem, ‘direct influence’ for the mesosystem, ‘more distant influence’ for the exosystem and ‘overarching role’ for the macrosystem.

Interviews were held on the basis of the self-made photos. The documents and transcripts of the interviews were evaluated qualitatively. Data were collected from participants of the pilots of the coach courses within the MATCODE-project. The PEI were executed online, 20-60 minutes per participant. Questions were asked using an interview protocol, as can be seen in attachment. To ensure that data collection meets ethical requirements, ethical approval was sought and obtained from the ethical committee of the University of Groningen. Instructions for the participant for taking the photo can be seen in attachment II. The interviews were executed by a researcher of the University of Groningen. In Slovakia, the interviews took place during Camp, with one of the project group members as a translator. All codes derived from the article by Wensing et al. (2020) on implementing guidelines in general practice, leading to the following coding categories: ‘implementation’, ‘organisational context’, ‘practical use’, ‘prerequisites’, and ‘intervention in practice’.

### *Context*

An initial exploration of the interview data per country led to a general impression for each national context:

### *Ireland*

Irish coaches often work within a sports club, specifically for MATP or within an institution. Coaches are mostly volunteers or movement therapists. This is in line with the stakeholders analysis, where we found out that people with PIMD live either at home or within an institution. Many volunteers have been involved for several years through community sports clubs and talk about it 'as a family'. Athletes in Ireland often participate in weekly training sessions within these sports club, if they do not live in institution. When they live in an institution, they get weekly Physical Exercise (PE) or trainings sessions most of the time. MATP is sometimes incorporated into broader training programmes. Events are key motivational drivers, with coaches training towards them. Visible joy and pride are especially present during events. There is a balance between repetition and increasing difficulty and introducing new activities. Participants express a need for better event planning and accessibility, especially for athletes using wheelchairs. Medal ceremonies and cheering are often reported as emotionally impactful moments for the athletes, the coaches themselves and the relatives of the athlete. Coaches emphasise the emotional and social benefits of MATP, because they think participating in the program boosts the self-confidence of athletes and provides opportunities for social connection, which is, in their opinion, often lacking in other areas of life.

### *Slovakia*

In Slovakia, most people with PIMD live at home with their parents. It is noteworthy that in Slovakia MATP seems to be more than only a sports program. The focus seems to lie primarily on fostering social inclusion, creating a sense of belonging, being part of something and highlighting the capabilities of the individual. Slovak participants see MATP as a way to support social development and reduce isolation. Parents learn that their child is indeed capable of many things and not limited to simply sitting in a wheelchair. Moreover, participants report overcoming feelings of shame, for instance, when going outside or visiting a restaurant with their child due to the MATP-program and the community of other parents with a child with PIMD. They state this as particularly meaningful. Events at MATP are often the first time their child is cheered to and gets a medal for example. Over time, participants show increased confidence and physical ability. With regular practice, they observe progress in motor skills and participants state these skills useful for daily life as well.

### *The Netherlands*

The Dutch participants focus strongly on structurally embedding the MATP-program into daily routines. Sports and exercise are mostly executed in day-care and institutions, therefore mostly the coaches in the Netherlands are physiotherapists or movement therapists. Their approach is goal-oriented and built on small, progressive steps. Coaches make visual materials and easily accessible

resources to enable health care professionals to carry out sessions without the physiotherapist or movement therapist being present, enabling more opportunities for movement than one time a week. Sessions follow mostly a familiar structure, providing predictability for both athletes and staff. Coaches think adaptions to the exercises are necessary, so you can use one activity for different levels of ability. They emphasize that you 'have to look small', and celebrate small achievements like making eye contact or joining a group. MATP is according to the coaches most effective when fully adapted to the individual capabilities and preferences of the athletes, to keep them motivated. Repetition, visual cues, and structured routines help them engage. A lot of the time participants talk about being flexible, because you should be able to adjust the exercise on the spot.

