



TOY for Quality Programme

An assessment tool
to evaluate and improve quality
in intergenerational learning initiatives

Guidelines

Acknowledgements

These Guidelines were developed by members of the TOY-PLUS Consortium: Ilaria Farina, Carla Dessi and Grazia dell'Oro (Azienda Speciale Retesalute, Italy); and Giulia Cortellesi, Jessica Harpley and Margaret Kernan (ICDI, the Netherlands).

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For more information about TOY-PLUS, please visit:
www.toyproject.net/project/toy-plus/

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Introduction

Welcome to the TOY for Quality Programme Guidelines. These provide information for practitioners working with intergenerational learning initiatives who wish to assess and improve the quality of intergenerational learning services and programmes. The purpose of the TOY for Quality Programme is threefold:

1. to support improvements in the quality of existing intergenerational initiatives and services
2. to provide organisations with a method to enhance planning in the field of intergenerational learning
3. to raise awareness at the local and national level about intergenerational learning as an area of professional and social action.

The TOY for Quality programme is part of the TOY approach to intergenerational learning. TOY, which stands for Together Old and Young, primarily focusses on young children and older adults. Visit the TOY website www.toyproject.net for more information about TOY, its projects, partners and resources.

By participating in the TOY for Quality Programme:

- Your organisation will be a pioneer in assessing the quality of intergenerational learning initiatives and you can demonstrate their potential.
- Staff, volunteers and beneficiaries in your initiative will be supported to reflect on their practice and improve the quality of intergenerational learning activities.
- Your initiative will be mentioned on the TOY website and you will be free to mention TOY in your own communications.
- You will be part of an international community of practice and have access to the TOY resources, including publications and a free upgrade on the TOY Online Course (www.toyproject.net/toy-course) in intergenerational learning.
- You will be recognized in your community as an organisation delivering quality intergenerational initiatives.

The TOY for Quality Programme is organised into two documents:

The Guidelines provide information about the TOY approach and explains the 5 stages of the TOY for Quality Programme.

The Assessment Form, which comprises the six quality dimensions, their indicators and reflective questions which are used during the assessment process. The Assessment Form will be made available to organisations once they have registered for the TOY for Quality Programme.

What is
intergenerational
learning?



Intergenerational learning is a learning partnership based on reciprocity and mutuality, involving people of different ages, where the generations work together to gain skills, values and knowledge¹.

Why is intergenerational learning important?

Opportunities for separate age groups, such as young children and older adults, to engage socially in day-to-day activities are reducing because of social changes affecting societies and families across Europe. Older people are living longer, and yet are often separated from their families due to migration or family breakdown. Children are growing up in smaller family circles and therefore have fewer chances to socialize with different age groups. Intergenerational learning activities recognise the important role that older adults can play in the lives of young children, and provide a means for young children and older adults to connect and form positive relationships. Research has demonstrated that children, older adults and the community as a whole benefit by participating in intergenerational learning activities².

The Together Old and Young approach to intergenerational learning

The Together Old and Young approach brings young children (0-8) and older adults together to share experiences, have fun, learn from each other and develop meaningful relationships. Intergenerational learning activities in TOY are friendly and informal social encounters, where children and adults can equally partake as the learner and the teacher.

TOY has two overarching goals of (1) improved health and well-being for all generations, and (2) the development and building of age-friendly communities. The vision of TOY is also elaborated in **five goals of intergenerational practice**:

Goal 1: Building and sustaining relationships

Goal 2: Enhancing social cohesion in the community

Goal 3: Facilitating older people as guardians of knowledge

Goal 4: Recognising the roles of (social) grandparents in young children's lives

Goal 5: Enriching the learning processes of both children and older adults.

The TOY approach recognizes that learning occurs across a lifespan and is not restricted to a formal school setting; learning can happen anywhere, at any stage of life. Intergenerational learning initiatives within TOY recognize the importance of relationships in the learning process, and of being active in one's learning. Intergenerational programmes provide a space for the formation of reciprocal and collaborative relationships, where both the child and older adult can act as the **teacher** and as the **learner**.

