
2024

NATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON THE VALUE OF PLAY

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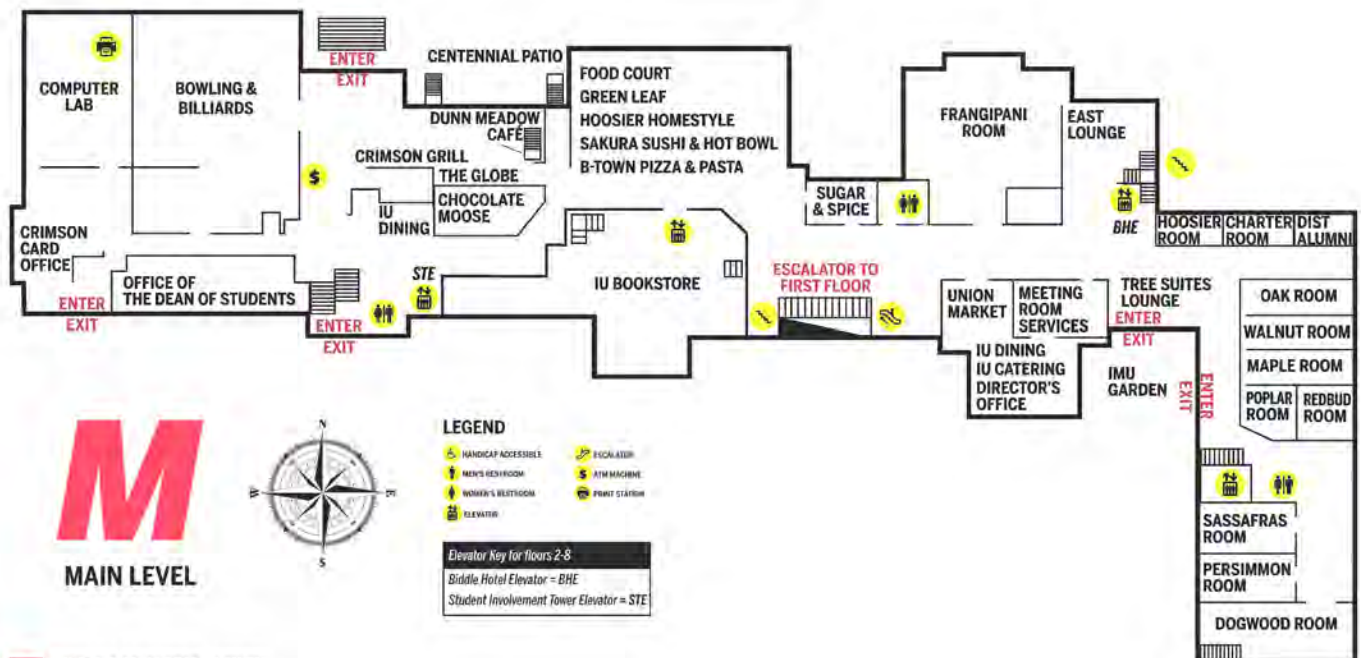
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APRIL 16-18, 2024 | BLOOMINGTON, IN

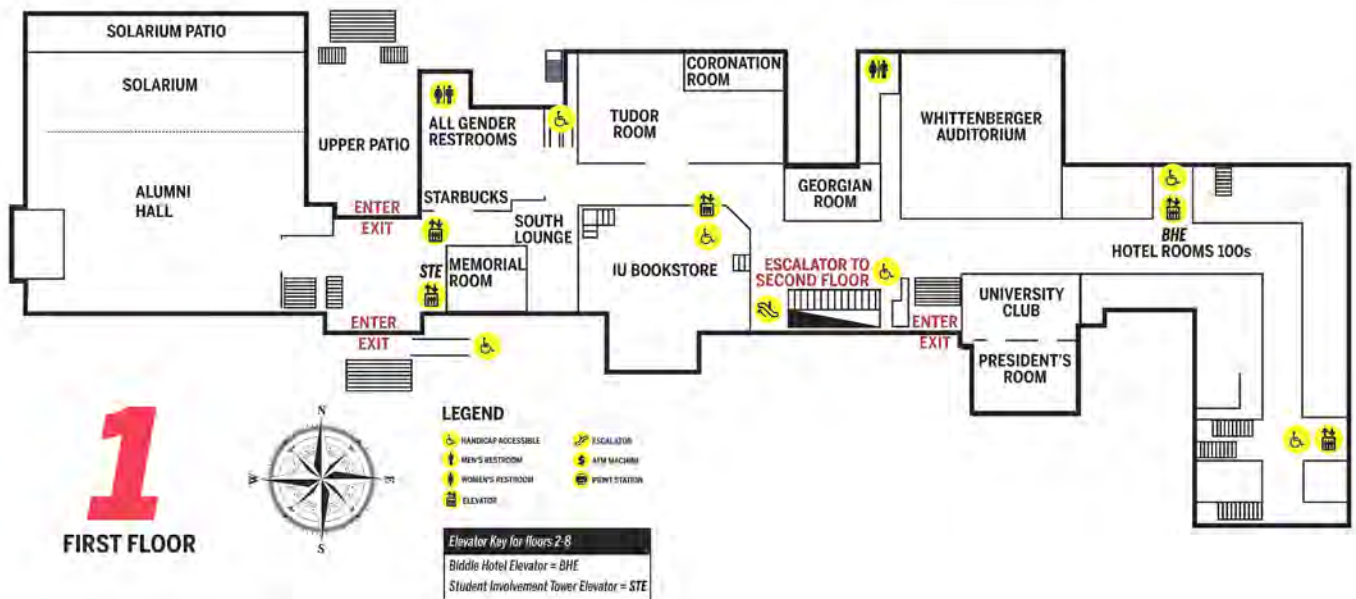
IMU BUILDING MAPS

BUILDING DIRECTORY



INDIANA MEMORIAL UNION
INDIANA UNIVERSITY

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WELCOME FROM THE US PLAY COALITION

Welcome from the US Play Coalition!

As your hosts for the 2024 National Conference on the Value of Play, we are excited to welcome you to OUR NEW HOME IN BLOOMINGTON for the main event!! Whether this is your first or fifteenth USPC event, we are glad you have joined us on our journey to promote the value of play for people of all ages and abilities, anywhere and everywhere.

As we kickoff our first Play Conference at IU, we encourage you to EXPLORE new spaces, ENGAGE with new people, and open your mind to “THE FUTURE OF PLAY.”

The National Play Conference incorporates phenomenal speakers and resources with unique opportunities for learning through play! We are thrilled with the many sessions that will reframe the way we think about play through the sharing of knowledge and experience in the field. With more than 75 sessions from headliners, practitioners and researchers, we are confident you will gain new knowledge and build meaningful connections with your peers. We also invite you to join our closed LinkedIn and Facebook groups for 2024 Play Conference attendees to help you further connect with PLAY colleagues, share resources and engage around the VALUE of play year-round!!!

We continue to advance play with our great sponsors, supporters, advocates and volunteers. Collaboration is the key to our success, and we are excited that PLAY has creatively united so many of our individual efforts to make the world a more PLAY-FULL place!

Thanks to our sponsors, collaborators, planning teams at both Indiana University and Clemson University, the USPC steering committee, dozens of volunteers and everyone who has played a role in making this event a reality.

Of course, our conference would not be possible without YOU. You are the heart and soul of the modern play movement. Thank YOU for being WITH US!!!

