

REGULATIONS FOR 2026



1. General

1.1 Objectives

PLAY - Lisbon's International Kids Film Festival is a Portuguese film festival, exclusively dedicated to children and youth, determined to promote the access to culture for a younger audience through Cinema, and intends to be a national reference in the pedagogical and leisure field.

1.2 Dates

PLAY will take place from the 21st of February to the 1st of March 2026, in the São Jorge Cinema in Lisbon, Portugal.

1.3 Eligibility

Submission to the Festival is open to feature films, creative documentaries, experimental films, student films, short films and innovative visual productions for digital media completed after January 1, 2023.

1.4 Entries

Entries for the 2026 PLAY Lisbon's International Kids Film Festival are open from 1st of April to October 15th of 2025, the latter being the deadline for filing the required online entry form (available in [filmfreeway](#), [festhome](#) or in [PLAY](#) call for entries).

Films should be submitted for evaluation by the selection committee by providing an online screening or link.

1.5 Programmes

The 2026 PLAY Lisbon International Kids Film Festival will include, but will not be limited to, the following program sections:

1-2 years old – Learn to see; 3-5 years old – Learn to play; 6-9 years old – Learn to think; 10-13 years old – Learn to deconstruct; + 13 years old – Learn to Be. The Festival Program Committee will place selected films in the appropriate section.

2. Competitions

2.1 PLAY Audience Award for Best Short Film

All short-movies are eligible for the audience competition. There will be four winners: Best Short Movie for the ages 3-5, for the ages of 6-9, for the ages 10-13 and for the ages + 13 elected by the audience vote.

The Festival Program Committee will make the selection of competing films. This is a non-monetary award, and the four winners will each receive a diploma.

2.2 PLAY Jury Junior Award

The Festival Program Committee will make the selection of competing films. A Jury composed of children from 6 to 16 years old designated by the Festival's organising committee, will award this prize. There will be three winners: Best Short Movie for the ages 3-5 , for the ages of 6-9, for the ages 10 to 13 and for the ages +13.

2.3 PLAY International Award for Best Short Film animation & Live-action.

The Festival Program Committee will make the selection of competing films. An International Jury composed of professionals of the film industry and culture, designated by the Festival's organising committee, will award this prize. The jury can decide not to award a prize if it feels that there are no worthy films. Decisions of the jury are final. If any jury member is unable to perform their duties, the Festival reserves the right to nominate one or more additional jury members. The two pecuniary prizes are 800 euros for each category. The announcement of the prize-winners is made at the festival, on the closing night. Any sums of money the Festival offers will be transferred to the bank account of the beneficiary at the latest by June 30, 2026.

2.4 ECFA (European Children Film Association) short film Award

The Festival Program Committee will make the selection of competing films. An International Jury composed of Members of ECFA , will award this prize.

The jury can decide not to award a prize if it feels that there are no worthy films. Decisions of the Jury are final. If any jury member is unable to perform their duties, the Festival reserves the right to nominate one or more additional jury members. This is a non-monetary award, the winner will be on a short list competing for the best European children film, this winner will be announced on the Berlinale festival 2027.

3. Promotional materials

Participants are asked to make available all requested publicity materials for promotion.

4. Submission Guidelines and Materials

4.1 Entry Form

The film should be entered through the adherent Sites and online form (see 1.4).

4.2 Preview Copy

In order to complete the submission, the applicant is requested to send a link for online screening.

4.3 Selection

Festival programmers select and invite all films presented at the festival. Films selected for the PLAY Lisbon International Kids Film Festival will be announced by January 31th, 2026 on our website. Filmmakers selected to participate will be notified prior to this date.

5. Selected films

5.1 Selected films must have their exhibition clearly authorized according to the model, which will be released. A pdf copy must be sent, with the signature of the detainer of the exhibition rights, to the mail contacto@playfest.pt

5.2 Catalogue materials

All contact persons of selected films will receive a request for catalogue materials upon confirming participation in the festival.

5.3 Publicity Materials

The publicity contacts of the films participating in the Festival will receive a request from the Press office to send publicity materials. These materials will be used in Festival publications and for distribution to the press.

5.3.1 Excerpts

After official selection of a film, the Festival is qualified to use excerpts from the film, with a maximum of 1 minute, in the case of films with 1 min last, a 10% maximum. In the event that excerpts are not available, and it's being understood that under no circumstances the entire print might be lent out.

5.3.2 Promotion

For promotion of the entire selection and of each selected film, the Festival website is allowed to use any photo or digital film clip (less than 3' duration).

5.4 Programming

General scheduling and the timetabling of screenings are entirely at the discretion of the Festival Management.

5.5 Subtitling

When not in Portuguese, selected films, could be screened in their original version with subtitles or dubbed in Portuguese. It is imperative, before sending the print, to send the English dialogue list (including time codes) . Any cost made for translation, dubbing or producing time coded files needed will be covered by the PLAY Festival.

5.6 Formats

Film formats and video systems that can be presented during the Festival are: 35mm, DCP, Video Files (mov, h264 etc) preferably. Presentation of other formats and video systems or delivery through any other type of disk, formatting or licenses requires the authorization of the Festival. Without this authorization the Festival retains the right to exclude a film from the program.

6. Shipping of Prints and Videos of Selected Films

6.1. The copies of the selected films must be at the Festival address no later than 7 of January, 2026 (with exception of the films to dub which will be needed before this date).

6.2. Shipping instructions

Detailed print/video/DCP shipment information will follow upon acceptance of the film.

6.2.1 Availability of screening copy

Unless authorized by the Festival, prints/videos must be made available for the whole festival period. A DCP can be returned upon request right after ingesting and testing. In case you send a DCP take into account that the Festival needs time for testing and ingesting, and must therefore be available. In case an encrypted DCP will be delivered, the DKDM time-window should be valid from 30 January 2026 till the 15th of March 2026.

6.2.2 Shipment

The Festival will pay for the transportation charges, unless the shipment should be to another Film festival, in this case they should take care of the transport.

6.2.3 Pro forma

A pro forma invoice must accompany the print/video stating the name of the sender, the title of the film, format, length, number of reels (if applicable) and whether it is in color or in black and white.

6.3 Print return

All prints will be returned within two weeks after the Festival. DCP's can be returned upon request right after ingesting and testing. It is the responsibility of each participant to inform the Festival in due time on (any change in) the details of the return address as well as the desired date of arrival at the return address. In case there is no confirmation of the address within two weeks after the Festival, the screening copy will be returned to the print source of the film (as listed on the entry form). The Festival is not liable for any inconvenience this may cause.

6.4. Insurance

The insurance of the copies comes into effect the moment the film has arrived at the Festival office. The insurance remains in effect until the film is reshipped. In case of damage to or loss of a film during the Festival, the Festival is only responsible for the costs involved in making a new print or replacing the damaged reel(s) based on the current laboratory rates for ordering a standard print.

7. Conclusion

Entry and participation of films implies unconditional acceptance of the regulations. In unspecified cases, the Festival Management will make a final decision.