

GrazIAS Children's Perspective: Guide

On the use of a dialog-promoting tool to survey
children's perspectives on interaction quality in routine daycare environments

Contents

1.	Interaction quality from the child's perspective	2
1.1.	Talking with children about quality	2
1.2.	About GrazIAS Children's Perspective	5
2.	Practical guide to using the app	9
2.1.	Taking the first steps	9
2.2.	Recording the children's perspectives.....	17
2.3.	Receiving the analysis report.....	22
3.	Practical information on incorporating the children's perspectives.....	26
3.1.	Observing basic requirements.....	26
3.2.	Shaping conversations with GrazIAS Children's Perspective	30
4.	Possible applications of GrazIAS Children's Perspective	35
4.1.	Self-reflection.....	35
4.2.	Educational work with the children	36
4.3.	Quality development	38
	List of sources	39
	Suggested citation.....	43



1. Interaction quality from the child's perspective

As a key aspect of good education and caring for young children, interaction quality is often viewed from an adult perspective. However, the children's perspectives are also useful for reflecting on the quality of educational interactions and developing these further. Entering into dialog with young children about how they experience their routine daycare environment primarily requires interested, approachable education professionals. It is essential to recognize the children as active players, to appreciate their perspectives on the organization of the routine daycare environment and the interactions within it, and, if applicable, use these as an opportunity for quality development. The dialog-promoting digital tool *GrazIAS Children's Perspective* ("*GrazIAS Children's Perspective*") (Lassotta et al., 2022) was developed as an app for tablets, and is based on the *Graz* interaction scale for children in their first six years (*GrazIAS 0-6*; Walter-Laager et al., 2022). This app makes it possible to stimulate and systematically document the linguistic-interactive dialog between education professionals and children about their everyday experiences in the daycare facility, to visualize this dialog in a child-appropriate way, and to evaluate it.

This guide to *GrazIAS Children's Perspective* describes the scientifically established objective, the specific approach, and the practical applications of the tool. Education professionals can use it to understand the purpose and application of *GrazIAS Children's Perspective* and gain new insights for quality development. The guide and app are continuously monitored from a scientific perspective, and further developed with new ideas from practical experience.

1.1. Talking with children about quality

Significance of children's perspectives in developing education quality

Quality assessment and development in early childhood education has increasingly become the focus of interest in the last decade, in terms of both research and practice (e.g. Duncan & NICHD, 2003; Tietze et al., 2013; Wadepohl, 2017; Walter-Laager et al., 2018). However, the concept of quality is complex and associated with different aspects depending on the perspective of the relevant stakeholder group (Michl & Geier, 2019).

As an indicative quality aspect within educational practice, interaction quality is considered a prerequisite for the satisfaction of the children's basic physical and psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 1993). This implies that children experience themselves as active entities (competence) and self-directed (autonomy) and feel that they belong to a social group (social integration). At the same time, it is important that children be able to learn in an appropriate manner for their age and level of development (Becker-Stoll et al., 2015). Satisfying these needs requires a trusting and fortifying relationship between the educator and the child.

Exactly what characterizes good educational interaction quality is usually systematized by adults and measured scientifically using standardized procedures, such as *CLASS* (Pianta, 2017), *GINA* (Weltzien et al., 2017), *GrazIAS 0-6* (Walter-Laager et al., 2020), and *KRIPS-R/KES-R* (Tietze et al., 2017). As a result, the children's own perspectives on how they experience the interactions and routine daycare environment are considered rather indirectly, although children are both the recipients and active participants in these interactions (Krüger & Gunert, 2020; Mayall, 2002; Qvortrup et al., 1994), and their

assessments could provide supplementary—if not essential—ideas for quality development processes.

Another important condition for successful learning and educational processes is the children's individual well-being. Children's well-being is therefore a significant indicator of educational quality (Eberlein & Schelle, 2018). And who could provide better information about their own well-being than the child themselves?

The children's perspectives supplement the idea of quality from the point of view of adults, as they offer the opportunity to learn how children experience social, material, education-related, and physical aspects of daycare facilities.

Fundamental understanding of childhood and children

Our understanding of childhood and children has changed significantly since the 1990s. Childhood is no longer seen as preparation for adulthood. Children are seen as having their own competencies and abilities to act. They are also seen as active stakeholders who certainly can and should be involved in shaping the areas of life that concern them (Krüger & Gunert, 2020; Mayall, 2002; Qvortrup et al., 1994).

This image of a child is reflected in the current plans for their upbringing and education. Children are described as actors who independently, co-constructively, and actively help shape their education and upbringing. Furthermore, the children's participation in their everyday education is seen as a central educational duty (e.g. Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Arbeit und Sozialordnung, Familie und Frauen & Staatsinstitut für Frühpädagogik München [Bavarian State Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Family and Women & State Institute for Early Childhood Education in Munich], 2016; Charlotte Bühler Institute, 2009). Participation, in turn, means granting children the opportunity to actively help shape the experiences they have in life and education (Prenzel, 2016).

This stipulation is also emphasized in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These declare that children have a right to freedom of opinion. Children also have the right to have their opinions on the areas of life affecting them heard and considered, and to be asked about how they experience and evaluate their social and educational everyday lives (Maywald, 2019).

Alongside the educators, children are the main participants in early childhood education. Many children spend more than half their day in educational and childcare facilities (OECD, 2016). If they get the opportunity to share how they experience their routine daycare environment and specify aspects that influence their well-being and learning, it is possible to observe their experienced reality and use it as a starting point to reflect on and further develop quality at the facility.

Current research results on children's perspectives on quality

Individual research studies have examined the perspectives of children under the age of six and their opinions on quality. The research shows that even young children are able to communicate their points of view and express what is important to them—for example, that they want to play a role in day-to-day educational activities and help shape the rules (Ballaschk & Anders, 2020; Botsoglou et al., 2019; Nentwig-Gesemann et al., 2021). These findings underscore the fact that children describe participation as an important aspect of quality, and illustrate the importance of including children's perspectives

in the organization of routine daycare environments. A Swedish study on this topic examined whether and when children have the impression that they can participate, in the sense of contributing to decision-making processes (Sheridan & Pramling Samuelsson, 2001). They listed playing with other children and their own individual activities as key areas in which they experienced decision-making authority. Children felt they had little or hardly any say when it came to organizational aspects, routines, and rules, or in respect to what the education professionals would offer. Based on these results, Sheridan and Pramling Samuelsson (2001) called for much greater inclusion of children's viewpoints in everyday educational activities.

In addition, children consider positive peer experiences to be important for their well-being (Einarsdottir, 2005; Nentwig-Gesemann et al. 2017; Sandseter & Seland, 2016; Puroila et al., 2012). Results of a related study from Norway with children aged four to six years old showed, for example, that children who are often bothered or harassed by other children indicate significantly lower well-being overall (Sandseter & Seland, 2016). Children named a good relationship with the education professionals as another key aspect (Botsoglou et al. 2019; Nentwig-Gesemann et al. 2017; Puroila et al. 2012; Rodriguez-Carrillo et al. 2020; Sandseter & Seland, 2016). Children considered it particularly important that their comments received sensitive and responsive reactions and that the professionals had a sense of humor (Nentwig-Gesemann et al. 2017; Puroila et al. 2012). Recognizing and tapping into the children's interests as well as their individual skills and needs were also seen positively (Rodriguez-Carrillo et al. 2020).

Other quality aspects that children found important include the stimulating design of indoor and outdoor spaces (Botsoglou et al. 2019; Nentwig-Gesemann, 2017; Puroila et al. 2012; Sandseter & Seland, 2016) and how rules are handled (Botsoglou et al. 2019; Nentwig-Gesemann et al. 2017).

The results of these few studies that address children's perspectives on quality show that even children under the age of six can communicate and evaluate their own experiences. Asking the children for their points of view, and thereby taking their opinions into account, offers education professionals the opportunity to fulfill their educational duties and uphold the children's rights. At the same time, they can use the children's perspectives as a springboard for reflection and quality development processes.

Talking to children about how they experience their routine daycare environment

Starting a dialog with children is a key strategy in helping them to acquire language. Even more significantly, it can be used to encourage children to express their own concerns and needs. It should be the goal of any educational activity to recognize the children's needs and concerns and take them into account in the educational setting. An appreciative (and also critical) culture of conversation and complaint resolution can be created by addressing the children's thoughts in a dialog, seeing the children as experts on their own personal environment, and encouraging them to voice their own opinions (Hansen & Knauer, 2016; Schubert-Suffrian & Regner, 2014). Stimulating dialogs also help young children develop their language skills, which is essential for the success of their subsequent education, and can also have a positive effect on equal opportunities (Zumwald & Schönfelder, 2015).

Children's perspectives can be obtained spontaneously in the course of everyday activities in almost any situation. Using standardized tools is also an option¹. To involve children in the process of systematically documenting and evaluating their perspectives, education professionals can now get assistance from the new GrazIAS Children's Perspective tool.

1.2. About GrazIAS Children's Perspective

Development of the app

GrazIAS Children's Perspective was developed based on the GrazIAS 0–6 scale (Walter-Laager et al., 2022). It comprises the same scientifically established attributes of good interaction quality. While external evaluators assess the interactions between educators and children in GrazIAS, it is the internal experts whose assessments take center stage in GrazIAS Children's Perspective—namely the children.

Unlike other tools that are currently used to research children's viewpoints, GrazIAS Children's Perspective was developed specifically for daycare centers. It offers education professionals a structured guideline to engage the children in a partially standardized interview about how they experience the routine daycare environment, in which the children are treated as having equally expert insights. This dialog is intended to let the children express their opinions, observations, thoughts, ideas, feelings, and needs, and draw on their potential to explain their own personal environment: How do the children experience interactions in everyday activities, conversations, and educational programs? What kinds of ideas or suggestions do they have for shaping the routine daycare environment? Education professionals can learn this and more by using GrazIAS Children's Perspective.

Positive “side effects” of this dialog include not only stimulating verbal exchanges, but also a recognition of the children as experts on their personal environment. The shared use of this app is intended to create a culture of critical dialog in daycare practice, whereby children are encouraged to express their suggestions as well as their complaints. It enables children to feel that their points of view are interesting and meaningful to the educators. If precisely this perspective in turn noticeably affects the design of the routine daycare environment, i.e. allowing the children to feel that they are participating and helping shape the daycare environment, this can contribute to their sense of self-efficacy and well-being.

Structure and use of the app

GrazIAS Children's Perspective is a digital tool: An app to be used on tablets. It is available in German, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish, so it can also be used when speaking the child's respective native language at multilingual daycare centers. The target group is children aged from three to six and an educator whom they trust, who partially use the app together.

The app consists of three parts, the operation of which is described in detail in chapter 2:

- (1) Registration and configuring settings (see chapter 2.1.),
- (2) Dialog with the children and its documentation (see chapter 2.2.) and
- (3) Analysis (see chapter 2.3.).

¹ Other tools that could be used by education professionals include Achtung Kinderperspektiven! [Attention, Children's Perspectives!] (Nentwig-Gesemann et al., 2020) and KbiK (Sommer-Himmel et al., 2016).