The **benefits** of such a programme are numerous, with research demonstrating greater life enjoyment, happiness and coping in older adults, and the development of important skills such as leadership, self-confidence and civic attitudes in young

1 ENIL, European Network for Intergenerational Learning, www.enilnet.eu/Dossier_ENIL_EN2.pdf

2 TOY Project Consortium (2013) *Reweaving the tapestry of the generations: An Intergenerational Learning tour through Europe*, Leiden: The TOY Project.

children³. Intergenerational learning can also have a positive effect on society as a whole, fostering social inclusion and acceptance in multicultural communities, as stereotypes and negative thoughts about other age groups are broken down, and cultural heritage is shared between generations.


In order for benefits such as these to take effect, however, an intergenerational learning initiative must be of high quality. Quality practice is difficult to define, and even more tricky to measure. Quality is also contextual, dependent on the values, needs and skills of the local target community. However, research and best practice has demonstrated some key elements for fostering good quality in intergenerational learning initiatives⁴:

- The learning relationship is reciprocal and collaborative, meaning that both young and old take agency in the direction of the relationship, each acting as teacher and learner.
- Comfortable and tolerant relationships are built over time, and can be encouraged with simple shared activities such as gardening, craft-making or story-telling.
- The best intergenerational learning facilitators are able to be flexible, creative, playful, non-judgmental and welcoming, and embrace learning as an active and lifelong process.
- The design and layout of the physical environment is comfortable and safe, and able to facilitate a range of activities and stimuli, from active stimuli to quiet interaction.
- Working collaboratively with practitioners from other sectors ensures that staff have the knowledge and resources required to support the needs of both young children and older adults.

3 TOY Project Consortium (2013) *Intergenerational Learning Involving Young Children and Older People*, Leiden: The TOY Project.

TOY Project Consortium (2013) *Reweaving the tapestry of the generations: An Intergenerational Learning tour through Europe*, Leiden: The TOY Project; TOY Course (2018), <http://www.toyproject.net/toy-course/>

4 TOY Project Consortium (2013) *Reweaving the tapestry of the generations: An Intergenerational Learning tour through Europe*, Leiden: The TOY Project; TOY Course, <http://www.toyproject.net/toy-course/>

An elderly man with white hair, wearing a blue and white striped polo shirt and dark blue trousers, is walking away from the camera on a paved path. He is using a silver cane. To his left, a young child wearing a grey baseball cap, a blue shirt, and a yellow and grey backpack is walking alongside him, holding onto the cane. The background shows a park setting with trees, a wooden fence, and other people in the distance. The text "What does the TOY for Quality programme consist of?" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

