



# INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 3

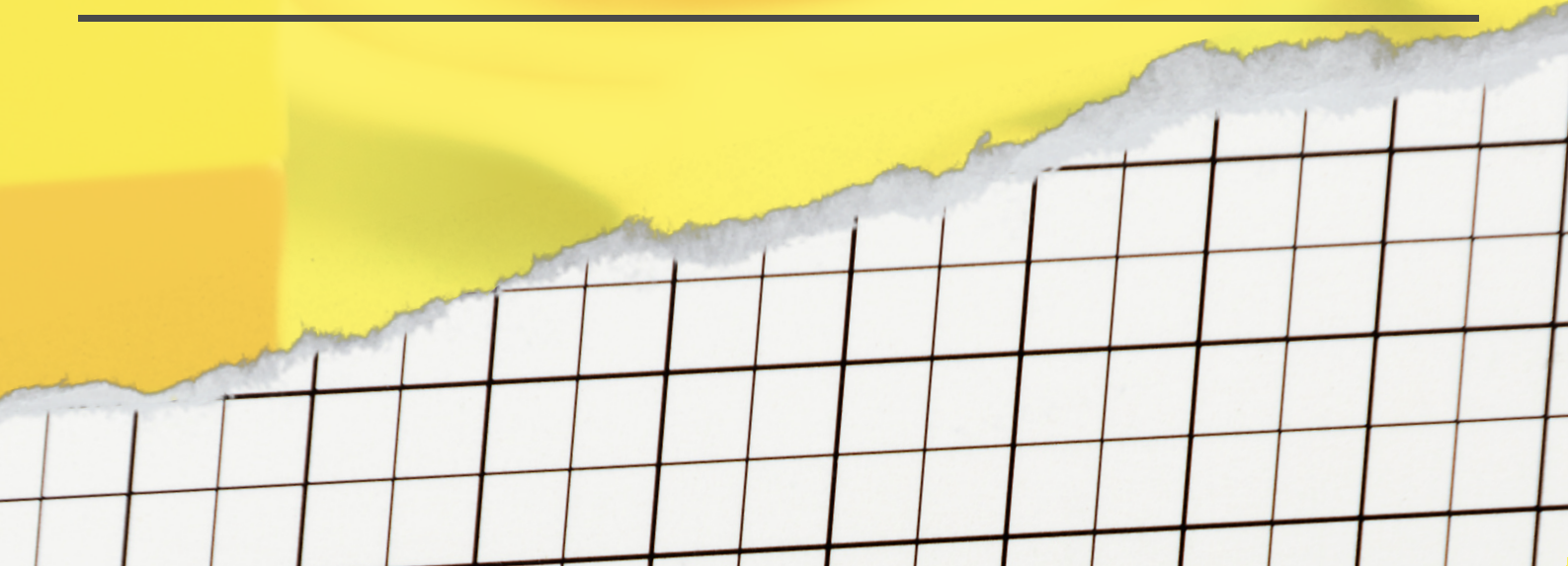
## PLAYING PROJECT



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# GUIDELINES FOR *Peer Review* IN PRESCHOOLS

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Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

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# THE PROJECT IN SHORT



<b>ACRONYM</b>	<b>PLAYING</b>
<b>TITLE</b>	Enhancing the quality of preschool services through innovative play-based learning methodologies
<b>FUNDING PROGRAMME</b>	ERASMUS+
<b>LENGTH</b>	2020-2023
<b>GENERAL OBJECTIVE</b>	The general objective of the project is to increase quality in early childhood education and care through the development of new knowledge on teaching approaches based on the role of play.
<b>SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES</b>	The specific objectives are: 1. To strengthen the skills of pre-school teachers through innovative play-based learning methodology 2. To improve the quality of preschool services introducing transnational peer review- based processes in relation to learning methods.
<b>TANGIBLE RESULTS</b>	IO1: MAPPING OF PLAY – BASED LEARNING AS A TEACHING METHOD, a mapping analysis, offering an overview on the existing needs and the gaps in methodologies and knowledge related to play-based learning. IO2: TRAINING METHODOLOGY, a teaching method comprises the principles and methods used by preschool teachers to enable children learning through symbolic play. IO3: A PEER REVIEW TOOLKIT, a document explaining how to perform a peer review to evaluate preschool services and providing ready-to-use materials and templates.
<b>LEAD PARTNER</b>	Municipality of Linköping (SE)
<b>OTHER PARTNERS</b>	University of Linköping (SE), Municipality of Parma (IT), Sweden Emilia Romagna Network – SERN (IT), Escola Sant Josep (ES), UCL (DK), Elmer School (BE), Børneinstitutionen Holluf Pile-Tingkær - Odense (DK)
<b>WEBSITE</b>	<a href="https://playing-project.eu/">https://playing-project.eu/</a>
<b>FACEBOOK PAGE</b>	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/Playingproject">https://www.facebook.com/Playingproject</a>