Parts (1) and (3) explain the preparation and follow-up processes for the conversations, which the educator initially works on without the children present. Part (2) is carried out jointly by the children and the educator. Capturing the children's perspective means that the educator talks to the children in a natural dialog (1:2 or 1:3) about how they assess the interaction quality at their daycare center or group. The purpose of this small group setup is to have the children outnumber the adults while remaining in a small group, which makes it easier for them to express themselves freely (also see chapters 3.1. and 3.2.). The educator starts by clarifying the purpose and process of the conversation, shows the children the tablet with the app, and explains the possible answers. Then, the educator talks to the children and asks the specified questions. Once the group has finished all of the conversations, an automated and anonymous evaluation is produced.

The tool is based on the nine² attributes of good interaction quality according to GrazIAS 0–6 (Walter-Laager et al., 2018; also see info box below). For each of these attributes, the app contains a statement to be evaluated and an open question to be read out by the educator. The intention here is to attain a balance between closed and open questions; firstly, to enable a certain objectivity and quantitative measurability, and secondly, to encourage the children to talk freely (Sommer-Himmel et al., 2016).

Attributes of good interaction quality:

BEING PRESENT The educator is emotionally and physically present and displays an appreciative manner at all times when working with children.

EXPERIENCING RELATIONSHIPS The educator designs the routine daycare environment so that the children can experience relationships.

INTRODUCING AND COMPLYING WITH RULES The educator complies with rules together with the children and the daycare center team.

GUIDING CONFLICTS The educator understands conflicts between children as meaningful interactions and guides the children in such a way that the tension dissolves on all sides.

CONSIDERING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS The educator designs the daily schedule in a variable manner so it can be adjusted to individual children's needs where necessary and possible.

SUPPORTING EMOTIONAL REGULATION The educator helps the children regulate their emotions by removing them from stressful situations and giving them closeness and opportunities to resolve tension.

ENABLING PARTICIPATION The educator creates conditions and situations in which the children can participate and contribute.

PROVIDING STIMULI The educator actively observes the children's play and offers stimuli to enhance the playing process.

STIMULATING COMMUNICATION The educator encourages language practice in everyday situations and records the children's verbal contributions.

² Another GrazIAS attribute, *sensory exploration*, is covered in GrazIAS Children's Perspective under *providing stimuli* and not asked about separately.

Each child evaluates the statements in GrazIAS Children's Perspective using a four-level, tappable, child-appropriate koala approval scale (see table 1). This scale ranges from "Yes, absolutely" to "Yes, generally" and "No, not exactly" to "No, not at all". For the attribute *Being present*, for example, the statement is worded: "In the daycare center we adults are always there for you if you have a question or need something."

Table 1

Koala approval scale for the statements in GrazIAS Children's Perspective

Koala	Points	Meaning
	4	Yes, absolutely.
	3	Yes, generally.
	2	No, not exactly.
	1	No, not at all.

The children answer the open questions in a conversation with the educator, who records their statements in the notes field of the app. Additionally or alternatively, they may make a separate voice recording of the conversation (not possible via the app) to avoid having the text input interfere with the dialog. For the attribute *Being present*, for example, the open question is: "What can I do so you feel comfortable here in our group?"

A detailed overview of all statements and open questions on the attributes of good interaction quality can be found in table 2. Based on this systematic survey of the children's viewpoints regarding various aspects of the interactions and activities that form the routine daycare environment, it is possible to develop a comprehensive discussion about what is important from the children's perspective, and their relevant criteria for having a good day. The derived insights into the children's feelings and thoughts can expand the adults' perspective on the children's well-being and contribute to quality development.

Table 2

Overview of the statements to be evaluated with the koala approval scale and the open questions to be answered verbally on the 10 items addressed in GrazIAS Children's Perspective

Items	Statements	Questions
General	You like coming to daycare.	What do you really like at day-care? And what don't you like so much?
Being present	In the daycare center we adults are always there for you if you have a question or need something.	What do we adults do to make you feel comfortable in our group?
Experiencing relationships	At daycare, we adults always help you if you feel alone or excluded.	What do you like doing most with others at daycare?
Introducing and complying with rules	We adults have given you a good explanation of the rules here at daycare. (Preparatory question: What are the rules at this daycare?)	Which rules do you like? And which rules would you like to change?
Guiding conflicts	At daycare, we adults always help you if you get stuck in an argument.	What would you like me to do if you argue with another child?
Considering individual needs	You can always rest at daycare if you need a break.	What is forbidden at daycare that you would like to do?
Supporting emotional regulation	We adults are always there for you at the daycare if you get annoyed or sad.	What can I do if you are sad?
Enabling participation	At daycare, you can decide for yourself what you'd like to do.	What things would you like to be able to decide for yourself without asking us adults?
Providing stimuli	You can do many exciting new things at daycare.	What would you like to try or do at daycare?
Stimulating communication	You really like it, when we talk with each other.	Whom do you most like to talk to when you are at daycare? And when is there time for this?

Note. The first, general item serves as an introduction and familiarization with the discussion process and does not represent any particular attribute of interaction quality.

2. Practical guide to using the app

This chapter explains how to use the app, from registration and configuring the settings (see chapter 2.1.) to the evaluation by the children (see chapter 2.2.) and the evaluation report (see chapter 2.3.).

Please note that it is necessary to inform the legal guardians of the children participating in the conversations about the children's involvement and obtain their consent (see chapter 3.2.).

Within the framework of the children's perspective, no personal data relating to children is processed by the University of Graz. It is possible to enter the (nick) names of children locally on the tablet used in order to keep track of who has already been surveyed. However, this data is not uploaded to the server, i.e. to the app's database, when the evaluation is uploaded, and is deleted from the device used at the time of uploading the evaluation. This means that the transmitted child data is technically anonymised. In addition, the educational professionals are expressly instructed by a pop-up window in the GrazIAS app not to enter any identifying information about the children in the free text fields and to survey a sufficient number of children in an evaluation (at least six) in order to maintain anonymity as far as possible. The kindergarten staff using Kinderperspektive are therefore responsible for ensuring the anonymity of the children's data. We recommend informing families about the use of GrazIAS (and, if applicable, the use of voice recording), e.g. by means of a notice.

2.1. Taking the first steps

Download the GrazIAS app on the tablet³ (from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store; see Figure 1 for logo) and register in the app.

Figure 1

Logo of the Children's Perspective app

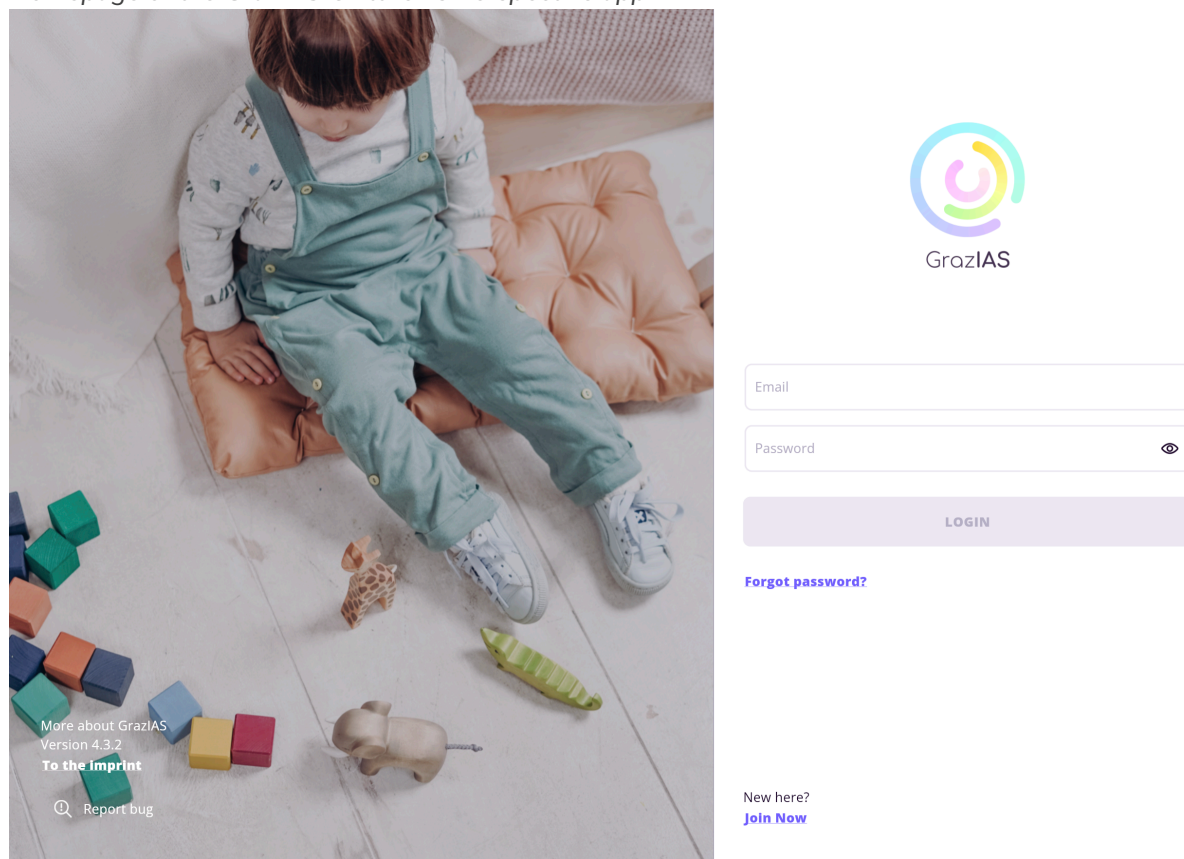


To register, go to “New here?” on the homepage (see Figure 2) and tap “Join now” on the bottom right. On the registration page (see Figure 3), enter your first and last name and email address, choose a password and accept the privacy policy. Then tap “REGISTER”. You will receive an email at the email address you provided. Confirm the link (Figure 4) and you will be redirected to the GrazIAS page to set a password (Figure 4). Once you have completed this process, you can log in at any time via the start page (Figure 2) using your email address and password.

³ If you do not have a tablet, there is a GrazIAS web client available. To use it, enter the following URL in a browser (Safari, Firefox and Chrome are supported): <https://app.grazias.org/> A stable internet connection is required to use the web client.