## RESULTS

### Dossier research

A dossier research of the Best Practices document, the PowerPoint of the training and the Lessons Learned document on guidelines for implementation (Wensing et al., 2020) resulted in the following guidelines, categorized per level of the ecological model preceded by some general principles.

#### 7 general principles:

##### 1) Individual approach

MATP should be tailored to the individual needs, preferences, and abilities of people with pervasive support needs. Activities must be adaptable in terms of content, difficulty, location, and duration. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. The program should remain flexible and responsive to contextual factors such as the setting (home, care facility, outdoors), time constraints, resources, and housing situations. Practitioners are encouraged to use available materials and adapt them freely to their own context.

##### 2) Repetition

Implementation should start with simple, small-scale, and repeatable activities. Repetition supports skill development, confidence, and routine building. Creating predictable routines helps participants feel secure and motivated.

##### 3) Embedding in daily-life situations

Movement should not be limited to only formal training sessions. Embedding physical activity into daily care routines enhances continuity and supports development, especially when time or resources for separate sessions are limited.

##### 4) Identity

Referring to individuals as 'athletes' contributes to a positive self-image and frames their participation within a sports context. Referring to the companions as 'coaches', ensures that they take on a different role within MATP.

##### 5) Motivation

MATP activities should be engaging, enjoyable, and provide opportunities for success. Celebrating small moments of achievement through encouragement and applause boosts motivation and reinforces participation.

#### 6) Collaboration

Collaboration between professionals and sectors (e.g., care, sport, education) is essential. Sharing experiences, co-developing exercises, and learning from each other supports innovation and builds a strong MATP community so that we can learn from each other.

#### 7) Coach course

Effective implementation depends on well-trained professionals. The MATP coach course includes phased modules on the athlete, the coach, the program, and practice-based application. Coaches are encouraged to experience the program from the athlete's perspective to deepen understanding. Peer training (train-the-trainer) and certification further strengthen implementation quality.

#### 8) Evaluation

To ensure quality and improvement, tools such as questionnaires, feedback sessions, and reflective practices are essential. These support individual growth, team learning, and long-term impact assessment.

#### 8) Awareness

Raising awareness through events, social media, and storytelling is important. Engaging ambassadors and policy influencers helps build long-term visibility and recognition of MATP's value.

### **5 guidelines on the level of the microsystem (athlete):**

#### 1) Adaptation

All MATP activities should be tailored to the individual athlete's physical, cognitive, and social abilities. Familiar materials and activities can lower the threshold for participation, while gradually introducing new challenges supports growth.

#### 2) Motivation

Meaningful and motivating experiences are central to MATP. Activities should be designed to offer visible success and achievable goals, which in turn increase confidence and motivation. Even small moments of progress or joy should be celebrated.

#### 3) Routine

Regular repetition and predictable structures help athletes feel safe and supported, and contribute to building skills over time. Developing consistent routines fosters familiarity, autonomy, and comfort in participating.

#### 4) Language

Referring to participants as "athletes" supports a positive and empowering identity. It frames their participation in the context of sport and achievement, reinforcing self-worth and social belonging.

## 5) Own level

It is important that each athlete can participate at their own pace, level and on their own terms.

### 5 guidelines on the level of the mesosystem (direct influence):

#### 1) Coach competence

Effective implementation starts with well-trained coaches. A structured training course should equip professionals with knowledge of the MATP philosophy, practical skills, and the ability to tailor activities to each athlete's needs. On-the-job coaching and peer learning opportunities can further strengthen competence and confidence.

#### 2) Experience

Letting coaches experience MATP activities from the perspective of the athlete enhances empathy, deepens understanding, and promotes practical insight. Connecting training content directly to coaches' daily routines helps to bridge theory and practice.

#### 3) Staff

To ensure long-term sustainability, MATP should initially be delivered collaboratively with staff members, who can then increasingly take ownership. This gradual transfer of responsibility embeds MATP into daily routines and supports continuity in care settings.

#### 4) Interaction

During activities, athletes should be supported through positive reinforcement such as applause, encouragement, and shared moments of joy. These seemingly small interactions have a strong motivational effect and contribute to emotional connection and a sense of pride.

