

US PLAY COALITION

2025 NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON THE VALUE OF PLAY

CREATE.

EXPLORE.

INSPIRE.

APRIL 15-17, 2025 | BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

PROGRAM



Table of Contents

Welcome! 3

Indiana Memorial Union Building Map 4

Key Information..... 5

Our Sponsors 6

The Team 9

Keynote Speakers10

Special Programming 11

Conference Tracks.....13

Poster Session & Market-PLAY-ce Features.....14

Concurrent Sessions15

Schedule of Events31

Welcome!



A partnership to promote the VALUE OF PLAY throughout life

Welcome to the 2025 National Conference on the Value of Play!

We are excited to have you join the US Play Coalition for our annual conference, hosted at Indiana University Bloomington's Indiana Memorial Union. Over the next three days, we are thrilled to bring together thought leaders, researchers, educators, and advocates who are dedicated to advancing the importance of play for all, across the lifespan. Featuring education sessions, research presentations, keynotes, evening play socials and more, the conference will not only a fun, jam-packed event, but one that we hope is also incredibly transformative for its attendees—you!

This year's theme is "Create, Explore, Inspire!" With this theme, the 2025 conference celebrates play as a dynamic, multifaceted experience that fuels creative ideas, art, and design; facilitates exploration of place and perspectives; and inspires individuals and communities. By embracing the "Create, Explore, Inspire!" theme, the conference aims to highlight how play serves as a powerful catalyst for learning, creativity, art & design, investigation, exploration, and more.

In 2025 we also look forward to a series of new initiatives seeking to create lasting memories for attendees! As a couple sneak peeks, we will be taking advantage of IU Bloomington's status as one of the nation's most beautiful campuses by offering an outdoor track for educational sessions—we believe this will be a great opportunity for place-based and interactive sessions, as well as align well with our explore theme! We will also have an amazing lineup of special keynotes and evening events that we hope will inspire our attendees in the days and months to come following the conference.

We have many to thank who supported this year's conference. Thank you to our Advisory Board, supporters, advocates, volunteers, and presenters! And of course, thank you to our generous sponsors and collaborators, without whose support this event would not be possible.

And certainly—this wonderful conference would not be what it is without you! Thank you for joining us this week and your commitment to play!

Play On!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Derek Nord".

Derek Nord, PhD

Director
Indiana Institute on
Disability and Community,
Indiana University
Bloomington

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clay Chafin".

Clay Chafin

Director
Eppley Center for Parks
and Public Lands, Indiana
University Bloomington

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristy Anderson".

Kristy Anderson, PhD

Assistant Research
Scientist
Eppley Center for Parks
and Public Lands, Indiana
University Bloomington

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephanie P. Garst".

Stephanie P. Garst

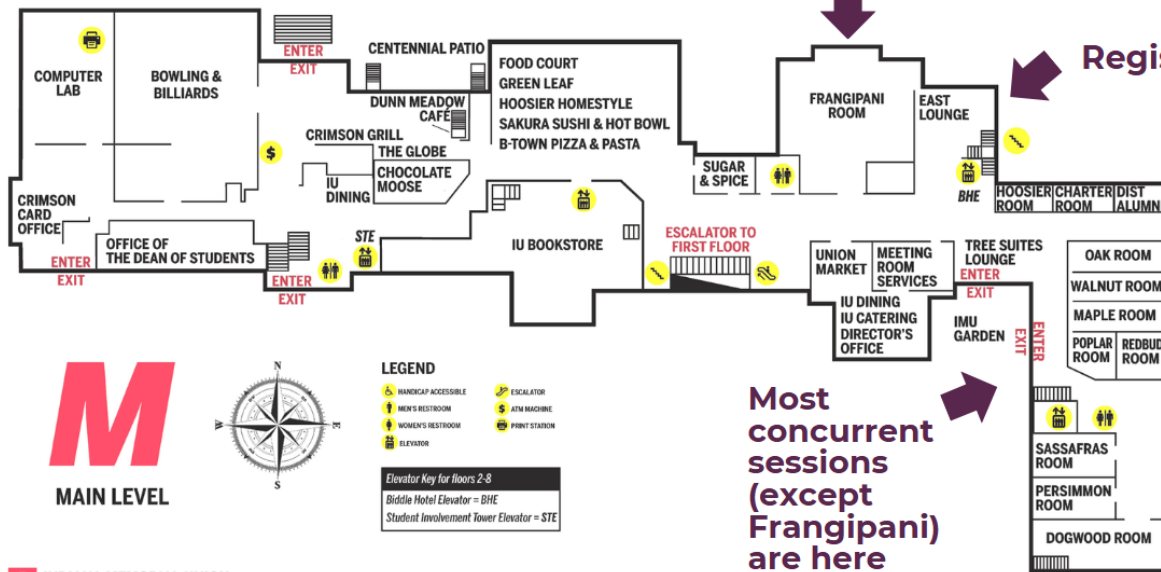
Lecturer
Department of Parks,
Recreation, and Tourism
Management, Clemson
University

Indiana Memorial Union Building Map

Wednesday evening social

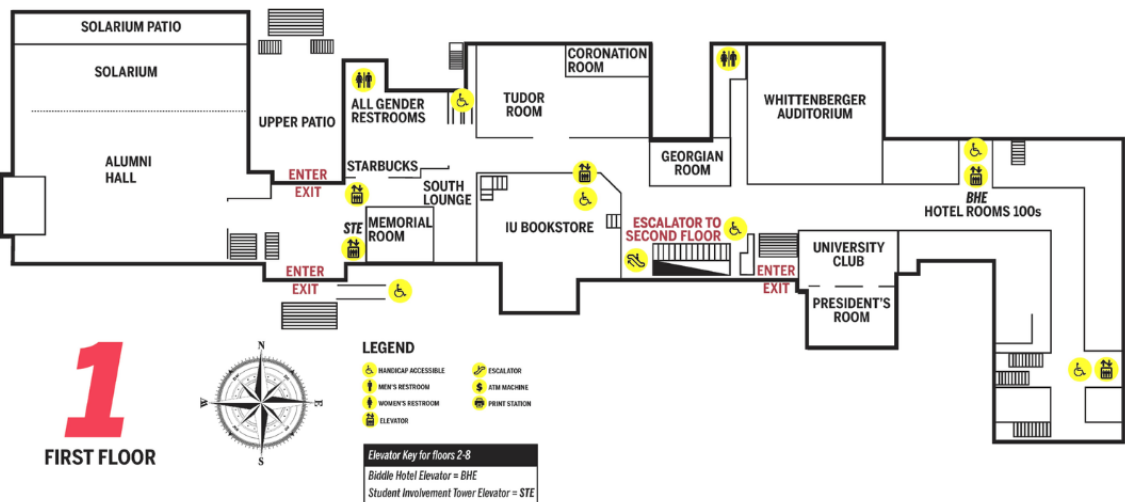
Frangipani

Registration!



Outdoor & Special Tracks meet here

Keynotes & Lunch



INDIANA MEMORIAL UNION
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Key Information

Goosechase: The Conference App

Returning this year is our conference app Goosechase! Get ready for an interactive conference experience where networking, learning, and exploration happen through fun, gamified challenges. Complete missions, connect with exhibitors, ask questions during the keynote speeches, and compete for the top spot on the leaderboard while making the most of every session and opportunity. Whether you're a first-time attendee or a returning guest, Goosechase will keep you engaged, and excited! Goosechase can be found in your phone's mobile app store. Upon downloading, find the 2025 conference's experience via **JOIN CODE: QKPP1V**

Session & Conference Evaluation

We hope you enjoy your time at the National Conference on the Value of Play—and are energized by our wonderful lineup of speakers and presenters. We strive for excellence and growth, and we hope that you will support us in that mission by completing session evaluations for each presentation you attend. The session evaluation form can be found at <https://go.iu.edu/PlaySessions2025> or via the QR code below. Each entry/session evaluation completed will be entered into an opportunity to receive Eppley Center for Parks and Public Lands promotional items at the Celebration Luncheon on Thursday!



After the conference, you will also be invited to evaluate the conference as a whole via email follow up. Keep an eye on your inbox!

