



PLAY SYMPOSIUM

2016 "DIGGING DEEPER"

SEPT. 30 - OCT. 1

A gathering of play enthusiasts and change-makers featuring two days of sharing, discussion, and play while learning from local initiatives and play leaders from across the US and abroad. Featuring presentations, play observation, and panel discussion, the ICG Play Symposium is highly relevant for educators, parents, play professions, parks and recreation staff, and anyone passionate about children, education, the great outdoors, and play.

Join us in cultivating a culture of play.



Home to the Hands-On-Nature Anarchy Zone, one of the few adventure playgrounds in the U.S., Ithaca Children's Garden makes play a priority in both space and programming. Dedicated to inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards, ICG fosters relationships between children and the natural world by providing time, space, and permission for child-led, free play.

Ithaca Children's Garden * 607.319.4203 * www.ithacachildrengarden.org *
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Program Schedule

Friday September 30

- 8:30am** Registration/Check in begins **at Ithaca Children's Garden**
- 9:10am** Welcome & Introductions
- 9:30am** Play Observation in the Hands-On-Nature Anarchy Zone
Tour of Ithaca Children's Garden
Small Group Discussions
- 11:30am** Travel back to **TheSpace @ GreenStar, 700 W. Buffalo St. (walkable from the Garden)**
- 12:00pm** Lunch
- 12:30pm** Keynote Speaker Fraser Brown:
"Stories of Children Playing: what do they tell us about the significance of play and playwork?"
- 1:30pm** Stretch and Play mini-break
- 1:45pm** "Celebrating a Revival of Play," Joan Almon, Alliance for Childhood
- 2:30pm** Stretch and Play mini-break
- 2:45pm** Snapshots: What's Been Happening in Play?
1. Adventure Play: a childlife restoration in dense urban environments,
Brenda Simon, Earth Day Canada
 2. KOOP's Adventures in Play
Naomi Sukenik & Kelsey Langley, KOOP (Kid Owned and Operated Play)
 3. Adventure Update - Bainbridge Island
Kevin Mills, Play Czar, Inc.
 4. 210 Hancock Project: Kids Planning for Play
Beth Myers, Just Consulting, LLC
 5. How Children Use Play Constructively in a Changing World
Ray Wills,
 6. A Renewal of the Value of Play in 21st Century America
Joel Agate, SUNY Brockport
- 5:00pm** Closing Remarks
- 7:30pm** Film Screening at **Lehman Alternative Community School (111 Chestnut St. Ithaca)**
- The Land (2015)** A short documentary film about the nature of play, risk and hazard set in The Land, a Welsh "adventure" playground. At The Land children climb trees, light fires and use hammers and nails in a play-space rooted in the belief that kids are empowered when they learn to manage risk on their own.
- Nature Play (2016)** Filmed in Denmark, Norway and Sweden and the US, NATUREPLAY portrays the Scandinavian method of teaching, living and enjoying nature that is juxtaposed with the high stakes/high stress American testing culture. In the USA rampant testing has become a virus, a disease not in alignment with how children naturally learn. NaturePlay film finds a way to TAKE CHILDHOOD BACK in Nordic "Udeskole" concepts in outdoor learning and playing in nature. Featuring the different ways Udeskole is practiced in Scandinavia through forest kindergartens, adventure playgrounds, teaching outdoors, increased recess, afterschool clubs, and nature based play areas the film investigates the Nordic research and cultural "Friluftsliv", Free Air Life, attitudes behind it all.

Program Schedule

Saturday October 1

- 8:00am** Registration/Check in: **Lehman Alternative Community School (111 Chestnut St. Ithaca)**
- 8:30am** Welcome & Introductions
- 8:45am** Keynote Speaker Tom "Teacher Tom" Hobson: "Educating Citizens"
- 9:30am** Stretch and Play mini-break

	Meeting Room A	Meeting Room B
9:45am	Play is Power: Play Based Preschool in a Climate of Educational Emergency Courtney Gardner & Ben Dalbey, Community Play School	The Land: One Year Out Erin Davis, Director, The Land
10:35am	Reconceptualizing Recess at a Lower School Jyoti Gopal, Riverdale Country School	"It's Gonna Hurt:" Roughhousing and Risk in Play (a video documentation) Jim McCullough, Bon Air Presbyterian Preschool
11:25am	Adult Perspectives on Play in Schools Kristin Shepherd, Recess Revolution	Play as a Pan-Cultural Construct - Reflections of an Editor Michael Patte, Bloomsburg, University

12:15pm: Lunch

1:15pm	Children without Play, Children without Hope Fraser Brown, Professor of Playwork Leeds Beckett University	Children's Imagination and "Terrains Vagues:" a look at how kids reappropriate unoccupied public land as space for play Megan Cohoe-Kenney, The Lion & The Mouse
2:05pm	Recess and After-School: Bringing Loose Parts into the School Day Morgan Leichter-Saxby, Pop-Up Adventure Play	Seasons of Play Rusty Keeler, Earthplay
2:55pm	Exploring the Link Between Art and Play Ann Reichlin, Creative Mess	Regulatory Policy and the Production of Spaces for Play: Confronting Adult-Oriented Limitations Reilly Bergin Wilson, The Graduate Center, City University of New York/ play:ground NYC
3:15pm		

3:40pm: Stretch and Play mini-break

4:00pm: Panel Discussion: The Play Must Go On: Sustainability in the Play Movement

Moderator: Beth Bannister, Panelists: Joan Almon, Fraser Brown, Rusty Keeler, and Morgan Leichter-Saxby

5:30pm: Closing Remarks & Safe Travels Home

Keynote Speakers

Fraser Brown



Fraser Brown is Professor of Playwork at Leeds Beckett University and a Core Member of the Institute for Health and Wellbeing. His key interests include Playwork and children's wellbeing.