#### 5) Community

Building a strong MATP community enhances knowledge exchange and fosters commitment among professionals. Sharing experiences and co-developing exercises enables mutual learning, strengthens team spirit.

### 6 guidelines on the level of the exosystem (more distant influence):

#### 1) Formal structure

Establishing a formal structure within organizations helps to anchor MATP beyond individual efforts. A clear framework supports coordination, planning, and the integration of MATP into regular services.

#### 2) Adjust to environment

Implementation should remain low-threshold and resource-efficient. Activities can take place in informal settings (e.g., living rooms, outdoor spaces), and sessions can be brief and adjusted to available staff and time. This flexibility makes it easier to embed MATP in a variety of care environments.

#### 3) Daily life activities

Linking MATP activities to existing daily care routines enhances consistency and reinforces physical

activity as a natural part of everyday life.

#### 4) Collaboration

Collaborating with existing professional networks enables resource sharing, mutual support, and collective responsibility. These partnerships can help to distribute workload, offer peer feedback, and promote continued engagement with MATP.

#### 5) Adapt

Implementation strategies must account for contextual differences such as housing arrangements, staffing models, and organizational culture. Recognizing and addressing these variations ensures that MATP remains relevant and feasible across diverse settings.

#### 6) Feedback

Providing continued support through regular feedback moments (e.g., monthly check-ins or team discussions) allows for refinement and responsiveness. This ongoing support structure helps practitioners remain engaged and confident in applying MATP.

### 7 guidelines on the level of the macrosystem (influence from an overarching level):<sup>1)</sup>

#### 1) Coöperation

As in other levels, sustainable implementation of MATP requires strong cooperation between the care, sports, and education sectors. These partnerships enable the integration of diverse expertise, foster innovation, and help embed inclusive physical activity within a wider societal framework.

#### 2) Visibility

Raising public awareness of MATP is key to building societal support. This can be achieved through organizing inclusive events, sharing success stories via social media, and hosting webinars that highlight the impact of MATP on individuals and communities.

#### 3) Policies

Involving societal and political ambassadors helps elevate MATP onto policy agendas. Advocacy at this level can influence structural changes, secure recognition for inclusive sport, and promote the rights of people with profound disabilities to access meaningful physical activity.

#### 4) Monitoring

To ensure quality and promote growth, it is essential to implement tools for monitoring and reflection. Questionnaires, team reflections, and regular evaluation cycles contribute to continuous improvement and accountability.

#### 5) Sharing of knowledge

Disseminating best practices through professional communities supports peer learning and helps maintain momentum. Online platforms and social media groups can facilitate ongoing exchange, inspiration, and a shared vision for inclusive sport.

6) Inclusive attitude

Promoting an inclusive sports mindset at the societal level reinforces the idea that everyone, regardless of ability, should have access to enjoyable and meaningful movement experiences. This cultural shift is essential for widespread acceptance and implementation.

7) Funding

Relying on a single donor creates vulnerability. Expanding and diversifying funding sources strengthens the program's financial sustainability and resilience, ensuring that MATP can grow and adapt over time.

*Analysis of the new Handbook on guidelines for implementation*

A dossier research of the Handbook on guidelines for implementation (Wensing et al., 2020) resulted in the following guidelines. MATP is suitable for individuals with pervasive support needs. It can be used in special education, care institutions, sports associations, and municipalities. The intention is to provide an adapted and motivating sports program for each individual, with an emphasis on enjoyment and personal development rather than competition.

There are 7 core principles of the MATP-program:

	Individualized approach.	The program is tailored to the motor, cognitive, and social abilities and preferences of the athlete.
	Five basic skills.	Mobility, dexterity, striking, kicking, and stability (optionally swimming).
	Flexibility	It is important that the exercises are flexible and can be adapted to the individual in terms of difficulty level, form, and context.
	Target group	It is important to first familiarize yourself with the vision and target group of MATP. Then, assess the physical, social, and cognitive abilities of the athletes. Subsequently, choose an approach based on basic skills or specific sports.