Figure 2

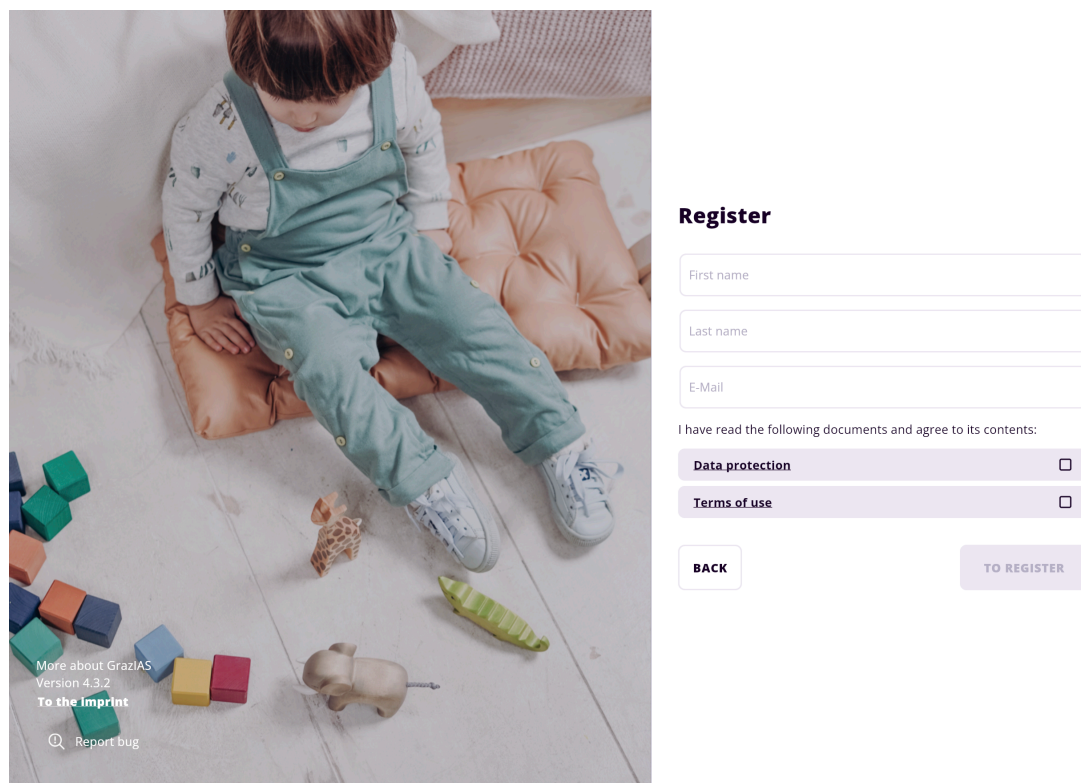
Homepage of the GrazIAS Children's Perspective app



The image shows the homepage of the GrazIAS Children's Perspective app. On the left, there is a photograph of a young child with brown hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and teal overalls, sitting on an orange cushioned floor. The child is surrounded by colorful wooden blocks and toys. In the bottom left corner of the photo, there is text: "More about GrazIAS Version 4.3.2", "To the Imprint", and a magnifying glass icon with the text "Report bug". On the right side of the page, there is a login form. At the top is the GrazIAS logo, which consists of a circular graphic with colorful segments and the text "GrazIAS" below it. Below the logo are two input fields: "Email" and "Password" (with an eye icon for toggling visibility). Below these fields is a purple "LOGIN" button. Under the button is a link "Forgot password?". At the bottom right, there is a link "New here? Join Now".

Figure 3

Registration page of the GrazIAS Children's Perspective app



The image shows the registration page of the GrazIAS Children's Perspective app. On the left, there is a photograph of the same child as in Figure 2, sitting on the orange cushioned floor with toys. In the bottom left corner of the photo, there is text: "More about GrazIAS Version 4.3.2", "To the Imprint", and a magnifying glass icon with the text "Report bug". On the right side of the page, there is a registration form. At the top is the heading "Register". Below the heading are three input fields: "First name", "Last name", and "E-Mail". Below these fields is a statement: "I have read the following documents and agree to its contents:". Below this statement are two checkboxes: "Data protection" and "Terms of use". Below the checkboxes are two buttons: "BACK" and "TO REGISTER".

Figure 4

Confirmation email and set password

The image shows a confirmation email on the left and a web interface on the right. The email, from GrazIAS, asks the user to confirm their email address and set a password. A green arrow points from the link 'E-Mail-Adresse bestätigen und Passwort setzen' in the email to the web interface. The web interface has a header 'Redirect to the GrazIAS page' and a main area with a photo of a child. Below the photo are links for 'Mehr über GrazIAS Version 4.3.1', 'Zum Impressum', and 'Problem melden'. To the right of the photo is a form titled 'Account aktivieren' with fields for 'Passwort' and 'Passwort wiederholen', a password strength requirement, and an 'AKTIVIEREN' button.

Hallo,

vielen Dank für Ihre Registrierung auf der GrazIAS Plattform! Bitte bestätigen Sie Ihre E-Mail-Adresse, um Ihre Anmeldung abzuschließen und Ihr persönliches Passwort festzulegen.

So funktioniert es:

- Klicken Sie auf den nachfolgenden Link:

[E-Mail-Adresse bestätigen und Passwort setzen](#)

- Sie werden zu unserer Plattform weitergeleitet, wo Sie ein sicheres Passwort erstellen können.

Warum ist das wichtig?

Die Bestätigung Ihrer E-Mail-Adresse stellt sicher, dass Sie Zugriff auf alle Funktionen der Plattform haben.

Falls Sie sich nicht auf unserer Plattform registriert haben, ignorieren Sie diese Nachricht bitte.

Bei Fragen steht Ihnen unser Support-Team gerne zur Verfügung: grazias@uni-graz.at.

Wir freuen uns, Sie in der GrazIAS-Plattform begrüßen zu dürfen!

Viele Grüße,
Ihr GrazIAS Team

PEP – Zentrum für Professionalisierung der Elementarpädagogik
Hilmgasse 4/2
8010 Graz

Redirect to the GrazIAS page

Mehr über GrazIAS
Version 4.3.1
Zum Impressum
Problem melden

Account aktivieren

Fast geschafft! Bitte vergeben Sie ein Passwort, das den unten angeführten Sicherheitskriterien entspricht um Ihren Account zu aktivieren.

Passwort

Passwort wiederholen

Ihr Passwort muss mindestens 8 Zeichen lang sein, einen Großbuchstaben, einen Kleinbuchstaben, eine Zahl und ein Sonderzeichen enthalten.

AKTIVIEREN

Practical note on internet connections:

An internet connection is required to download the app from the app store, register and log in on the app, create an evaluation, complete an evaluation, and then create an analysis report. However, the evaluation itself can be performed without an internet connection. If no internet connection is available to you during your conversations with the children, make sure that you complete all entries ahead of time with an internet connection (entering master data and creating profiles for all the children to be surveyed). Only then should you start the exchange and documentation process with the children.

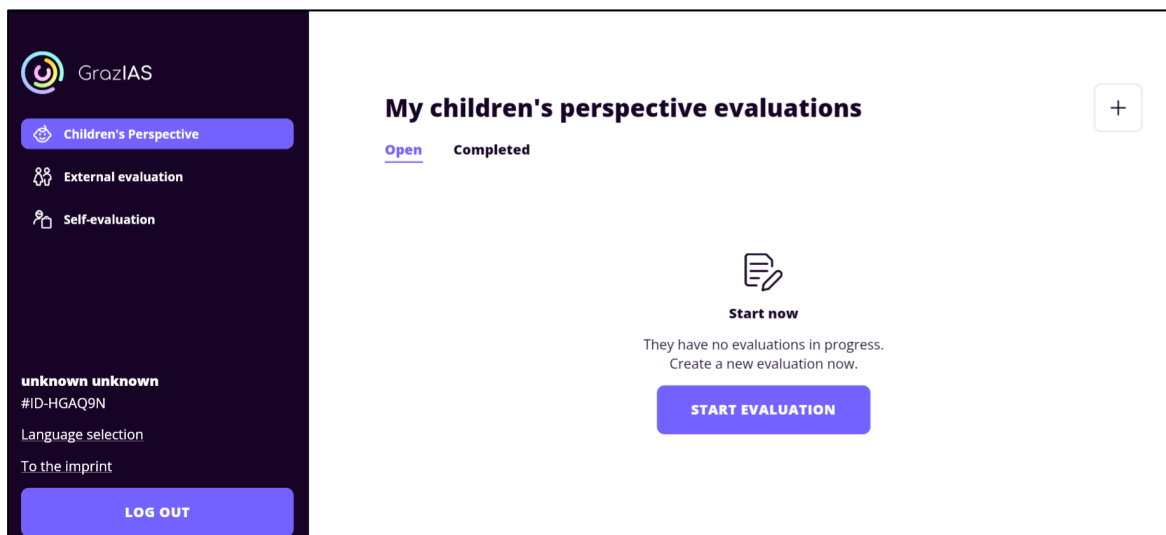
Forgotten password

If you have forgotten your password, you can click on 'Forgotten password' on the GrazIAS homepage. You will receive a link to reset your password at the email address you provided. If you do not receive an email, please check your email address – emails are only sent to registered users – and check your spam folder. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact at any time (grazias@uni-graz.at).

After you register or log in, you will be taken to the main page. Now you can select “Children’s Perspective” on the left. Next, you will see the page “My children’s perspective evaluations” with the tabs “Open” and “Completed” (see Figure 5). When you create an evaluation, it will appear under the “Open” tab (provided it has not been completed and uploaded). Once an evaluation has been completed (the recorded data uploaded), you can find the summary analysis report under the “Completed” tab (see Figure 8). Tap the respective tab and evaluation to start or view it.

Figure 5

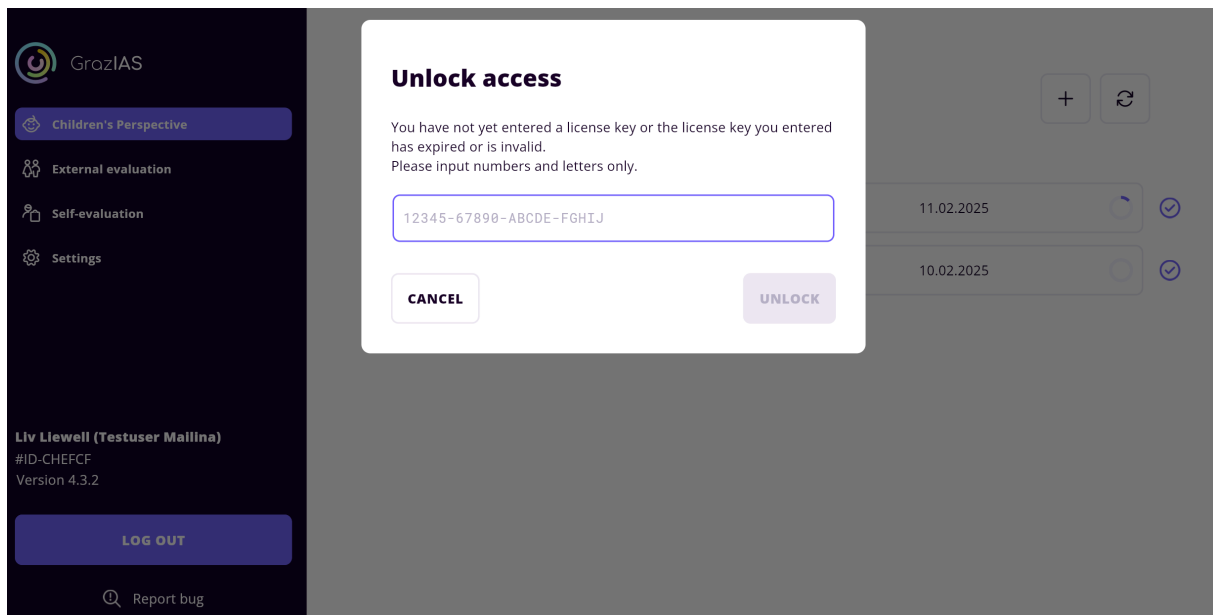
“My children’s perspective evaluations” page with the “Open” tab showing no evaluations created



If you have not yet created an evaluation, click on ‘START EVALUATION’ (see Figure 5). To start an evaluation, you need a licence key to activate your access. You can obtain a licence from the project management (if you are using GrazIAS Kinderperspektive as part of a project). Otherwise, you can request a licence at grazias@uni-graz.at. Enter the licence key in the field displayed (see Figure 6) and then click on ‘ACTIVATE’.