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) & Library Education Units (LEUs)

CEUs are available for the 2025 Play Conference. The CEUs are issued by the Eppley Center for Parks and Public Lands on behalf of Indiana University at 0.1 per hour of learning. The conference has also been approved for Library Education Units (LEUs) by the Indiana State Library. Don't forget to turn in your CEU cards and nametag holders at the Registration Table on your way out.

Sensory Room

The Poplar Room (located within the Tree Suites) has been designated as a dedicated sensory room to provide a calming and safe environment for attendees who would like a respite space. It is designed to offer a break from the event and is equipped with fidget materials and a range of stimuli. This space is presented by Autism LLC.

Our Host



The Eppley Center is Indiana University's unique outreach program for the park, recreation, and public land management professions. The Center works to enhance the quality of natural, cultural, and recreational experiences for all people. With the resources of Indiana University, the Eppley Center has access to experts and a technology support system that are difficult to duplicate. The Center provides expertise in several areas, including technical assistance and research, planning and design, and training and education. As a unit of the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Eppley has a rich history and legacy in park and recreation management. Indiana University has been a leader in parks, recreation, and public lands education, research, and technical assistance since 1946. Visit our website at www.iidc.indiana.edu/eppley to learn more about what the Eppley Center can do for you. We have a wide range of training and educational resources for individuals and organizations!

See you next year!

Our Sponsors

Platinum



INDIANA INSTITUTE ON
DISABILITY AND COMMUNITY



EPPLEY CENTER FOR PARKS
AND PUBLIC LANDS



Gold



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Bronze



Play Collaborators



goosechase



Play
is
life-
changing.



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We transform the landscape of play.
Our commitment is driven by the belief that
play, when designed for everyone, brings
out the best in all of us.

Because play, in its magical simplicity,
makes us who we are.

To learn more visit us at playlsi.com/play-changes-lives



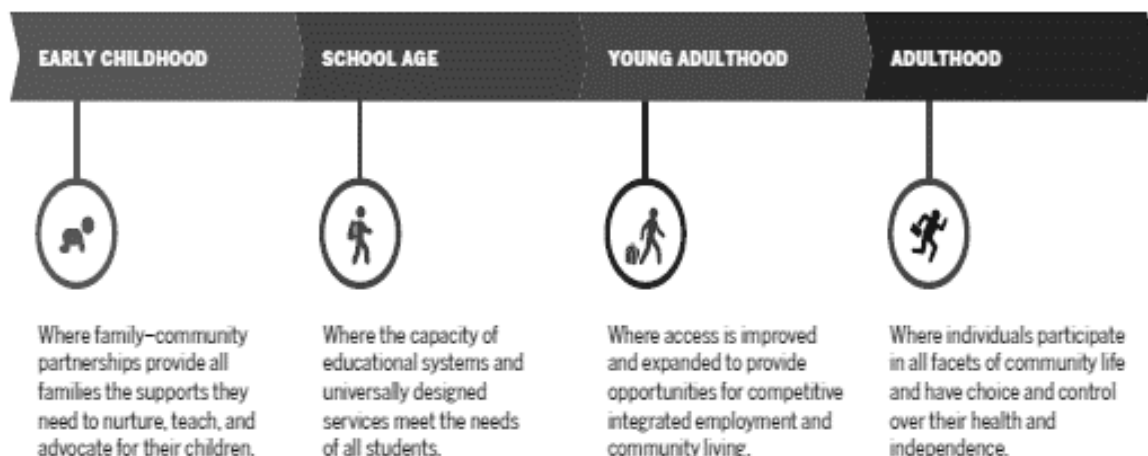
INDIANA INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY AND COMMUNITY

A FOUNDATION OF EXCELLENCE

The Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC), Indiana's University Center for Excellence in Disabilities, has fostered a foundation of excellence for community investment in developmental disabilities since 1970. Our mission is to work with communities to welcome, value, and support the meaningful participation of people of all ages and abilities through research, education, and service.

Our work crosses the lifespan and is conducted through six centers and an Indiana University disability-focused library accessible to all state residents.

A LIFESPAN APPROACH TO DISABILITIES



Visit Our Website
go.iu.edu/8s8d

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tlnyurl.com/53nfp7zf

The Team



US Play Coalition

at Eppley Center for Parks and Public Lands

Kristy Anderson, PhD

Kris Brethova

Clay Chafin, Director

Stephanie Garst

Layne Elliott

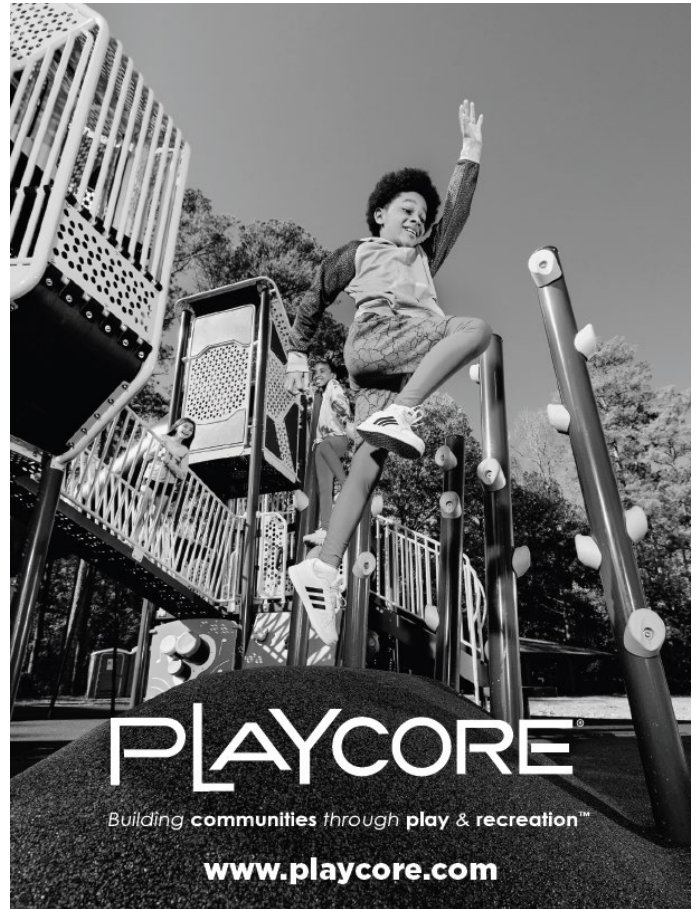
Claire Jenness

Srihari Kamath



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Meghan Talarowski, Studio Ludo

Keynote Speakers



Cas Holman

CREATE! Keynote Tuesday, April 15th

award-winning toy designer

developer of world-renowned rigamajig

founder & principal at toy company Heroes Will Rise

Cas Holman is the founder and principal designer at Heroes Will Rise: an award-winning independent toy company producing innovative toys that are designed for creativity and open-ended play. For two decades, she's been designing playthings like the well-known Rigamajig—used around the world—and interactive play spaces that encourage children and adults alike to explore, imagine, and collaborate. Her motto? Easy is boring. She motivates us to notice the world around us, adopting a mindset of curiosity in everything we do. Her philosophy places play at the forefront of the design process, and she makes toys for kids to feel empowered and understood.

As a consultant, Cas has worked with the leadership and design teams at Nike, Ford, Disney Imagineering, and MIT. She teaches the world's biggest companies to integrate the benefits of play, open-ended processes, and new ways of thinking into their ethos. Cas also designs indoor and outdoor play spaces for schools, public parks, and museums. As an educator of twelve years and a former associate professor at the Rhode Island School of Design, she's dedicated her life to challenging conventional ideas about how we learn, and what types of learning have value. She's collaborated with thought leaders in design, early education, and play advocacy who share her passion for reimagining our systems for learning and play.

Rick Erwin

EXPLORE! Keynote Wednesday, April 16th

creative director & curator at the

City Museum in St. Louis

"Top 50 Greatest Places in the World for Kids"

Rick Erwin is the Creative Director of City Museum in St. Louis, Missouri (USA). The Museum is a 600,000 square foot attraction featuring interactive sculptures, climbers, slides, and architectural exhibits made out of repurposed found objects and historic artifacts. The Museum is the brainchild of internationally acclaimed artist Bob Cassilly, who opened the Museum in 1997 and passed away in 2011. Prior to taking over the Creative Director role, Rick was the Executive Director for 15 years and led the museum to an annual attendance of more than 800,000. Following Cassilly's passing in 2011, the museum continued to thrive under Rick's leadership and is consistently ranked as a must-see attraction nationally and internationally. In 2019, City Museum was named one of the Top 50 Greatest Places in the World for Kids by TIME Magazine and continually is listed in the top 10 Best Immersive Art Experience and Best Children's in USA Today 10Best. City Museum was purchased in 2018 by Premier Parks and continues to thrive under their ownership.