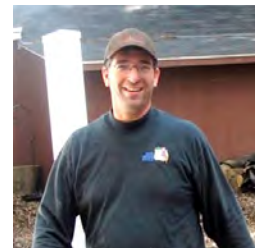
LET'S PLAY!!!



Stephanie Garst
Executive Director



Meghan Talarowski
Co-Chair, Steering Committee



Tony Malkusak
Co-Chair, Steering Committee



INDIANA INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY AND COMMUNITY
**EPPLEY CENTER FOR PARKS
AND PUBLIC LANDS**
Indiana University

Dear Play Conference Attendees,

Welcome! On behalf of Indiana University's Eppley Center for Parks and Public Lands and the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, we are thrilled to have you join us at the US Play Coalition's 2024 National Conference on the Value of Play.

As campus leaders deeply committed to play—whether that be play in parks and public settings, inclusive play, or play across the lifespan—we believe this gathering will offer a unique opportunity to explore the future of play and its transformative potential across education, research, and practice.

This year's conference theme, *The Future of Play*, invites participants to envision innovative approaches and conceptions of play—from e-sports and gaming to health-based applications—we are excited to delve into discussions surrounding emerging technologies, interdisciplinary collaborations, and inclusive practices that will redefine the way we understand and integrate play in daily life.

The National Conference on the Value of Play is more than just a gathering of play proponents; it is a vibrant community of individuals from across the globe, joining together to learn about and promote the value of play throughout life. We are excited for a jam-packed, play-based series of events; and we are especially grateful for the keynote speakers, featured session leaders, and the many wonderful presenters who will be sharing their work with us over the next three days. From the Libraries, Learning & PLAY Forum; to the keynote panels and PLAYtalk; through dozens of educational and research sessions, networking and PLAY opportunities and more, we invite you to soak up the fun, learning, and excitement!

Again, welcome—and thank you for joining us at this first US Play Coalition conference at Indiana University Bloomington.

With thanks and enthusiasm for *The Future of Play*,

Stephen A. Wolter
Director
Eppley Center for Parks & Public Lands
Indiana University Bloomington

Derek Nord, PhD
Director
Indiana Institute on Disability and Community
Indiana University Bloomington



OFFICE OF THE
PROVOST
AND
EXECUTIVE
VICE PRESIDENT

April 16, 2024

Dear conference attendees,

On behalf of Indiana University Bloomington, welcome to campus for the annual Conference on the Value of Play! We are so happy to have you here.

With IU Bloomington as the new home of the U.S. Play Coalition, I am excited for the present and future of our campus's powerful research and education on the importance of play throughout life. And I want to thank you for choosing to join us here for the reliably connective and generative 2024 National Conference on the Value of Play.

As Indiana University endeavors to bring on tomorrow, transforming the future through science, business, medicine, and the arts, it is fitting that this year's conference theme focuses on the future. Play, as you know well, is foundational to how we build knowledge and connection, and it will serve an imperative role as we blaze new trails across disciplines, industries, and our world.

I have no doubt you will find this conference inspiring — with captivating speakers, networking among fellow leaders in the field, and professional development opportunities to help you reach the next level.

Please enjoy your time on campus and throughout Bloomington, and again, I extend my gratitude for all you do in research, education, and facilitation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rahul Shrivastav", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rahul Shrivastav
Provost and Executive Vice President
Indiana University Bloomington

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KEYNOTE PANEL

THE FUTURE OF PLAY: HEALTH

PEOPLE. PLACE. SPACE

Our Health & PLAY team tackles this year's conference theme by exploring advanced digital technology in healthcare to enable play, looking at health implications of the e-athlete, utilizing play as an intervention for healthcare provider burnout and a medium for patient care, incorporating play in hospital design and architecture and more.

MEET OUR EXPERTS



Michael Suk, MD, JD, MPH, MBA (Moderator) is a leading advocate on health and nature, outdoor recreation as a gateway to better health, and play for life champion. Dr. Suk is a board-certified orthopaedic surgeon, Professor and Chair of the Musculoskeletal Institute at Geisinger Health System in Pennsylvania. He also serves on numerous Boards including the American Medical Association, Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Healthcare Associations and SHIFT at the Center for Jackson Hole. Previously he served as Special Assistant to the Secretary of the US Department of the Interior and Senior Advisor on Health and Recreation to the National Park Service



Brooke Buckley, MD, FACS is Chief Medical Officer at Henry Ford Wyandotte Hospital. She is responsible for the leadership of the hospital's physicians. She is a board-certified general surgeon and national expert on physician well-being. Dr. Buckley has dedicated a significant portion of her training and professional life to organized medicine and taking a broader look at medical care delivery, with specific interests in emergency surgical care, health-care delivery to rural communities, and physician wellbeing.



Sandy Goodman, IIDA, CHID, LEED AP, EDAC, LSSBB is a Certified Healthcare Interior Designer with nearly 35 years of healthcare design experience. Sandy is the President of CRGA Design, an architecture and interior design firm that specializes in healthcare design. She is currently serving as President for the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Healthcare Interior Designers (AAHID). Throughout her career, Sandy has focused on designing caring environments from a human-centric perspective. She strives to support the delivery of care through the design of environments that facilitate the flow of efficient processes in a patient-centered environment that will foster positive outcomes. Her passion for designing healthy built environments is supported by her training in evidence-based design, and she continues to engage in opportunities to broaden the body of knowledge and resources available to healthcare interior designers.

KEYNOTE PANEL

THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE OF GAMES, SCREENS, AND PUBLIC PLAY

While we often think of play as activities for children or as not involving screens, streaming, or other forms of technology, a historical view of the video game industry helps us better understand what play has meant to large sectors of adults over time. Additionally, because the demographics for who plays games is always shifting and trending older, what can taking adult forms of public play seriously tell us not only about the past but also about the future of games?

MEET OUR EXPERTS



TreaAndrea Russworm, PhD is the Microsoft Endowed Chair and a Professor in the Interactive Media & Games Division at the University of Southern California. She is also the founder of Radical Play, a games-based public humanities initiative and afterschool program. Russworm is a Series Editor of *Power Play: Games, Politics, Culture* (Duke University Press). A prolific author and editor with research expertise in digital culture, video games, and popular African American media, Dr. Russworm is often interviewed in news and social media platforms. She is a video game Hall of Fame voter, and she is currently writing a new monograph on *The Sims* and a book on race and the politics of play.



Eric Zimmerman is an award-winning game designer who has been inventing play on and off the computer for more than 25 years. He is the Co-Founder and Chief Design Officer of Gamelab, a game development company based in New York City. Eric is a founder of the Institute of Play, a nonprofit that looks at the intersection of games and learning that has opened a public school in New York City based on play as the model for learning. Eric has written and lectured extensively about game design and game culture.



Maura White is the Senior Director at AARP Gaming & Community. She is a creative force behind AARP's original games, *Right Again! Trivia*, *SongTheme* and *Throwback Thursday Crossword* puzzle. She also created the AARP Games Summit in 2023 for video gaming companies, educational institutions, associations, and media, spotlighting AARP Research's findings that the 52.4M gamers in the U.S. ages 50 and over are growing in numbers, increasing their engagement, are powerful economically, but do not feel the industry is designing games with them in mind.



Raiford Guins, PhD is professor of cinema and media studies in The Media School at Indiana University. He edits MIT University Press's "Game Histories" book series with Henry Lowood and serves as a founding principal editor with the *Journal of Visual Culture*. His Areas of Expertise include video game history and preservation, media/materiality and life histories of objects, cultural studies of technology and media history, visual culture and material culture, design culture and design history, history and philosophy of technology.

