

Workshops Monday 4 July

Here are the abstracts for the workshop session 4:00 – 5:00pm

Assembly Room

Henrik Tarp Vang
(Denmark)

IPA Denmark

'In Cracks and Crevices': a continuous story about play

IPA was founded in Denmark in 1961 and the first two presidents of IPA-World were from Denmark. You can therefore say that the idea of children's right to 'free play' is very much connected to Denmark.

However the idea of children's right to 'free play' is not static but is a dynamic concept. When is the playing free?

This paper will present a continuous discussion we have in IPA-Denmark today. Many things have happened since the world's first adventure playground was established in the early forties in Copenhagen. Society and family structure have changed. Women work outside the home and children spend many

hours in day care institutions. Not least the traffic situation has changed children's opportunities for free play.

The paper will present two investigations of children and play in Denmark: "In Cracks and Crevices" and www.childrenplay.net.

The paper will say something about what children play, where they play and with what they play. There will also be provided examples of how children use the modern media.

Assembly Room

Michael Wurtz Bjørn
(Denmark)

University College
Lillebaelt, Department
of Knowledge and
Development

Play, games and the use of computer technology as tools to enhance the learning outcome among children in Danish schools and institutions

In Denmark, we have a long and outstanding tradition in how to include children's play in education, from kindergarten and throughout primary and secondary school. The main purpose of this, is to contribute to the formation of identity of each individual child, but also to contribute to the development of innovative skills among Danish children.

Information and communication technology is a significant part of contemporary life of young people. Games and social networks challenge traditional approaches to teaching, and therefore the use of new learning platforms, which include the use of existing technologies as well as the development of new technologies, are of significant importance in order to facilitate a learning outcome, which faces the requirements of today and tomorrow.

In my presentation, I will discuss the concept of learning through play, I will introduce new and innovative approaches to playing and learning, which include the use of information and

communication technologies, and I will discuss how the combination of play and information and communication technology can contribute to the learning process in order to enhance the development of new and creative identities, which should enable our youngsters to meet the challenges of tomorrow.



Council Chamber

Jan van Gils
(Belgium)

President ICCP
(International Council
for Children's Play)

The evolution of
children's play in
public space
during the last 25
years in Flanders

Recent research in Flanders (Belgium) has shown a considerable decrease of children's play in public space, both in frequency and in the quality of play. We were able to compare observations made in 1983 with new observations carried out in 2008.

Each time, observations took place in all the public spaces of the quarter (streets, playgrounds, greeneries, parking places etc.) and the age, company and activities of the observed children at play were noted down. This research has offered the opportunity to compare the changes over a period of 25 years in the frequency of play (as compared to the demographic data), the age groups, the quality of play (social, creative, passive and motor play), etc. And this comparison might indicate some concerns about children's play in the future.



Ferrier Hall

Tom Jambor (USA)
Margaret Westwood,
Susan McIntyre
(Scotland) and Anna
Lenninger (Sweden)

IPA World

Thinking globally,
acting locally –
IPA Council
Reports

IPA is led by a Council of representatives from IPA groups and branches around the world. Council members work to protect, preserve and promote the child's right to play and provide a link between national and international thinking and action.

This session is to enable National Representatives and Correspondents on the IPA Council to present 'snapshots' of the situation regarding play, and the work of IPA, in their own countries. The focus will be on the time period between this conference and the previous IPA World conference (2008-2011).

The triennial IPA World Conference presents one of the very few opportunities for Council members to meet to share progress made and obstacles encountered. This enriches IPA's global perspective on play and provides Council members with renewed energy and inspiration.

After the presentations, reflection and discussion time will enable the Council and IPA members present to reflect on the themes emerging from the presentations and whether there are:

- examples of particularly successful ways to build participation in IPA;
- ideas for action that could be of benefit to protecting, preserving and promoting the child's right to play in their own countries; and
- joint working possibilities that could support effective local action

Those attending the session will gain:

- insight into the child's right to play in a global context;
- knowledge about obstacles to the child's right to play and ways to overcome these; and
- ideas for building the IPA network to better achieve goals

Office

Rusty Keeler (USA)

EarthPlay

Mud Pies, Willow Huts, and Water Play: The World of Natural Playscapes

The natural playscape movement is happening! By working together with our communities we can bring the wonder of nature to children and create beautiful environments for discovery and play.