Rick received his undergraduate degree in Art History and Studio Art from Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri and his Master of Arts in Arts Administration and Policy from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Special Programming

Outdoor Track on the IU Bloomington Campus

New this year is an outdoor track – spanning Tuesday afternoon through all day Wednesday. Head to the Solarium (adjacent to Alumni Hall) to begin the session, and your presenter will facilitate part or all of the session on the beautiful campus of IU Bloomington. Nature, place, recreation, physical activity, and outdoor play in action! The outdoor track will be kicked off by Darryl Edwards on Tuesday afternoon.



Tuesday Night Social: A Night of Wonder!

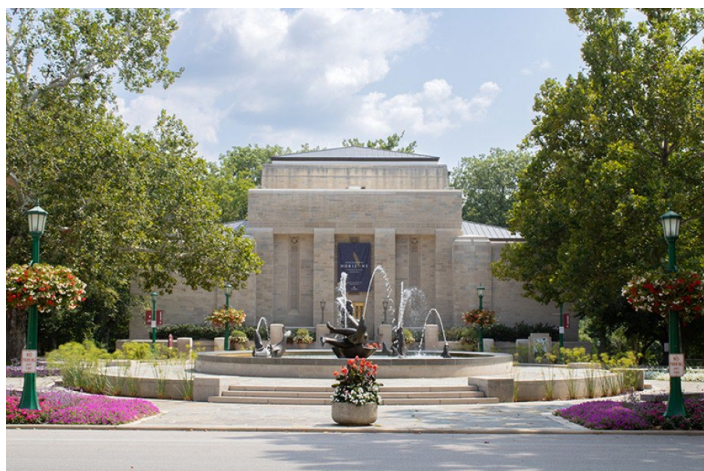
We are thrilled to host A Night of Wonder in partnership with WonderLab Museum of Science, Health, and Technology. WonderLab is a play-focused science museum with interactive exhibits that stimulate creativity, encourage exploration, and inspire lifelong learning. This event takes place from 7-9pm on Tuesday, April 15th at the Wonderlab Museum in downtown Bloomington. While a short walk, drive, or bike ride away, a roundtrip shuttle is also available at the Indiana Memorial Union circle drive (Biddle Hotel entrance).

Play, Games, and Granfalloon

In collaboration with the IU Arts & Humanities Council 2025 Granfalloon festival, Value of Play Conference attendees are invited to attend the “Kurt Vonnegut’s GHQ: The Lost Board Game,” a talk by Geoff Engelstein at the Lilly Library, 6pm on Wednesday, April 16th. There will be a reception with copies of the game available for play at 4pm. Geoff Engelstein is an award-winning table-top game designer and educator. His game titles include Space Cadets, The Expanse, and the Super Skill Pinball series, and book titles include Building Blocks of Tabletop Game Design, Achievement Relocked, and The Universe Explained with a Cookie. Podcast credits include the long-running GameTek series on The Dice Tower, and Ludology. He is also on the faculty of the NYU Game Center.

Wednesday Night Social: Bowling & Billiards!

Back by popular demand, join us at the Indiana Memorial Union's Bowling & Billiards Wednesday night social (April 16th, 7-9pm). Enjoy a game of pool or round of bowling with your fellow conference attendees—and the “disco” night bowling atmosphere!



Libraries, Learning & Play Forum

The US Play Coalition is thrilled to bring back the Libraries, Learning & Play Forum to the 2025 National Conference on the Value of Play on Thursday, April 17th. The play forum features exemplars, case studies, best practices, lessons learned and big ideas! Learn how play is supported in public, school, and university libraries - and consider how to most effectively collaborate with librarians at local, state, and national levels to advance play goals. This forum will take place all day in the Frangipani Room—with a field trip to the Lilly Library.

& More!

This year's conference features several amazing sessions and mini forums. For example, check out the 2-part sessions on Froebel's Gifts, Loose Parts Exploration, and Applied Improvisation. Additional special sessions include the kickoff to the Research Symposium (Tuesday afternoon), back-to-back Health & Play Institute sessions (Wednesday morning), a morning Yoga Stretch followed by a yoga presentation session (Tuesday morning), and more!

Conference Tracks



Creative & Innovative Play

Play is an avenue for creativity and innovation. Play facilitates process-based approaches. This theme incorporates, art, design, innovation, and creativity and their role in play.



Play Across the Lifespan

Promoting play across the life, including multi/intergenerational play, is central to our mission. Explore how adults (college-aged to retirees) play and how adults share and benefit from play with children.



Accessible & Inclusive Play

Play should be accessible, available, and open to all. Advance the field for play for all abilities, all shapes, all sizes, all colors.



Education & Play

Play is a vital part of the learning equation, both in and out of the classroom. The faces of those learning while at play are some of the most engaging! Consider play as a vehicle for learning through both traditional and nontraditional settings including schools, camps, afterschool programs, museums, zoos, aquariums, parks & recreation departments, faith-based spaces, and more.



Health, Recreation, & Play

Play is a building block for healthy living. Examine health and physical activity trends related to play, healthy benefits of play, and the intersection of health and recreation to insure a healthy face of play.



Nature Based & Outdoor Play

The faces of play are often wet, muddy, and sun-glistened from hours spent outdoors. Focus on play in nearby and far away nature—backyards, parks, creeks, lakes, trails, wetlands, and beyond.



Designing for Play

Landscape architects, architects, designers, city planners, and civic groups are invaluable experts, practitioners and resources for PLAY.



Emerging Trends in Play

Play is changing! The Play movement is growing! Explore the latest in play- technology, social media, politics, policies, and more.



International/Global Play

Play looks very different around the world. Share play practices, history, and culture from countries across the globe.



Nuts & Bolts

From play basics to play essentials. Share tips, trainings, techniques and tools for PLAY.

Poster Session & Market-PLAY-ce Features

#RecycleforPlay | Bruna Breen & Patty Stine



#RecycleforPlay, by Pure Play Every Day, repurposes household items like bottles into tools for playful learning. By turning everyday objects into creative materials, it promotes imaginative play, problem-solving, and sustainability, encouraging children to engage in eco-friendly activities.

Adult Recess: A Movement to Reconnect, Relieve Stress, and Make Friends through Play | Allison Frueh



Explore how play-centered communities provide adults with a healthy, social outlet to reconnect with their inner child, relieve stress, and make friends. This session highlights the success of Adult Recess in Austin, TX and offers a vision to expand play-based gatherings worldwide.

AI Adventures: A Play-Based Curriculum for Inspiring Young Minds | Sohheon Yang & Kyungbin Kwon



This presentation explores collaborative dynamics in co-designing a play-based AI curriculum with kindergarten teachers and children. Participants will examine how AI4K12 concepts align with Indiana's early learning standards and discover AI tools for creative play while sharing strategies.

Coach Beyond: Empowering Coaches to Create, Explore, and Inspire in Youth Sports | Jerry Reynolds, Larry Judge, Nick Elam, Samantha Bates, Lindsey Blom & Kylee Ault-Baker



This presentation identifies critical youth coaching challenges and providing training to over 7,500 coaches in the state. They will also demonstrate how their research efforts will shape national coaching education priorities.

Playing Through Trauma, Learning Through Experience, and Stimulating the Creative Mind | Victor Wilburn & Shiela Long



Play is an instrumental part of a child's development. It is through the institution of play that children experiment, experience, and interpret the world and their relation to it. Therefore, it becomes most important that teachers help to bridge the gap between play, education, & development.

The Playful Homeschooler: Creating a Roadmap for Families New to Learning at Home | Laura Scheinholtz



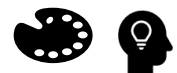
Come on a visual journey to explore play in a homeschool setting. Homeschooling needs playful interlude like any other learning space. Learn how one homeschool incorporated play in fun and novel ways.