Figure 6

“My children’s perspective evaluations” page with the input field for the license key



To start a (further) evaluation, click on the plus sign in the top right corner of the ‘Open’ tab.

Before conducting an evaluation, enter your master data, i.e. the name of the institution, the location (name of the facility), the name of the group, the language of the survey and the project (see Figure 7). All fields marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory and must be completed before you can continue.

Figure 7

Example of the completed mandatory fields on the “Institution” page

The image shows a form titled 'New evaluation' with a sub-header 'Institution'. The form contains five input fields: 'HOLDER *', 'LOCATION *', 'GROUP *', 'LANGUAGE *', and 'PROJECT'. The 'PROJECT' field is a dropdown menu with 'No project' selected. Below the 'PROJECT' field is a note: 'If known, please state the name of the project for which the survey is being carried out.' At the bottom of the form are two buttons: 'BACK' and 'NEXT'.

Then tap Next. Now you can add the children in your group. To add a child, tap “ADD CHILD” on the “Children” page (see Figure 8). Then enter a name for each child (see Figures 9–10). You can use nicknames or fictitious names. However, you must be sure that you can clearly attribute the selected names to the children, so you can see who has participated in the conversations and who has not.

Practical note on data protection:

The names of the children are NOT saved in the app and do NOT appear in the analysis report. They can only be viewed while the evaluation is in progress; the educator uses them as a guide to see who has participated or who has answered which statements or questions.

Figure 8

Setting up children in a group on the “Children” page

Edit evaluation

Children

The children's names are NOT saved in the evaluation. They serve solely as assistance.

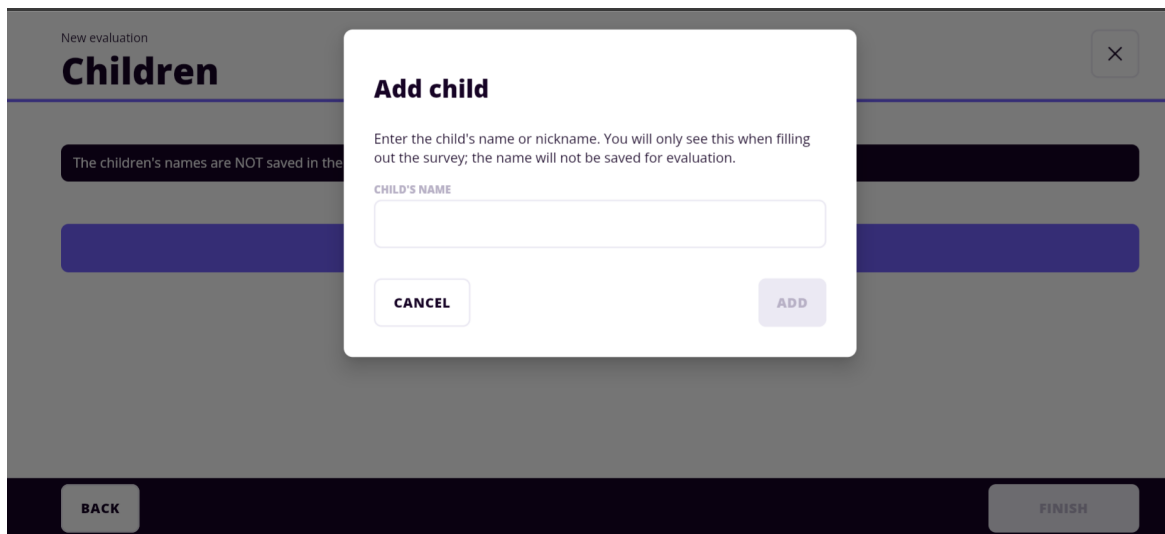
≡	Simone 🐼	✎	✕
≡	Sigi 🐼	✎	✕
≡	Selma 🐼	✎	✕

ADD CHILD

BACK START

Figure 9

Entering a child's name on the "Children" page



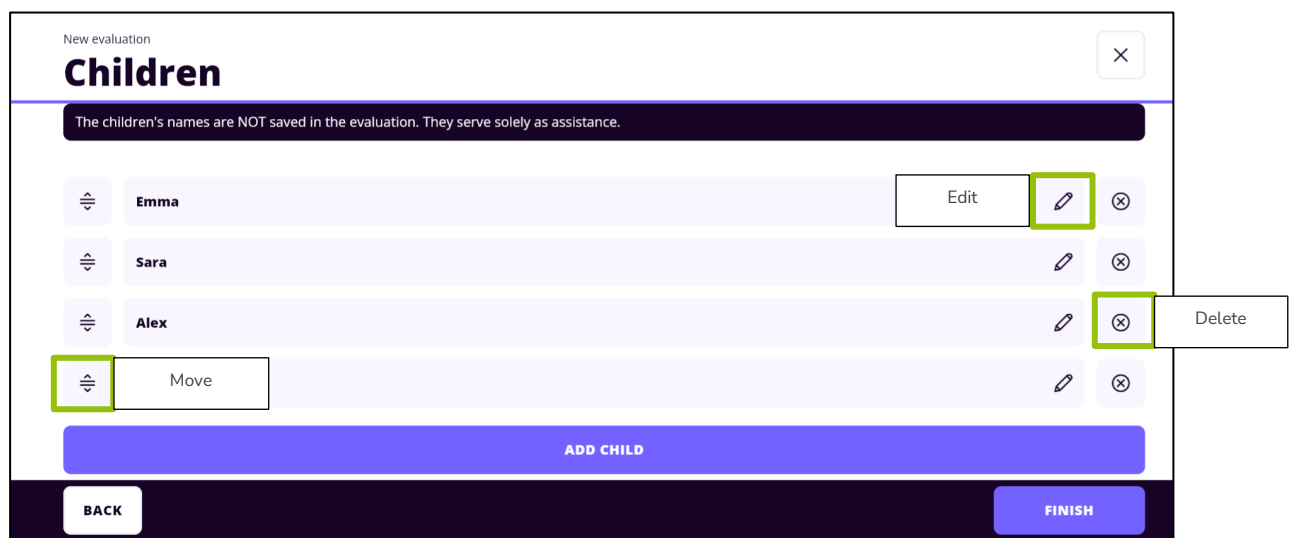
The screenshot shows the 'Children' page of the 'New evaluation' app. A modal titled 'Add child' is open in the center. The modal contains a text input field labeled 'CHILD'S NAME' and two buttons: 'CANCEL' and 'ADD'. Above the input field, a message states: 'Enter the child's name or nickname. You will only see this when filling out the survey; the name will not be saved for evaluation.' The background page shows a header with 'New evaluation' and 'Children', a warning bar stating 'The children's names are NOT saved in the evaluation. They serve solely as assistance.', and a list of children's names. At the bottom are 'BACK' and 'FINISH' buttons.

One option for involving the children in the discussion preparations and use of the app is for them to help enter their name/nickname and to let them choose it themselves. Please remember that you must have an active internet connection to enter and edit existing children.

The number of participating children entered determines how many possible responses the educator can record in the evaluation. If you have a total of 20 children in your group who want and are permitted to participate, set up all 20 children in this step so that 20 answers can be recorded. Then you can hold the conversations in small groups of two to three children each.

Figure 10

Example of the entered children's names in a group



The screenshot shows the 'Children' page with a list of children's names: Emma, Sara, and Alex. Each name has a 'Move' button (with up/down arrows) on the left and an 'Edit' button (with a pencil icon) and a 'Delete' button (with an 'X' icon) on the right. The 'Edit' button for Emma and the 'Delete' button for Alex are highlighted with green boxes. A 'Delete' tooltip is visible next to the 'Delete' button for Alex. At the bottom of the list is a blue 'ADD CHILD' button. The page also features a 'BACK' button and a 'FINISH' button at the bottom.

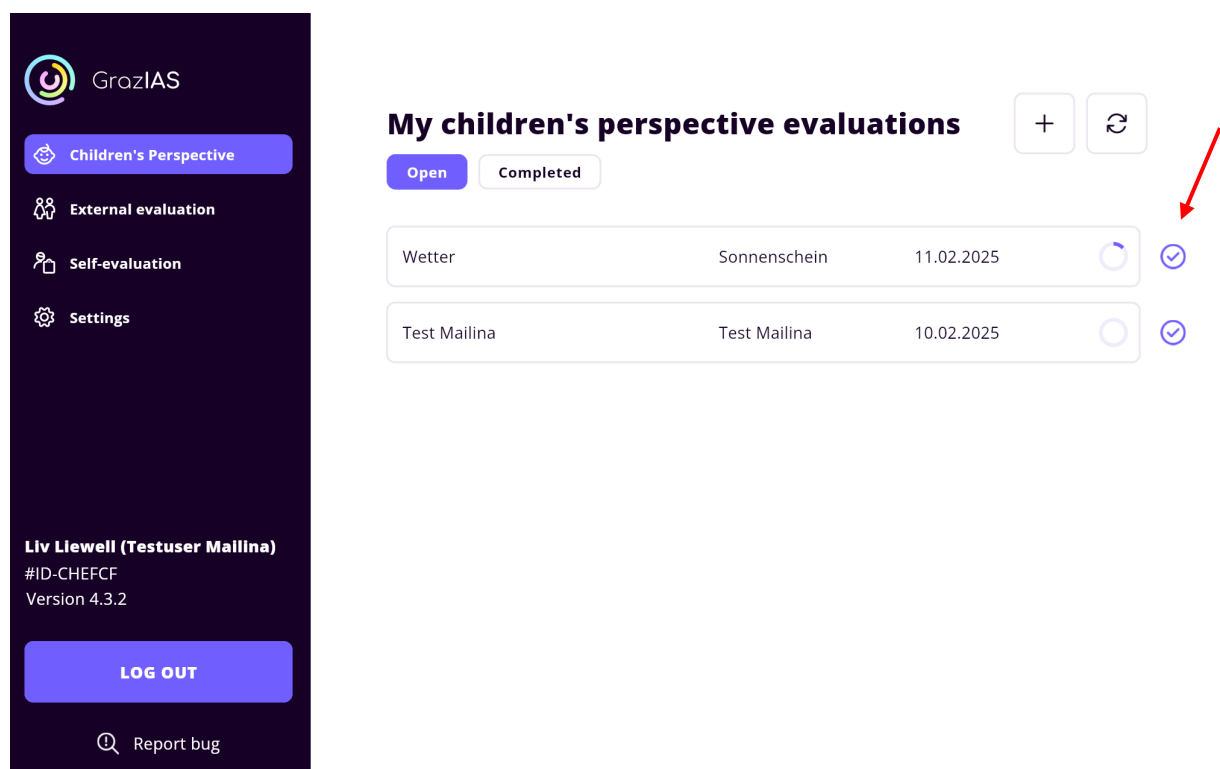
To delete a name or remove a child from the list, click on the delete icon on the right. You can edit the entry as required using the pencil icon. The icon on the left allows you to move the children so that, for example, child surveys that have already been completed are moved down or the group of children currently being surveyed is moved to the top to avoid searching within the survey (see Figures 10). Once your group has been created, click on 'FINISH' to start the conversation with the children. If you have an internet connection, you can of course add, delete and edit children during the process.