PLAYTALK SPEAKER



PLAYTALK: PLAY, FUN, & TAXES

**Bob Grennes, Commissioner,
Indiana Department of Revenue**

Who would think taxes could be so much fun? Hear a real-life story of how our team integrated play and fun into our organization's DNA to help fuel the transformation and dramatic improvement of our organization's energy, reputation, employee engagement, and performance.

FEATURED SPEAKERS & SESSIONS



**Supporting a Movement for Play & Healing in Uvalde
Jen De Melo, VP of Organizational Innovation & Strategic Partnerships,
KABOOM!**

In Uvalde, the City joined with KABOOM! and The Archewell Foundation to help unite the community in a positive way after the unthinkable tragedy at Robb Elementary School in May of 2022. The creation of a vibrant playspace created space for healing and honoring the many lives lost.



**Why Active Play Is the Best Form of Self-Care
Darryl Edwards, Founder, Primal Play Method**

Despite appearing frivolous, play is essential for healthy human existence. Not just for kids, but adults too. We will highlight the risks of play deprivation, review the evidence on the benefits of active play, and discuss the importance of incorporating active play to support adult physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.



**Move Think Learn - Using a Games-Centered Approach for Developing
Fundamental Movement Skills with Children From K-6
Ryan Fahey, Programs & Resources, Physical & Health Education Canada**

Come join PHE Canada for this interactive session as we explore new resources and ways to develop Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) using a games-centered approach. Come ready to Move, Think, Learn and Play your way to fresh ideas and games to support physical literacy development with children from K-6.

FEATURED SPEAKERS & SESSIONS CONTINUED



Play in Early Child Settings: Agency, Equity, and Content
Susan Friedman, Senior Dir. of Publishing & Content Development
Jared Totsch, Staff Assessor

National Association for the Education of Young Children

Developmentally Appropriate Practice focuses on the educator's role in creating joyful learning experiences for all children: This session focuses on a few essential approaches educators implement as they create learning environments which foster joyful play and learning for all children.



The Importance of a Balanced Play Diet - Introducing the Play Pyramid
Amanda Gummer, PhD, CEO of FUNdamentally Children & Good Play Guide

The play pyramid is a model of play that uses the analogy of a balanced diet to help communicate the benefits of different types of play, different play partners and different play locations.



Learn to Love to Teach Again™ – with PLAY guiding the way!
Kimberly Johnson, PhD, Author + Lecturer, Youth Development Leadership, Clemson University

When educators implement various components of play into their lesson plans, they shift many of the students in classroom or out of school time settings into more engagement, academic success and focused behaviors. - Components such as creativity, positive reinforcement, and more movement- will be delivered in this interactive session.



Growing Playful Communities: Lessons We Can Learn from Trees
Julie P. Jones, PhD, Associate Professor of Child & Family Studies, Converse University

Unlike science class instruction from our childhoods, current research teaches us the forest is a social network. How are trees like human communities? What can we learn from the ways they live together and communicate that can enhance our understanding of playful communities?



Beyond Play: Elevating Educational Impact through Esports
James O'Hagan, VP of Education Innovation, LeagueSpot

This session explores integrating esports into education, highlighting its potential to enhance learning, inclusivity, and student engagement. This session offers insights into curriculum integration, strategic program implementation, and the pedagogical benefits of esports, providing educators with actionable strategies for leveraging gaming as a transformative educational tool.

FEATURED SPEAKERS & SESSIONS CONTINUED



Learning to Play & Playing to Learn

Peg Oliveira, PhD, Director, Gesell Program in Early Childhood, Yale University

In this workshop we will investigate how to use different types of play, on a scale of child initiated to teacher initiated, in order to achieve different developmental and learning goals. Specifically, we will investigate the importance of free play in the development of young children's executive function skills, and the power of guided play in addressing explicit learning goals. Participants will leave understanding that play grows young brains best and know how to plan different types of play into their classrooms toward different goals.



The Sims and Utopia: Playing for the Future

TreaAndrea Russworm, PhD, Microsoft Endowed Chair

Interactive Media & Games, University of Southern California

Do simulation video games like The Sims (2000-) create worlds and social practices that are utopian for the ways in which they represent a society that is better than the one in which we are living? This talk takes a critical and historical approach to rethinking one of the all-time most popular video game franchises, its diverse player base, and what it can teach us about how people really want to live.



Play is Like Story Building

Linda Smith, PhD, Distinguished Professor, Psychological & Brain Sciences, Indiana University

Theoreticians of human learning (and artificial intelligence) characterize play as optimal for learning. We place sensors on children to capture the fine details of toy selection, actions and exploration. We observe a pattern similar to that of well-structured narratives, that offer insight into how play benefits learning and discovery.



Health Considerations for the e-Athlete

Michael Suk, MD, Professor & Chair, Musculoskeletal Institute Geisinger Health System

This presentation explores crucial health considerations tailored for e-athletes, highlighting the importance of ergonomics, mental well-being, and strategies to mitigate the risks associated with prolonged screen time and sedentary lifestyle. Attendees will gain insights into optimizing their physical and mental health to enhance performance and longevity in the competitive world of Esports.



Making & Breaking Rules - Teaching Design through Play

Eric Zimmerman, Game designer

NYU Arts Professor + co-founder of Gamelab + Institute of Play

This highly interactive session is based on classic playground games like Rock Paper Scissors. By playing, discussing, and modifying these games, we will explore fundamental ideas about what games are and how they provide meaningful experiences. The session draws from decades of teaching design through games and play.

EDUCATIONAL, RESEARCH & POSTER SESSIONS

Educational Sessions are opportunities to share and discover innovative play strategies and applications. These sessions are interactive and aimed at practitioners. Educational Sessions are 45 minutes long including Q&A.

The **Play Research Symposium** is aimed at researchers and academics. It provides opportunities for a scholarly exchange surrounding play. Sessions will include several 8-10 minute presentations grouped by theme with a moderated Q&A to follow.

Poster Presentations will display fthroughout the conference in the Solarium to maximize visibility. The formal Poster Session will precede the closing PLAY Celebration Luncheon on Thursday, where presenters will have the opportunity to speak to conference attendees about their poster display. Posters this year will feature:

Experimental Evidence of Using Digital Gamified Platform for Nature Conservation-Mixed Methods Study – Kuiran Zhang

Infant-Caregiver Behavioral Coordination: The Influence of Dyadic Spatial Arrangement in Object Play – Hiroki Yamamoto, Linda Smith

JUST Playing – Anita Wadley Schlaht

Leadership Development: The Power of Play at Work - Sandra Harrison

Nature is Full of Surprises: Emergent Curriculum Embraces Curiosity and Promotes Joyful Learning – Nea McKeehan, Bryan O'Callahan

Play Activism: Creating Impactful Social Change Through Playful Inspiration – Sharon Calderon

Play-A Fundamental Way to Figure Out the World – Kate Meade, Hazel Seiden

Pocket-Sized Play: Designing Dynamic Schoolyards in Small Footprints – Taylor Metz

Reclaiming playful streets: comparing different street types and uses that encourage inclusivity – Joe Blalock

Temporal Behavior Changes in Response to Infrequent Object-Directed Behaviors – Hiroki Yamamoto, Merna Botros, Aishwarya Pattel, Sanjana Penmathsa, Linda Smith

Trust the Children: When Learners Lead the Way in Sculpting a Nature-Play Based Schoolyard – Taylor Metz

Utilizing The Principles of Universal Design for Play Equity on Playgrounds – Jennifer Rich

LIBRARIES, LEARNING & PLAY FORUM

The US Play Coalition has teamed up with Let's Move in Libraries and LaundryCares Foundation to create the Libraries, Learning & PLAY Forum, featuring 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.