For ten years Brown was Director of the playwork training agency Children First, and has previously held advisory posts with Playboard and the National Playing Fields Association. He has also worked as a playworker on an adventure playground in Runcorn, managed projects for the North West Play Association, and served as District Leisure Officer in Middlesbrough.

Brown has spoken throughout the UK and around the world about his research on the effects of therapeutic playwork on children in Romania. He is Chair and Co-Founder of the Aid for Romanian Children charitable trust, and a member of the International Advisory Board of the Romanian Association of Play Therapy and Drama Therapy.

Tom "Teacher Tom" Hobson is a preschool teacher, writer, speaker, artist, and author. He is best known for his namesake blog "Teacher Tom's Blog" where he has posted daily for over 4 years, chronicling the life and times of his little preschool in the rain soaked Pacific Northwest corner of the US. For the past 15 years Teacher Tom has been the sole employee of the Woodland Park Cooperative School, a collection of 4 separate parent-owned and operated schools housed under a single roof, knit together by Teacher Tom's democratic, progressive play-based pedagogy. The children come to the school as 2-year-olds in diapers and leave as "sophisticated" 6-year-olds ready for the larger world.

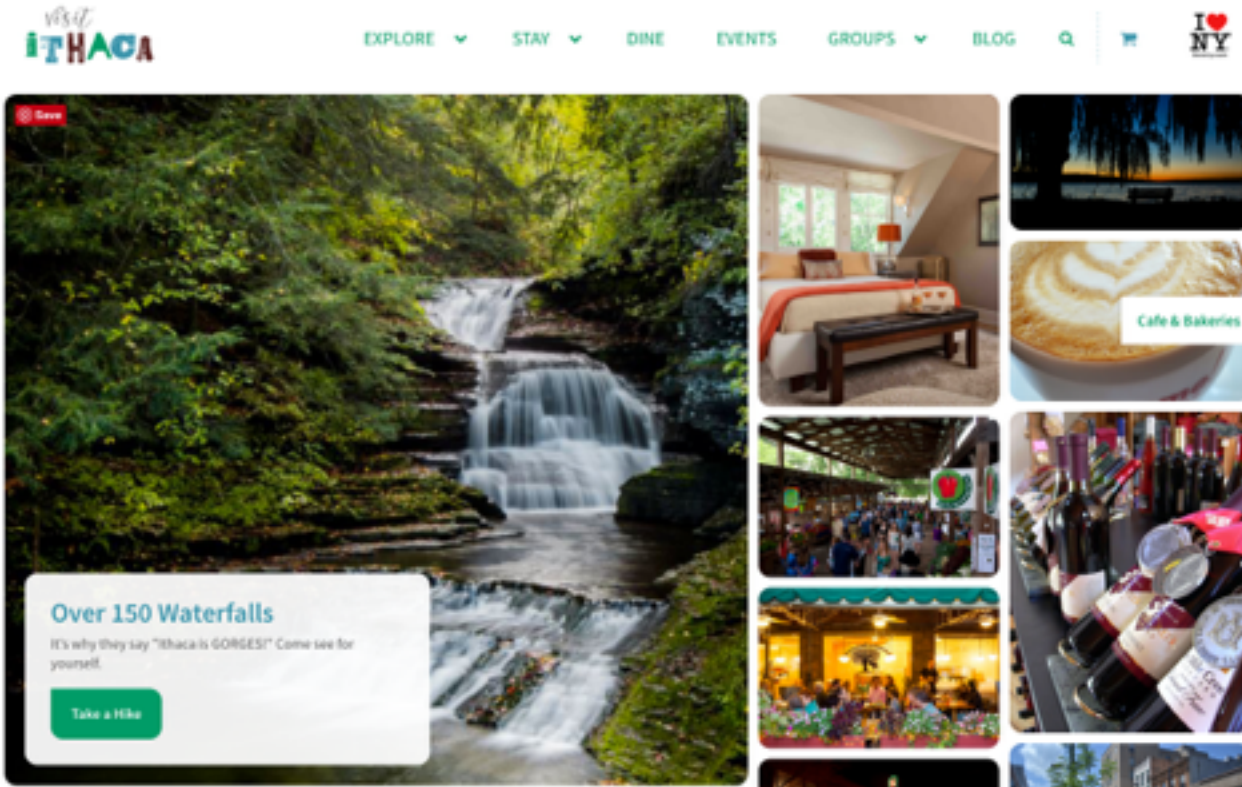
Teacher Tom came into teaching, where he began working daily in his daughter's classroom as an assistant teacher. He'll be the first to tell you that most of what he learned came from the children themselves. When it was time for his daughter to move on, he "stayed behind," where he plans to remain for the rest of his life.