	Sample lessons and week program	You can use the template to concretely design lessons. You can use sample lessons and weekly programs.
	Evaluation	Plan a concluding event or moment to evaluate goals and celebrate achievements. At the end you reflect. Consider what could be improved, what is worth repeating, and begin again.

There are 5 main characteristics of the intervention:

	Personalized approach	A personalised approach lies at the core of MATP. Activities should always be tailored to the motor, cognitive, and social capacities of each individual athlete. This ensures that every participant has the opportunity to engage in a way that is both meaningful and achievable.
	Flexibility	Flexibility is essential. Activities must be adaptable in terms of difficulty, duration, and method of execution. What works for one athlete may not work for another.
	Observation	Observation plays a key role in coaching. By carefully watching how the athlete responds, professionals can offer one-on-one guidance and adjust support in the moment.
	Collaboration	Seek the collaboration between special schools, institutions, sports clubs, parents and caregivers.
	Align goals	Trainers and coaches are encouraged to coordinate with caregivers and teachers to align training goals.

There are 3 main sources for MATP:

	Use MATCODE	Use the content and training programs that GSN and SO developed. Use SO for integrating MATP into national and regional sports events.
	Use resources	Use online video libraries like IkgaEMB, Youth Sport Trust or YouTube. Use the activity booklets.

	Provide tools	Provide coaches with tools, inspiration and a framework to shape local implementation.
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There are 3 things you need to keep in mind while organizing MATP:

	Sports for everyone	Emphasize the value that sport is a right for everyone, regardless of ability or support needs.
	Competition	Training is more important than competition. But some competition can add to the fun.
	Inclusion	Base MATP on acceptance, equality and inclusion.

### Photo Elicitation interviews

The photographs used in the interviews were highly diverse. They showed a wide range of activities like swimming, hitting and kicking for example, but also thematic materials (e.g. Easter), and medal ceremonies. A frequently mentioned reason according to the coach for selecting a particular photograph was the visible joy expressed by the athlete. However, participants also reported a broad spectrum of motivations for their choices ranging from a sense of pride that an activity had finally been adapted to allow the athlete to participate, to the desire to capture meaningful moments that marked a turning point in the life of the athlete or the coach.

Coding for the categories ‘implementation’, ‘organisational context’, ‘practical use’, ‘prerequisites’, and ‘intervention in practice’ yielded the following results:

A total of 376 codes were identified within the 5 named categories, with an average of 73.4 codes per category. All codes derived from the article by Wensing et al. (2020) on implementing guidelines in general practice are well represented in the transcripts of the Photo Elicitation Interviews, which is a positive sign. The number of codes is fairly evenly distributed across the categories, with the fewest codes assigned to implementation (66) and the most to practical use (88). The other categories fall in between: organisational context (67), intervention in practice (70), and prerequisites (76).

Below, the content of the results is described per category, accompanied by illustrative quotes:

## *Implementation*

Within the category 'implementation' (strategies and approaches), 66 codes were found. The 66 quotations related to implementation strategies reveal several key themes regarding how MATP is embedded and sustained in practice.

### 1) Raising Awareness and motivation.

Many participants emphasized the importance of creating awareness and enthusiasm for MATP among colleagues, parents, and other stakeholders. Enthusiastic engagement often inspired others to become involved.

For example:

*"Telling everyone how great it is."*

*"Some of the other kids came to support, and the staff... was saying 'we should really get our kids signed up'."*

### 2) Consistency and perseverance.

Sustained implementation was frequently linked to consistency in delivery and perseverance over time. Quotes reflected that skill development and program success depended on repeated exposure and long-term commitment. It is important to have more or less the same structure within the sessions.

For example:

*"We could not get him in a straight line for a year but he wanted to go everywhere...but he kept turning around himself... and that's the thing like... eventually, he mastered it... that's the big thing, it's consistency really."*

### 3) Being creative and flexibility

Implementation often required professionals to have a flexible mindset, adapting the program to fit the abilities, needs and preferences for each individual. Several quotations highlighted the importance of "thinking outside the box" to ensure meaningful participation.