**What does the
TOY for Quality
programme
consist of?**

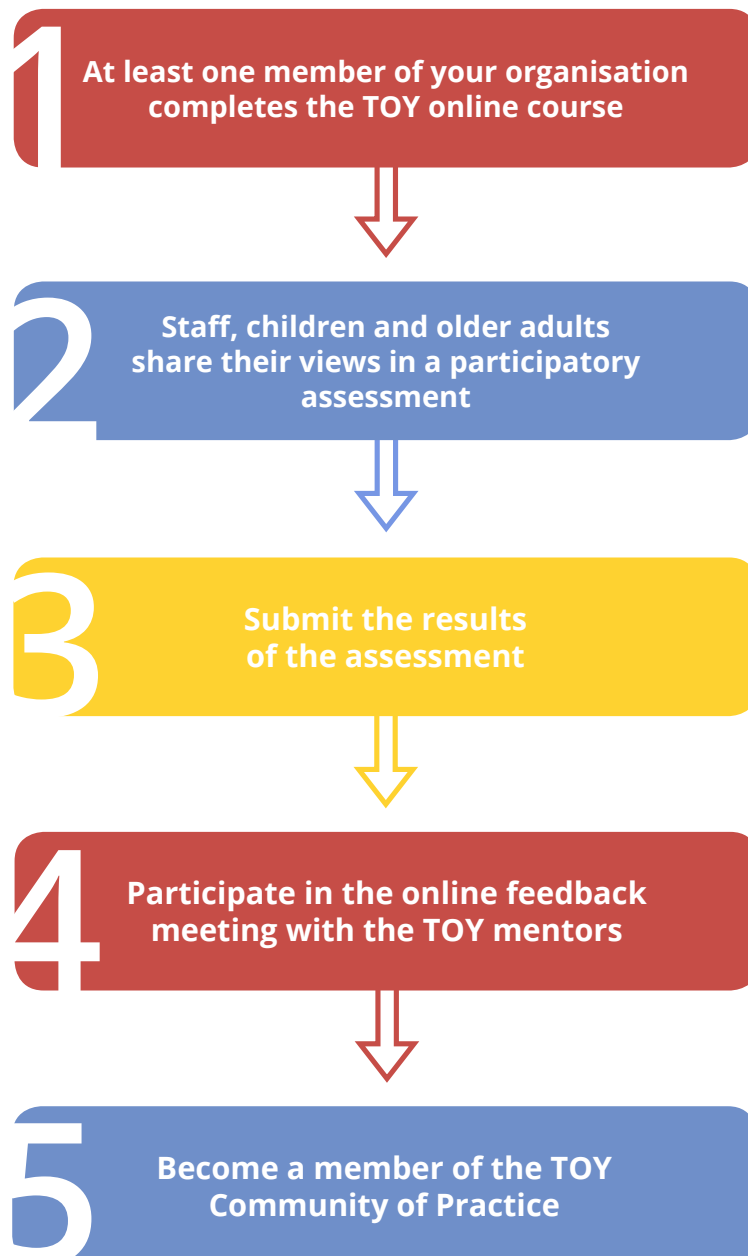
The TOY for Quality programme is a **participatory process of reflection, discussion and action** leading to improve quality in intergenerational learning initiatives involving young children and older adults.

Who is the TOY for Quality Programme for?

It can be used by practitioners and organisations engaged in any stage of planning or implementation of intergenerational learning initiatives. These may be **service providers in ECEC, social care, and community work**, as well as **local authorities** offering intergenerational learning programmes and initiatives.

Five stages towards quality

The Programme consists of **five stages**, which are summarised in the graphic below and explained in more detail in the following paragraphs. The estimated time required to complete the TOY for Quality assessment process is 7 to 10 hours.





Stage 1 – Preparation

Make contact with TOY mentors

First stage is to get in contact with the TOY mentor based in your region, and ask to participate in the TOY for Quality Programme:

Countries	TOY Mentor contact
ITALY Italian speaking countries	Azienda Speciale Retesalute Piazza Vittorio Veneto 2/3 – Merate (LC) Tel: +39 039 2264754 ufficiobandi.retesalute@gmail.com Contact language: Italian
SPAIN Spanish speaking countries	Ajuntament de Lleida – Regidoria d’ Educació c/ Bisbe Torres, 2-25002 Lleida Tel: +34 973 700 618 educacio@paeria.cat Contact language: Catalan and Spanish
SLOVENIA CROATIA BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA SERBIA	Step by Step Centre for Quality in Education (Educational Research Institute) Tel: +386 14 29 20 20 korakzakorakom@pei.si Contact language: Slovenian and English
English speaking countries All other countries	International Child Development Initiatives – ICDI Hooglandse Kerkgracht 17-F, 2312 HS Leiden. Tel: +31 71 512 7420 info@toyproject.net www.toyproject.net Contact language: English

You will be asked to complete a short application form in which you explain your motivation to participate in the TOY for Quality Programme. Once this has been processed the TOY mentor will contact you and you will receive access to the TOY for Quality Programme documents to proceed with the assessment process.