Tom "Teacher Tom" Hobson

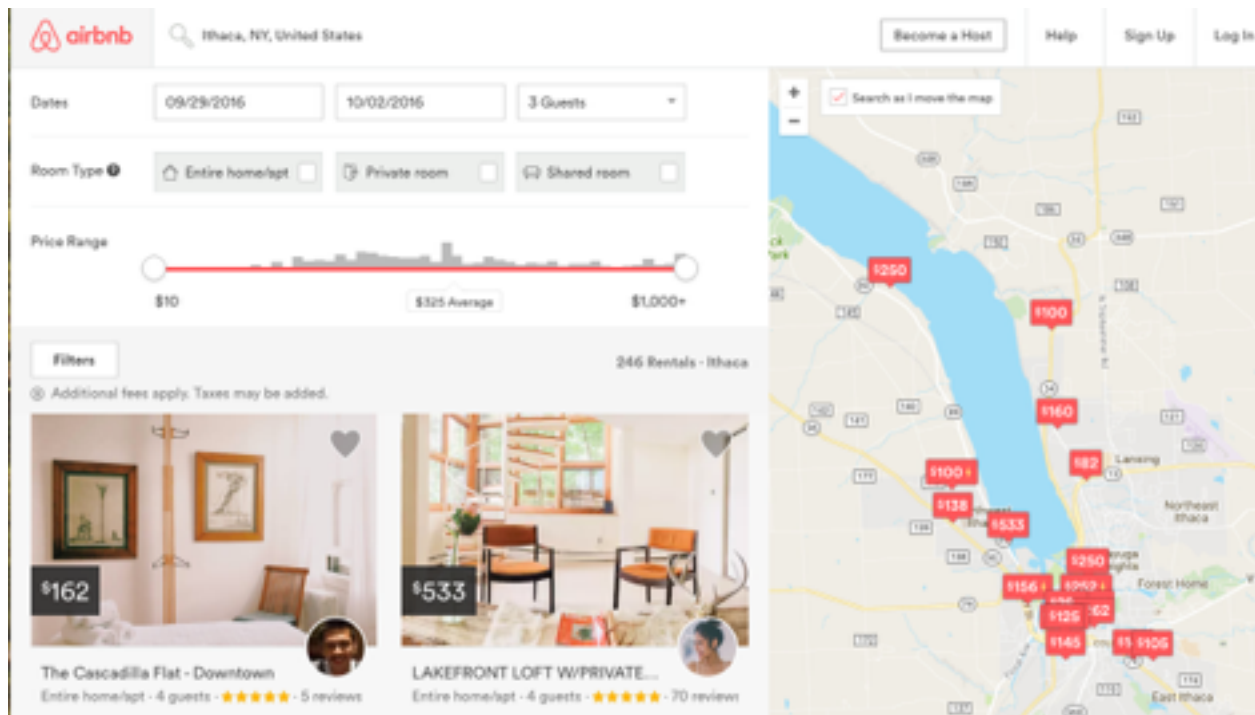


Where to Stay

The Symposium will take place primarily on the West End of Ithaca. VisitIthaca.com is a great resource for finding accommodation options from hotels to B&B's to resorts.



AirBnB offers an alternative to traditional lodging with many options in the Ithaca area.



Traveling to Ithaca

By Plane

The Ithaca Tompkins County Regional Airport is located northeast of the city, about 6 miles from Ithaca Children's Garden. Airports in Syracuse, Elmira, and Rochester offer an alternative with a 1-2 hour drive to the Ithaca area.
<http://flyithaca.com/>

By Car

By car, Ithaca is about 1 hour south of Syracuse, 1 hour north of Binghamton, 2 hours southeast of Rochester, 4 hours north of Philadelphia, and 4 hours northwest of New York City.

By Bus

The Ithaca Bus Terminal is located within minutes of the Garden and welcomes daily service from Greyhound and Shoreline (Coach USA).

<http://locations.greyhound.com/bus-stations/us/new-york/ithaca/bus-station-150097>
<http://www.coachusa.com/shortline/>

By Train

The nearest Amtrak stations are on the Empire Corridor in Syracuse and Rochester. There is one bus per day to Ithaca (Greyhound Station) from the Syracuse Amtrak station and two to three buses per day to Ithaca from the Rochester Trailways Bus Station, a three-minute walk from the Amtrak station.

https://www.amtrak.com/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=am/am2Station/Station_Page&code=SYR
https://www.amtrak.com/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=am/am2Station/Station_Page&code=ROC



Friday Daytime Locations

We'll begin our two days together at Ithaca Children's Garden (ICG), home to the Hands-on-Nature Anarchy Zone and 3 rich acres full of gardens, habitats, and play spaces.

ICG is in the Ithaca city limits, tucked in the south corner of Cass Park, on Route 89 (Taughannock Blvd) along the Cayuga Inlet, across the parking lot from the Black Diamond Trail head. From downtown Ithaca, follow signs for Rt 89 N. Pass Island Health & Fitness on your left, cross over the inlet bridge, and take your first left on to Cass Park Access Road, marked with Ithaca Children's Garden's turtle sign.



