

**To: EECERA Board of Trustees**  
**From: Sofia Avgitidou and Mandy Andrews**  
**Re: Special Interest Group: Rethinking Play 2016-2017**  
**Date: April 2017**

The Special Interest Rethinking Play was formed in Geneva in 2011. It has since been active and has undertaken a number of activities listed below.

**Names and Emails of convenors and current members of the SIG:**

*SIG Convenors:*

Convenor: [Sofia Avgitidou](mailto:saugitidou@uowm.gr), University of Western Macedonia, Greece [saugitidou@uowm.gr](mailto:saugitidou@uowm.gr)

Co-convenor: Mandy Andrews, University of Plymouth, UK [mandy.andrews@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:mandy.andrews@plymouth.ac.uk)

*Current SIG members:*

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There are another 30 academics and researchers who are in the SIG's list but are not official members since they are not EECERA members. However, it is important to have a broader list since it can act as a motive for those involved to become EECERA members.

**Activities undertaken by the SIG since establishment:**

**2010** –initial discussion by Hännikäinen, M., Singer, E., & van Oers, B. For the development of a SIG group in Brimingham

- submitted formal proposal to establish SIG and received approval by the Board of Trustees;

**2011 SIG** convenors, Hännikäinen, M., Singer, E., & van Oers, B

- held inaugural meeting in Geneva;
- collated a list of contact addresses to enable participants to pursue points of discussion raised at that meeting;

**2012:** SIG convenors, Hännikäinen, M., Singer, E., & van Oers, B

- initiated a proposal for a special issue
- organised the themes of papers and made a call for papers

**2013:** The SIG has proceeded to the publication of a Special Issue in the EECERJ titled “Promoting Play for a Better Future”. Guest editors: Hännikainen, M., Singer, E., & van Oers, B. (2013).

Hännikäinnen, M., Singer, E., & van Oers, B. (2013). Promoting play for a better future. *Editorial* to special issue for *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 21(2), 165 – 171.

**2014:** During the SIG meeting in Crete conference 2014, Elly Singer and Bert van Oers retreated as convenors of the Sig and Maritta Hannikainen proposed Sofia Avgitidou for the post of Sig convenor and all members agreed. Maritta kept the post of co-convenor.

- Members shared research interests.
- The SIG created a website <https://rethinkingplay.wordpress.com/about/> and asked members to join in.

**2015:** In the Barcelona conference the SIG had a symposium with academics from Greece, Canada and Netherlands. During the SIG meeting we organized the research themes around play and shared information. The website created in 2014 had few participants, so we decided to keep the e-mail list. We also discussed about a position paper in the inaugural meeting is made based on the current trends in ECE curricula that emphasize structured learning across different subject matter. A committee was formed to make a draft paper.

**2016:** During Dublin conference a new co-convenor, Mandy Andrews, was elected as Maritta retreated from this post. During the SIG meeting the final structure of the position paper about play was decided. Members had a vivid discussion through e-mails, sending amendments and proposals. The SIG convenors prepared the final paper based on these amendments and proposals and invited comments from all the members. It was published to the SIG webpage and to EECERA webpage, inviting researchers and academics from all over the world to contribute drawing from their studies in different countries and thus enriching the perspectives included in the paper. We also tried to invite play symposia for the conference in Bologna by asking members to share with others their title presentations in order to be grouped into symposia evident in the programme rather than scattered in different paper presentations.

**2017:** The SIG has proceeded to the preparation of the SIG’s information for the EECERA webpage. It has also sent two e-mails to its members reminding them of sending the papers to the convenors to organize different play papers to SIG symposia.

#### **How SIG activities fit with aims and ethos of EECERA:**

In the context of EECERA, Rethinking Play aims to be thought provoking and reflecting on issues that relate to developments in understanding of play at a philosophical, scientific, social, educational and policy level. It is multidisciplinary and open for theoretical and practice based research; but also sensitive to issues of diversity, and rights experienced within the lived experiences of children. Specifically, the SIG on Rethinking play addresses relevant questions linked to a continually emerging and developing discourse on play and learning, children’s voices, play based curricula and power relations in ECE. In both research and practice development, the SIG pays special attention to a critical consideration of play practices in different early childhood education contexts. It aims at

creating a space for shared thinking about the concept and for creating synergies between participants from different countries and contexts. Among the issues considered by the Rethinking Play SIG are:

1. Cultural differences in the concept of play and the value placed on the role of play in young children's learning and education.
2. Consequences of an exchange of ideas with non-western ECE colleagues and the alternative implementation of play-based programmes in non-western countries.
3. The role of the teacher in supporting and stimulating young children's play and learning, including the discussion of play facilitation in educational preschool programmes.
4. The nature of play and playful learning in children under 3 years old in day care centres

#### Future Plans:

In line with EECERA's main principles, the SIG provides an academic and rigorous forum at European and international level to develop and disseminate high quality research on play. This has so far been evident by the EECERA special issue on Rethinking Play and the position paper about play. In 2017-18 we aim to:

- Provide a forum for discussion through the EECERA SIG website
- Encourage more EECERA members to engage with the debates on play, playfulness and playful learning in ECEC.
- Encourage collaborative papers on the concepts of play in ECE