This workshop will look at creative play spaces from around the world as examples and talk about how to bring all the good stuff to children: trees, grass, sand, water, hills, mud, gardens, sound elements, pathways, living willow huts, and much more.

Group discussions will include ideas, questions, challenges and discoveries of participants' interested in the natural playscape movement.

- See pictures of natural play environments from around the world
- Learn about the community built process
- Get ideas about planning a community build
- Learn how to plant a living willow hut!



Room A

Carol Barron

(Republic of Ireland)

Dublin City University

Boys are from Mars and Girls are from Venus? Play activities of Irish children in middle childhood

Over many decades researchers have focused on the differences between boys and girls play activities. This focus on the differences leads us to ignore any 'border work' or 'sameness' of play activities between boys and girls and leads us to accept the seductive 'different worlds culture' or the Boys are from Mars and Girls are from Venus debate.

In Ireland one could argue that we have promoted this view by a long tradition of single sex education where boys and girls have never shared the same physical space of the school playground. However, girls and boys do not live in isolation from each other.

I will present data from my PhD thesis on children's play activities within the school playground setting which identifies areas of differences as well as sameness. I will examine children's counting out rhythms and other forms of oral folklore which are a living oral tradition passed on from child to child, and performed by both sexes, or as Sutton

Smith bluntly states 'the non-serious things in life'. This is followed by an examination of the use and non-use of playground markings between boys and girls, one specific area where difference dominated over sameness.

- We need to identify and acknowledge the 'sameness' as well as the differences in children's play activities
- Boys and girls in middle childhood do play together as well as apart
- When boys and girls in middle childhood play the same activities they may still maintain complex differences in relation to performance and purpose of the enactment

Room A

Rachel Rosen
(England)

Institute of Education,
London

Young children's perspectives on their construction of gender identities during 'taboo' play

This workshop will present the early stage findings of a PhD study exploring young children's construction of gender identity during 'taboo' play. The word 'taboo' denotes play that contains themes of death, violence, anger, irrationality, and power play which can often be seen in war, weapon, superhero, mythic, and magic play.

'Taboo' play disputes views of play as happy, innocent, and instrumental. There are few studies on the social ecology of 'taboo' play (Goldstein, 1995) and even fewer on children's perspectives examining this form of play 'in the context of childhood, not adulthood' (Reed & Brown, 2000, p. 115). While it is widely reported that boys engage in 'taboo' play more than girls (Wegener-Spohring, 1989), these results have been challenged; girls engage with 'taboo' play more often when there are female characters to emulate (Gronlund, 1992; Marsh, 2000). Furthermore, teachers tend to be more aware of boy's 'taboo' play (Holland, 2003). Using participatory methods – including polyvocal revisiting of videotaped 'taboo' play and children as co-researchers – this presentation will examine initial findings in response to the questions: How do children view the link between gender and 'taboo' play? How do children's constructions of gender in 'taboo' play relate to cultural-historic constructions of gender? How do children challenge, reinforce or otherwise engage with inequities in their 'taboo' play?

Participants will learn about:

- Working with children as co-researchers
- Children's views on gender identity and 'taboo' play
- Implications for social justice educational approaches



Room B

Alison John (Wales)

Alison John &
Associates Limited

Risky Play - looking at the risk in play and how risk can be effectively managed

This workshop looks at different ways of how disabled children are allowed to experience risky play alongside their non-disabled peers.

The session looks at attitudes towards facilitating risk and examines the four different risk types that disabled children have a right to experience. Activities will be used by participants so that they are able to carry out benefit/risk assessments and make appropriate adaptations to ensure the inclusion of all children.

Room C

Lizzy Fleming
(England)

Halabja Community
Play Project

The story of Iraq's
first Adventure
Playground

This workshop will give the opportunity for delegates to see a presentation of the ongoing development of the first Adventure Playground in Halabja, Iraq, from conception to the present day.

A ten minute video, partly filmed by the children during the first year of the project will be shown, then a short presentation of how and why this project began. The staff from Halabja will be present to speak about how they became involved, and their views on play and playwork, and issues arising from the project.

The ethical, political, religious and practical considerations that affect the successful outcome of this project will be discussed, including avoiding imposing a Eurocentric play framework on a culture in which playwork as a profession is unheard of.

- A valuable opportunity to meet, learn from and discuss issues with Iraqi staff working on the playsite, and the UK based team running the charity funding this project, who work designing and building adventure playgrounds in London.
- An opportunity to discuss and critique the ethical and practical considerations in running International Play Projects funded by charity.
- The importance of linking this project with training, guidance, support and development from established play associations and organisations in the UK, to ensure the growth of a unique, grassroots Halabja Play Project, run with confidence and skill by local staff.