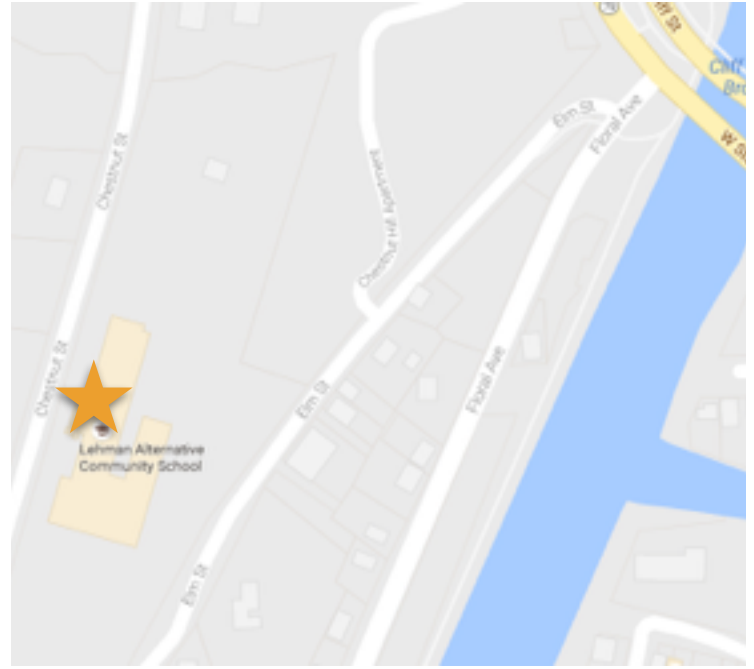
From Rochester, Buffalo, and other northerly parts, make your way to Route 89 heading south. When you pass Hangar Theater and Alan Treman Marine Park on your left, you are less than one mile from the entrance to ICG. You will pass by Union Fields on the right, then pass by Ithaca Children's Garden which you will recognize by the fence. Take your last right onto Cass Park Access Road and ICG entrance before going up and over the inlet bridge towards downtown Ithaca

Mid-day on Friday we'll move to The Space @ GreenStar, 700 W. Buffalo St. a short walk or drive from the Garden.



Friday Evening and Saturday Locations

Friday evening's film and all Saturday sessions will take place at the Lehman Alternative Community School (LACS). The address is 111 Chestnut St., Ithaca. It is within walking distance from the Garden and The Space @ Greenstar.



Session Descriptions

Friday:

Stories of Children Playing: what do they tell us about the significance of play and playwork?

Fraser Brown, Leeds-Beckett University

The Playwork profession has always exchanged their experiences of working with children, and often reflected on what those experiences might mean for both the children and the playworkers. In this presentation Fraser Brown will offer a selection of stories that were submitted by playworkers for inclusion in his book, *Play and Playwork: 101 Stories of Children Playing*. The stories are always instructive, often funny, and sometimes sad. The presentation will explore a number of key theoretical concepts such as play cues, adulteration, and the significance of reference points in children's lives. Some of the stories illustrate the therapeutic aspects of children's play. The overall intention is to focus on the connection between theory and practice that is so often misunderstood by our politicians.

Celebrating a Revival of Play

Joan Almon, Alliance for Childhood

After years of decline, children's play is on the move again, thanks to a host of local activists. From individual pop-up play days to year-round adventure playgrounds -- and many activities in between -- many children are being given a chance to play freely with loose parts. The Alliance for Childhood is celebrating this revolution and supporting its further development with a new book and outreach activities.

Adventure Play: a childlife restoration in dense urban environments

Brenda Simon, Earth Day Canada

For two summers, PLAYbynature mounted 24 pop up adventure playgrounds across the City of Toronto, using re-purposed scrap to bring creative chaos to flat grass in city parks. Now, as Earth Day Canada, we are scaling up this program to educate a wider audience of parents about the benefits of play, while familiarizing local politicians, city planners, recreationists and childcare providers with the lively wild aesthetic of play. This presentation will discuss our latest initiatives and the institutional obstacles to child-life habitat restoration in dense urban environments.

KOOP's Adventures in Play

Naomi Sukenik & Kelsey Langley, KOOP - Kid Owned and Operated Play

KOOP Co- Directors discuss their experiences in starting an adventure playground from nothing, challenges faced and alternative ideas during a first year with no permanent location. Explore the challenges and benefits of having a changing environment in which they set up their adventure playground and how that affects children and their play.

Adventure Update - Bainbridge Island

Kevin Mills, Play Czar, Inc.

Explore the chronology of events on the path toward creating an adventure playground on Bainbridge Island, Washington, including everything from uncanny serendipity to profound discouragement. We'll explore gaining public acceptance of adventure play, strategies for advancing public support and pop-up successes and failures. New highlights will include bowling balls and their relationship to PVC and other unlikely uses for improbable materials.

210 Hancock Project: Kids Planning for Play

Beth Myers, Just Consulting, LLC

The 210 Hancock project is the redevelopment of one block in Ithaca's Northside Neighborhood. The project includes the new construction of 63,000 square feet of housing, 6,000 square feet of commercial space (including an Early Head Start facility), and the creation of a new playground and pedestrian/bicycle path. Working alongside designers, planners, developers, community organizations, neighborhood associations, and community centers, children and teens from Northside played an active role in the design and planning process.

Session Descriptions

Friday, con't:

How Children Use Play Productively in a Changing World

Ray Wills

Ray will look at how child's play has been affected and influenced by dramatic changes in their natural world. Looking at specific effects of wartime, housing redevelopment, natural surroundings, school and street playgrounds, fixed play equipment, junk play loose parts and adventure playgrounds. Providing examples and research/evidence showing how children have adapted through play by a variety of means to overcome their constraints and social circumstances thereby using play in all its varied forms to socially enrich their lives in positive and constructive ways.