*"With MATP and thinking outside the box you can be breaking barriers... and making things more inclusive showing that capability, looking at the ability rather than what people cannot do."*

### 4) Collaboration

Successful implementation was often described as a collaborative effort. Team discussions, peer support, and involvement of families were commonly cited.

*"We talked about it as a team and found ways to make it work."*

### 5) Structural integration

In some cases, MATP had become structurally embedded into existing routines or educational

settings. Structure between sessions is important.

*“Now it is part of our weekly routine.”*

### *Organisational context*

Within the category ‘organisational context’ (systems and structures), 67 codes were found. The quotes coded reflect a strong emphasis on the structural embedding of MATP within schools and care organisations. A recurring theme is the establishment of weekly routines, with structured training sessions that provide predictability for both athletes and staff. These organisational structures appear essential for maintaining long-term commitment to MATP. The quotes can be divided into 5 codes.

#### 1) Continuity and repetition

Participants indicate that consistent scheduling facilitates preparation for events and sustains motivation among athletes.

For example:

*“We will train every Friday, and then only two weeks ago, we had a local event, so we had four athletes that competed in that, which was brilliant.”*

#### 2) Visual materials

Several quotes highlight how visual materials such as photographs and progress stories for creating more awareness about MATP. This promotional strategy helps generate enthusiasm and strengthens team spirit.

For example:

*“Every Friday we would go back and say, it's great, we need more to sign up, but look at these pictures and look at them progressing.”*

#### 3) Flexible design of sessions

Rather than rigid repetition, variety is introduced weekly to maintain engagement. Usually there is a set of exercises that is practised regularly and then gradually new exercises will be introduced.

For example:

*“Every Friday, we have something different for the kids to keep them engaged. You know, no Friday is the same.”*

*“We use it in every lesson because it works.”*

#### 4) Coördination

Leadership and coordination within organisations are also noted. Organisers or key figures are mentioned as responsible for sustaining the program, underscoring the importance of ownership and accountability at an institutional level.

### *Practical use*

Within the category ‘practical use’ (application in practice), 88 codes were found. These codes give

information about the daily routines and practical settings. The programme's adaptability enables facilitators to make adjustments in form, duration and intensity, depending on the athlete's needs. This leads to meaningful and empowering experiences that are tailored, inclusive, and responsive to both individual and situational dynamics.

1) Flexible program

Across interviews, participants describe MATP as a flexible programme that is integrated into existing educational, therapeutic or leisure activities. Rather than being implemented as a separate, strictly scheduled intervention, MATP is often embedded in everyday structures, such as physical education lessons, afterschool programs, or therapeutic routines.

For example:

*"We use it in every lesson because it works."*

2) Participation

MATP is often used as a tool to stimulate not only motor development, but also engagement, motivation, and social participation. Facilitators refer to the importance of positive reinforcement, such as cheering and celebrating success, as crucial elements of practical implementation.

For example:

*"It's good that they are included, and that they are part of the team."*

3) Inclusion

MATP activities are designed and conducted in a way that promotes meaningful inclusion, allowing athletes to participate alongside peers and experience a sense of belonging. The focus is not merely on performance, but rather on joyful participation and emotional connection.

One respondent highlights the following:

*"Maybe sometimes his tolerance is low, and we're not going to get a lot done in the gym, but maybe something else will help."*

### *Prerequisites (for successful implementation)*

Within the category 'prerequisites', 76 codes were found. These codes highlight several key conditions that must be in place to facilitate the effective implementation of the MATP-program. These prerequisites form the foundation upon which inclusive participation and adaptive sports engagement can be built. These insights emphasize the importance of individual awareness, supportive environments, and attitudinal shifts among both professionals and families.

1) Strength-based approach

Participants emphasize the importance of focusing on what individuals can do rather than their limitations. A proactive and empowering mindset that is essential to MATP. This orientation

fosters motivation and encourages participation.