Once you have created an evaluation (i.e. entered at least one name and returned to the overview), you will see this evaluation on every device when you log in with your GrazIAS user account. To synchronise the evaluation status, the device you have been working on must be connected to the internet (the data is sent to the server in encrypted form) until the evaluation has synchronised (icon to the right of the survey – Figure 11). As soon as the check mark in the circle is visible, you can log in on the other device and wait with an active Internet connection until the evaluation has synchronised (the check mark in the circle must also appear there – Figure 11).

Once the evaluation is complete, you can access the uploaded output (evaluation report) from any device under the 'Completed' tab, save it as a PDF and use it for your purposes.

Figure 11

Synchronisation status of surveys



2.2. Recording the children's perspectives

After you have successfully set up the group with all the children, you can start the children's evaluation. First, explain the purpose and structure of the app to the children. You can also use the first sample exercise with the general statement "You like coming to daycare" and the general question "What do you really like at daycare? And what don't you like so much?" (see Figure 12).

Practical note:

When you hold the conversations, bear in mind the detailed explanations in chapters 3.1. and 3.2.

The process is the same for all 10 items (see table 2). First, you read the statement and a child agrees to a greater or lesser extent by tapping on the koala emoji that fits best. Then you read the open question out loud and write down the child's answer(s) in the comment field below. You can use the bar at the top (see Figure 12) to select the respective item and child.

When a child has evaluated a statement, i.e. tapped on a koala emoji, the emoji will appear with a dark background (see Figure 13). The circle next to the child's name shows their progress with respect to the answers recorded. Once a child has selected all the koalas, a tick appears in the right-hand corner of the name. The progress of the overall evaluation is also displayed in percent in the top right-hand corner, along with the save status of the evaluation (Figure 13).

Figure 12

Children's perspective evaluation with a list of the items and the children's names in the top bar.



You like coming to daycare center.



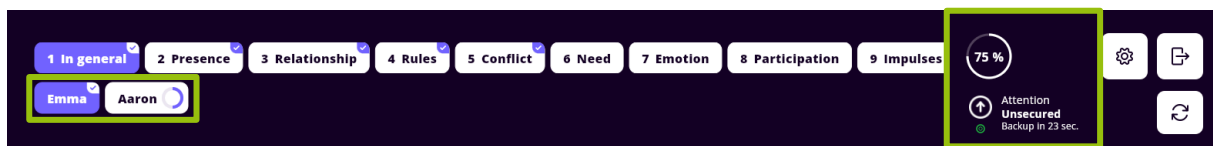
☐ No response received

What do you really like at the daycare center? And what don't you like?

"I like the craft supplies because I can paint and glue things."
"I don't like it when someone takes my shovel away."

Figure 13

Children's perspective evaluation with koala selection and progress indicator.



You like coming to daycare center.



☐ No response received

What do you really like at the daycare center? And what don't you like?

"I like the craft supplies because I can paint and glue things."
"I don't like it when someone takes my shovel away."

NEXT

If a child is unable or unwilling to evaluate a statement (i.e. none of the four koalas is selected), the "No response received" button must be tapped (see Figure 14). This is because the item can only be considered completed once every child has evaluated each statement or this button has been tapped, so that the analysis report can be generated at the end.

To record the children's answers to the open questions, tap on the comment field below (see Figure 14). The text entered here will appear later in the analysis report. Please do not enter any personal data here!

Figure 14

Children's perspective evaluation with comment field for text input selected

You like coming to daycare center.

No response received

What do you really like at the daycare center? And what don't you like?

"I like the craft supplies because I can paint and glue things."
 "I don't like it when someone takes my shovel away."

NEXT

The conversations with the children can be interrupted and continued at another time (or with other children). To do this, click on the 'Close evaluation' icon in the top right-hand corner. All previous entries will be automatically saved in the app (see Figure 15).

If you want to add or delete children during the survey or edit their names, you can do so by clicking on the gear icon in the top right corner and selecting "Edit evaluation data" in the pop-up window (see Figure 15).

Figure 15

Save Children's perspective evaluation or Edit children & master data

You like coming to daycare center.

No response received

What do you really like at the daycare center? And what don't you like?

"I like the craft supplies because I can paint and glue things."
 "I don't like it when someone takes my shovel away."

Evaluation settings

- Edit master data
- Show history
- Import / Export
- Import data from json
- Export data

CLOSE

At the end of the conversation, you can check with the children to see if there is a tick next to each child's name in the list (see Figure 16 – Emma is complete). If not, you can return to the item that is still open.

Figure 16

Check for completeness

1 In general 2 Presence 3 Relationship 4 Rules 5 Conflict 6 Need 7 Emotion 8 Participation 9 Impulses

Emma Aaron

75 %

Attention Unsecured Backup in 23 sec.

You like coming to daycare center.

☐ No response received

What do you really like at the daycare center? And what don't you like?

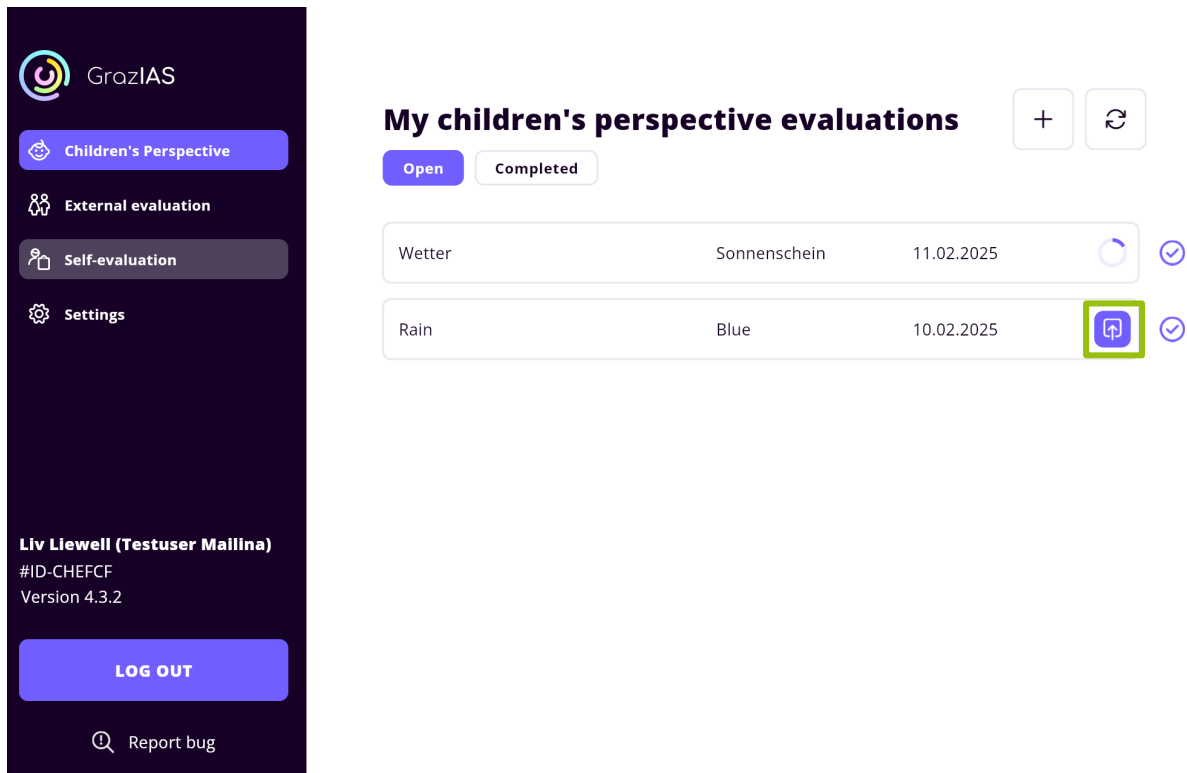
"I like the craft supplies because I can paint and glue things."
"I don't like it when someone takes my shovel away."

NEXT

Once all statements and questions have been processed (or marked as 'No answer received'), you can complete the evaluation by exiting the evaluation (see Figure 15). This will take you back to the 'My child evaluations' page, where you will see which evaluations are complete and ready to be uploaded in the list of child evaluations (see Figure 17). The completed evaluation is now marked with an icon on the right. Click on this icon to upload the data (only possible with an internet connection). Please note: You cannot edit the evaluation or change the answers after uploading! The app then automatically processes the entered data into a summary report (see Figure 18). To do this, click on the 'Completed' tab in the child evaluation. You will now find your completed evaluation there. Click on the icon on the right to download the results report (see Figure 18).

Figure 17

“My children’s perspective evaluations” page with an incomplete evaluation that cannot be uploaded yet, and a complete evaluation that is ready for upload (icon for the upload on the right).