Participate in the TOY online course

You will then be invited to attend the TOY online course⁵, titled 'Together Old and Young: An Intergenerational Approach'. The modules of this course cover learning between old and young, intergenerational learning for social inclusion, and organisation, quality and sustainability of intergenerational learning programmes. Satisfactory completion of this course by at least one practitioner in an organisation is one of the requirements to complete the assessment process. Participants in the TOY for Quality Programme will receive a free Upgrade in the TOY Course (unlimited access to the TOY Course and a Certificate of Achievement) provided the Course has been completed satisfactorily.

Organise a preparation meeting

As part of this stage, you will also be asked to organise a preparation meeting with your colleagues involved in the intergenerational learning initiative and review with them the Guidelines and the Assessment Form in order to get ready for the process. You are invited to get in contact with the TOY mentors about any doubts that might arise. The TOY mentor will be at your disposal to better understand the whole process and to prevent drop-out at all stages.

⁵ <http://www.toyproject.net/project/toy-plus/>



Stage 2 – The Participatory Assessment

The second stage of the TOY for Quality Programme is the participatory assessment using the TOY for Quality Assessment Form.

The Form is designed to create an opportunity for open discussion, for staff to reflect on their work, and for children and older adults to actively engage in the practice as participants. Their views are also taken into account in the assessment of the quality of the practice. The assessment is a facilitative process, highlighting areas for growth and improvement, and utilizing the opinions and expertise of different stakeholders to improve the quality of the service.

The Assessment Form comprises six dimensions of quality:

1. Building relationships and well-being
2. Respect for diversity
3. Interaction with and within the community
4. Learning with and from each other
5. Professional development and teamwork
6. Monitoring, evaluation and sustainability.

Each dimension includes a description of quality intergenerational learning practice, and a set of indicators and reflection questions to be used to guide the discussion.

The Participatory Assessment process has four components:

a. Staff group reflection

Staff and volunteers involved in the intergenerational learning initiative will participate in a group discussion or reflection using the dimensions, indicators and questions for reflection as a guide. The assessment form should be completed in this meeting, which involves assigning a rating from 1 to 4 for each indicator. We suggest allowing three hours to allow adequate time for this. Additional guidelines for conducting the group reflection meeting, and how to rate the indicators, can be found in Appendix 1.

b. Consultation with children, parents and older adults

Certain indicators in the Assessment Form, marked by a star (*), need to be assessed based on the opinions and experiences of the **participants** (i.e. young children and older adults). Practitioners will need to organise short conversations with parents of young children, children themselves and older adults. The views of the children, their parents and older adults need to be gathered in advance and brought to the group reflection meeting.

Consultation with children, parents and older adults need to take place prior the group reflection of the staff, in order to inform this reflection. Additional guidelines for these sessions can be found in Appendix 2.

c. Collection of evidence

For each indicator, there is a list of suggested documents to provide. Organisations are invited to only include significant evidence demonstrating the development of the initiative. There is no need to provide supporting documents for every indicator. Examples of **supporting documentation** (evidence) that could be submitted can be found next to the relevant indicators, but might include: courses attended by staff members, reflections by staff members, data such as attendance records, quotes and responses from participants (children and older adults), photographic evidence, reports of activities, video, etc.

d. Action Plan

The assessment is a reflective process, and it is hoped that the results of this session can be used to inform programme development and improvements in the quality of the intergenerational practice. To get the most value out of this process it is advised to develop an Action Plan, in which strengths and weaknesses in each dimension are identified and actions and activities to make improvements are agreed upon.

An Action Plan template has been included in Appendix 3. This is an **optional resource** for service providers, and not a requirement for completion of assessment process. However, it is strongly recommended.



Stage 3 – Assessment Submission

The next stage is to submit the completed TOY for Quality assessment form and supporting evidence to the TOY mentors. This is done by sending all documents via email.