Room D

Shauneen McCusker
(Northern Ireland)

PlayBoard Northern
Ireland

Positive
PlayGrounds – an
innovative
programme
encouraging
positive use of the
school playground
environment in
Northern Ireland

The workshop will give an overview of PlayBoard's Positive PlayGrounds Programme which was developed to encourage schools to re-examine their policy and practice approach to break-time playground experiences.

The training programme, which consists of six sessions, is primarily aimed at adults working and supervising in the school playground and includes an additional session which focuses on strategies to enable children to engage in the process.

Delegates will be given the opportunity to explore topics contained within the programme which includes:

- Examination of the importance of, and theoretical framework, which supports play;
- The role and value of play in formal and informal education;
- The role of the adult, and their ability to either facilitate or adulterate play in the playground;
- Playground Needs Assessment;
- Playground Policy;
- Involving children in the process;

- Practical fun games and activities where theory and practice merge;
- Loose parts and imaginative props for the playground;
- Wet playtimes;
- Playground Action Planning and Ways Forward.

This interactive workshop will include a mix of PowerPoint, discussion, group exercises and will end with a fun practical games session!



Room E

Morgan Leichter-Saxby (USA)

Independent/PATH/
Pop-Up Adventure
Play

The Ethnographic
Playworker –
Putting
Loose Parts
Methodologies
into Play

This submission reports on a series of pilot experiments in play-centric, research methodologies and their implications for community organising and play advocacy projects in the UK and US.

By locating the position of the ethnographer *within* that of the playworker, we found that it is possible to conduct research during play that remains true to the Playwork Principles, supporting free play above all other concerns without imposing adult agendas upon the frame.

Through reconfiguring the tools of research as loose parts (the camera, the voice recorder, as well as concepts, observations and material evidence), the process of research became open source, and the ethnographer functions as a supporter of and object within play, rather than an observer.

The tools of research left the hands of the ethnographer to become material participants in play, while being inscribed by it.

Our key influence was the realisation that other fields, particularly women's studies, developed field-appropriate research methodologies to examine lived experience from within the priorities of the field. Play, in spite of its wealth of theories and observations, still tends to rely upon conventional, research-moderated methods.

Findings from the pilot indicate the diversity of the concerns within play and its operation as creative living, moving through the world of reality and imagination to draw disparate inspirations and make new connections. These concerns highlight the importance of providing opportunities for individuals and communities of children to gain control of the power of research and to determine their own narratives.

Room E

Elena Smirnova
(Russia)

Moscow State
University of
Psychology &
Education, Play and
Toys research centre

Toys as Tools of
Imaginative Play

The concept of children's play in a broad and narrow sense is discussed. The broad sense of play is free independent activity with spontaneous testing of oneself and the subject of play.

The most accurate, scientific sense of child play is the *divergence between the real and imaginary situations* (L.S. Vygotsky). The play role is a case of the imaginary situation ('illusory Ego'). An imaginary situation is the main specific property of narrative play distinguishing it from any other activities. Imaginary situation exists in the child's practical play actions (individual or joint) rather than in his/her imagination. It is a simultaneous holding to both real and illusionary situation. Due to these characteristics of play, it serves as a base for the effectively develop creative imagination, image thinking, self-awareness, etc.

The main tools for a creation illusory situations are toys. Toys are the only accessible cultural means that can be used for independent activities at early age. The toy can become a play tool but it depends on the toy's qualities that may either facilitate or interfere child's activity. A good toy ought primarily to be *open to the*

different actions and emotions of the child. Toys should make it possible for children to impact their own voices, movements, activity in toys. Basis of these criteria we carried out the psychological examination of toys in our Play & Toys centre.



Room G

Ali Jonzon (Canada)

University of Alberta,
Faculty of Physical
Education &
Recreation

Daughters of
Mothers with
Multiple Sclerosis:
Their Experiences
of Play

This study described the play experiences of daughters who were caregivers to their mothers with multiple sclerosis (MS).