GrozIAS

- Children's Perspective
- External evaluation
- Self-evaluation
- Settings

Liv Liewell (Testuser Mallina)
#ID-CHEFCF
Version 4.3.2

LOG OUT

Report bug

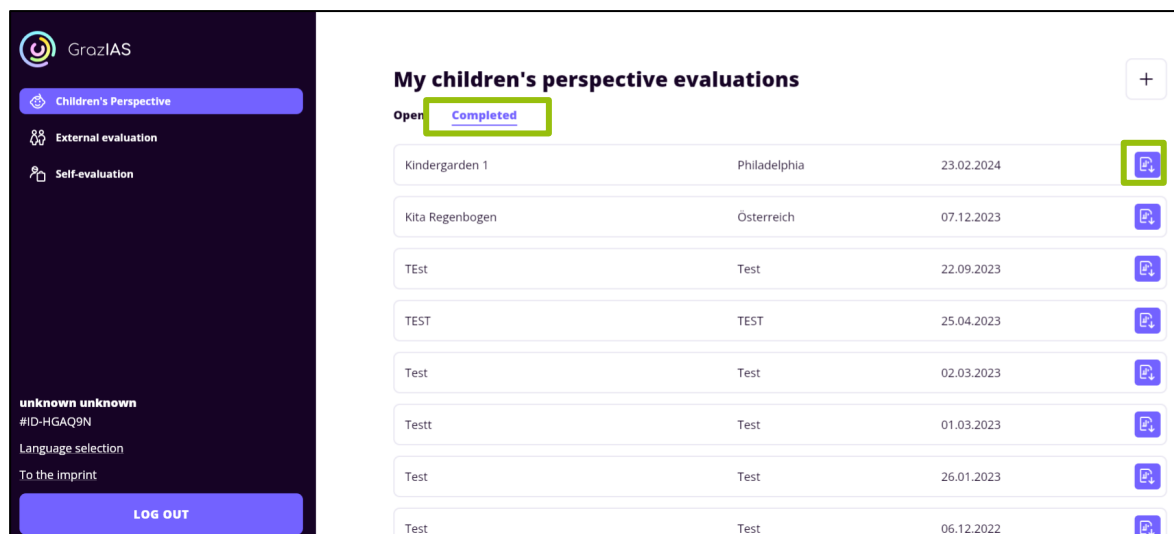
My children's perspective evaluations

Open **Completed**

Wetter	Sonnenschein	11.02.2025		
Rain	Blue	10.02.2025		

Figure 18

“My children’s perspective evaluations” page showing all completed evaluations



GrozIAS

- Children's Perspective
- External evaluation
- Self-evaluation

unknown unknown
#ID-HGAQ9N
Language selection
To the imprint

LOG OUT

My children's perspective evaluations

Open **Completed**

Kindergarden 1	Philadelphia	23.02.2024	
Kita Regenbogen	Österreich	07.12.2023	
TEst	Test	22.09.2023	
TEST	TEST	25.04.2023	
Test	Test	02.03.2023	
Testt	Test	01.03.2023	
Test	Test	26.01.2023	
Test	Test	06.12.2022	

2.3. Receiving the analysis report

Once the data has been uploaded, you can find all your generated reports on the “My children’s perspective evaluation” page under the “Completed” tab (see Figure 18). If no report appears there, you have either not completed or not uploaded an evaluation yet.

By clicking on the download icon on the right (see Figure 18), you will be taken to the generated report on the GraziAS website. A new window will open and the report will appear if you have an active internet connection. As this involves large amounts of data, it may take a few minutes depending on your internet speed. At the top of the report, you will find the ‘PRINT’ button. Click on this button to print the report or save or send it using the export button (see Figure 19).

Figure 19

Website with the report ready to print and/or export



GraziAS 
CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE

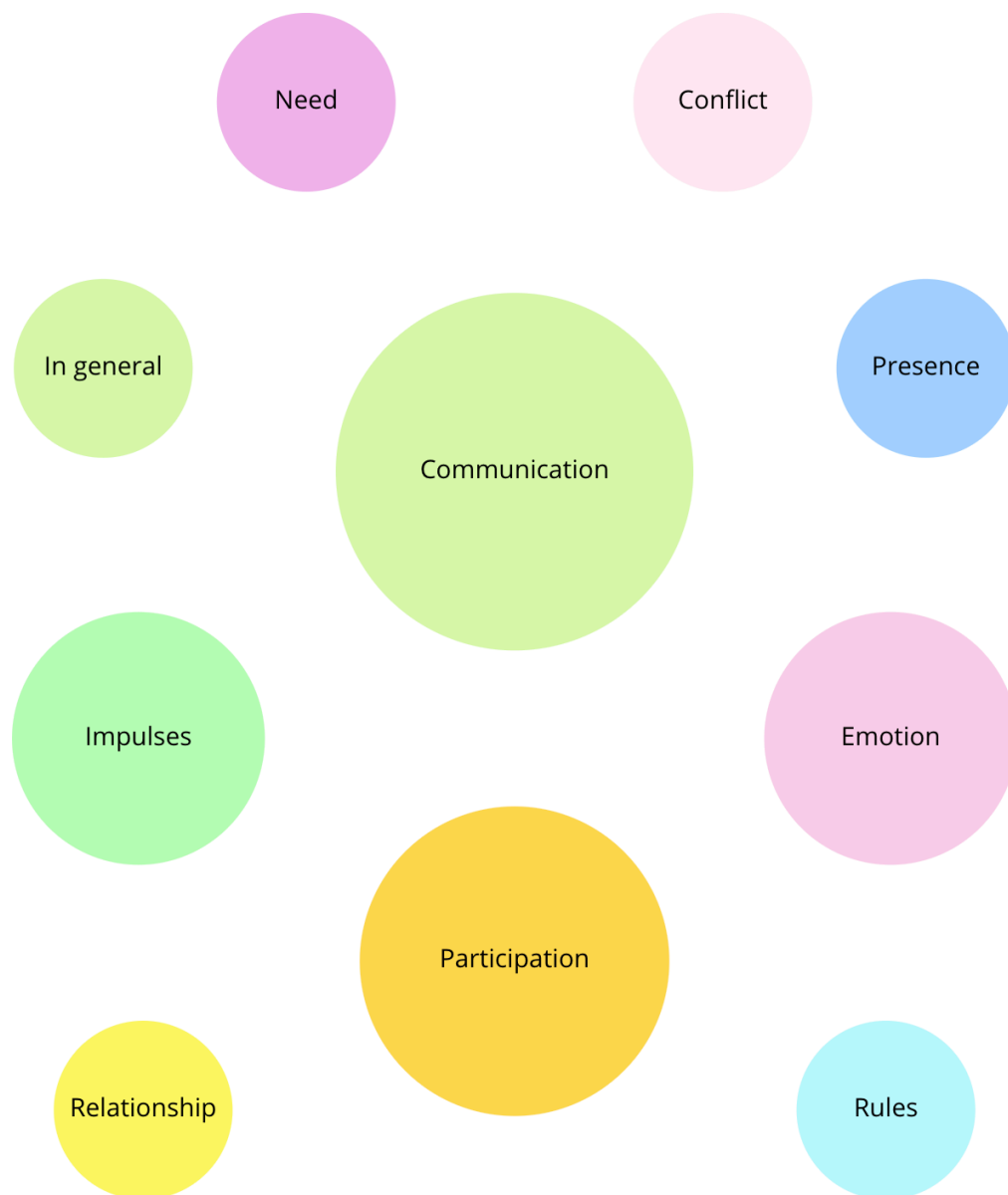
GraziAS Kinderperspektive
Erhebung 2022

KEP
Toni-Mallin
Graz
9. Nov. 2022 - 1 Kinder - KEK+ELDE-72AF-KTUM

Following the report's title page, the second page shows a graphical overview of the recorded attributes of good interaction quality in the form of differently colored circles (see Figure 20). The larger the circle for an attribute, the better the children have rated the interaction quality based on the koala scale. Consequently, the size of a circle reflects the children's satisfaction in the respective area.

Figure 20

Graphical overview of the analysis report



The analysis report is itemized into the different attributes over the following pages. For each attribute, the report includes (see Figures 21-22):

- a short summary of the attribute's meaning for educators,
- the statement for the attribute,
- a graphical depiction (bar graph) of the frequency of the evaluations recorded for the statement (i.e. the number of children who selected koala 1, 2, 3 or 4 in each case) and
- the amount (percentage) and description of the frequency, which enables you to draw conclusions about the children's evaluation of the interaction quality,
- the open question(s) for the attribute and
- a list of the answers to these (if they were entered in the comment field).

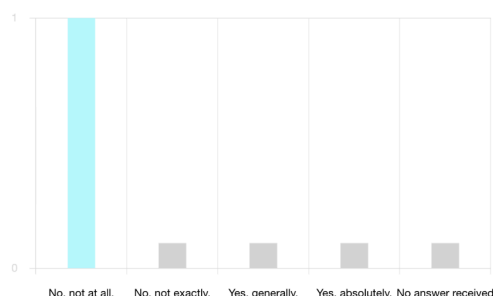
Figure 21

Excerpt from an analysis report on the attribute Introducing and complying with rules (meaning of the attribute and results related to the statement)

4 Introducing rules and adhering to them

In order to protect the children and to minimize risks, it is important to establish rules which are discussed with the children at least once a year. The children are given information on the basic rules. In introducing or implementing rules, the early childhood educator takes care to stick to the few fixed rules and to explain them again and again in simple terms. The basic rules should be documented for everyone to see. This documentation can take various forms, for example, it can be displayed as symbols, photos or in written form.

"We adults have explained the rules of the daycare center to you."



Yes, absolutely. 0% of votes

That means that the adults always explained the rules in the daycare center to the children clearly. From the children's perspective, the quality of interaction in this regard is excellent.

Yes, generally. 0% of votes

This means that the adults have explained the rules in the daycare center to the children somewhat clearly. From the children's perspective, the quality of interaction in this regard is good.

No, not exactly. 0% of votes

That means that the adults rarely explained the rules in the daycare center to the children clearly. From the children's perspective, the quality of interaction in this regard is minimal.

No, not at all. 100% of votes

That means that the adults haven't explained the rules in the daycare center to the children at all clearly. From the children's perspective, the quality of interaction in this regard is inadequate.

"Which rules do you think are good? And which ones don't you like?"

No answer received

Figure 22

Excerpt from an analysis report on the attribute Participation (results related to the open question)

**What would you like to decide alone
without asking us adults?**

when I want to go into the gym
just going into the gym
also just going into the gym
going into the gym together
I want to go into the gym by myself sometimes
getting food when I'm hungry
when I want to do gymnastics, just go and do gymnastics
I also want to go into the gym without asking
doing experiments in the research corner
I also want to go into the research corner whenever I want
I don't know
which children I play with
what I play with, choosing the toys on my own
that I can go into the gym
getting food for myself

The analysis report can be exported as a PDF and stored for further use. You can find suggestions on the practical application of the analysis report in chapter 4.

3. Practical information on incorporating the children's perspectives

Being able to freely express your own opinion is a basic right, but not a matter of course. It is important to encourage young children along these lines, to exemplify an open, appreciative exchange of opinions, and stimulate this kind of conversation among the children. The following describes general requirements for making children's perspectives visible (see chapter 3.1.), as well as specific information on recording children's points of view with the GrazIAS Children's Perspective tool (see chapter 3.2.).

3.1. Observing basic requirements

Educational demeanor

To get more familiar with the children's viewpoint and to ensure they can open up in new and structured conversational situations, it is necessary for the educator to have an attentive and sensitive, appreciative and non-judgmental, equal and participatory demeanor toward the children.

Basic educational demeanor:

ATTENTIVENESS Clear physical and emotional presence and availability as a trustful, safe base for every child (Dietrich, 2013; Walter-Laager et al., 2018).

SENSITIVITY Perceiving the signals, i.e. the needs, feelings and concerns of the children, and understanding these with empathy, taking the children's feelings seriously and responding to them (cf. sensitive responsiveness; Gutknecht, 2014; Remsperger, 2015).

APPRECIATION Attentiveness to and interest in every child regardless of their behavior, as well as respectful, sympathetic, empowering, and emotionally warm communication (Ahnert, 2007; Hohmann, 2021; Wadepohl, 2017).

IMPARTIALITY Objective and appreciative observation and classification of the children's actions without subjective evaluation, interpretation or (pre-)judgment (cf. non-violent communication; Leitner, 2011).

CREDIBILITY Attitude toward children that is characterized by unconditional respect for their dignity and integrity, their wishes, opinions, and needs, since these have the same value as those of adults (Juul, 2012).