Stage 4 – Feedback Meeting

The TOY mentors will review all your documentation and will schedule an **online meeting** to discuss the assessment experience and results. The meeting will be organised with the main person responsible for the intergenerational learning initiative and the assessment process. Following the meeting, the TOY mentor will draft a written feedback report containing the main discussion points and recommendations to improve quality in the intergenerational initiative. These recommendations in combination with Action Plan developed during the group reflection meeting can provide a framework to continue to improve practice.

This is an ongoing process and is illustrated in The Reflective Cycle for Quality Intergenerational Learning (see Stage 5 below).



Stage 5 – Membership of the TOY Community of Practice

An initiative or organisation who demonstrates commitment and motivation to quality intergenerational learning practice by participating in the process can become a member of the TOY Community of Practice. However, membership may be postponed where there are serious concerns about the quality of the practice, especially in the case of lack of continuity in the intergenerational activities and lack of attention to safeguarding the well-being of both children and older adults. In both cases, organisations will receive written feedback highlighting the main results of the assessment process.

The membership is valid for three years on condition that member organisations:

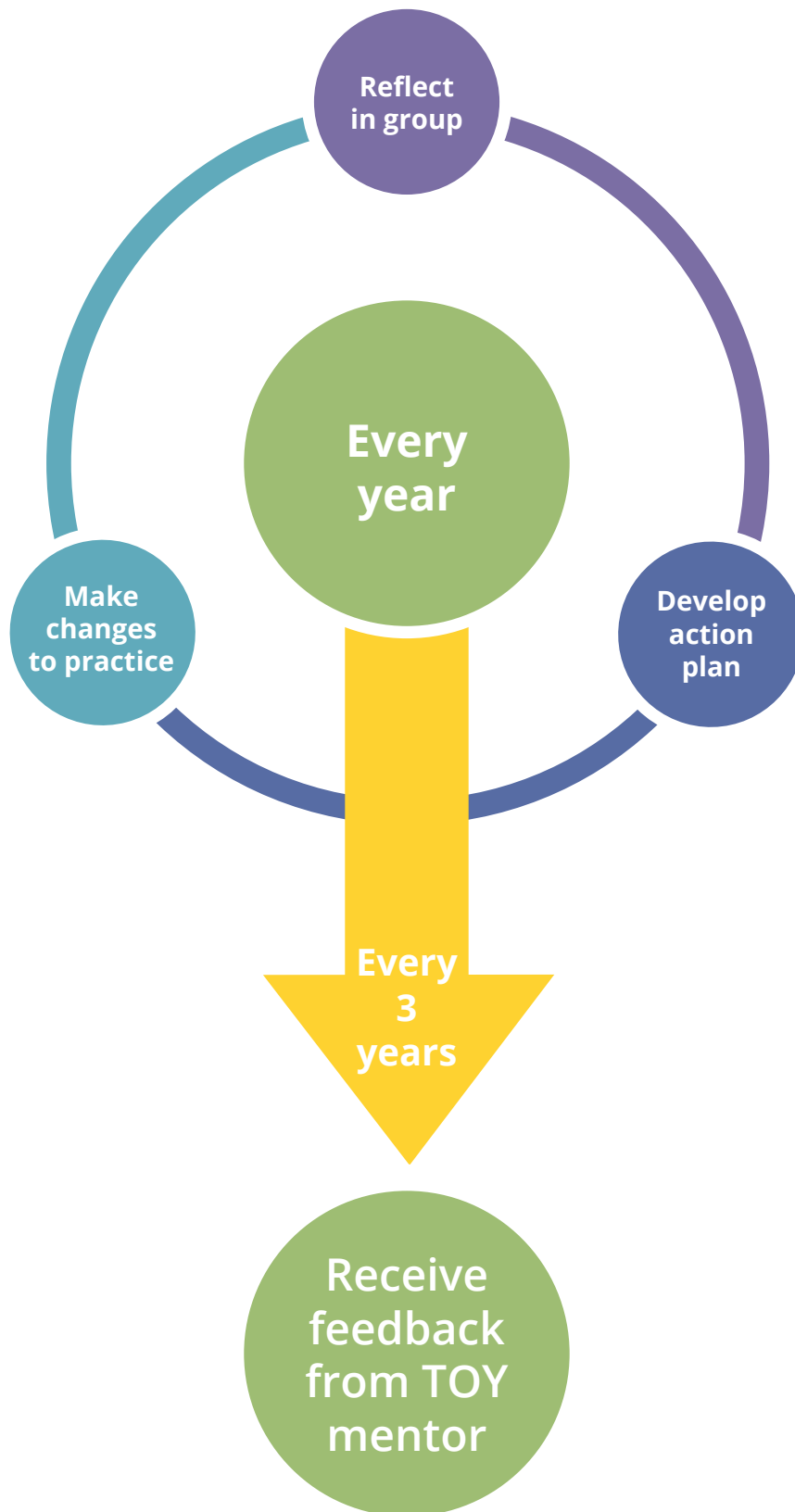
- repeat the self-assessment process internally once a year, without the support of the TOY mentor (see The Reflective Cycle for Quality Intergenerational Learning below);
- submit annually to the TOY mentor an example of a successful intergenerational activity which they have facilitated and would like to share with other organisations (see Template in Appendix 4).