A Renewal of the Value of Play in 21st Century America

Joel Agate, SUNY Brockport

This session will provide an overview of play across the past 130 years. We will focus on research supporting the value of play and the disappearance of unstructured, free play from American society. We will explore the consequences of play deprivation and possible solutions to the problem.

This presentation will focus on the following three main points:

1. The history of play ranging from Chicago's Hull House to the current day.
2. The benefits of free play as outlined in current research and the consequences of the decline of such play.
3. Possible actions that can be taken to return play to children's daily lives.

Saturday:

Educating Citizens

Tom "Teacher Tom" Hobson,

Tom will speak about bringing the habits and principles of democracy into early years learning. He will begin by discussing the purpose of education in a democracy and how and why we have managed to veer so far from the original intent of education in America. He will then explain how a play-based curriculum works and, in fact, demonstrate how it is an ideal model of democracy in action. Participants will learn the benefits of introducing democratic principles into their classroom, the hallmarks of what makes a good citizen in a democracy, the traits and habits required for self-governance, and some practical tips on how to implement these ideas in their own classrooms.

Play is Power: Play-Based Preschool in a Climate of Educational Emergency

Courtney Gardner & Ben Dalbey, Community Play School

Community Play School is a child-led, play-based preschool located in Baltimore, MD. Our curriculum emerges from the play of the children in our care, the relationship between children and adults, and our indoor and outdoor school environment. In this workshop we will investigate the inequities which threaten play in early childhood education and advocate for powerful play environments and relationships that support children.

The Land: One Year Out

Erin Davis, Director

Building on yesterday's informal viewing of The Land, a short documentary about the Welsh adventure playground of the same name, as seen in The Atlantic & NPR Ed. Director Erin Davis will be with us to answer questions and discuss the impact the film is having as an educational and organizing tool.

Reconceptualizing Recess at a Lower School

Jyoti Gopal, Riverdale Country School

I will be sharing the process I started of moving my school towards expanded play opportunities at recess- more loose parts, openness to rough and tumble play, weapon play, and tentative support of other risky play. Teachers are slowly coming around to the importance of autonomy and risk-taking in children's play and what their role could be in supporting this.

Session Descriptions

"It's Gonna Hurt;" Roughhousing and Risk in Play (A Video Documentation)

Jim McCullough, Bon Air Presbyterian Preschool

Embracing play means embracing chaos or anarchy. And while this uncontrollable energy shows up in all forms of true play, it shows up dramatically in roughhousing and risky play. In this session, you will be privy to a series of video clips of kids engaging in all manner of roughhousing and/or risky play with smiles on their faces even though "It's gonna hurt". First and foremost, this presentation documents, in video, kids in full self-directed play that is risky, rough and tumble play. For the field of Early Childhood Education, rough and tumble play is important because it connects kids with their emotional core (especially anger) and thereby allows them to play with it, identify it and deal with it. Ideally, viewers will leave determined to make sure rough and tumble, risky play remains one of the color choices in their kid's play palate

Adult Perspectives on Play in Schools

Kristin Shepherd, Recess Revolution

Dive into a qualitative study on the perspectives of play in schools from adults who have the power to promote change. Observations and interviews are analyzed and recommendations made.

Brainstorming session to follow. Adults control play environments in schools. Schools are told they need to teach creativity, collaboration, communication and critical thinking skills. Free play in an enriched environment can help develop these skills. How do we convince key adults that play is important in school?

Play as a Pan-Cultural Construct

Michael Patte

The presentation will highlight how The International Journal of Play has aspired to develop a global science of play since its inception in 2012. The International Journal of Play encourages pan-cultural Views on Play

* Nurtures the spirit of play scholarship from many cultures.

* Encourages cross indigenous perspectives.

* Provides a platform for qualitative and quantitative work on the meaning of play.

* Integrates diverse perspectives through different mechanisms (multidisciplinary).

* Seeks to achieve a global understanding of play with an eye towards the local particularities of the expression of play.

* Invites majority world/developing world scholars and practitioners to contribute to an increasing global understanding of play

Children without Play, Children without Hope

Fraser Brown, Professor of Playwork, Leeds Beckett University

An exploration of the therapeutic impact of a playwork project on a group of children in a Romanian paediatric hospital. The children were abandoned at birth, and subsequently spent most of their time tied in a cot, with little positive input into their lives. In October 1999, a playworker started working exclusively with the children. Nothing else in their lives changed. The children still spent the rest of their day tied in the same cots, having little interaction with anyone else. During the first year of the project two researchers from Leeds Metropolitan University studied the developmental changes in the children. In some cases, the changes were dramatic, providing strong evidence of the power of play as a therapeutic and developmental agent. The evidence shows a speed of 'recovery' that was quite unexpected, and casts doubt on the 'ages and stages' view of play development, as seen in the work of Piaget, Parten, Sheridan, etc.