For example:

*"Whereas we like to promote their abilities and see them as very able."*

## 2) Adaptions

Participants state that successful implementation often depends on detailed knowledge of each athlete's abilities, which in turn supports better adaptation and meaningful engagement. It is important to know the specific needs, abilities and preferences of each athlete and to adapt the exercises to this. You have to know who you have in front of you. The exercises are regularly adapted to each athlete.

For example:

*"It's important to always see what works for them, and then adapt the activity so they can participate in their own way."*

## 3) Attitude of parents

Parental involvement and attitude also play a significant role. Beliefs and expectations of caregivers can either hinder or facilitate inclusion. Programs like MATP therefore benefit from actively involving families.

For example:

*"And maybe sometimes parents at home might put limits on them..."*

*"The parents were like: 'I didn't know he could do that!' And then they started crying. It was really emotional because they saw him achieving something they never thought possible."*

## 4) Consistency and routine

The participants suggest that consistency and routine, such as regular attendance at sessions, are important conditions for success. Such stable structures support skill development and predictability, which is particularly relevant for individuals with pervasive support needs.

*"So when he comes here to the gym every Friday..."*

### *Intervention in practice (concrete examples)*

Within the category 'intervention in practice', 70 codes were found. These codes provide information and diverse examples of how MATP is practically implemented across different settings. MATP is according to the participant more than a static program, it is a dynamic practice shaped by individual contexts and persons needs and preferences.

#### 1) Tailored exercises

Participants highlight the importance of tailored interventions, often describing how specific exercises are adapted to fit the individual needs and abilities of the athletes.

For example:

*"You really try to adapt the activity to their abilities, so that everyone can participate at their own level."*

## 2) Enjoyment

The value of value of enjoyment in participation is often emphasized. Using words like 'enjoy', 'happy' etc. And also by emphasising the engagement with the exercises.

For example:

*"So seeing him really engaging and enjoying what he was doing..."*

## 3) Benefits

The benefits of MAPT are named in every single interview. The physical benefits, but also a lot of benefits for social inclusion and participation are named. The broader developmental outcomes are acknowledged. And also the benefits for daily life are named a lot.

For example:

*"For me, as I'm not only just a teacher but also a parent... I can see the impact beyond the sessions."*

## CONCLUSION

*General conclusion dossier research on the implementation guidelines for MATP, MATCODE and implementation*

The document analysis of the handbook, the Best Practices document, the PowerPoint of the training and the Lessons Learned document on guidelines for implementation, shows that flexibility and individualisations are key-components of the MATP-program. Across all layers of Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1977), a consistent theme emerges: MATP must be tailored to both the athlete (abilities and preferences) and the environment in which it is practiced. Central to this is a person-centred approach, allowing adjustments based on individual motor, cognitive, and social capacities of the athlete.

*General conclusion Photo Elicitation Interviews on the implementation guidelines for MATP, MATCODE and implementation*

The Photo Elicitation Interviews offered rich insights into the implementation and experience of coaches with MATP. The diversity of photographs and the narratives they elicited highlighted both the emotional and practical value of MATP for athletes, coaches, and families. Participants chose photographs that captured a wide variety of activities, often selecting images based on the visible joy and engagement of the athletes. National differences were notable like the living situation and organization of MATP, but most principals were general like inclusion, collaboration and structure. Implementation strategies revolved around awareness-raising, consistency, creativity, collaboration, and structural embedding. Enthusiastic communication about MATP helps inspire others. Consistency and perseverance seem to be important key elements of successful implementation of MATP. As in

the dossier research, creativity, flexibility and adapting the program to the persons wishes and needs, therefore keeping a flexible mind is important. Participants emphasize the importance of teamwork and building a community and promote structural integration of the MATP-program in the daily life of the athletes. The Photo Elicitation Interviews confirm that MATP is a physical activity program which enhances also a very social experience and is beneficial for a lot of other aims and goals.