The membership of the TOY Community of Practice will be awarded through a certificate and will give access to the following resources:

- use of the TOY for Quality logo
- visibility of the organisation's practice through TOY communication media (Facebook, website, newsletter)
- free access to knowledge and resources about intergenerational learning
- contact with many good practices and organisations around the world
- free upgrade on TOY Online Course in intergenerational learning (unlimited access to the TOY Course and a Certificate of Achievement)

Please refer to Appendix 5 to know more about the terms of use of the TOY logo, name and resources.

The Reflective Cycle for Quality Intergenerational Learning



Appendixes

Appendix 1 – How to conduct a group reflection meeting using the TOY for Quality Assessment Form

The TOY for Quality assessment process is centered on conducting **group reflection meetings** with staff and volunteers involved in the intergenerational learning initiative, which is **preceded by conversations with children**, their **parents** and the **older adults** participating in the intergenerational initiative. Through group reflection meetings, staff and volunteers exchange views and opinions of different areas of the intergenerational learning initiatives. For organizations who are working together for the first time, the group reflection meeting can be considered a great opportunity to get to know each other better and plan future meetings to further reflect on their intergenerational practice. The following section will provide some useful guidelines for conducting these assessment sessions.

a. Preparation and logistics

Staff and volunteers will be invited to come together at an **agreed time and place** for the group reflection meeting. It would be useful if everyone who attends has received a copy of the Assessment Form prior to the meeting (see Stage 1 – Preparation), and has a copy with them for perusal. When organizing the meeting, consider what time of day will be most suitable for participants, and consider supplying **light refreshments** (e.g. coffee, tea, snacks). As mentioned earlier, the meeting should take about **three hours**, which can be divided over two or three separate sessions if necessary.

b. Facilitation

One person takes the role of facilitator (chair). A second person should be asked to take responsibility for recording (writing down) key comments, supporting information and ratings. It is important for the facilitator to be welcoming, explaining briefly the purpose of the assessment and stressing the inclusive and democratic nature of the discussion. The discussion session(s) will address each of the 6 quality dimensions in turn. First, the dimension will be introduced using the description provided. Next, the facilitator will lead a group reflection on each of the indicators relating to that dimension. The 'reflection questions' provided can be used to prompt further discussion and help to collect supporting documentation. The facilitator should be aware of time management, to ensure that each dimension receives adequate time for discussion.

c. Rating and supporting evidence

By the end of the session, the group should have discussed all 6 dimensions of quality, including indicators and reflection questions, questions and ideas for further reflection or improvement. Additionally, the group will have decided on a rating (1, 2, 3 or 4) for each of the 6 dimensions, indicating in which phase of quality development the intergenerational learning initiative is currently operating at.