Topics for the Inaugral Libraries, Learning & Play Forum

Play and Learn in Library Summer Programs

Play in Public Libraries - Using Play to Drive Social, Emotional and Learning Results for Kids, Families and People of All Ages

The Playful Library: Inspiring Curiosity and Discovery

Shall We Play a Game? 16 Years of Play in University Libraries

Visit the Lilly Library with Our Guide Andrew Rhoda, Curator of Puzzles

Playful Collaborations: Partnering with Libraries



Elizabeth McChesney (Moderator)

Early Literacy and
Community Partnerships
Director for the
LaundryCares Foundation



James Allen

Statewide School Library
Lead and a Digital Learning
Coach for the Kentucky
Department of Education
in the Office of Education
Technology



Carissa Christner

Youth Services Librarian for
the Madison Public Library
(Madison, WI)



Brodrick Clarke

Vice President of Programs
and Systems Quality for the
National Summer Learning
Association

LIBRARIES, LEARNING & PLAY FORUM CONTINUED



Joanna Fabicon
Senior Librarian of
Children's Services
Department, Los Angeles
Public Library and Lecturer
at the UCLA School of
Education and Information
Studies



Daniel W. Hatcher
Senior Director of Strategic
Partnerships for the
Alliance for a Healthier
Generation



Yolanda Hood
First Year Experience
Librarian and Instruction
Coordinator at University of
Massachusetts Lowell



Chris McEachron
Manager of Visitor
Engagement at the
Kentucky Science Center



Maria Papanastassiou
Youth Services Supervisor
at the Skokie Public Library



Bryan Wunar
President and CEO
of Discovery World in
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS (CEU)

CEUs are available for the 2024 Play Conference (up to 1.5 CEUs). 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.

SPECIAL THANK YOU!

The 2024 National Conference on the Value of Play could NOT have happened without the time and talents of our Conference Planning Team - Stephanie Garst, Kristy Anderson, Layne Elliott, Elizabeth Mascharka and Riley Reese. Thanks, too, to IU Conferences and the Indiana Memorial Union staff.

SESSION THEME DESCRIPTIONS



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.



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



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.



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



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



Multi/Intergenerational & Adults at Play: Promoting play throughout life is our mission. Explore how adults (college-aged to retirees) play and how adults share and benefit from play with children.



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.



Nuts & Bolts: From play basics to play essentials. Share tips, trainings, techniques and tools for PLAY.



Special Performance by
Another Round, Indiana
University's premier all-male
cappella group, at our Play
Celebration Luncheon on
Thursday

SESSIONS BY THEME

* denotes a featured session

° denotes a research symposium

All other sessions are educational sessions.

All sessions have two themes. The sessions in this list are sorted by their primary theme.

Accessible & Inclusive Play



Looking With a Lens: Keeping a Play Cultural Sensitive | Lydia Jagodzinski

Play looks different across different cultures, social economic statuses, and backgrounds. This session will touch on the difference in play for some of these groups as well as give attendees hands on activities that they can do with youth to encourage cross cultural play.



Inclusive Playground Design Research 2.0 | Ingrid Kanics

In this presentation we will share the second round of inclusive playground research done at The Walnut Grove in Canfield, OH. Participants will walk away with an understanding of what parents of children with disabilities identify as the key design elements that make a playground truly inclusive to their children.



° Supporting communities at work and play through MoZAICS | Jennifer Garcia

Through a secondary analysis of the Modeling Zoos and Aquariums as Inclusive Communities of Science (MoZAICS) project, trends of the current strategies to welcome and enhance the experience of individuals with autism is explored to guide practitioners on where inclusive play practices can be implemented on a community level.



Joining the Fun: Providing Playful Experiences for Autistic People Across the Lifespan Ross Edelstein & Nell Krahne

Autistic people, especially adults, are often excluded from play opportunities. However, play has been shown to not just be fun, but beneficial for a full, healthy, and involved life. Come join us to learn more about how play and learning can be made accessible for Autistic people of all ages.

Designing for Play



The Future of Playground Design for Social, Gender, and Cultural Equity | Nathan Schleicher & Janelle Zwart

Explore cultural diversity with case studies on Indigenous play spaces, delve into gender-aware design decisions, and examine racial factors for social justice through playground design. Led by playground concept designers, join an interactive design thinking workshop, addressing challenges and embracing opportunities for a more inclusive future.



Finding Harmony: Nature Play Environments and Manufactured Play Equipment

Claude Stephens, Jenny Gardner, & Bri Marr

How can we bring the universes of manufactured and natural play environments into conversation? We know there are differences in how these environments are created, how children engage with them, the types of play behaviors they support, and other valid considerations. Where is the middle ground and how do we get there?



° Active, thrilling, sensory play: children and parents talk about what attracts them to a public play Suzanne Quinn

This post-occupancy case study of playground use found that adults and children value active, thrilling, sensory play. The study is based on interviews of 124 adults and 57 children during 7 days. Findings are discussed in relation to prior academic research, with implications for the future of outdoor playgrounds.



Sustainable Playgrounds: Empowering Communities with Recycled Materials | Jon Racek

This presentation will explore the development of an innovative approach to designing sustainable, cost-effective playgrounds using recycled tires and local materials. This presentation will highlight how our this process empowers communities worldwide to build, maintain, and repair play areas, fostering play and learning, through accessible and community built solutions.

SESSIONS BY THEME CONTINUED

Education & Play



Gaming and Cognitive Development: Beyond Learning Outcomes | Jyoti Arora & Jagriti Arora

This educational session examines how gaming enhances cognitive skills beyond direct learning outcomes. It explores the development of quick decision-making, multitasking, active engagement, and strategic thinking. These skills are extremely relevant and prepare students for the future we are working towards. We will share more about the ways in which game based learning can be implemented in the classroom.



Free Play Pedagogy and the Young Child's Learner Identity | Heather Bernt-Santy

The LiiNK Project, a 60-minute recess intervention, has been implemented successfully across diverse learning environments to improve whole child development. Unfortunately, state and local school officials are using COVID as a roadblock to nature. This session will focus on how to tackle these continuous roadblocks through health and physical literacy components.



Outsmart the Wiggles | Preston Blackburn

When kids wiggle, act distracted, and can't control their bodies, it is hard for them to learn. More often than not big-body physical play helps kids hone self-regulation and self-control so when it is time to sit in school, at their desk, in circle time, or transition smoothly they can.



Bringing Play Back - One Box at a Time | Lindsay Brauer Dzielski

Learn how the passion of a small, grassroots community group began to change the play opportunities in their City with Pop-Up Playgrounds and Teen Wars.



Play and Academic Rigor - Exploring the Relationship | Joanna Cichocka

In the following presentation, the author uses a combination of her own experience, anecdotal observations, as well as selected research to explore the relationship between play-based curriculum and academically rigorous environment in the early learning classroom.



Learning Through Play: A Model for Implementing Guided Play in Early Elementary Classrooms

Karen DuBois-Garofalo & Jennifer Berube

Using a combination of interactive discussion and hands-on experiences, presenters will share a model for the implementation of guided play in early childhood and elementary school settings and participants will deepen their understanding of their roles as facilitators. Participants will deepen their understanding of their roles as facilitators of play-based learning.