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## PLAYING WHAT IS A TRANSNATIONAL PEER REVIEW IN PRESCHOOL?

Peer Review is a form of **external evaluation** with the aim of supporting a reviewed preschool in its quality assurance and quality development efforts. In the peer review activity we have a group of Peers, external experts, who are invited in a preschool to conduct **observations and interviews times** to assess the quality of one or more fields of activity of the hosting preschool. The peers are external but work in a similar environment in their country ( preschool teachers, pedagogical coordinators) and have specific professional expertise and knowledge of the evaluated subject. The peers are a group of **3-4 “persons of equal standing”** with the persons whose performance is being reviewed. The peer review can be bilateral or multilateral and can be inside the region/ country or transnational. In the framework of the PLAYING project it was transnational and based on reciprocity since the Peer review was conducted in the preschool services of Elmer - Brussels (Belgium), Linkoping (Sweden), Parma (Italy), Escola Sant Josep - Terrassa (Spain).

### WHY TO PERFORM A TRANSNATIONAL PEER REVIEW?

The aim of the peer review process is:

- obtaining critical yet sympathetic feedback on the quality of their service provision from colleagues in the field,
- becoming acquainted with an external perspective,
- ascertaining the quality of the service,
- presenting strengths and showcasing good practice,
- detecting blind spots and weaknesses,
- receiving advice and discovering the good practice of Peers,
- engaging in mutual learning with Peers,
- obtaining an external evaluation report on the quality of their service

### HOW DOES THE PEER REVIEW WORK?

#### *Phase 1* PREPARATORY PHASE

In this first phase, the Peer Review is organized and a self evaluation-report is written by the organization which is going to be reviewed. This self-assessment report allows the peers who will visit to have some important information on the preschool itself: area in which it is located, characteristics of the school, number of children and educators (ratio). In this document, educators are also asked to highlight what they consider to be the strong and weak points of their preschool and then have a comparison with what is indicated the final feedback from their peers.

In the meantime, peers must be identified and get informed about the peer review's general roles (see below).



*The group of peers should include maximum 5 people, over this number it may be difficult to participate in the observations, without children being disturbed by a group of strangers*

The program is then defined: a timetable for the Review is drawn up and arrangements are made for the Peer Visit which can last from 2 to 3 days.

### **Phase 2** THE PEER VISIT STARTS

Peers come to visit the preschool, observe the daily activities in the school and interview (or rather converse in a more relaxed way) the teachers.



*Have a conversation with the teachers following a trail, but also let the discussion proceed spontaneously. This will put the interviewees at ease and favor the free exchange of points of view among the participants.*

### **Phase 3** THE PRODUCTION OF THE REPORT

The observations collected during the visit and the interviews are all aimed at producing a final report.

The report is usually produced once the peers have returned.



*It could be important to give the peers time at the end of the visit to draft some parts of the report, since everything is still recent.*

The report should be finalized within a few weeks. The report is then ready to be delivered to the reviewed school.

### **Phase 3** THE PEER REVIEW REPORT AS A TOOL FOR IMPROVEMENT

The fourth phase is crucial for the organization's development: results and recommendations contained in the Report, done by Peers, should lead to an internal reflection within the organization aimed at transferring into concrete actions for improvement, which are planned and implemented.