The ratings are assigned according to the following phases of development:

Rating 1	Awareness phase- the initiative or programme shows some sensitivity towards this dimension of quality, however little action has been taken to embody it
Rating 2	Exploration phase - the initiative or programme shows awareness of this dimension of quality and has taken some steps to work towards these goals
Rating 3	Transition phase - the initiative or programme is aware of the importance of this dimension of quality and is taking several actions to embody it in practice
Rating 4	Full implementation phase - the initiative or programme is successfully promoting the principles and actions involved in this dimension of quality

By the end of the group reflection meeting, staff and volunteers select which supporting evidence better illustrates their intergenerational learning initiative and the rating they gave to each dimension. Examples of **supporting documentation** include: courses attended by staff members, reflections by staff members, data such as attendance records, ratings and responses from participants (children and older adults), photographic evidence, reports of activities, video, etc.

d. Follow-up

Based on the outcomes of the group reflection meeting, staff and volunteers are invited to develop an Action Plan, which identifies the main areas of improvements on the short, medium and long-term. Please see Template in Appendix 3. The process should be repeated annually, referring to the completed Action plan as a starting point (see 'The Reflection Cycle for Quality Intergenerational Learning').

Appendix 2 – How to conduct a short interview with young children and older people

Six of the indicators require having an informal short interview with a sample of the children and older adults participating in the initiative: three indicators specifically for children and three specifically for older adults.

In the cases where children are not yet verbal, it is recommended to also consult with their parents.

The interview should be a **pleasant conversation** between a practitioner and the child or adult and their participation in the interview should be completely voluntary.

It is beneficial that practitioners who know the children and older adult are the ones who conduct the interview conversation, although it is not necessary that they are the practitioner who is responsible for the intergenerational initiative.

It is important to sit in a **quiet place** where you will not be disturbed by other children or adults and that this is a familiar place where the child and older adult feels safe.

It is also important that the interviewer does not read out the questions from the Assessment Form but rather **asks the questions in a natural manner**, as in a conversation. For example, when interviewing a young child use expressions and words that the child is familiar with. In addition, bear in mind that the questions should be asked so the child or older adult is not led to believe that there is a "correct" or "wrong" answer. It may be good to remind them that the adult wants to hear about their experiences, thoughts and opinions.

One useful way of eliciting views and experiences of participants is to **use visual methods** such as a drawing, collages or asking participants to take photos of aspects of the activity/programme they like or don't like. Sometimes emotions are more meaningful than words, so don't focus only on verbal aspects but also consider the way words are expressed.

Appendix 3 – Action Plan template

Dimension	Strengths	Weaknesses	Activities for improvement	Who is responsible?	Timeline	Resources needed (materials, support, money, etc.)
1. Building relationships and well-being						
2. Respect for diversity						
3. Interaction with and within the community						
4. Learning with and from each other						
5. Professional development and teamwork						
6. Monitoring, evaluation and sustainability						

Appendix 4 – Example of successful intergenerational activities*

Title of activity	
Purpose	
Description of participants (e.g. age and number)	
Materials	
Setting the stage (introducing the activity to participants))	
Activity step-by-step	
Closure	
Additional tips and suggestions	
Links	

Adapted from Heydon R. (2013) Learning at the ends of Life. University of Toronto Press: Toronto

Appendix 5 – Terms of use of the TOY Logo

TOY Community of Practice membership

Use of TOY image, resources and reputation for members

Congratulations!

You have completed the TOY for Quality Programme and you are now a member of the TOY Community of Practice.

What does it mean for your organisation?