Make + Play = Learn | Joyce Hemphill & Michelle Langmeyer

Make-n-take a variety of playful learning activities using safe household recyclables. To participate you need to bring your focused attention, problem solving strategies, decision making tools, and creativity. All other materials will be provided.



Toward an "Ethos of Play" in Afterschool Programs | Emily Holder

Childhood time has changed. It's gone from unsupervised and outdoors to supervised and indoors. An "ethos of play" could support Afterschool professionals as they reflect on their role and purpose, and update their understanding of what children need in their out-of-school time.



Kinetic Play as PE at IU High School Online | Rebecca Itow, Dawn Daria, & Paul Miller

Can play count for Physical Education? At Indiana University High School Online it can! Join this experiential session to learn how IUHS and Flow Circus are promoting physical, emotional, and social wellbeing in an online asynchronous school. We will share curricular strategies, student responses, and even try some of the exercises.



What Happens When You Connect Multicultural Picture Books and Hands-On STEAM? | Diane Jackson Schnoor

What makes a natural scientist? Wonder, curiosity, a sense of purpose, and PLAY! Young children ask the most amazing questions about how the world works. Play, multicultural picture books, and hands-on STEAM experiences can be powerful vehicles for learning -- inside and outside a classroom.



Making a PEEP! - Activating Green Spaces Through Self Led Education Guides for All Ages | Jordan Joly

Discover how Families in Nature's innovative PEEP (Park Environmental Education Project) program is bringing custom, accessible, play based education to green spaces across the U.S. Join our workshop, earn your Ecologist School badge, and learn how to activate green spaces with engaging lessons for all ages.



Play is the Way to Optimal Wellbeing | Jay Kimiecik & Carlyn Kimiecik

This session shares an approach for developing optimal wellbeing in people of all ages (especially young people) through play-based experiences and creating a playful mindset. Participants will be introduced to four innate wellbeing needs, how play/being playful can influence wellbeing, and experience a game designed to enhance optimal wellbeing.



A Circus Artist, a Comedian, and a Biologist Walk into a Bar: Notes from Play Fully! Podcast | Emily Korte-Stroff

Maintaining a playful mindset throughout life is difficult for many. Through the interviews for the Play Fully! podcast on play, Emily chronicles what playful people have in common as well as her experience as a play practitioner that led to her idea for a play revolution for society.



Leveraging Advocacy Efforts to Support Play-Based Learning | Mindi Leiber

Be a leader in the early childhood education field by employing child outcomes research and data to advocate for play-based learning. Identify approaches and opportunities to inform local, state, and federal government agencies about the educational gains children make when early childhood educators can offer developmentally appropriate instruction.



Froebel's Gifts: Building Blocks for Play-based Education from Early Childhood to Higher Education Cecilia Maron-Puntarelli

This hands-on workshop centers on Froebel's Gifts as a teaching tool helping children of all ages—early childhood to adult—learn through play, exploration, and discovery. The inventor of kindergarten, Froebel created these tools for children's active learning through play. Participants will consider their use in today's classrooms.



Discoverers of Knowledge and Unicorn Bones | Chris McEachron

Explore tips and tricks to turn everyday interactions into open-ended learning from "Science in Play".



Sustainable Playgrounds: Inspiring Young Children's Play with Loose Parts Materials in Turkey Ozge Metin Aslan

This study is the final report of the "Play for the Planet" project that is run by the district governorship, local municipality, and the university, which gives the opportunity for children to play their own from Turkey.



Is Play Enough?: Easing Fears Around Kindergarten Readiness | Katy New

In this session, we will explore the deep connection between play and development. We will link play-based classroom scenarios to the Indiana Early Learning Foundations, discuss authentic approaches to observation and assessments, and ensure that attendees leave feeling confident in their abilities to answer this question: "Is play enough?"



Playful and Hands On: How Multimodality Enhances Learning | Sharon Peck

The intent of this interactive playshop is to explore ways to make learning more inclusive, playful and hands on. After a review of the research on multimodal learning, participants will try out different modes of play and playfulness that can be applied in the classroom. Participants will also be challenged to modify a typical classroom interaction to make it more playful! Come if you'd like to learn playfully!

SESSIONS BY THEME CONTINUED



Mindful Monitoring©: A balancing act allowing risky play while ensuring student safety **Catherine Ramstetter & Charlene Brickman**

Often, recess doesn't live up to its promise due to a lack of training for supervisors. It's a balancing act, to be sure, allowing "risky" play and ensuring student safety. Join us as we discuss the tenets of being mindful—not directive—while monitoring students. In other words, just let them play!



Engaging Kindergarten Writers Through Play Experiences | Andrea Sanchez

This presentation explores how increased and scaffolded literacy materials within play experiences can help to increase student engagement and motivation as well as support children's ability to develop ideas for writing.



Omaha Urban Thinkscapes: Play Happens Everywhere | Debora Wisneski

Around the world, city leaders are recognizing the need for development of community spaces to improve the lives of young children and their families. The Omaha Urban Thinkscapes project is one city's approach to integrating playful learning landscapes or "thinkscapes" through an inclusive and equitable process.



Outdoor Play and Learning in Elementary Schools: A Digital Tool for Success | Megan Zeni

This session will introduce a digital tool developed by Canadian elementary school teachers who locate their curricular learning outdoors. Learn more about 1) the potential of outdoor play and learning in elementary schools to transform children's experience of school 2) how to get started with outdoor play and learning in their school 3) how emergent learning supports outdoor play and learning and 4) how to assess outdoor play and learning for reporting purposes.



Learning through Play - First Book and the LEGO Group's Sustainability Resources to Inspire Children to Create and Share Ideas for Real World Issues | Jenna Grubman, Melissa Elgersma, Stephanie Tanner, Sequoia Munoz

Let's Build the Change! Get hands on, creating a solution to real-world sustainability problems. Take on the role of the child and then learn how the resources created with Title I educator feedback can be implemented in traditional and nontraditional environments. Bring your imagination, creativity, and voice to share your ideas!



° Mindfulness and Me: A Play-Based Practice that Supports the Emotional Well-Being **Tammy Davis & Sara Garner**

Mindfulness play-based practices can create a positive classroom environment by enhancing child and teacher relationships, potentially reducing challenging behavior, and increasing emotional well-being.



° Barriers to Outdoor Play in Education - A UK Study | Amanda Gummer

A widespread study of attitudes to outdoor play within UK education settings was conducted and found that whilst play was prioritised in Early Years, it dropped off dramatically in older classes. This is explored and discussed in terms of behaviour, learning outcomes and wellbeing.



° Building Snow How: Introducing a Playful Learning Method for Promoting Arctic Literacies | Katriina Heljakka

In this study, we present a playful learning method for promoting adults' arctic literacy skills. The method engages participants creatively, involving minds-on, hands-on, and body-on activities in indoor or outdoor environments. Novel methods in educational research are needed to explore, grasp and make a sustainable future.



° Improving recess through collaboration: The RECESS Initiative | William Massey

This presentation will highlight findings of a participatory based recess intervention for a rural elementary school. Findings relative to children's behavior at recess and intervention sustainability will be discussed.



° **The Core of Play: Standards-Based Learning Potential in Schoolyard Design** | Taylor Metz

This research explores the integration of nature and educational standards in schoolyard design by positioning landscape architects as playscape and educational landscape designers. The presentation emphasizes aligning outdoor play features with educational standards to aid school administrators and attract funding. It proposes transforming outdated schoolyards into dynamic learning environments, highlighting the potential for purposeful design to enhance children's conceptual thinking and connection-making, echoing the philosophy that "play is the work of children... play is serious learning."