What are you doing to advocate for the International Day of Play? | Pat Rumbaugh & Rebecca Horrace



The UN named Wednesday, June 11, 2025, the International Day of Play. You will have the opportunity to hear about ways Pat Rumbaugh, The Play Lady, is promoting the International Day of Play.

Why play is the ideal tool for nurturing creativity | Tom Rendon & Zach Stier



Play provides the richest experience to support creativity in young children. We explore how play shows their creativity and enhances creativity as well as how the neuroscience of creativity is engaged through play.

Yes or No: The Power of Choice in Play for All Ages | Charlene Woodham Brickman



We "talk the talk" but do we "walk the walk?" If you are reading this then you probably already believe in the power of play for children. Let's discuss the power of yes and no for you!

Concurrent Sessions

Tuesday, April 15

10:00-10:45am

Frangipani

Part I of 2-Part Session!

Froebel's Gifts I: Building Blocks for Play-based Education from Early Childhood to Graduate Degrees | Cecilia Maron-Puntarelli

The inventor of kindergarten, Froebel created tools known as Gifts for children's active learning through play, experience, and discovery. Participants will consider Froebel's philosophies, practices and influences in education and design while discovering and playing with Froebel's Gifts



Dogwood

Designing YES Spaces: Embrace the Power of Play in Child-Centered Environments | Carla Ward

Designing YES Spaces is a hands-on workshop that empowers educators to create child-centered environments that inspire exploration and creativity. Learn strategies to design spaces that prioritize autonomy, sensory engagement, and safe, meaningful play.



Oak

Got Game? Professors Who Play! | Amy Roehl, Ellis Kirkdorffer & Milagros Zingoni-Phielipp

In this interactive educational session, play activities used by 3 design professors who incorporate play into their higher ed curriculum will be shared around 3 key themes: 1) PLAY for Community Building and Belonging, 2) PLAY as Centering Practice, 3) Play for Visualization in Design Processes.



Walnut

Playful Learning Takes Flight for Kindergarten Students | Cornella McKeehan & Bryan O'Callahan

Explore the connection between open-ended play and the development/implementation of emergent curriculum in a kindergarten classroom setting. Presenters will survey the ways emergent curriculum and play-based learning provide students the opportunity to cultivate critical 21st century skills.



Maple

Anji Play: An innovative approach from China | Ling Chen

Anji Play is an educational philosophy and approach advocating for true play. In Anji Play centers, play is a fundamental right of children, and children are capable agents who can initiate learning through play, while educators step back to observe, scaffold, and reflect on play.



Frangipani

Part 2 of 2-Part Session!

Froebel's Gifts I: Building Blocks for Play-based Education from Early Childhood to Graduate Degrees | Cecilia Maron-Puntarelli

The inventor of kindergarten, Froebel created tools known as Gifts for children's active learning through play, experience, and discovery. Participants will consider Froebel's philosophies, practices and influences in education and design while discovering and playing with Froebel's Gifts



Dogwood

Computational Thinking in a Box | Michelle Friend

Students can learn computational thinking (CT) by playing with simple materials. Come play with the CT bins hands on, inquiry activities that allow students to independently learn fundamental computing ideas, all through playing with materials contained in a shoe box!



Oak

Cringe! Exploring adult discomfort in children's play | Molly Bishop

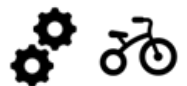
Children's play isn't all sunshine and rainbows. Pushing boundaries, exploring difficult topics, and experiencing a variety of feelings are all natural and necessary parts of play. Come explore the challenging side of play and the importance of understanding what types of play make us cringe!



Walnut

Reimagining Play, Movement, and Sport as a Tool for Health & Well-Being | Ivan Ortega

Join the Center for Healing and Justice through Sport for an interactive session that enables youth development professionals to explore core concepts of trauma-informed care and develop a deep, applicable understanding of how play, movement, and sport are uniquely suited to help young people grow.



Maple

Playing from Scratch | Joyce Hemphill

Make-n-take playful activities using safe household recyclables. To participate bring focused attention, problem solving & decision-making skills & creativity - all other materials provided. Activities good for schools, park programs, assisted living workshops, & play dates with grandchildren.



Frangipani

Using LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® To Explore Collaboration, Creativity and Problem-Solving | Mallori DeSalle

LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® is a method of creative problem-solving and exploration that turns ideas into innovation. Participants will build with LEGO® and answer evocative questions that will lead to solutions to complex problems or concerns. This play-forward session is for all areas of work/service.

Dogwood

Research Featured Session
Watch and Learn: Observing Children's Development in Play | Zachary Gold

Research on children's learning has trended toward formal evaluation and has undervalued play-based perspectives. This session discusses research from Play Lab. Observing children's language and behavior in play reveals their thinking and provides opportunities for adult scaffolding and support.

Oak

An Assessment Tool for Play Promotion Practices Implementation in Early Childhood Classrooms | Thomas Rendon & Sandra Little

While evidence is strong that play-based learning is a successful pedagogical strategy, few teachers use it. This session will explore a new tool that helps assess the implementation fidelity of play promotion practices as they relate evidence-supported learning outcomes.

Walnut

Use Your Imagination: Play, Autism, and Sensory Friendly Experiences | Ross Edelstein

Sensory-friendly events are often the one time that a space welcomes in Autistic people and focused on taking away. But why should they be? Why can't we create playful, everyday sensory friendly experiences, and change the narrative - including people at all ages and life stages?

Frangipani

Beyond Accessibility: Promoting Participation in Recess for Students with Disabilities | Krinai Sullivan

Though meeting accessibility requirements, school playgrounds continue to pose barriers to recess participation for children with high intensity needs and autism. This presentation will guide attendees to identify common barriers to recess and provide possible solutions to these barriers.

Dogwood

Wild Play: How Forest Schooling Shapes Social Skills... | Brook Crenshaw

In this exciting study, Crenshaw dives into how forest schooling boosts preschoolers' social skills and play behaviors. Join this session to explore how the wild, unstructured environment of forest schools can ignite social development and empower the playful spirit in young children.

Oak

Nurturing Play and Creativity as Keys to Lifelong Well-being | Mary McMullen & Debbi Ponella

Influenced by play pioneer Brian Sutton-Smith, who famously said: "the opposite of play is depression," the presenters, together with graduate students taking their "Play and Creativity" seminar, share how these important aspects of being human impact health and well-being throughout the lifespan.

Walnut

Systems changing the face of play: transforming asphalt to nature | Jen De Melo & Claude Stephens

Connecting kids with nature in public spaces is crucial. This panel with KABOOM!, Oakland USD, and Children at Play Network explores child-led design and community engagement in green schoolyards, using the Stonehurst Campus in Oakland, CA as a model for nature-based play and environmental goals.

Special
Track
(meet in
Solarium)**Redefining Fitness: Transforming Exercise into Enjoyable, Sustainable Movement Through Play** | Darryl Edwards

Explore how playful movement redefines fitness, offering sustainable, enjoyable, and science-backed health benefits for adults. This session presents the latest evidence on active play and provides practical strategies to inspire lifelong movement.

Frangipani

Reflections on an Infant-Toddler Outdoor Playground Collaborative Project | Debora Wisneski, Sarah Lisiecki & Brian Johnson

This is the story of the transformation of a playground for a childcare center told through the perspectives of project collaborators (playground equipment designers, educators, families, and children) to offer inspiration to others to support outdoor play for infants and toddlers.

Dogwood

Failing Forward with Improv | Mallori DeSalle

"Failing Forward with Improv" is an interactive workshop designed to transform setbacks into steppingstones. Participants engage in dynamic improv exercises that encourage risk-taking, adaptability, and collaboration. By embracing failure as a learning tool, attendees will enhance their creativity.

Oak

The Power of Adult Play: Discover Your Play Personality to Boost Creativity and Productivity | Maya Saggat & Carla Ward

Embracing play as adults shapes our personal and professional choices. In this workshop, participants will uncover their "play personality," connect with others who share their style, and discover how this insight can fuel aligned choices in work and life, sparking creativity, motivation and purpose.

Walnut

Exploring creative play for all ages: A comparison of indoor and outdoor play and a call to action | Kimberly Vigil, Kelly Rogers, Ryan Heath, Autumn Jeffords & Alex West

In this hands-on presentation, participants will create and explore in order to inspire others! Participants will engage in indoor creative play, learn, and discuss the merits of indoor and outdoor creative play, and be empowered to take play back to their respective workspaces.