NB. This presentation includes video footage that some attendees may find disturbing

Exploring the Link Between Art and Play

Ann Reichlin, Creative Mess

An exploration of the relationship between art, play and the creative process. I will present my 2015 & 2016 Community Arts Partnership workshop for kindergartners, "Make Way for Play" that I conducted at Caroline Elementary School. I will also present insights into the role of play in the creative process based upon my studio experience as a practicing sculptor. While teaching art workshops to children ages 4-7 a few years ago at Abovago Studios in Ithaca, I noticed that as the children made art projects they could play with, they began to create elaborate stories, began to collaborate with each other, and kept adding new details to their artworks. Through these projects, such as imaginary worlds, houses and people, puppets and theaters, I saw an organic connection emerge between the act of playing and the act of invention

Session Descriptions

Recess and After-School: Bringing Loose Parts into the School Day

Morgan Leichter-Saxby, Pop-Up Adventure Play

Many people wonder how to incorporate loose parts into recess - what to choose, and how to start. Others already make loose parts available for their children but want to know ways to take materials to 'the next level', or how elements of playwork can be applied to a school context. This presentation will look at what a handful of sites are doing in the US and beyond using pictures, stories and testimonials from training workshops. Walk away with new ideas for integrating loose parts into your recess and play spaces.

CANCELLED - Play, Sustainability, and the Arts of Survival

Elizabeth Goodenough & Susan Lamoreaux, University of Michigan

My literature course, *Children Under Fire*, examines how war and natural disasters have been portrayed in picture books, young adult fiction, fairy tales, and film. We will focus on nature play and the healing arts and explore the physical and emotional resources of children in a 2012 film, "Beasts of the Southern Wild."

Seasons of Play: Life in the Natural Playscape

Rusty Keeler, Earthplay

A fun tour of nature-based preschools from around the world including a full year look at several inspirational family childcare spaces in Ithaca that were the basis of Rusty's new book! Loads of ideas to inspire you to take your own play spaces to the next level: ice fun, sensory gardens, sand pits, chickens, driftwood forts, a bit of anarchy and more!

Children's Imagination and "Terrains Vagues:" A look at how kids reappropriate unoccupied public land as space for play

Megan Cohoe-Kenney, The Lion and the Mouse

The Lion and The Mouse is a non-profit community organization that provides nature and play based programs for urban kids. Over the last two and a half years, we have developed our own outdoor urban adventure play approach that brings these opportunities to children whose daily lives are increasingly pre-determined and who all too often experience their urban environment as a limit imposed on them, rather than a rich network that they are ultimately a part of. Our outdoor urban adventure play ethos draws is informed by our understanding of Forest School and Playwork principles as well as our experiences appropriating urban spaces, particularly the Champ des possibles, for children.

Regulatory Policy and the Production of Spaces for Play: Confronting Adult-Oriented Limitations

Reilly Bergin Wilson, The Graduate Center, City University of New York/play:ground NYC

Spaces for play by young people are produced and confined by political-economic constrictions and dominant or subversive adult expectations of young people. The interaction between how adults construct idea(l)s about childhood and how adults perceive their own roles in the production of play environments are linked, but often asymmetrical. Drawing on the experience of producing an adventure playground in New York City, as well as historical records about adventure playground production in the United States and the United Kingdom, I hope to open up a collaborative discussion of how such restrictions can be negotiated, and contested where necessary.

CANCELLED - The Impact of Loose Parts Play on Children's Oral Language During Recess

David Ramsey, Boston Public Schools

This lecture/ presentation details my PhD research at Lesley University. My research indicates that play with loose parts has a positive impact on the kinds and quantities of oral language children use during recess. First, there has been a decrease in the amount of time provided for recess in public schools over the past 20 years, due largely to demands for more in-class direct instruction to meet academic standards from No Child Left Behind and Common Core. Second, when recess is provided, it is increasingly supervised or led by a recess 'coach' and opportunities for children to play freely are diminished. Third, my research demonstrates that it is possible for children to increase their use of academically impactful oral language when they are allowed to play freely with loose parts materials.

Featured Speakers

Joel R. Agate is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Recreation and leisure studies at The College at Brockport, State University of NY. Dr. Agate completed his Ph.D in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management and a MBA at Clemson University.

Dr. Agate's research focuses on the ways that recreation contributes to improved quality of life, exploring the value of play across the lifespan and the positive psychology of outdoor recreation. His professional contributions include serving as a member of the Steering Committee of the US Play Coalition. As an advocate for play, he has given over 20 presentations on the value of play.

In an effort to practice what he preaches, Dr. Agate spends as much time as possible exploring wilderness, parks, and historic sites with his wife and three young children.

Joel Agate



Joan Almon



Joan grew up in Wilmington, Delaware and loved playing as a child, which has fueled her work as an early childhood educator and advocate for children's play for the past 45 years. For almost 20 years she taught children ages three to six as a Waldorf educator in Maryland and then consulted with Waldorf schools around the world. In the late 1990s she became very concerned with the decline in children's health and well-being, and co-founded the Alliance for Childhood.

Almon currently consults with the Alliance, continuing a project to restore play to the lives of children by introducing adventure play and playwork in the U.S. Through the Alliance she is working on a book that features current play initiatives in hopes that it will inspire other grassroots activities. She is also looking at the patterns of development of play in local communities and how adventure playgrounds and related projects can be sustained financially. Almon is inspired by the new wave of play activists who are passionately restoring play across the country.

Megan Cohoe-Kenney is co-founder of the community organization Le lion et la Souris (The Lion and the Mouse), an educator, a playworker-in-training, and a researcher. Like many others, she fell into the world of Playwork after years of working with children in preschools, elementary schools, summer camps, as a nanny, and in her role as Educator in a playschool program. Her background in Sociology and Child Development, as well as a post-graduate diploma in Community Economic Development, inform her practice as administrator, educator, and playworker.