° **Identifying Educator Perceptions of Play** | Danielle Nehring & Ann Haley MacKenzie

Play is a critical part of development, promoting social skills, spatial awareness, and problem-solving. This research explores current perceptions of play in the classroom, tools used for play, and how educators are currently employing play in their classrooms through a survey.



° **Play Ball, Play Music, and Play the Stock Market** | Debbi Ponella

Play takes on different connotations throughout life. However, basic aspects of play can benefit everyone across professions, demographics, and generations. Play encourages creative exploration that develops characteristics including flexibility, fluency, adaptability, problem finding, and problem solving, that apply throughout life in diverse situations. Panelists represent China, Honduras, Nigeria, Singapore and Turkey.



° **Unearthing Black Girls' Genius Through Play: Fostering Language and Critical Consciousness in ELA** Ed Tyana Velazquez-Smith

Unearthing Black Girls' Genius Through Play: Fostering Language and Critical Consciousness in ELA Education explores how play spaces for Black girls act as sanctuaries for their experiences. These spaces allow them to express, rest, resist, reimagine, and recreate, fostering a nurturing environment for personal and communal growth.



° **Break time for Middle School Youth: It's not Recess** | Heather Von Bank & Hannah Adams

Middle school aged youth in the US are typically overlooked in the research, concerning their need for recess and how play affects their cognitive, physical, and social-emotional development. Results from this study reveal the misunderstood perspectives of young people about recess and highlights mischaracterizations of what youth need at school.

Emerging Trends in Play



° **Using Block Play to Support Young Children's Engineering Thinking** | Zachary Gold & James Elicker

This interactive session will present strategies for identifying and supporting early engineering thinking using blocks and other loose parts play materials. Practitioners will observe PreK-Grade 5 children's engineering skills in video examples and engage in hands-on activities for scaffolding STEM in play.



° **Growing Playful Communities: Lessons We Can Learn from Trees** | Julie Jones

Unlike science class instruction from our childhoods, current research teaches us the forest is a social network. How are trees like human communities? What can we learn from the ways they live together and communicate that can enhance our understanding of playful communities?



° **Screen-based or Screen-less Play in the Future: Findings from IoT and Speculative Toy Fiction** Katriina Heljakka

The presentation offers ideas on screen-based and screen-less play with smart and Internet-connected toys of the present and observations made with speculative toy fiction representing imagined toys of the future. Screen-based or screen-less toys have consequences for player behavior and play patterns, which may become more versatile in the future.

SESSIONS BY THEME CONTINUED

Health, Recreation & Play



Laughter and Play - Using Intentional Laughter for Health and Happy | Erica Buchholz

Laughter Yoga is an ancient, new idea about finding health, happiness, and well-being. Join this engaging seminar on the simple, yet powerful practice that produces profound changes, all through laughing. The science and practice of Laughter encourages constant learning, wonder, and profound journeys of discovery.



Body in Motion: Revitalizing Well-Being Through Adult Play Breaks | Ashley DePaulis

Dive into the transformative experience of 'Body in Motion,' where we'll explore the significance of play breaks in our fast-paced, tech-centric world. Explore how they foster a profound mind-body connection, improving mental, physical, and social-emotional health & learn to integrate play into daily life.



Building Mental Health Resilience Through Play with MESH | Jamie Gallagher

ThinkFun set out to answer the question, "How can we strengthen the skills kids need for their Mental, Emotional, and Social Health (MESH) and build resiliency through play?" Work began through research with resiliency expert Dr. Deborah Gilboa and MESHhelps.org was launched to bring kids' mental health to the forefront.



Prescribing Nature Play as a Healing Way | Jamie Lynn Langley

NaturePlay answers both the call to be wild and the need to be mild across the human lifespan, especially for children. In this workshop presentation examples of how practitioners can prescribe doses of NaturePlay in-between sessions will be given. These prescriptions can also be adapted by educators as well.



Healthy Horseplay: Putting theory into practice with nature-based personalized play for children

Kimberly Vigil, Kelly Rogers, Autumn Jefford, Ryan Heath, & Alex West

This interactive presentation will model for participants how to promote nature-based play within their communities. Participants will leave with solution-oriented strategies to empower them to provide equitable opportunities for diverse children to engage with nature, in green spaces, using open-ended materials, where children direct the play.



° Pool-based Play: Where Conditional Safety Rules & Water Playscapes Meet

Kristina Anderson & William Ramos

Pools are beloved play spaces and also sites of potential tragedy. Among young children, drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death. This exploratory study analyzed 1,537 US government reports and demonstrates two understudied characteristics that contribute to drowning incidents: the "conditional play hazard rule" and "hazardous playscape" phenomena.

International/Global Play



International Perspectives on the Role of Play | Debbi Ponella with International Graduate Students

The value attributed to play varies across the globe. A panel of international graduate students will discuss the role of play during their formative years in diverse cultures, providing an opportunity to compare similarities and differences. Personal experiences with play will be connected to current relationships to play.



° The Playground I Imagine | H. Billur Cakirer

This presentation demonstrates the process and outcomes of a three-phase workshop on playgrounds, conducted with 8–12-year-old children coming from low-income families living in Istanbul, Turkey. These workshops aimed at children to get to know and analyze the playgrounds; to construct their dream playgrounds, and to develop awareness about inclusive playgrounds.



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The researchers applied Froebel's Principle of Play as a lens in childcare settings for one-year-olds in their own countries – England, United States, New Zealand, and Hong Kong. Using a discursive, ethnographic, multilayered approach, findings show Froebel's views on play differently, but significantly shaped the nature of early childhood education internationally.

Multi/Intergenerational & Adults at Play



° **Exploring Opportunities for Multigenerational Play on Nature Trails** | **Son Truong**

This presentation focuses on an evaluation study and community consultations to examine adults' and young peoples' experiences on a local nature trail. The findings provide insight into how a locally driven painted rocks initiative led to new opportunities for connecting with nature and multigenerational play on the trail.

Nature Based & Outdoor Play



Reimagining Schoolyards as Oases of Nature, Health, and Learning | **Jen De Melo**

How can leaders support playspace equity while also connecting children to nature? Leveraging creative partnerships and a data-informed approach, KABOOM! is working with a family of partners to improve the school experience for a generation of students in Oakland, California, in part by transforming more than 25 OUSD elementary schoolyards into joyful, green spaces that inspire kids' active play.



Mindful Recess with The Walking Classroom | **Daniel Hatcher**

Join the Alliance for a Healthier Generation for an energizing mindfulness walk to boost your day. Participants will have the opportunity to listen to The Walking Classroom podcast and play Nature BINGO while connecting with other conference attendees. A few lucky participants will win a WalkKit (\$125 value), and all attendees will receive an electronic version of a Walking Classroom Teacher's Guide PLUS Healthier Generation swag.



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Cecilia Maron-Puntarelli, Chris Barth, & Sam Sondergerath

Guided by the words of Rachel Carson, we take a comparative look at teaching and learning practices at forest schools in Germany and in Southern Indiana. Taking a virtual walk in the woods, we highlight nature (outdoor education) and nurture (social relationships) as play-based learning tools for early childhood students.



The Need for Nature: How Outdoor Programming Can Help Build Connection & Better Mental Health

Sarah Reader | Research shows that spending regular time in nature helps build kindness and compassion, improves social relationships, and builds resilience. This active session will dive into the importance and impact of outdoor play and give teachers and recreation professionals hands-on knowledge about how to incorporate nature into their classrooms and programs.