Special
Track
(meet in
Solarium)**Playful Connections: Art, Nature, and the Path to Wellness** | Bethany TestaAvila, Patricia Schneider, Lisa Milton & Kelly Korte

Let your playful side inspire you in this session about art, nature, and wellness! By offering a safe space for guests to shift their perspectives (sometimes literally) Newfields creates opportunities for everyone to engage with play and exploration. And you can, too!

Frangipani

What Does It Do? - Bringing the Power of Open Play Back to Toy Design |
Ryan Hamilton



Once upon a time, toy design was focused on open-ended playthings. Now the play product landscape is dominated by licensed products, electronic toys, and 'educational' items that leave little to the imagination. Together we'll look at the power of open play in toys for kids and 'kidults' alike.

Dogwood

Children and Families Talk about Why They Like Nature Playgrounds |
Suzanne Quinn



We know that nature play, and nature playgrounds continue to be a trend in community park design. Our study examines the perspectives of 98 adults and 52 children who tell us why they like a nature playground. Findings are used to prompt discussion about research informed nature playground design.

&

Understanding the Effects of Free Play on Elementary School Students: A Systematic Review | Danielle Nehring, Paul Flaspohler & Brooke Spangler Copenbaker



Students overall are engaging in less play despite play being found beneficial across multiple domains (physical, cognitive), skills (language, motor), and outcomes (academic achievement, mental health). This systematic review aims to identify the impact of free play on elementary students.

Oak

Purposeful Play: Asking Thought-Provoking Questions to Maintain Engagement and Deepen Learning | Alexis Markavage & Ryan Schaben



Empower your K-8 students through STEM inquiry! Learn to craft thought-provoking questions, master wait time and utilize engaging provocations. Transform your classroom into a space of playful learning and deeper understanding.

Walnut

A New Horizon for Children: Establishing Play and Growth Spaces in East Africa | Chad Kennedy



In East Africa, scarce play spaces limit childhood development. New projects are introducing traditional and inclusive playgrounds, fostering teamwork and problem-solving, while addressing cultural stigmas around disabilities. Despite challenges, local communities are recognizing play as essential.

Frangipani **All Ages, All Abilities, All the Time** | Jill Moore White



Parks today are responsible to ensure that we are providing not only accessible environments, but spaces where ALL users can feel secure and engaged. This session will articulate how to utilize the seven principles of universal design to create park and play spaces for all ages and abilities.

Dogwood **The Value of Play and Accessing the 'Inner Child' for Creativity, Inspiration & Design Innovation** | Stephen Davies



This paper presents a design research project which draws from psychotherapeutic theory of the "inner child." Using this in a non-therapeutic way, the process enables designers to interact between their adult and child selves to access their "inner child" to inspire creativity and ideas generation.

&

Mermaids' Concert Hall: Inspiring Creativity and Collaboration through Play and the Arts | Sohheon Yang



This session explores how combining free play with circle time enhances creativity, collaboration, and artistic skills in young children. Inspired by The Bremen Town Musicians, our "Mermaids' Concert Hall under the Sea" play integrated music, storytelling, and art, emphasizing child-led learning.

Oak **Tots, Teens and the Young at Heart: The role of play in the city for all ages** | Janelle Zwart, Stu Wershof & Melissa Mongiat



Examine the power of play in revitalizing urban public spaces, and how urban play can strengthen social fabric and foster multi-generational connections. We will share case studies of successful designs that have transformed public areas into vibrant, engaging spaces for connection and joy.

Walnut **The Neuroscience of Active Play: Enhancing Cognitive & Emotional Resilience Across the Lifespan** | Darryl Edwards



Active play significantly enhances cognitive function, elevates "feel-good" hormone levels, and mitigates the risk of cognitive decline from childhood through older adulthood. This session delves into play psychology and cognitive neuroscience, presenting evidence-based benefits.

Special Track (meet in Solarium) **Up the River with a Playful Paddle: Creating Psychological Freedom and Wellbeing Across the Lifespan** | Jay Kimiecik, Carly Kimiecik, Katie Dunn & Izzy Storey



This session shares a perspective for developing an Expressive Self (ES) through play-based activities that leads to the natural outcome of psychological freedom and wellbeing in people of any age. Participants will engage in an outdoor activity to experience the natural connection of play with ES.

Frangipani

Part I of 2-Part Session!

Breaking Barriers to Creativity thru Loose Parts Explorations

Part I: Adult Play & Development | Sierra Roussos & Connie Nelson



In Part I of this two-part session, we will explore stages of adult development, identify barriers to child and adult play, PLAY with loose parts (participants should bring loose parts to use), and discuss how this exploration can lead to personal and professional growth.

Dogwood

Playing with Sound | Debbi Ponella



Sound surrounds us. It offers a natural resource for playful engagement that stimulates creativity, imagination, and connection with our world. The presenter will share how playing with sound can stimulate multidisciplinary learning opportunities and cultivate creativity.

&

Peace Education Practice in Play | Gulistan Gursel-Bilgin & Daniel Castner



Drawing from Nel Noddings' framework of peace education and her explanations of evolutionary psychology, this phenomenological research presents an interview study on ten early childhood education teachers' understandings of war, peace, and early childhood education.

Oak

Integrating Education Through Play: The Play360 Approach | Jon Racek



Learn how Play360 embeds educational elements into community playgrounds, turning play into a dynamic learning experience. Explore how these playspaces enhance children's educational outcomes and foster community involvement in education.

Walnut

GOAL: Empowering kids and families to learn to play as part of a healthy lifestyle | Cheryl Kilmark, Priscilla Barnes, Shelby Drake, Mary Puckett, Catherine Sherwood-Laughlin & Nikhil Gloyeske



GOAL is a program that empowers children (ages 7-17) and their families by providing educational sessions about nutrition, physical activity, and living a healthy lifestyle. The focus will be on the physical activity component, rooted in play and implemented in various spaces in the community.

Maple

Legislating Play in Early Childhood Classrooms: How Connecticut Passed a Play Law and What's Next | Peg Oliveira



Learn what a determined group of play advocates were able to accomplish in one year and the research used to advocate for a play based, child centered approach to early education. The result was legislation requiring a pedagogy of play in all public preschools and kindergartens in Connecticut.

Special
Track
(meet in
Solarium)

Rediscover Your Wildhood - Finding Joy, Connection and Healing in Nature | Sarah Reader



In a fast-paced world of screens, stress and constant demands, many of us have lost touch with the rejuvenating, joyful, and grounding aspects of nature. "Rediscover Your Wildhood" explores how time outdoors - and a return to playfulness - can be powerful tools for building resiliency and connection.

- Frangipani **Part 2 of 2-Part Session!**
Breaking Barriers to Creativity thru Loose Parts Explorations
Part I: Adult Play & Development | Sierra Roussos & Connie Nelson
 In Part II of this two-part session, we will explore how child-led play with loose parts nurtures creativity and growth in children, identify barriers to supporting child-led play, and observe play through a schema play lens to gain insights into further enriching learning environments.
- Dogwood **Through a Pedagogy of Play: Teachers' Professional Identity, Self-Efficacy, and Well-Being** | Jennifer Berube
- This presentation examines how kindergarten's shifting educational landscape has eroded teachers' autonomy, leading to pressure, stress, and burnout. Many leave the field because their self-efficacy, professional identity, and well-being are undermined.
- &**
Let's Go Pla(y)ces: Bringing Community into the Classroom through Play | Maya Saggar
- Pla(y)ce-based learning merges elements of play- and place-based learning to create immersive, authentic, and context-rich experiences for students. Using roleplay, props, and narratives, students engage with and apply curricular concepts through first-hand experiences, all within the classroom.
- Oak **Imaginary Adventures: Rediscovering Creativity Through Adult Pretend Play** | Ashley DePaulis
- Rediscover your playful imagination! This session invites adults to explore the power of pretend play, which unlocks creativity, resilience, and joy. Through guided activities, learn how imaginative play enhances well-being and sparks inspiration for personal and professional growth.
- Walnut **Beyond the Floor: Rethinking Play in Everyday Life** | Kayla O'Neill & Katherine Hargreaves
- Many caregivers envision play as sitting on the floor with toys, which can feel overwhelming. However, play can be integrated into daily routines, offering rich learning opportunities. When we explore everyday activities to create playful moments, learning can be enjoyable and low stress!
- Maple **The Play Business** | Patricia Stine & Molly Bishop
- Creating and operating a business with "play" as its core commodity can be a rewarding and innovative venture. Play, whether it involves entertainment, recreation, education or gaming, has broad appeal that can attract a diverse customer base.



