

Call for Contributions to the Focus Publication “Play” for the *Orientierungsrahmen 2.0*

Working Title

Play – An Interdisciplinary Perspective: The Importance of Play and its Guidance for Development and Well-being in Early Childhood

Editors

SSECR SIG Play

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Concept

In the *Orientierungsrahmen* (OR) 2.0, play is given a special role: “Play means joyful learning. Through both free and guided play, alone or with others, children develop essential life skills such as motor and cognitive skills, creativity, self-confidence and social behaviour.”

Free and guided play is central to children’s development and health, education, care and child protection. Play is present in both pedagogical and therapeutic settings. For example, it is highly valued in playgroups, daycare centres, after-school care, sports clubs and within families, as well as in therapeutic contexts such as special needs education, psychomotor therapy, speech therapy, child psychiatry and paediatrics etc.

Taking an interdisciplinary view of play as a key element of child development provides an opportunity to support children professionally and deserves attention. The planned focus publication creates a space in which different disciplines can learn from each other and develop a common understanding of play. It brings together research findings and practical examples from educational and therapeutic perspectives to take an interdisciplinary look at the role of play in child development and education. This broadens the perspective in OR 2.0.

Guiding Questions and Objectives

The following guiding questions are central to this publication:

- How is play defined and understood from different academic and professional disciplines?
- What do we know from research across various disciplines about the significance of play for children’s development and well-being?
- What do we know from research about the importance of adult facilitation in children’s play?

This publication aims to illustrate the diversity of play and its facilitation in various pedagogical and therapeutic contexts, encouraging reflection on one’s own professional practice. Scientific findings will be presented in a practical way and complemented with specific practical implications and, in some cases, examples.

Contribution formats

The focus publication will include 12–16 scientific contributions on a specific theme. There are two types of scientific contribution possible (see below). All contributions must include implications for practice. Researchers can choose to place greater emphasis on practice by including, for example, a case study or a practitioner statement.

(1) Scientific contributions

These should be 2 pages long (approximately 8,000 characters, excluding references) and include original research results with practical implications.

Structure:

- Background (contextual embedding)
- Scientific findings
- Implications for practice

(2) Scientific contributions with an extended practice focus

These contributions are 3 pages long (approximately 12,000 characters, excluding references). The extended practice section includes either a concrete example of implementation or a practitioner's report. This extended practice section can be authored by either the researchers themselves or someone directly involved in the practical implementation.

Structure:

- Background (contextual embedding)
- Scientific findings
- Implications for practice
- Extended practice focus

Practice-based contributions

In addition to academic articles, we welcome practice-based contributions, such as presentations of educational concepts or support approaches, or comments on the academic articles. Relevant stakeholders from the field will be contacted directly by the editors. The editors also welcome suggestions for practice contributions.

Structure and Scope

The planned focus publication will be structured as follows: First, the editors will locate the theme of play within the OR. This is followed by contributions from researchers.

The editors will then present a synthesis of the scientific insights, discussing them along the following dimensions: (a) Understanding of play and play development, (b) Importance of play for child development and well-being across age groups, (c) Importance of pedagogical and therapeutic facilitation of play, (d) Open questions (research gaps).

Introduction: locating the theme of play within the OR (by the editors)	2 pages
Research contributions 1-16 (each 2-3 pages)	40-44 pages
Synthesis: What is relevant for practice (by editors)	4 pages
Total	46-50 pages

Timeline / Milestones

Submission of contribution outline (first draft of the idea; declaration of intent, see attached template). Contributions can be submitted in German, French or Italian	11. August 2025
Review and selection of submissions	18. August 2025
<i>Possible request for an extended focus on practice or a practice contribution</i>	<i>By end of August 2025</i>
Submission of full manuscript	End of October 2025
Compilation of full manuscript (by editors)	December 2025 -January 2026
Writing of synthesis	February 2026
Translation	February-March 2026
Layout and print	April – Early May 2026
Launch of focus publication (professional event or webinar)	June 2026

Submission of the first draft of the idea

Please submit your contribution outline using the attached word template by 11 August 2025 via email to Lena Hollenstein (lena.hollenstein@phsg.ch). All submissions will be reviewed, and decisions on acceptance or rejection will be communicated by the end of August 2025 at the latest.