° **Nature-based Early Childhood Educators' Perspectives on Embracing Fire as a Loose Part** | **Carla Gull**

Recess as an unstructured break benefits the whole child and policies have been established in many states and districts to protect children's access to recess. Yet, recess deprivation still occurs. The Theory of Planned Behavior was used to assess the beliefs and perceptions of site-based decision-makers in this area.

SESSIONS BY THEME CONTINUED

Nuts & Bolts



From Ideas to Reality: How to Start a Play Program at Your Elementary School | Ann Brandt

You believe in the power of play...what comes next? This session will discuss how to turn your ideas for a play initiative into reality. This session will discuss how to get buy-in from the stakeholders at your school and make your play vision come to life.



7 Don't Skips! Applying Principles of Youth Development and Engaging Experiences to Organized Play! Courtney Foster & Alexandra Skrocki

Want to create play experiences that are both fun and impactful? This session features 7 key strategies based on youth development principles and the theory of structured experience. Practitioners will learn ideas to implement within their organized play spaces in order to create high quality experiences for youth.



Embracing Fire as a Loose Parts: Safely Exploring Fire Play with Children | Carla Gull

Explore the potential of fire as a loose part, as well as needed safety parameters needed for fire play. In this practical, exploratory session, lean into fire as part of risky play, skill building, and safety awareness!



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Play and Academic Rigor - Exploring the Relationship | Joanna Cichocka

In the following presentation, the author uses a combination of her own experience, anecdotal observations, as well as selected research to explore the relationship between play-based curriculum and academically rigorous environment in the early learning classroom.



° Mindfulness and Me: A Play-Based Practice that Supports the Emotional Well-Being Tammy Davis & Sara Garner

Mindfulness play-based practices can create a positive classroom environment by enhancing child and teacher relationships, potentially reducing challenging behavior, and increasing emotional well-being.



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Dive into the transformative experience of 'Body in Motion,' where we'll explore the significance of play breaks in our fast-paced, tech-centric world. Explore how they foster a profound mind-body connection, improving mental, physical, and social-emotional health. Acquire practical strategies for integrating play into daily life, enhancing well-being and resilience.



Learning Through Play: A Model for Implementing Guided Play in Early Elementary Classrooms Karen DuBois-Garofalo & Jennifer Berube

Using a combination of interactive discussion and hands-on experiences, presenters will share a model for the implementation of guided play in early childhood and elementary school settings and participants will deepen their understanding of their roles as facilitators. Participants will deepen their understanding of their roles as facilitators of play-based learning.

SESSIONS BY THEME CONTINUED



Joining the Fun: Providing Playful Experiences for Autistic People Across the Lifespan **Ross Edelstein & Nell Krahne**

Autistic people, especially adults, are often excluded from play opportunities. However, play has been shown to not just be fun, but beneficial for a full, healthy, and involved life. Come join us to learn more about how play and learning can be made accessible for Autistic people of all ages.



Building Mental Health Resilience Through Play with MESH | Jamie Gallagher

ThinkFun set out to answer the question, “How can we strengthen the skills kids need for their Mental, Emotional, and Social Health (MESH) and build resiliency through play?” Work began through research with resiliency expert Dr. Deborah Gilboa and MESHhelps.org was launched to bring kids’ mental health to the forefront.

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Pools are beloved play spaces and also sites of potential tragedy. Among young children, drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death. This exploratory study analyzed 1,537 US government reports and demonstrates two understudied characteristics that contribute to drowning incidents: the “conditional play hazard rule” and “hazardous playscape” phenomena.



Gaming and Cognitive Development: Beyond Learning Outcomes | Jyoti Arora & Jagriti Arora

This educational session examines how gaming enhances cognitive skills beyond direct learning outcomes. It explores the development of quick decision-making, multitasking, active engagement, and strategic thinking. These skills are extremely relevant and prepare students for the future we are working towards. We will share more about the ways in which game based learning can be implemented in the classroom.



Free Play Pedagogy and the Young Child’s Learner Identity | Heather Bernt-Santy

The LiiNK Project, a 60-minute recess intervention, has been implemented successfully across diverse learning environments to improve whole child development. Unfortunately, state and local school officials are using COVID as a roadblock to nature. This session will focus on how to tackle these continuous roadblocks through health and physical literacy components.



Outsmart the Wiggles | Preston Blackburn

When kids wiggle, act distracted, and can’t control their bodies, it is hard for them to learn. More often than not big-body physical play helps kids hone self-regulation and self-control so when it is time to sit in school, at their desk, in circle time, or transition smoothly they can.



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Bringing Play Back - One Box at a Time | Lindsay Brauer Dzielski

Learn how the passion of a small, grassroots community group began to change the play opportunities in their City with Pop-Up Playgrounds and Teen Wars.

SESSIONS BY SPEAKER'S NAME CONTINUED



Laughter and Play - Using Intentional Laughter for Health and Happy | Erica Buchholz

Laughter Yoga is an ancient, new idea about finding health, happiness, and well-being. Join this engaging seminar on the simple, yet powerful practice that produces profound changes, all through laughing. The science and practice of Laughter encourages constant learning, wonder, and profound journeys of discovery.



Engaging Kindergarten Writers Through Play Experiences | Joyce Hemphill

This presentation explores how increased and scaffolded literacy materials within play experiences can help to increase student engagement and motivation as well as support children's ability to develop ideas for writing.



° Supporting communities at work and play through MoZAICS | Jennifer Garcia

Through a secondary analysis of the Modeling Zoos and Aquariums as Inclusive Communities of Science (MoZAICS) project, trends of the current strategies to welcome and enhance the experience of individuals with autism is explored to guide practitioners on where inclusive play practices can be implemented on a community level.



Using Block Play to Support Young Children's Engineering Thinking | Zachary Gold & James Elicker

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Make + Play = Learn | Joyce Hemphill & Michelle Langmeyer

Make-n-take a variety of playful learning activities using safe household recyclables. To participate you need to bring your focused attention, problem solving strategies, decision making tools, and creativity. All other materials will be provided.



Toward an “Ethos of Play” in Afterschool Programs | Emily Holder

Childhood time has changed. It's gone from unsupervised and outdoors to supervised and indoors. An “ethos of play” could support Afterschool professionals as they reflect on their role and purpose, and update their understanding of what children need in their out-of-school time.



Kinetic Play as PE at IU High School Online | Rebecca Itow, Dawn Daria, & Paul Miller

Can play count for Physical Education? At Indiana University High School Online it can! Join this experiential session to learn how IUHS and Flow Circus are promoting physical, emotional, and social wellbeing in an online asynchronous school. We will share curricular strategies, student responses, and even try some of the exercises.



What Happens When You Connect Multicultural Picture Books and Hands-On STEAM? | Diane Jackson Schnoor

What makes a natural scientist? Wonder, curiosity, a sense of purpose, and PLAY! Young children ask the most amazing questions about how the world works. Play, multicultural picture books, and hands-on STEAM experiences can be powerful vehicles for learning -- inside and outside a classroom.



Looking With a Lens: Keeping a Play Cultural Sensitive | Lydia Jagodzinski

Play looks different across different cultures, social economic statuses, and backgrounds. This session will touch on the difference in play for some of these groups as well as give attendees hands on activities that they can do with youth to encourage cross cultural play.



Making a PEEP! - Activating Green Spaces Through Self Led Education Guides for All Ages | Jordan Joly

Discover how Families in Nature's innovative PEEP (Park Environmental Education Project) program is bringing custom, accessible, play based education to green spaces across the U.S. Join our workshop, earn your Ecologist School badge, and learn how to activate green spaces with engaging lessons for all ages.