The experiences of four Canadian-Caucasian women aged 19-26 were captured using phenomenological methods of individual and focus group interviews, field notes, and artefacts. Three themes with supporting sub-themes emerged: (a) being a good daughter, (b) blurred relationship boundaries, and (c) encumbered play. Caregiving for their mothers was part of being a good daughter. Excessive caring duties changed their roles from being daughters to caregivers and contributed to feelings of maturity over peers, which impacted their relationships with friends. Their mother-daughter relationship boundaries were blurred and the participants wished to spend more time as daughters.

Activities that surrounded their mother's disability were perceived as work, or as part of the role of caregiver, and activities that did not surround disability were perceived more as play and part of the role of daughter. Play, although sometimes limited, was highly valued and provided an escape from caregiving. Using family systems theory to interpret the findings, it was concluded that support for families living with MS would release children from caregiving duties so rich and rounded childhood play could be experienced.

Delegates will learn more about:

- Young caregivers and ways in which disability can affect the whole family.
- These young caregivers' experiences of play growing up.
- Ways in which the caregiving role influenced the daughters' experiences of play today as adults.

Room G

**Melissa Tolman,
Stephanie Barton**
(USA)

University of Central
Oklahoma

Play and Urban
Schools in Early
Childhood Care
and Education

Young children living in current urban environments are not given appropriate contexts for play in their environments (home, school, neighbourhood, community).

Appropriate play experiences in early childhood promote healthy development in areas of socialisation, cognitive ability, emotional maturation, and academic achievement. In the United States, current early childhood practices promote a 'push down curriculum' that allows very few play opportunities. As early childhood educators we have an important responsibility to provide students with appropriate play opportunities in the classroom that they might not be experiencing at home or within the community. Play provides students with proper socialisation, language and communication skills, and cooperative learning.

- For teacher/educators to use appropriate areas in the classroom environment for play.
- Understanding families and students in the area of play; where do you play, who do you play with, how do you play?
- The role of teachers and parents in children's play.



Room H

Maria Sokolova
(Russia)

Moscow State
University of
Psychology &
Education, Play and
Toys research centre

Images of child
media-culture in
play and toys of
modern children

Today children spend a lot of time viewing cartoon films. It takes the place and time of play – the main developing activity in preschool age.

What kind of effect does it have on the content of child play, toy choice and child identity?

Our study included observation of 68 playing children, interviewing their parents, and analysis of cartoons.

Special films analysis showed that one group of cartoons was too high-speed, contradicted between hero image and the context of its activity, had divergences of film's content and child's real life. Age addressing is failed. We found that preschoolers do not understand and experience most modern cartoons.

The data shows that children's watching does not result in plotting plays as based on the content of these films. We found that 94% identified with heroes from cartoons, preference of such toys, but only several children could include 3% cartoon plots in their play. They remain watching for the sake of watching, providing addiction.

This means play can be a marker of perception and understanding of cartoons. If the sequence of character's actions is not

clear to the child, the play is impossible.

Another kind of cartoon characterised by slow speed and speech, logical acts of character, movements and activities typical for children, correspondence to child age in presence of internal conflict as point of growth. They have positive influence on game activity of preschoolers: give rich material for experience, senses, comprehension. Such kind of cartoon provide many valuable plots of high-grade play.



Room I

Shelly Newstead
(England)

Institute of Education,
London

Measuring Play,
Measuring
Playwork

The evidence base of those working in play and playwork is largely based on qualitative methods. These methods have produced rich and valuable narratives about children's play behaviours and adult practice, and yet those working in the play and playwork field often express the need for something more concrete with which to demonstrate the need for play and the benefits of playwork practice.

Drawing on the author's current PHD research, this presentation will argue the case for the use of quantitative methods in evaluating play and playwork. In doing so it will explode some of the myths associated with quantitative research and demonstrate how a quantitative approach can be as much of a 'natural fit' for those working in play and playwork as qualitative methods.

The presentation will then explore how 'play' and 'playwork' can be defined and

operationalised in measurable terms by using some of the initial data collected from the author's quasi-experiment in primary school playgrounds, which attempts to address the research question, 'Does adopting a playwork approach change the way that children play?' Individual measurement instruments will be presented and discussed with reference to the play and playwork literature.

By attending this presentation delegates will be able to explore:

- The benefits of using quantitative methods in demonstrating the importance of play and playwork
- The need for quantitative methods to demonstrate both reliability and validity and how this might be achieved in play and playwork terms
- The practicalities of using quantitative methods in 'real-life' research

Room J

Anne-Marie Mackin
(Scotland), Anne
Emerson Smith, Lesley
Creevy
Play First Scotland

Putting the Theory
into Practice –
How can we use
training to make
Playwork Theory
come alive?