#### *General conclusion*

All five categories from Wensing et al. (2020) are well represented, confirming the program's holistic and adaptive nature. The analysis of both the documents and the Photo Elicitation Interviews shows that successful implementation of MATP depends on flexibility, individual tailoring, and a person-centred approach. Across all ecological levels, from the individual athlete to broader systems, the program thrives when it is adapted to both personal needs and contextual realities. The interviews underscore the emotional and social impact of MATP, highlighting joy, inclusion, and small successes as central. MATP emerges a physical activity program providing a meaningful, inclusive experience that enhances quality of life. MATP therewith contributes to physical development, social connection, self-worth and inclusion.

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*Attachment I: Interview protocol*

**Interview Protocol**

- What photo did you select?
- When was the photo taken?
- Where was the photo taken?
- Who took the photo?
  
- Can you identify what is in the photo?
- What is the story this photo tells?
- What would you tell a relative of the athlete about this photo?
  
- Why did you select this particular photograph?
- What do you remember of this photo?
- What do you like most about this photo?
- What do you like least about this photo?
  
- Why do you think this photo is important?
- Why is this photo meaningful to you?
- What do you feel when you look at this photo?
  
- What does participation in the MATP-program mean for you personally?
- What do you think participation in the MATP-program means for the athlete?
- Do you think participation in the MATP-program can have benefits for other persons as well?
- Can you name some positive effects of MATP?
- Can you name some negative effects of MATP?
  
- Can you give a golden tip for organizing MATP?
- Can you give an example of a Best Practice within MATP?
  
- Is there anything you do differently within MATP since the coach course?
- Do you do more activities nowadays?
- Can you describe a daily activity?
- Where do you get your inspiration for MATP?

- What do you think is the importance of sports and exercise for people with PIMD?
- What do you think is the importance of the MATP-program?
- What do you think about the quality of the MATP-program?
- How do you think MATP promotes inclusion of people with PIMD?

- Is there anything else that is not in this picture that you want to add?

## Instructieformulier foto

1. Neem foto's terwijl de atleet die jij vertegenwoordigt/coacht deelneemt aan het Motor Activity Training Program (MATP).
2. Belangrijk is dat je een foto kiest van iets wat jij (of de sporter) belangrijk vindt, wat betekenisvol is voor jou en wat jou aanspreekt.
3. Zorg ervoor dat de foto geschikt is om aan anderen te laten zien.
4. Zorg ervoor dat, behalve de atleet die jij vertegenwoordigt/coacht, er geen andere personen herkenbaar op de foto staan.
5. Als je wel een foto wilt gebruiken met andere personen herkenbaar op de foto, verwijder of blur hen dan voorafgaand aan het interview.
6. Er bestaat geen goed of fout, kies alsjeblieft een foto die jou aanspreekt.

## Instructionform photo

1. Take photos while the athlete you represent is participating in the Motor Activity Training Program (MATP).
2. It is important that you choose a photo of something that you (or the athlete) consider important, that is meaningful to you and that appeals to you.
3. Make sure the photo is suitable to show to others.
4. Make sure that, except for the athlete you support, no other persons are recognizable in the photograph.
5. When you do want to use a picture with other persons visible, please blur them or remove them from the picture prior to the interview.
6. There is no right or wrong, please pick a photo that speaks to you.

## Foto s návodom

1. Odfotte sa, kým sa športovec, ktorého zastupujete, zúčastňuje programu Motor Activity Training Program (MATP).
2. Je dôležité, aby ste si vybrali fotku niečoho, čo vy (alebo športovec) považujete za dôležité, čo je pre vás zmysluplné a čo vás oslovuje.
3. Uistite sa, že fotografia je vhodná na zobrazenie ostatným.
4. Uistite sa, že okrem športovca, ktorého podporujete, nie sú na fotografii rozpoznejné žiadne iné osoby.
5. Ak chcete použiť obrázok s viditeľnými inými osobami, pred rozhovorom ich rozmažte alebo odstráňte z obrázka.
6. Neexistuje žiadne správne alebo nesprávne, vyberte fotografiu, ktorá k vám hovorí.