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SESSIONS BY SPEAKER'S NAME CONTINUED



Inclusive Playground Design Research 2.0 | Ingrid Kanics

In this presentation we will share the second round of inclusive playground research done at The Walnut Grove in Canfield, OH. Participants will walk away with an understanding of what parents of children with disabilities identify as the key design elements that make a playground truly inclusive to their children.



Play is the Way to Optimal Wellbeing | Jay Kimiecik & Carlyn Kimiecik

This session shares an approach for developing optimal wellbeing in people of all ages (especially young people) through play-based experiences and creating a playful mindset. Participants will be introduced to four innate wellbeing needs, how play/being playful can influence wellbeing, and experience a game designed to enhance optimal wellbeing.



A Circus Artist, a Comedian, and a Biologist Walk into a Bar: Notes from Play Fully! Podcast Emily Korte-Stroff

Maintaining a playful mindset throughout life is difficult for many. Through the interviews for the Play Fully! podcast on play, Emily chronicles what playful people have in common as well as her experience as a play practitioner that led to her idea for a play revolution for society.



Prescribing Nature Play as a Healing Way | Jamie Lynn Langley

NaturePlay answers both the call to be wild and the need to be mild across the human lifespan, especially for children. In this workshop presentation examples of how practitioners can prescribe doses of NaturePlay in-between sessions will be given. These prescriptions can also be adapted by educators as well.



Leveraging Advocacy Efforts to Support Play-Based Learning | Mindi Leiber

Be a leader in the early childhood education field by employing child outcomes research and data to advocate for play-based learning. Identify approaches and opportunities to inform local, state, and federal government agencies about the educational gains children make when early childhood educators can offer developmentally appropriate instruction.



Froebel's Gifts: Building Blocks for Play-based Education from Early Childhood to Higher Education Cecilia Maron-Puntarelli

This hands-on workshop centers on Froebel's Gifts as a teaching tool helping children of all ages—early childhood to adult—learn through play, exploration, and discovery. The inventor of kindergarten, Froebel created these tools for children's active learning through play. Participants will consider their use in today's classrooms.



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In this study, I examine preschoolers' meaning making of their social interactions with memory care residents at a same-site intergenerational facility. Children identified 'play' as the activity they engage in with their elder 'friends.' Play connects the youngest and oldest generations, providing opportunities to build empathy, understanding, and social reciprocity.



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° 2023 RESEARCH GRANT WINNER Improving recess through collaboration: The RECESS Initiative William Massey

This presentation will highlight findings of a participatory based recess intervention for a rural elementary school. Findings relative to children's behavior at recess and intervention sustainability will be discussed.



Discoverers of Knowledge and Unicorn Bones | Chris McEachron

Explore tips and tricks to turn everyday interactions into open-ended learning from “Science in Play”.



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SESSIONS BY SPEAKER'S NAME CONTINUED



° **Active, thrilling, sensory play: children and parents talk about what attracts them to a public play** | Suzanne Quinn

This post-occupancy case study of playground use found that adults and children value active, thrilling, sensory play. The study is based on interviews of 124 adults and 57 children during 7 days. Findings are discussed in relation to prior academic research, with implications for the future of outdoor playgrounds.



Sustainable Playgrounds: Empowering Communities with Recycled Materials | Jon Racek

This presentation will explore the development of an innovative approach to designing sustainable, cost-effective playgrounds using recycled tires and local materials. This presentation will highlight how our this process empowers communities worldwide to build, maintain, and repair play areas, fostering play and learning, through accessible and community built solutions.



Mindful Monitoring©: A balancing act allowing risky play while ensuring student safety

Catherine Ramstetter & Charlene Brickman

Often, recess doesn't live up to its promise due to a lack of training for supervisors. It's a balancing act, to be sure, allowing "risky" play and ensuring student safety. Join us as we discuss the tenets of being mindful—not directive—while monitoring students. In other words, just let them play!



The Need for Nature: How Outdoor Programming Can Help Build Connection & Better Mental Health

Sarah Reader

Research shows that spending regular time in nature helps build kindness and compassion, improves social relationships, and builds resilience. This active session will dive into the importance and impact of outdoor play and give teachers and recreation professionals hands-on knowledge about how to incorporate nature into their classrooms and programs.



Engaging Kindergarten Writers Through Play Experiences | Andrea Sanchez

This presentation explores how increased and scaffolded literacy materials within play experiences can help to increase student engagement and motivation as well as support children's' ability to develop ideas for writing.



The Future of Playground Design for Social, Gender, and Cultural Equity | Nathan Schleicher & Janelle Zwart

Explore cultural diversity with case studies on Indigenous play spaces, delve into gender-aware design decisions, and examine racial factors for social justice through playground design. Led by playground concept designers, join an interactive design thinking workshop, addressing challenges and embracing opportunities for a more inclusive future.



Finding Harmony: Nature Play Environments and Manufactured Play Equipment

Claude Stephens, Jenny Gardner, & Bri Marr

How can we bring the universes of manufactured and natural play environments into conversation? We know there are differences in how these environments are created, how children engage with them, the types of play behaviors they support, and other valid considerations. Where is the middle ground and how do we get there?



° **Exploring Opportunities for Multigenerational Play on Nature Trails** | Son Truong

This presentation focuses on an evaluation study and community consultations to examine adults' and young peoples' experiences on a local nature trail. The findings provide insight into how a locally driven painted rocks initiative led to new opportunities for connecting with nature and multigenerational play on the trail.

° **Unearthing Black Girls' Genius Through Play: Fostering Language and Critical Consciousness in ELA** Ed Tyana Velazquez-Smith

Unearthing Black Girls' Genius Through Play: Fostering Language and Critical Consciousness in ELA Education explores how play spaces for Black girls act as sanctuaries for their experiences. These spaces allow them to express, rest, resist, reimagine, and recreate, fostering a nurturing environment for personal and communal growth.



Healthy Horseplay: Putting theory into practice with nature-based personalized play for children
Kimberly Vigil, Kelly Rogers, Autumn Jefford, Ryan Heath, & Alex West

This interactive presentation will model for participants how to promote nature-based play within their communities. Through discussion and brainstorming, participants will leave with solution-oriented strategies to empower them to provide equitable opportunities for diverse children to engage with nature, in green spaces, using open-ended materials, where children direct the play.



° Break time for Middle School Youth: It's not Recess | Heather Von Bank & Hannah Adams

Middle school aged youth in the US are typically overlooked in the research, concerning their need for recess and how play affects their cognitive, physical, and social-emotional development. Results from this study reveal the misunderstood perspectives of young people about recess and highlights mischaracterizations of what youth need at school.



Omaha Urban Thinkscapes: Play Happens Everywhere | Debora Wisneski

Around the world, city leaders are recognizing the need for development of community spaces to improve the lives of young children and their families. The Omaha Urban Thinkscapes project is one city's approach to integrating playful learning landscapes or "thinkscapes" through an inclusive and equitable process.



Outdoor Play and Learning in Elementary Schools: A Digital Tool for Success | Megan Zeni

This session will introduce a digital tool developed by Canadian elementary school teachers who locate their curricular learning outdoors. Learn more about 1) the potential of outdoor play and learning in elementary schools to transform children's experience of school 2) how to get started with outdoor play and learning in their school 3) how emergent learning supports outdoor play and learning and 4) how to assess outdoor play and learning for reporting purposes.



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