Frangipani

Health & Play Institute: Wild at Heart - Prescribing Play and Nature for Inspired Well-being | Michael Suk



Explore how play, nature, and creativity intersect with evidence-based lifestyle medicine to create healthier individuals and communities. This session examines the role of purposeful play and outdoor exploration as essential components of well-being—fueling curiosity, joy, and resilience.

Dogwood

Playful Failure: A Reflection on "Ready-Go!" a Master's Thesis | Maddy Moreland



This presentation reflects a master's thesis, "Ready-Go!: Exploring Play as a Tool of Accessibility in Secondary Classrooms", and the playful failures and learning moments gleaned from this project, including process, findings, and implications for future research.

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The Houston Adventure Playground Association: A History | John Sutterby & Deepti Kharod



Our research presentation traces the history of a children's adventure play experiment in Houston, Texas from the 1980s to the 1990s. The Houston Adventure Playground Association began as a movement to create an adventure playground and later partnered with the Houston Independent School District.

Oak

Finding Flow Through Laughter: A Playful Exploration of Positive Psychology | Erica Buchholz










Explore how laughter can catapult you into a flow state, where productivity soars, creativity flourishes, and happiness abounds. Discover the science behind this powerful connection and unlock your true potential through the simple act of laughter.

Walnut

Structured Freedom: The Magic of Guided Play in Early Education | Lynne Hall & Janet Ballard



This session will provide research on different types of play and their effectiveness. It will provide participants opportunities to analyze different play scenarios and apply content by designing lesson plans that include guided play opportunities to meet learning objectives.

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|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Frangipani | <p>Health & Play Institute: Artfully Well - Trauma-Informed Leadership and the Healing Power of Play Brooke Buckley</p> <p>This session explores how lifestyle medicine, trauma-informed leadership, and the creative arts converge to foster resilience, community, and well-being. Grounded in “<i>Create, Explore, Inspire!</i>”, participants will examine how play and artistic expression serve not only as catalysts for healing but also as tools for transformative leadership.</p> |  |
| Dogwood | <p>Healthy Balance of Learning and Play in School: Follow the Data Deborah Rhea</p> <p>This session will highlight the diseased school we have today in many parts of the country and how we can transform it into a school of healthy teachers and children who thrive in the school setting again. Unstructured play (recess) is the root and data is the key to shift the school environment from diseased to healthy for teachers and children.</p> <p>& In Their Own Words: Conceptualizing the Transition to First Grade in a Shifting Social Context Andrea Sanchez</p> <p>This study examines how shifts in school curriculum and environment influence young children's agency and perspectives on education. Using narrative inquiry, findings show how social context shapes kindergarteners' views, highlighting their role as active contributors in understanding education.</p> | 
 |
| Oak | <p>Play at Work: Exploring Participatory Design Models for Children's Play Spaces Taylor Metz</p> <p>Involving children in the design process to "create" play environments fosters ownership and belonging. This presentation "explores" a variety of participatory design models used by designers and seeks to "inspire" new ways to improve children's engagement and outcomes in shaping their play spaces.</p> |  |
| Walnut | <p>Multi-Year Play Conference Attendees Share Valuable Play Connections Pat Rumbaugh, Darryl Edwards, Patricia Stine, & Julie Jones</p> <p>Darryl, Julie, Patricia, and Pat the Play Lady have attended and presented several times at the US Play Coalition's annual Play Conference. Each of them will share their valuable play connections by explaining the professional play contacts and personal friendships they made while attending the Play Conference.</p> |  |
| Maple | <p>Playful Interventions for Enjoyable Learning Processes Nandhini Giri</p> <p>This education session introduces four key approaches of enhancing classroom learning experiences through playful interventions. It is motivated by a need for mindfully designing enjoyable and sustainable structures in classroom learning experiences for the desired aesthetic outcome.</p> |  |
| Special Track
(meet in Solarium) | <p>Deconstructive Play Carla Gull</p> <p>In this hands-on session, explore why tearing, ripping, and crumbling can allow for sensory input, build understanding of materials, work on flexible thinking, and promote STEM connections. We'll discuss logistics and tips, associated literature, and have time to participate in deconstructive play!</p> |  |

Frangipani

Library Forum: Words & Wiggles: Using Creative Mvmt as a Vehicle for Early Literacy | Samantha Hyde

Take a Words & Wiggles creative movement class to engage your mind and body in PLAY! The Words & Wiggles class model is a blend of creative movement games, exploration of dance concepts, and early literacy practices.

Dogwood

A New Horizon for Children: Establishing Play and Growth Spaces in East Africa | Chad Kennedy

In East Africa, scarce play spaces limit childhood development. New projects are introducing traditional and inclusive playgrounds, fostering teamwork and problem-solving, while addressing cultural stigmas around disabilities. Despite challenges, local communities are recognizing play as essential.

Oak

The Playful Advocate: Create, Explore, and Inspire Change through Lifelong Play Practices | Sharon Calderon

Discover how play advocates can enhance their impact by reconnecting with personal play practices. This session explores how play fuels creativity, inspires exploration, and sustains well-being-helping build confidence, broaden perspectives, and create lasting change for individuals & communities.

Walnut

"Blessed Be the Tie That Binds": Wool and Fiber Crafts Creating Resilience-Producing Peaceful Play | Meredith Addison

The Indiana Sheep and Wool agricultural organization is the oldest agricultural organization in our Hoosier state, having been founded in 1876. The Indiana Sheep and Wool Association works in cooperation with Purdue and exists to educate communities about the value for food, fiber, and fun.

Maple

Risk-Failure-Mastery, On the Playground | Brittney Cable & Kacy Roeder

Through positive risky play experiences, children develop essential life skills and prepare themselves for a successful future. This session will dive into research surrounding risk, failure, mastery and review a few recent playground designs.

Solarium

Yoga Follow Up! The Power of Yoga and Mindfulness: Best Practices for Engaging Children & Adolescents in Playful Yoga | Sara Garner & Tammy Davis

This session is designed to equip participants with playful, practical techniques and best practices for teaching yoga and mindfulness to children of all ages, from toddlers to adolescents.

Frangipani

Library Forum: Using Mechanical Puzzles in the Univ Classroom & in Outreach | Andrew Rhoda

In this session, Andrew Rhoda, Curator of Puzzles at Indiana University Bloomington's Lilly Library, will discuss how he utilizes the Jerry Slocum Mechanical Puzzle Collection both in university classes and in outreach to the community outside the university. Focusing on how he plans for classes and outreach events, Rhoda's goal is that attendees will take away ideas for including puzzles in their work.

Dogwood

Recess Research: Gathering Information, Telling the Story, Advocating for Change | Heather Von Bank, Catherine Ramstetter & Charlene Woodham Brickman

All children deserve recess, yet it isn't equitable. Advocacy is needed and research is an effective way to advocate and be a catalyst for change. The panel discussion showcases research methods telling the stories of shareholders to foster change & advocate for recess at policy and societal levels.

Oak

Interactive Playgrounds promote active learning through active play | David Flanigan

Educational play makes learning enjoyable, so students don't view it as work. When students want to keep playing games, it shows how effective the right conditions for educational play can be. Success lies in blending content with a playful atmosphere, engaging 21st-century skills and STEM.

Walnut

Let's Explore: How Children Develop Cognition While Engaging in Purposeful Play | Stephanie Adams

This education session will present research on the occupation of play and how cognition is interconnected with play opportunities for young children. Parents and educators have a critical role in helping a child develop foundational skills during structured and unstructured play experiences.

Maple

Playing For Keeps - A Look at the Barron Park Playschool Approach | Kim Adams

Delve into the philosophy and practices of Barron Park Playschool, a beacon of play-responsive learning in California. Building on the shared belief in the power of play, our play approach fosters creativity, innovation, and meaningful inspiration in young children and the adults who serve them.