We came together to look at different ways to present our ideas around play training. Our ethos for the new project centred on the importance of self-directed play and promoting and supporting a free play environment moving from an adult led to a child led agenda.

The barrier was a lack of understanding of how to implement the new principles and 'how to make it happen' in a different play environment. We wanted to promote more Mastery Play, Deep Play, Self-directed Play and Loose Parts Play using recycled and free resources. We wanted to provide children with risk and challenge and to support playworkers in developing the confidence to deliver these opportunities. We are also keen to promote physical activity through play, particularly outdoor and free play.

We decided to look at developing participatory training events to provide examples of good practice. The first event was led by an external team. We made dens, lit fires, cooked our lunch and played games with natural materials. Photographs and film from the day will provide the basis for our workshop.

We aim to develop this work further by applying for funding to work with partners on a range of activities and initiatives and would like to explore our ideas with other delegates.

- Film and photography as a tool for reflective practice
- Implementing the broadest range of play types
- Free resources
- Examples of good practice
- Transforming the playwork agenda

Room K

Pete King (Wales)
Swansea University

Maximising
children's choice
during play in
relation to
structural,
functional, social
and emotional
affordances?

The importance of choice in children's play exists in legislation (WAG, 2002; DCMS, 2004/6; DCFS /DCMS, 2008) and through consultation with children (SkillsActive, 2006; Henshall and Lacey, 2007; Kapasi and Gleave, 2009).

Children's choice of play within learning environments tends to decrease in relation to adult presence or the dominance of external rewards (Lepper and Greene, 1975) (McInnes et al, 2009). These two factors, and possibly others, may in fact become barriers to children's choices in their play, not just within learning environments but any environment where adults are present.

Ten years ago *Best Play* (CPC et al, 2000) was published which stated: *'The provision (play environment) extends the choice and control that children have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it'*. The quality of the play environment to support children's choice of play has emerged as an important area of study in both quality assurance recording procedures (Hughes, 1996; Play Wales and PlayEducation, 2002) and in the concept of affordances (Kyttä, 2002; Kyttä, 2004).

This workshop aims to discuss how children's perception of their choice of play can be maximised in relation to structural, functional, social and emotional affordances.

Learning Outcomes:

- Reflect and identify adult perception on the importance of choice in children's play
- Identify what factors may impact on children's choices when playing at home, school and out of school provision
- Construct possible strategies which could maximise children's choice in their play across domains



Room L

**Sarah-Jane Lowson,
Karen Benjamin and
Dan Rees Jones**
(England)

Play Torbay

Playing Creatively

This presentation will look at the process of developing a training course collaboratively with the support of children, playworkers, practitioners and artists so that it might have a creative impact on practitioners and play provision much further afield.

Delegates will learn about:

- the relationship between play and creativity
- the value of creative partnerships
- tools for sparking creativity
- transforming spaces
- further information



Outdoor – meet outside Main Entrance

**Tracey Bancroft,
Steve Plimmer** (Wales)

Play On the Move

Play On the Move
– Active Play on
Wheels. Dynamic,
innovative
environment
encouraging play

‘Children who possess inadequate motor skills are often relegated to a life of exclusion from organised and free play experiences of their peers, and subsequently, to a lifetime of inactivity because of their frustrations in early movement behaviour.’ – (Seefeldt, V. 1979).

Active play is key to developing the fundamentals of movement (agility, balance, coordination) and fundamental movement skills such as running, jumping, striking, climbing and catching. Decline in children’s fundamental movement skills has been linked to less free play activity today than in the past. For previous generations the demands of everyday living promoted fundamental movement skills. Children grew up experiencing active free play as a major part of daily life. Society’s approach to living today, challenges us to offer wide and varied ‘active play’ spaces for our children. Play on the Move is a new approach to the traditional play bus – a framed play structure encased

within a bus – ‘a play centre on wheels’.

- A play space that promotes an opportunity for physically active play improving muscle control and co-ordination, increasing strength and endurance, and may promote fat reduction and body temperature regulation – addressing the concerning challenge of child obesity that faces society.
- An environment where risk and uncertainty can be self-managed by each child with ease.
- A play space providing practitioners the opportunity to explore and overcome the barriers to ‘safe’ active play opportunities in areas where development land is limited or premium.
- An interesting, challenging environment that enriches and expands children’s play.