She believes that finding play spaces outside of traditional schools and playgrounds where children are given space to make decisions for themselves and make changes in the landscape, even in a small way such as using chalk on cement barriers or in putting a tire swing in an otherwise empty field, helps create a more democratic and engaged community and city, where children are seen, heard, and listened to.

Megan Cohoe-Kenney



Erin Davis



Vermont based documentary storyteller Erin Davis is the director of THE LAND, a documentary short about a Welsh adventure playground of the same name as seen in The Atlantic and NPR Ed. Her favorite game is catch.

Courtney Gardner & Ben Dalbey



Courtney Gardner has been working and playing with young children and their families for over 20 years. She has taught in public, private and non-profit schools in Baltimore for most of her career. She founded Community Play School, a play-based, child-led preschool in Baltimore City in 2009. She recently contributed to the book, *Landscapes for Young Children: Connecting Children, Community, and Culture* by Sandra Duncan. She has been presenting with Ben Dalbey about the work they do at Community Play School since 2014.

Ben Dalbey lives in Baltimore, Maryland, and is a parent of two children attending Baltimore City Public Schools. This is his sixth year working with young children at Community Play School, a play-based, child-led, private preschool. Outside of the classroom, Ben is active in the movement against high-stakes standardized testing and is an advocate for public schools.

Elizabeth Goondenough

Elizabeth Goodenough received a Master's in Teaching and a PhD in English and American Literature from Harvard University. She has taught at Harvard, Claremont McKenna, and Sarah Lawrence College, and at the University of Michigan School of Information, School of Education, and most recently the Residential College. She founded the *Landscapes of Childhood* Series at Wayne State University Press and has served as an assistant editor of the *Michigan Quarterly Review* since 2003. She helped produce the 2007 PBS documentary "Where Do the Children Play?" which won six regional Emmys. The RC course "Growing Up Near the Great Lakes" was a finalist for the 2014 U-M Provost's Teaching Innovation Prize, and she received the UROP Outstanding Research Mentor Award in 2016.



Jyoti Gopal



Jyoti Gopal is a kindergarten teacher at Riverdale Country School in New York. For years, she quietly, and sometimes not-so-quietly, chafed at the restrictions placed on children's play at recess. Finally, she armed herself with research from the fields of child development, learning, animal studies, cultural anthropology, evolutionary biology, neuroscience and yes, education, and got up the courage to stand up and speak out. She firmly believes in the teaching power of rough and tumble play, loose parts, and the healing power of nature and is working on building a coalition of believers in her school.

Rusty Keeler

Rusty Keeler is an author, speaker, and designer of natural play environments for children. He has worked with communities all over the world to create magical messy playscapes filled with trees, sand, water, mud, hills, loose parts and more. His favorite playspace, of course, is Ithaca Children's Garden's Hands-on-Nature Anarchy Zone.



Morgan Leichter-Saxby



Morgan Leichter-Saxby is a playworker and co-founder of Pop-Up Adventure Play. Since 2007, she has traveled to support play and provide playwork training for adventure playgrounds, schools, parks departments and more in a dozen countries. She has provided keynote presentations at several international conferences, is co-author of *The New American Adventure Playground Movement: How Communities Across the US are Returning Risk and Freedom to Childhood*, and is currently working towards her PhD in Playwork at Leeds Beckett University.

Jim McCullough

Jim is a teacher at Bon Air Presbyterian Preschool in Richmond, Va. He marks the point when play turned into adventure play. When he first released, "It's Gonna Hurt," it sparked a back-to-the-adventure movement in the American underground. Throughout the '00s, he worked relentlessly, recording adventures every year and touring, speaking both in theaters and backwoods dives. Along the way, he inspired countless folk, from the legions of at home groups in the mid-'80s to scores of schools in the '90s.



Kevin Mills



Kevin Mills is an industrial designer / artist and has been designing and building specialty furnishings and functional art for 25+ years. The former Director of Exhibits at the Children's Museum of Tucson, he's passionate about tinkering as a form of hands-on, play-based learning and specializes in finding "unlikely uses for improbable materials." He relocated to Bainbridge Island, WA in 2015 and is an instructor at Alchemy Industrial Arts where he and others are helping kids get their hands dirty. Mills is actively promoting the creation of an adventure playground on Bainbridge Island.

Beth Myers

Beth Myers, PhD, MPH is the founder and president of Just Consulting, LLC. Beth has been conducting research and evaluation for 11 years and completed her PhD in Environmental Psychology at Cornell University, in Ithaca, New York. Her work focuses on 'salutogenic' (health-promotive) outdoor environments and their effects on children's play, physical activity, health and well-being. She conducted one of the first empirical studies in the United States on the effect of an adventure playground (Hands-on-Nature Anarchy Zone) on children's physical activity, active free play behaviors, and social interactions. Beth has a Masters of Public Health, a Masters in Childhood Education, was a New York City public school teacher, and a B.S. in Kinesiology / Exercise Science.



Michael Patte

Michael Patte, Ph.D., is a professor of teaching and learning. During his 25-year career in education he developed an interest in the research fields of creativity, child development and play and has shared his scholarship through publications, international and national conference presentations, and advocacy projects. Dr. Patte is a Distinguished Fulbright Scholar, Co-editor of the International Journal of Play, past president of The Association for the Study of Play, board member of The International Council for Children's Play, and a member of the Pennsylvania Governor's Early Learning Council, responsible for planning the expansion of effective early learning and development services for Pennsylvania's young children and families.