Solarium

Part I of 2-Part Session!
Applied Improvisation: Communicating, collaborating, and learning through play | Jim Ansaldo

This interactive presentation will engage participants in playing introductory applied improvisation games as well as provide a general introduction to the research base and describe the IIDC's work using applied improvisation in K-12 education, dementia care, and research communication.

Lilly Library **Library Forum Lilly Library Puzzles & Play Tour** | Puzzle Curator Andrew Rhoda



Dogwood **Play as a creative and restorative process: Evidence from neuroscience research** | Andrew Bailey & Ryan Zwart



This presentation will provide evidence of play as a creative and mentally restorative process from a developing line of research. Participants will view and engage in various playful activities, reflect on the process, and compare their experience with a variety of research findings.

Oak **Developing Creative Innovation through Guided Play** | Jennifer Berube



Guided play allows children to explore, experiment, encounter problems, and discover creative solutions in a safe, engaging environment that nurtures divergent thinking and innovation. This presentation will examine educators' roles in facilitating guided play.

Walnut **Integrating Language and STEM Learning Through Dramatic Inquiry Play: An Activity Theory Analysis** | Myung Jin Kim



This study examines how Dramatic Inquiry fosters language and STEM learning in emergent bilinguals. Using Activity Theory, it highlights how collaborative play supports language development and STEM understanding in multilingual settings.

Maple **The Art of Imagination: Making Time for Unstructured Creative Play** | Lindsay Johnson



In today's world, youth need creative outlets more than ever. This talk reveals why unstructured art-making time boosts imagination, well-being, and social bonds. Participants will learn practical tips for creating judgment-free spaces that spark resilience and build community through creative play.

Solarium **Part 2 of 2-Part Session!**
Applied Improvisation: Communicating, collaborating, and learning through play | Jim Ansaldo



This interactive presentation will engage participants in playing introductory applied improvisation games as well as provide a general introduction to the research base and describe the IIDC's work using applied improvisation in K-12 education, dementia care, and research communication.

Frangipani

Library Forum Lightning Library Talks**Beyond Storytime: Imaginative Play in the Library** | Katie Friedericks & Lori

Anne Boone

Learn how our library provides daily child-led, imaginative play experiences as a cornerstone of early literacy. From dynamic spaces to an innovative toy checkout system that does much more than meets the eye, play at our library sparks early learning and builds community!



&

Toy Libraries: getting the "tools" of play into the hands of all ages, all abilities | Sue Kirschner



Toy libraries increase play opportunities and support developmental needs of children; ease economic challenges of families and promote positive socialization of seniors. Successfully launch and maintain a toy library to encourage play that entertains, educates, and enriches everyone!

&

Recipes for Play! Language-rich Play Activities for Babies and Toddlers | Rachel Payne



Learn about two model programs to support language development for children 0-3 years. Mother Goose on the Loose is an award-winning early literacy program focusing on learning through play. At Big Playdates, parents/caregivers learn language-boosting play activities using everyday materials.

Dogwood

Promoting Belonging and Inclusivity in Hospital Programming Through Interdepartmental Collaboration | Kristy Lercher, Amy Palmer & Brooke Ledford



This presentation will outline specific examples and provide strategies for incorporating diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging principles in group play sessions through interdepartmental collaboration while highlighting potential obstacles and suggestions for troubleshooting.

Oak

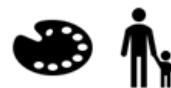
Story, Camera, Imagination: Creative and Collaborative Play Beyond the Screen | Sohheon Yang



Join this interactive session to discover how a green screen inspires creativity and collaboration in children. Based on my teaching experience, we will create a storytelling project and design a play-based learning environment, empowering young children as imaginative storytellers and collaborators.

Walnut

The Schule of Drag: Play My Queen, Play! | Bryant Mehay



In early 2024, a group of community members met at The Center on Colfax in Denver, Colorado to participate in a two-weekend workshop culminating in a Drag performance in front of an audience. In this experiential session, we will discuss and practice Drag as a program tool for inspiring growth.

Frangipani

Library Forum - Playing in Public Libraries: A Model for the Primary Prevention of Child Maltreatment | Tammie Benham & Diane Cucar

Family Engagement in Public Libraries or FEPL is being implemented in small and rural public libraries in southeast Kansas. This cross-disciplinary approach is designed to be a primary prevention model for child maltreatment in children birth to five.

Dogwood

The Pla(y)ce of Possibility: How making space for play makes room for creativity and productivity | Lauren Hanna

This interactive presentation invites participants to look at ways they can incorporate play into their everyday lives as a conduit for innovation, creativity, and productivity. The time has come to reclaim recess one bite at a time!

Oak

Let's talk about play as the antidote for "The Anxious Generation" | Cathy Ramstetter & Charlene Brickman

Whether or not you've read Jonathon Haidt's book, "The Anxious Generation," we hope you'll join us for this book club style talk! We'll provide a briefing on the book, then invite you to share how we, as play advocates, researchers, & playful people can bring more play to our schools and communities.

Walnut

Connecting Children to Nature Through Volunteerism & Play | Kelley Phillips

Engaging youth in volunteering fosters environmental responsibility and a connection to nature. This session gives you easy-to-adapt youth activities and tips to transform any event into a family-friendly one. Walk away inspired to engage the next generation of stewards!

Schedule of Events

Conference Schedule Overview | April 15-17, 2025

Schedule as of April 7, 2025 – be sure to check the conference Goosechase app and lunchtime announcements for schedule changes.

T U E S D A Y	VENUES	Frangipani	Dogwood	Oak	Walnut	Maple	Special Track (meet in Solarium)
	8:30am	Registration desk opens in the East Lounge (near the "Tree Suites"). Posters set-up in Solarium begins (continues through celebration lunch on Thursday). Coffee and Morning Snacks in Tree Suite Commons.					
	10:00-10:45am	Part I of 2-Part Session! Froebel's Gifts I: Building Blocks for Play-based Education from Early Childhood to Graduate Degrees - Maron-Puntarelli	Designing YES Spaces: Embrace the Power of Play in Child-Centered Environments - Ward	Got Game? Professors Who Play! - Roehl, Kirkdorffer & Zingoni-Phielipp	Playful Learning Takes Flight for Kindergarten Students - McKeehan & O'Callahan	Anji Play: A innovative approach from China - Chen	
	11:00-11:45am	Part 2 of 2-Part Session! Froebel's Gifts II: Building Blocks for Play-based Education from Early Childhood to Graduate Degrees - Maron-Puntarelli	Computational Thinking in a Box - Friend	Cringe! Exploring adult discomfort in children's play - Bishop	Reimagining Play, Movement, and Sport as a Tool for Health & Well-Being - Ortega	Playing from Scratch - Hemphill	
	12:00pm-1:30pm	Lunch & "Create, EXPLORE, Inspire" Keynote – Cas Holman, award winning toy designer and founder & principal at Heroes Will Rise					
	1:45pm-2:30pm	Using LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® To Explore Collaboration, Creativity and Problem-Solving - DeSalle	Research Featured Session Watch and Learn: Observing Children's Development in Play - Gold	An Assessment Tool for Play Promotion Practices Implementation in Early Childhood Classrooms - Rendon & Little	Use Your Imagination: Play, Autism, and Sensory Friendly Experiences - Edelstein		
	2:45-3:30pm	Beyond Accessibility: Promoting Participation in Recess for Students with Disabilities - Sullivan	Wild Play: How Forest Schooling Shapes Social Skills... - Crenshaw	Nurturing Play and Creativity as Keys to Lifelong Well-being - McMullen & Ponella	Systems changing the face of play: transforming asphalt to nature - De Melo & Stephens		Redefining Fitness: Transforming Exercise into Enjoyable, Sustainable Movement Through Play - Edwards
	3:30pm-4:00pm	Play Break (Commemorative Garden/Tree Suites Lounge) – practice what you preach...and grab a snack!					
	4:00pm-4:45pm	Reflections on an Infant-Toddler Outdoor Playground Collaborative Project - Wisneski, Lisiecki & Johnson	Failing Forward with Improv - DeSalle	The Power of Adult Play: Discover Your Play Personality to Boost Creativity and Productivity - Saggar & Ward	Exploring creative play for all ages: A comparison of indoor and outdoor play and a call to action - Vigil, Rogers, Heath, Jeffords & West		Playful Connections: Art, Nature, and the Path to Wellness - TestaAvila, Schneider, Milton & Korte
	5:00-5:30pm	Newcomer Social (Solarium)					
	5:00-7:00pm	Break Dinner on Your Own					
	7:00-9:00pm	A Night of Wonder! Evening Social at Wonderlab Science Museum Travel on your own (<1 a mile) or meet at IMU circle drive for bus shuttle (departs 6:45pm)					