PARTICIPATION Developmentally appropriate and voluntary participation, co-determination, and shared decision-making by the children, considering their opinions in all matters that concern them during daily educational activities (DJI, 2017; Feige & Günnewig, 2018; Hansen et al., 2011; Knauer & Sturzenhecker, 2016).

If the educator connects with the children, permits a professional closeness, and is just as open to jokes as to criticism, this gives the children a framework that makes it easier for them to open up and confide their feelings.

Difference in perspective and power asymmetry

In addition to the basic educational demeanor towards the children, the awareness of certain asymmetries between adults and children plays a significant role. For generational reasons, adults view the world and how it is experienced in a different way than children do. The adult perspective is influenced by awareness of developmental steps and a certain level of far-sightedness, as well as by educational goals and expectations (or even the pressure of expectation) (Hohmann, 2021). Children pay more attention to the here and now and to their needs. Accordingly, this leads to a difference in perspective that must be taken into account (Heinzel, 2012). Being aware of this difference and being authentically curious about the “other” viewpoint can facilitate exchanges and encounters between adults and children as equals.

In addition, the relationship between children and adults is shaped by a power asymmetry that should be recognized and reflected on while incorporating the child’s perspective (Fuhs, 2012; Heinzel, 2012). Even if their more extensive experiences and social responsibility place the adults in a leading and protective role, it is important to be aware of this powerful position and counteract any discrimination, disregard, or devaluation of children (cf. adultism; Prengel, 2016; Richter, 2018). Adults can counter the power imbalance in the leadership role by recognizing the children’s concerns and viewpoints and taking them just as seriously as their own or those of other adults (cf. equivalence, Juul, 2012). This also includes, for example, asking the children whether they want to participate before starting the conversation with the GrazIAS Children’s Perspective, and clarifying that their participation is voluntary. Consequently, it is necessary to obtain not only the consent of the legal guardians but also that of the children, to make them aware that they are being recognized as conversation partners.

The relationship is also characterized by a gap in knowledge and competence, which the children are certainly aware of. This may tempt children to provide answers which the adult, “knowledgeable” person “probably expects from them as the ‘right’ answer” (Deckert-Peaceman et al., 2010, p. 69). Adults must demonstrate empathy, mindfulness, and appreciation to handle this well, in addition to a participatory demeanor (Fuhs, 2012; Heinzel, 2012). Before and during the conversation, it must be clearly communicated to the children that they are being interviewed as experts in this exchange, and asked questions that have no “wrong” answers. Questions to which the adults, in fact, do not know the answers. This is because the questions relate to the children’s lives and thoughts, and only they can provide that information (Sommer-Himmel et al., 2016). This contributes to the children’s (self-)competence and empowerment.

Children's rights

Professional educational activities are based on the awareness and knowledge of the fundamental rights of children. The genuine and continuous participation of the children in routine daycare activities, interested dialogs, and appreciative interactions with all children can be key elements for upholding the children's rights and well-being (Maywald, 2013, 2017, 2019).

Considering that all children have a right to participate, the educational team must determine how the children can integrate themselves as decisive actors in the daycare center's discourse on quality. Surveying children by means of the GrazIAS Children's Perspective is just one of many options for letting children contribute to the daycare center's quality development⁴. Basic principles for the successful participation of children in conversations and interviews (Feige & Günnewig, 2018) must be taken into account (see table 3).

Table 3

Principles for the successful participation of children

Principle	Meaning
Information	Children should be able to understand and comprehend what the discussion is about.
Transparency	Children should know how they can contribute.
Autonomy	Children are free to decide how, whether and to what degree they use their participation rights.
Respect	Children should be confident that their opinions will be respected.
Significance	The children's needs should be taken into account, and they should be able to acquire their own experiences that they consider significant.
Inclusion	All children should feel addressed and encouraged.
Reliability	Children must be able to trust that their rights are being respected.
Guidance	Children should be individually guided and supported with sensitivity.
Dialog	Children and adults should enter into an equal, collaborative dialog.

Note. Summary based on Feige & Günnewig (2018, p. 15).

⁴ To ensure that all children can be involved, including those who cannot (yet) express themselves verbally, diverse and age-appropriate forms of expression should be offered. Visual methods such as drawing or photography may be suitable here, for example (Clark & Moss, 2011; Nentwig-Gesemann, 2013).

Structuring conversations with children

Especially for children, the conversation or interview situation is an uncommon and highly complex type of interaction: It requires not only the understanding and production of language but also memory tasks, as well as assessments of the situation and the expectations of the conversation partner (Vogl, 2021). However, the success of interviewing children depends not (only) on the children's capacities but largely on the methodological approach to capturing their perspectives. The following basic methodological requirements facilitate a structured conversation with children (Sommer-Himmel et al., 2016; Vogl, 2021):

- explicit declaration of the conversation framework and metacommunication that clearly defines the goals and desired findings of the discussion, so that the children can understand the motives and intentions of their conversation partner
- obtaining the children's consent to participate in the conversation (and, if applicable, to record it), which they can revoke at any time, to make them aware that they are being recognized as conversation partners
- clarification of the children's status as experts, i.e. making it clear to them that they are the only people who can provide information on their individual lives and thoughts, that there are no wrong answers, and that even silence and not knowing are accepted
- ensuring a foundation of trust among the discussion participants to boost self-confidence and willingness to talk
- the adult's verbal and non-verbal expression of genuine interest and attentiveness (active listening, eye contact), to enhance the child's motivation
- use of contextualized and everyday topics—i.e. subjects related to the children's experiential knowledge that are relevant for them—to make them tangible for the children
- use of familiar forms of expression and language adapted to the child's individual level of language development (if needed, repeat questions in other formulations)
- avoidance of hasty completion or interpretation of the children's statements, i.e. always let the children finish speaking without correcting them or adding words, so that misinterpretations can be prevented
- adjusting the time frame to the children's attention span
- creating a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere and choosing a quiet place without distraction

The use of experiential topics and familiar forms of expression is very important for completing successful, substantial interviews with children (Vogl, 2021). The GrazIAS Children's Perspective aligns with this priority by using child-appropriate language and focusing on the children's experience of interactions in routine daycare environments.

3.2. Shaping conversations with GrazIAS Children's Perspective

The questions and statements within the GrazIAS Children's Perspective app comply with the general principles for recording children's viewpoints (see chapter 3.1.) and specify these on the topic of interaction quality and well-being. To date, GrazIAS Children's Perspective has been tested with 49 children at the ages of 3.9–6.7 years, and will be continuously improved upon in line with future empirical findings.

Preparing the conversations

Beforehand, the educational professional informs the children in the group to be surveyed about the new offer. They introduce the app and explain that it is used to talk together about how the children feel about their nursery (e.g. by showing the app on the tablet during morning circle time and briefly explaining it). We recommend informing the families about the use of GrazIAS (and, if applicable, about the use of voice recording). Before the conversation, the children are asked if they would like to participate and, depending on their wishes, small groups of two or three children are formed for each conversation. Together with the children, the educational staff member finds a quiet, undisturbed place in the childcare facility (if necessary, the team will have agreed in advance on a suitable time and room) and explains the exact procedure to all participants before the discussion begins. Discussions are held in small groups until all children who are allowed and wish to participate have done so.

With participation and inclusion in mind, the goal is for every child in the group to get the opportunity to take part and have their turn. However, the children's participation is based on the principle of autonomy: No child should be talked into participating in the conversation, or asked to do so in another form against their will or interest at the time. Conversations with GrazIAS Children's Perspective are to be seen as an offer, and every child is free to choose whether and at what time to take up this offer.

Practical note on the principle of autonomy:

Participation in the conversation must always be voluntary. This means that every child gets to freely decide whether and when to take part in the conversation. Every child is also free to end their participation early and leave the conversational setting or to take a break and continue it at another time. The children must also be given a choice whether to respond to all statements and questions, or whether they would prefer to skip certain topics. In addition, it is important to clarify that there are no wrong answers and that it is perfectly fine to remain silent or not know the answer.

The educator (ideally someone very familiar to the children) talks to the children in a 1:2 or 1:3 situation, so that the children are in the majority but still in a small group, resulting in a natural, balanced discussion. It may be easier for the children to freely express themselves in a small group like this rather than in a large group with many peers (or adults) or in a dialog alone with an educator. In a 1:1 situation in particular, it is possible for children to provide socially desired, more positive answers to "please" the educator (social-desirability bias; Heinzel, 2012; Vogl, 2021). This potential distortion of the results should be avoided as much as possible. The educator's open, sensitive demeanor and the

clear description of the discussion goal can counteract the social-desirability bias (also see chapter 3.1.).

A conversation that includes all statements and answers takes about 15–20 minutes with two children and 20–25 minutes with three children. It is recommended that the conversations are only held with children whose language is sufficiently developed. If a group includes children whose native language is something other than that of their peers, and there are educators who are proficient in that other native language, it is also conceivable to hold the discussions in the children's native language. This makes it easier for some children to understand the statements and answers. At the same time, the language they feel more comfortable with can be brought into the daycare context and thus appreciated. The app is currently available in German, English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Specific suggestions on how to structure the conversation can be found below. However, the educator is free to implement the process how they see fit. They may repeat the contents one-to-one or modify them slightly and adjust them according to the individual children's language usage and development level.

Introduction and explanation of the conversations

At the beginning, the educator clarifies the purpose and process of the conversation, shows the children the tablet with the app, and explains the koala evaluation scale. The children usually grasp and interpret the emotions represented by the koalas easily. The children who have participated in conversations with the GraziAS Children's Perspective to date have understood the koala scale very well, and could also give reasons why they chose particular koalas. It makes sense to offer an introductory explanation so that any questions from the children may be addressed and clarified before the discussion begins. The first general item, for example, can be used as an introduction like this:

"I would like to know what you think about our daycare center and I'm going to ask you some questions about this in a moment. I'm happy that you're participating, and I'm very interested to hear your opinion. You can say anything that comes to mind.

First off, I'll tell you how our conversation will go today. Sometimes I'll say sentences such as 'You like coming to daycare' and then you'll tap one of these koalas on the tablet to say whether the sentence is totally true for you, only partly true, not really true, or not true at all.

So, for example, you would tap the koala with the big, happy smile if it's true that you really like coming to the daycare center and are totally satisfied and happy about going to daycare. Or you'll tap the koala who smiles just a little if you think that not everything at the daycare center is great or you don't like coming to daycare all the time or if you're only sometimes happy to come. If you don't really like coming to the daycare center and are only sometimes happy here, tap the koala that looks a little sad. And if you don't like coming to the daycare center at all and are totally unhappy at daycare, then tap the really sad-looking koala.

Let's give it a try! Who wants to start? Great, CHILD'S NAME, you like coming to daycare—is that true? Then tap the koala that fits best for you. [Continue with every child in the group].

And in a moment, I'll also ask you questions like 'What do you really like at daycare? And what don't you like so much?' and you can just tell me your answer. Then I'll write it down on the

tablet. CHILD'S NAME, why don't you tell me why you don't really like coming to the daycare center (that much). [Continue with every child in the group].