## GENERAL ROLES FOR THE PEER VISIT

The following rules are to be considered by the Peer Teams during the Peer Visit:

- The Peers work on the evaluation assignments given by the reviewed organisation.
- The Peers keep to the agreed time schedule.
- The Peers adhere to the interview rules.
- The Peers treat the entrusted data and feedback confidentially.
- The Peers seek to listen and to report the statements objectively.
- The Peers work as a team supporting each other in our tasks and feedback.
- The Peers are prepared for unforeseen occurrences.

### *Communication and Interview Rules*

- Basic attitude: curious, open and accepting, striving for understanding, no rash or sweeping interpretations or judgements.
- Use appropriate language.
- Make contact, assume an open and friendly posture, listen actively and show interest.
- During the interview: speak briefly and clearly, using short single questions, use silence and pauses, do not interrupt the interviewee's line of thought.
- Ask short questions so that the interviewee can speak as much as possible!
- Ask again: Did I understand that correctly? Ask for facts and examples especially when answers are too general.
- Follow the main thread, lead back to the main topic. Finish the interview in time.
- Allow critical questions concerning the interviews or the Peer Review. Note down remarks and critical comments.

### *Reflective and Constructive Feedback ...*






- promotes reflection as part of a dialogue between the giver and receiver of feedback. Both parties are involved in observing, thinking, reporting, and responding.
- focuses on processes rather than on the individual. Refers to what an individual does rather than to what we think s/he is.
- is descriptive rather than judgmental. Avoiding judgmental language reduces the need for an individual to respond defensively.
- is specific rather than general.
- promotes reflection about strategies and the children' or observer's responses to a specific strategy.
- is directed toward behaviour which the receiver can change.
- considers the needs of both the receiver and giver of feedback.
- is solicited rather than imposed. Feedback is most useful when the receiver actively seeks feedback and is able to discuss it in a supportive environment.
- involves sharing information rather than giving advice, leaving the individual free to change in accordance with personal goals and needs.
- considers the amount of information the receiver can use rather than the amount the observer would like to give. Overloading an individual with feedback reduces the likelihood that the information will be used effectively.
- requires a supportive, confidential relationship built on trust, honesty, and genuine concern.

## TOOLS TO SUPPORT THE PEER REVIEW

The PLAYING project group has developed a set of materials and documents, tested in the different peer reviews conducted that can be useful to anyone who wants to perform a peer review. Note that the project team conducted a transnational peer review, but what is applied internationally can also be done nationally.

The PLAYING project focused on play activities, learning through play and the role of the educator during children's play, for this reason specific quality areas, criteria and indicators were chosen to be analysed during the process of the peer review.

The toolkit for the peer review includes several materials:

<b>1.</b> <b>SELF-REPORT FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT TEMPLATES</b>	<b><u>the organization that will be reviewed must complete this document</u></b> , leave it available to peers two weeks before the peer visit to acquire the essential information on the service to be reviewed, before the arrival	<i>Link</i> 
<b>2.</b> <b>OBSERVATION</b>	is a document <b>for the peers</b> , to be used during the peer visit, useful to annotate and collect data on what will be analysed later	<i>Link</i> 
<b>3.</b> <b>INTERVIEW MINUTES AND GUIDELINES FOR ANALYSIS</b>	the guidelines are <b>for the peers</b> , they will guide the discussion between external peers and educators of the reviewed school. The suggested questions are helping the peers in deepening some aspects of the selected quality areas.	<i>Link</i> 
<b>4.</b> <b>META EVALUATION OF THE PEERS</b>	a tool <b>for the peers</b> to provide a reflective statement on the experience of the Peer Review process as a whole and particularly of the Peer Visit.	<i>Link</i> 
<b>5.</b> <b>FINAL REPORT FOR PEER REVIEW</b>	the final document, <b>compiled by the peers</b> and which will be delivered to the reviewed school	<i>Link</i> 

For each criterion includes, the strengths and areas of improvement should be summarised.

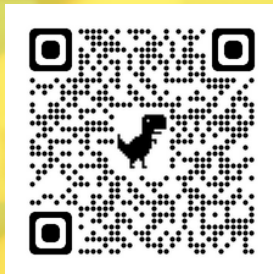
The whole toolkit with the templates is available in English, Swedish, Italian, French, Flemish, Danish and Spanish on the Playing project website.

[CLICK HERE](#)





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