VENUES	Frangipani	Dogwood	Oak	Walnut	Maple	Special Track (meet in Solarium)
8:00am	Registration desk open in the East Lounge (near the "Tree Suites"). Coffee and Morning Snacks in Tree Suite Commons.					
9:00-9:45am	What does it do? - Bringing the Power of Open Play Back to Toy Design - Hamilton	Children and Families Talk about Why They Like Nature Playgrounds - Quinn & Understanding the Effects of Free Play on Elementary School Students: A Systematic Review - Nehring, Flaspohler & Spangler Copenbaker	Purposeful Play: Asking Thought-Provoking Questions to Maintain Engagement and Deepen Learning - Markavage & Schaben	A New Horizon for Children: Establishing Play and Growth Spaces in East Africa - Kennedy		
10am-10:45am	All Ages, All Abilities, All the Time - Moore White	The Value of Play and Accessing the 'Inner Child' for Creativity, Inspiration & Design Innov - Davies & Mermaids' Concert Hall: Inspiring Creativity... - Yang	Tots, Teens and the Young at Heart: The role of play in the city for all ages - Zwart, Wershof & Mongiat	The Neuroscience of Active Play: Enhancing Cognitive & Emotional Resilience Across the Lifespan - Edwards		Up the River With a Playful Paddle: Creating Psychological Freedom... - Kimiecik, Kimiecik, Dunn & Storey
10:45-11:15am	Play Break (Commemorative Garden/Tree Suites Lounge)					
11:15am-12:00pm	Part I of 2-Part Session! Breaking Barriers to Creativity thru Loose Parts Explorations Part I: Adult Play & Development - Roussos & Nelson	Playing with Sound - Ponella & Peace Education Practice in Play - Gursel-Bilgin & Castner	Integrating Education Through Play: The Play360 Approach - Racek	GOAL: Empowering kids and families to learn to play as part of a healthy lifestyle - Kilmark, Barnes, Drake, Sherwood-Laughlin & Gloyeske	Legislating Play in Early Childhood Classrooms: How Connecticut Passed a Play Law and What's Next - Oliveira	Rediscover Your Wildhood - Finding Joy, Connection and Healing in Nature - Reader
12:15-1:45pm	Lunch & "Create, EXPLORE, Inspire" Keynote – Rick Erwin, Creative Director & Curator at City Museum in St. Louis					
2:00-2:45pm	Part 2 of 2-Part Session! Breaking Barriers to Creativity thru Loose Parts Exploration Part II: Child-Led Loose Parts Play - Roussos & Nelson	Through a Pedagogy of Play: Teachers' Professional Identity, Self-Efficacy, and Well-Being - Berube & Let's Go Pla(y)ces: Bringing Community into the Classroom through Play - Saggar	Imaginary Adventures: Rediscovering Creativity Through Adult Pretend Play - DePaulis	Beyond the Floor: Rethinking Play in Everyday Life - O'Neill & Hargreaves	The Play Business - Stine & Bishop	
3:00-3:45pm	Health & Play Institute Wild at Heart: Prescribing Play and Nature for Inspired Well-being - Suk	Playful Failure: A Reflection on "Ready-Go!" a Master's Thesis - Moreland & The Houston Adventure Playground Association: A History - Sutterby & Kharod	Finding Flow Through Laughter: A Playful Exploration of Positive Psychology - Bucholz	Structured Freedom: The Magic of Guided Play in Early Education - Hall & Ballard		
4:00-4:45pm	Health & Play Institute Artfully Well: Trauma-Informed Leadership and the Healing Power of Play - Buckley	Healthy Balance of Learning and Play in School: Follow the Data - Rhea In Their Own Words: Conceptualizing the Transition to First Grade in a Shifting Social Context - Sanchez	Play at Work: Exploring Participatory Design Models for Children's Play Spaces - Metz	Multi-Year Play Conference Attendees Share Valuable Play Connections - Rumbaugh, Edwards, Jones	Playful Interventions for Enjoyable Learning Processes - Giri	Deconstructive Play - Gull
5:00pm–7:00pm	Break & Dinner on Your Own & Special Invitation! 6:00pm You're Invited! Conference attendees are invited to “Kurt Vonnegut’s GHQ: The Lost Board Game,” a talk by Geoffrey Engelstein at the Lilly Library. Presented by IU’s Granfalloon Festival. 🍷					
7:00pm–9:00pm	Evening Social Bowling & Billards!					

T H U R S D A Y	VENUES	Frangipani	Dogwood	Oak	Walnut	Maple	Special Track (meet in Solarium)
	8:00am	Registration desk open in the East Lounge (near the "Tree Suites"). Coffee and Morning Snacks in Tree Suite Commons.					
	8-8:30am	Morning Yoga Stretch Session in the Solarium					
	8:45-9:30am	Library Forum: Words & Wiggles: Using Creative Mvmt as a Vehicle for Early Literacy - Hyde	A New Horizon for Children: Establishing Play and Growth Spaces in East Africa - Kennedy	The Playful Advocate: Create, Explore, and Inspire Change through Lifelong Play Practices - Calderon	"Blessed Be The Tie That Binds": Wool and Fiber Crafts Creating Resilience-Producing Peaceful Play - Addison	Risk-Failure-Mastery, On the Playground - Cable & Roeder	Yoga Follow Up! The Power of Yoga and Mindfulness: Best Practices for Engaging Children & Adolescents in Playful Yoga - Garner & Davis
	9:45-10:30am	Library Forum: Using Mechanical Puzzles in the Univ Classroom & in Outreach - Rhoda	Recess Research: Gathering Information, Telling the Story, Advocating for Change - Von Bank, Ramstetter & Woodham Brickman	Interactive Playgrounds promote active learning through active play - Flanigan	Let's Explore: How Children Develop Cognition While Engaging in Purposeful Play - Adams	Playing For Keeps - A Look at the Barron Park Playschool Approach - Adams	Part 1 of 2-Part Session! Applied Improvisation: Communicating, collaborating, and learning through play - Ansaldo
	10:45-11:30am	Lilly Library Tour: Puzzles & Play!	Play as a creative and restorative process: Evidence from neuroscience research - Bailey & Zwart	Developing Creative Innovation through Guided Play - Berube	Integrating Language and STEM Learning Through Dramatic Inquiry Play: An Activity Theory Analysis - Kim	The Art of Imagination: Making Time for Unstructured Creative Play - Johnson	Part 2 of 2-Part Session! Applied Improvisation continued - Ansaldo
	11:45am-12:30pm	Market-PLAY-ce of Ideas (Poster Reception, Marketplace, 360 Photo Booth & Fun!)					
	12:30-1:30pm	INSPIRE Celebration Lunch with Special Honors & more!					
	1:45-2:45pm	Library Lightning Talks! Friedericks, Boone & Sisson; Kirschner; Payne	Promoting Belonging and Inclusivity in Hospital Programming Through Interdepartmental Collaboration - Lercher, Palmer & Ledford	Story, Camera, Imagination: Creative and Collaborative Play Beyond the Screen - Yang	The Schule of Drag: Play My Queen, Play! - Mehay		
	3:00-3:45pm	Library Forum: Playing in Public Libraries: A Model for the Primary Prevention of Child Maltreatment - Benham & Cucar	The Pla(y)ce of Possibility: How making space for play makes room for creativity and productivity - Hanna	Let's talk about play as the antidote for "The Anxious Generation" - Ramstetter & Brickman	Connecting Children to Nature Through Volunteerism & Play - Phillips		

COLOR KEY:

SPECIAL SESSION
RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM SESSION
LIBRARIES, LEARNING & PLAY FORUM
OUTDOOR SESSION

2025 NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON THE VALUE OF PLAY



APRIL 15-17, 2025 | BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA



A partnership to promote the VALUE OF PLAY throughout life