- Your organisation is a pioneer in assessing the quality of intergenerational learning initiatives and you can demonstrate their potential.
- Staff, volunteers and beneficiaries in your initiative are supported to reflect on their practice and improve the quality of intergenerational learning activities.
- Your initiative is mentioned on the TOY website and you are free to refer to TOY in your own communications.
- You are part of an international community of practice and have access to the TOY resources, including the TOY online course and publications.
- You are recognized in your community as an organisation delivering quality intergenerational initiatives.

What are your responsibilities?

The membership is valid for **three years** on condition your organisation:

- repeats the self-assessment process internally once a year, without the support of the TOY mentor (see The Reflective Cycle for Quality Intergenerational Learning);
- submits annually to the TOY Mentor an example of a successful intergenerational activity which they have facilitated and would like to share with other organisations (see Template in Appendix 4 of the TOY for Quality Guidelines).
- organises intergenerational activities, which focus on young children (0-8) and older adults, and which are line with the TOY Vision and Goals (see TOY for Quality Guidelines) and the TOY for Quality Programme Dimensions.

How can you use the TOY image and resources? Do's and don'ts

- Your organisation can use the TOY – Together Old and Young logo, name and published resources on your communications and publications. Examples of use include but are not limited to: emails, posters, printed publications, journal articles, book chapters, newsletters, and webpages.
- Please, do not share the logo with anyone else for their use.
- Please, do not use, register or attempt to register any company name, product name, domain name, user name, email address or URL incorporating TOY image or any word or combination of letters similar to TOY.
- Your organisation needs to comply with the Style Guide instructions and directions regarding the use, appearance and placement of the TOY logo (see Annex A).

- Your organisation is asked not alter the nature or design of the TOY logo in any way.
- Please, do not use the TOY logo, name and published resources in any manner that will diminish or otherwise damage the TOY reputation.
- When using TOY logo, name and resources, your organisation is required to:
 - acknowledge that it is a TOY publication, and list the authors of the publication,
 - inform TOY (info@toyproject.net) and provide feedback on the use and alterations they have made,
 - keep the initial design of the publication and the TOY logo when translating and printing,
 - always include a link to the TOY website (www.toyproject.net).
- All TOY educational resources published during the project period are published under the Creative Commons License (<http://creativecommons.org/>). The specific license to be used for any deliverable, report and dissemination tool is Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported (CC BY-NC-ND 3.0) <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>
Please, do not sell TOY educational resources for profit or commercial purposes.

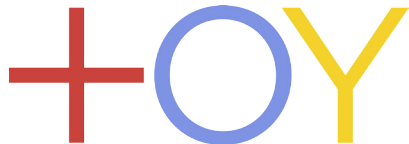
Annex A – Logo Style Guide

TOY logo

Black and White:



Coloured:



Coloured with sentence underneath:



Coloured with sentence on the right:



The TOY logo was created in 2012 for the first TOY project and has been used for TOY-PLUS to ensure continuity in communication. It is a known and powerful brand that will help disseminate the project results.

The logo includes the name of the project (TOY), and is based on the concepts of togetherness and the symbols associated to education in early childhood. The logo was developed by Patrick McDonald and Derek Doyle (Dublin Institute of Technology).

When you need to reproduce the TOY logo, simply use the digital logo files provided along with this guide.

The TOY logo (symbol + logotype) must be positioned on a white background and must always look sharp, clean and well-produced.

Pantone

RED

RGB: 199 67 63

CMYK: 0 66 68 22

Hex: C7433F

BLUE

RGB: 118 150 228

CMYK: 48 34 0 11

Hex: #7696EA

YELLOW

RGB: 254 210 48

CMYK: 0 17 81 0

Hex: #FED230

Grey

RGB: 154 154 154

MYK: 0 0 0 40

Hex: #9a9a9a

Logo Usage

To create greater visual impact, keep the area around the TOY logo uncluttered.

The logo looks best on a crisp white background. With solid black backgrounds the logo (symbol + logotype) must always be reversed out to white.

Never use placement on photographic or textured backgrounds. Never place the logo within another printed shape.