Now you've seen how our conversation is going to work. Do you have any questions about it? [If yes, then explain again.] If not, then we'll get started with the next questions. It's important that you say what you think—after all, you know the daycare center very well. If you don't feel like answering one of the questions or would rather take a break or do something else, that's not a problem. Just tell me."

In any case, the introduction should mention that participating in the conversation is voluntary. Even if children are generally very motivated by using the tablet and koala emojis, their level of interest can shift. In that event, they should know that they can take a break from the conversation at any time.

To maintain a good flow of the dialog without having to write a lot, the educator can also record the conversation with an external device (such as a dictation device) and enter the notes later. If this option is chosen, the children's consent should be obtained before starting.

The conversation process

The educator starts by reading the statement; then the children can assess it with the koala evaluation scale, tapping the corresponding image. Next, the educator asks an open question on the same topic and writes down the children's answers in the comment field. The goal is to make it possible for the children to independently contribute their experiences and wishes in response to the open questions and address everything that affects them and is important to them. Although the open questions are optional, they can reveal important information for the design of everyday education and interactions.

One method that has proven effective is to first ask all children in the small group about the same attribute, if possible, and only then moving to the next attribute. This avoids having the children wait for a long time until they can contribute again. The sequence in which the children are asked does not play a role. The only important thing for the subsequent creation of the analysis report is that, at the end, every child has responded to every attribute or that "No answer received" was entered if there was no answer.

To make the statements or questions even more tangible and comprehensible for the children, the educator can also provide additional specific examples (see table 4) and, for example, enter "I" or their own name or the name of other educators in the group instead of "adult". The word "daycare" can also be replaced by another fitting term or name (e.g. "kindergarten", name of the facility or name of the group).

Table 4

Specific examples of a detailed explanation of the statements and questions regarding the attributes

Attribute	Possible explanations
Introducing and complying with rules	“for example, not hitting or laughing at others”
Supporting emotional regulation	“when you don’t feel well, for example if you hurt yourself or you’re angry or sad”
Enabling participation	“joining in activities or helping to make decisions, such as getting dressed yourself, serving food, or choosing toys”
Providing stimuli	“exciting new things could be climbing a tree or cutting something with a knife”
Stimulating communication	“for example, we talk to each other when we play, look at a book, or eat together” “we can talk and tell stories just the two of us or with other children, for example, in a large group or quietly in the tree house, and we can talk about things such as what you like to play or what you do at home”

After the child has answered an open question, the educator can follow up (e.g. with “why?”), continuing and expanding the dialog. Likewise, when it comes to the statements, there could be a question about why a child has chosen a certain koala emoji to find out more about their experiences.

In conversations with small groups, it is not uncommon for children to follow their peers and select the same koala emojis or respond with “I feel the same way” or the like. If a child gives exactly the same answer as the previous one, it is a good idea to ask for more detail (e.g. with “why do you see it that way?”).

Practical note on conversational manner:

Since a good conversational manner means (being able) to listen, it is important to let the children formulate and express their thoughts without interrupting or correcting them. Attentive interest, follow-up questions and ‘being there’ emotionally helps the children express their thoughts, as these are signs that they are really (actively) being heard (Nentwig-Gesemann et al., 2020).

Analysis report for the entire group

When the conversations with all children have been completed, the educator automatically receives a summary analysis report, which can be used for quality development and to shape everyday educational activities. It can be downloaded with a single tap and saved locally.

In the next chapter, you will learn more about possible ways you can apply the information from the analysis report. It is generally recommended to hold the conversations regularly and keep exploring the children's perspectives. Among other things, this enables educators to examine the degree to which the results remain similar or start to differ over time, and thereby reveal changes.

Advantages of using GraziAS Children's Perspective regularly:

- Ability to compare to previous results and monitor the development of the interaction quality from the viewpoint of children in one's own group (and ability to compare with the results of other groups).
- The educator becomes increasingly familiar with this type of conversation.
- The children become increasingly familiar with the app and exchanges about the interaction quality, well-being, and different (including critical) opinions.

4. Possible applications of GrazIAS Children's Perspective

Daycare centers can use GrazIAS Children's Perspective and its results in a many different ways:

- for self-reflection and to design or further develop everyday educational activities
- as a starting point for educational work and additional conversations with the children
- as a change of perspective in quality development and collaboration with families

Regular use of GrazIAS Children's Perspective and the accompanying systematic compilation of the children's viewpoints makes it possible to reveal what the children consider to be aspects of a good daycare center, where they would like to see changes, and which changes are actually occurring. This enables the continuous, sustainable development of the interaction quality and the empowerment of children as true actors at their daycare center.

The following ideas should be seen as practical suggestions that can be expanded upon independently.

4.1. Self-reflection

Specific conversations with the children on how they perceive the quality of the relationships they experience in their routine daycare environment provide the opportunity to gain new experiences and insights, to try out a different form of entering into dialog with children, and perhaps learn about previously unknown parts of the children's inner psyche. It is worthwhile to reflect on all of this afterwards. After the educator has completed a discussion cycle, they can review the process and results of the conversations by themselves and/or discuss them with their colleagues or other users of GrazIAS Children's Perspective. Below is a compilation of various approaches in the form of questions to stimulate self-reflection.

Idea A. Questions on the conversations with the children

What went well for me while I used the app? What was my experience during the conversation with the children? Was the size of the group ideal? What do I find difficult? What would I like to do differently next time, and what do I need for this?

Idea B. Questions about the new insights

Which new information did I receive about the children, their perceptions and experiences, opinions, and needs or desires? Which part of this was most surprising to me? What did the children's answers make me aware of about myself or my educational work?

Idea C. Questions about the interaction quality from the children's perspective

How satisfied are the children? What do they want and how can I respond to these wishes? What has changed compared to the previous discussion cycle and what hasn't? What are my strengths according to the children? In which area can I keep developing to strengthen the interaction quality? Which development or change in routine daycare interactions is important to the children? What would I like to change or try out?

4.2. Educational work with the children

After the educator has viewed and examined the analysis report for themselves, there is the option to review and discuss the results with the children. Jointly discussing the results and possible new procedures or changes, in whichever form, can serve several objectives at once:

- to stimulate speech and dialog, i.e. the children can discuss their different experiences, opinions, and wishes
- to philosophize with children, i.e. the children can learn to think about difficult questions, substantiate beliefs, pose hypotheses/predictions, and discuss them (e.g. How many of you feel comfortable in our group and how can we make sure that everyone feels comfortable here? What would happen if we had no rules at all in the daycare center?)
- to make the quality development processes of the daycare center transparent
- to involve children in change processes in the interest of inclusion, participation, and democratic education

Idea A. Bubble image

The first page of the report provides a graphical overview of the attributes in the form of colorful circles or bubbles. This overview can be reproduced on a larger sheet of paper and shown to the children. For this, the educator draws the colorful circles on the paper (in similar colors and proportions as in the report) and adds a child-appropriate symbol for each attribute (see examples in Figure 23; you can also use the names of the attributes). The symbols can also be selected or designed with the children. When the bubble image is finished, the presentation and discussion of the results can begin. When it is visibly displayed in the room, it can also be talked about repeatedly over a longer time period. This means that in the interest of transparency and participation, the group is informed about the topics that the children addressed in the discussions, i.e. what the children like (large bubbles) and dislike (small bubbles), what everyone agrees on, or where there are great differences in the assessments and experiences. On this basis, the group can then consider which changes they care about most and how they could be made possible.

Idea B. Make a wish

The educator makes a list of wishes (or ideas) expressed by the children during the conversations. The educator presents these wishes to the group and gives the children space to discuss them and reflect on the best way to implement them. The suggestions are collected by the educator and, at the end, everyone agrees on which suggestion will be tried first.

Figure 23

Graphical overview of the results as a “bubble image”

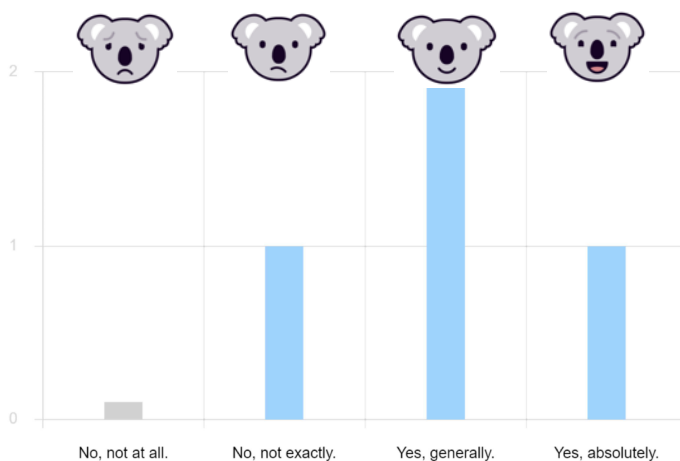


Idea C. Learning to understand statistics

The report is printed on A4 paper and displayed in a communal area. The educator uses this as a basis for a discussion with the children on what they see and what it could mean, and reflects on the results with them. The discussion can include not only an evaluation of the statements, i.e. the length of the bars in the bar graph and the proportion of children who provided a certain answer (percentage), but also the number of answers provided, for example, or the frequency of recurring answers to the open questions. The names of the bars can also be illustrated with the corresponding koala emojis if desired (see Figure 24).

Figure 24

Illustration of the bar name with koala emojis



4.3. Quality development

The analysis of the results can be used as an impetus for quality development not only by the individual educator, but the entire daycare team. Regularly considering the results and translating them into action and practice allows the children's viewpoints to be integrated into the quality debate and change processes. In addition, GrazIAS Children's Perspective offers options for comparing the external evaluation (GrazIAS 0–6) with the children's perspectives on interaction quality.

Idea A. Team discussions

Educators may wish to hold regular meetings, for example within the team sessions or on special team days, that address the topic of interaction quality and/or individual results recorded using GrazIAS Children's Perspective. This enables educators from different groups to share their experiences and opinions and use these to develop specific strategies for action, for example around the questions:

- Why do we want to implement GrazIAS Children's Perspective?
- How can we prepare the conversations effectively? What do we need to do this?
- How do we want to process and use the results (in a team, with the children and families)?
- How often can and should we have conversations in this format?
- Which changes have happened since we started using the tool?
- Which attributes should we pay special attention to in the future?
- What are our priorities and goals in developing the interaction quality?

Idea B. Concept development

The team discussions may quickly reveal that the development of the interaction quality and the incorporation of the children's perspective go hand-in-hand with concept development. If inclusive education, participation, and children's rights are part of the daycare concept already, it can be freshly interpreted and supplemented through the "lens" of the GrazIAS Children's Perspective, whether in the form of a separate chapter, such as "Our children's perspectives", or spread across existing chapters.

Idea C. Collaboration with families

In the interest of involving the families in their children's lives at daycare, a team could, for example, arrange an informative evening for them at which selected discussion results and the resultant changes in the daycare center are presented. This makes the processes and developments transparent for the families, which can strengthen the collaboration and feeling of being welcome—perhaps even the interaction quality between the educators and families. It is also an opportunity for greater participation on the part of the families, as the families can use this occasion to contribute their perspectives.

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