David Ramsey

David Ramsey is a program director in the Boston Public Schools Department of Early Childhood and a PhD candidate at Lesley University focusing on children's play in urban environments. As a program director in BPS he is responsible for the design and implementation of the district pre-kindergarten curriculum, as well as the design and delivery of professional development for district teachers. He taught pre-kindergarten and kindergarten in the Boston Public Schools and the Los Angeles Unified School district for 16 years, and is currently working on expanding opportunities for loose parts recess play in the Boston Public Schools.

Ann Reichlin

Ann Reichlin has an MFA in Sculpture from the University of Colorado-Boulder and a BFA in Ceramics from the Rhode Island School of Design, and has served as a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Art at Hamilton College and an Artist-in-Residence in Sculpture at Brandeis University. She has been teaching art on a freelance basis including workshops for young children including "Make Way for Play", and currently serves on the Ithaca City School District Board of Education. Ann has been exhibiting her work throughout the United States for more than twenty years including her ongoing series, Interventions: 914 Whitesboro Street, located on an abandoned house site on Sculpture Space grounds in Utica, New York.



Kristin Shepherd



Kristin Shepherd, former public school teacher, current student of Play at the University of Gloucestershire and mother of a rambunctious eight-year-old is the director of Recess Revolution, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping schools to enrich their environments with loose parts play.

Her experience as a professional educator in a diverse community provides her with a teacher's perspective of how schools work and which changes are possible. She understands the challenges that schools face, but also the necessity for bringing play to the forefront of every school's plan for success.

Brenda Simon

Brenda Simon is a graduate of the law and environmental studies program at York University and later studied education at the University of Toronto. She has worked as a human rights lawyer, a co-op housing developer and community educator. However, none of these experiences prepared her for the sisyphian labors required to arrange daily play-dates, play-groups and play outings for her two children. This improvised play provision model required hours of trekking through neighbourhood parks loaded down with backpacks and arriving home hungry and exhausted with children that still had several hours of play in them.

Seeking help from the local Boys and Girls Club, Brenda discovered an astonishing level of fear among management, and there were no programs or methods for managing the perceived risks.

Brenda researched the profession of playwork, play policy and planning in the U.K., Germany and Denmark and piloted POP UP Adventure Play in Toronto for two years as PLAYbynature before joining Earth Day Canada as the Director of Play Programs. The new EarthPLAY program at Earth Day Canada forms a central part of its new strategic plan to increase nature connection and outdoor play in urban environments across Ontario and Canada.



Naomi Sukenik & Kelsey Langley



Naomi Sukenik has been the KOOP Co-Founder and Co-Director for the past year and a half and strives to enrich children's lives with as much outdoor unstructured play as possible. She became affiliated with an organization whose main purpose is to provide equal opportunities for those with disabilities by using extreme sports as a learning tool and became an expert with ropes ziplines, rope parks, and more, while working with children. With an MA in NGO Management, she established a Center for Children at Risk. She advocates as a mother of two (almost 3), a playworker, and as an educator to create a reality where children get to truly indulge and experience their childhood to play freely, discover, and explore.

As a homeschool mom to her fifth-grader, Kelsey has seen firsthand the importance of play as it relates to child development. With experience and degrees in Business Management and Organizational Development, Kelsey expected to have a desk job, but homeschooling became a huge source of accomplishment and pride. With a background in Human Resources, she took a leap of faith and quit her job to be able to focus on building KOOP.

Ray Wills

Ray entered playwork in the early 1960s as a Community Service Volunteer, camp counselor and play scheme leader in London. He attended playwork training, operated summer playschemes, and worked as play centre leader. Beginning in the 60's and 70's, Ray established numerous adventure playgrounds and a town-wide play program, and became founder member of Stevenage Play Council. Ray has also coordinated playschemes for one parent families and earned a Level 4 Management certificate in Play and Youth Work. Ray has been involved in numerous play campaigns and organizations including LAPA, Regional Play Associations, Safety on Playgrounds, Fair Play For Children, Children Waiting, The Lollipop Brigade, Play Days, Social integration of the disabled etc. and served as a former Fellow of The National Association of Recreation Leaders and Institute of Play.

Ray has been recognized by Bournemouth Borough Council for his work in the community, is a published author and performing poet, and gives talks to community groups on gypsy history and child's play, and emigrated to Alpena Michigan USA where he lives with his wife Brenda.

Reilly Bergin Wilson



Reilly Bergin Wilson is a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow in the Environmental Psychology doctoral program at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, a research associate at the Children's Environments Research Group, and a co-founder and Board Chair of play:groundNYC. She was awarded a Masters by Research with Distinction in Geography from the University of Leeds for her thesis, *Who Owns the Playground: Space and Power at Lollard Adventure Playground (1954-1961)*, funded through a US-UK Fulbright Commission University of Leeds Partnership Award. She also holds an Honors B.A. in Geography from Temple University, for which she conducted funded research in Bosnia-Herzegovina on playground privatization. Reilly's research interests include play environments built for/with children, social reproduction, childcare, children's mobilities, the production of space, and geographies of the recent past. Currently, Reilly's research is focused on constructing a critical history of adventure playgrounds in the United States.