



Trying Together

# Finding Joy through Playful Learning

**February 3-4, 2021**

**February 9-10, 2021**

Finding Joy through Playful Learning aims to bring together educators, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners who have a variety of experiences related to education, play, and learning. The conference will take place via Zoom over the course of several days covering six topics related to playful learning. The goal is to generate dialogue among different stakeholders and share best practices to support children and families in learning through play.

# Using Technology to Strengthen the Way We Learn and Play

**February 10, 2021  
11 AM-1 PM (ET)**

Now more than ever technology has become a tool for learning. This workshop will discuss strategies to use technology in developmentally appropriate ways to engage children and families in learning. Participants will also be encouraged to think outside the box about forms of technology and how creative and imaginative play helps children connect learning objectives to real world application.

**Opening and Introduction – Jenn Zosh, PhD**

## Featured Speakers

**Katie Gullone, Trying Together**

**Megan Rooney, La Escuelita Arcoiris**

**Keith Griffin and Javier Maisonet, MathTalk**

**Elias Blinkoff, Temple University**

**Simran Mulchandani, and Karishma Menon, Project Rangeet**

**Q&A with Panel – Shelly Kessler**

**Round Robin Breakout Rooms**

**Closing and Feedback – Jenn Zosh, PhD**

## Moderator

**Jenn Zosh, PhD**

Jennifer is an Associate Professor of Human Development and Family Studies at The Pennsylvania State University's Brandywine campus. As the Director of the Brandywine Child Development Lab, she studies how infants and young children learn about the world around them. Her areas of expertise and publication include playful learning, the impact of technology on children, working memory, mathematical cognition, and language acquisition. Notably, she was co-lead author on a recent (2015) publication in Psychological Science in the Public Interest about putting education back in educational apps through the application of research in the science of how children learn. She presents regularly at professional meetings including: the Society for Research in Child Development, International Congress on Infant Studies, National Academy of Sciences Children and Screens colloquium, International Mind Brain and Education Society, and others. A major driving force in her career is dissemination and translation of scientific discoveries to the public via blogging and media appearances. This translational work has appeared on The Conversation, PBS Parents, The Huffington Post, the Brookings Institution, the Joan Ganz Cooney Center, NPR Radio Times, and beyond. She is also involved in the dissemination of developmental research through her involvement with Living Laboratories embedded in children's museums and her roles on advisory boards for organizations (e.g., Ultimate Block Party, Urban ThinkScape). She received her bachelors degree in Psychology from the University of Delaware and her Ph.D. in Psychological and Brain Sciences from Johns Hopkins University.



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## Featured Speakers



### Elias Blinkoff

Elias is a third-year graduate student in developmental psychology working with Dr. Kathy Hirsh-Pasek. He received his B.A. in Psychology and Educational Studies from Swarthmore College in 2017, where he worked with Dr. Daniel Grodner to research sentence processing. Before arriving at Temple, Elias mentored 7th-grade students in the School District of Philadelphia through City Year. He currently pursues research at the intersection of developmental psychology and education with interest in the connections between the science of learning, classroom instruction, and education policy. Elias works on “The 6 Cs Go to School” project, which brings the 6 Cs of learning identified by Dr. Hirsh-Pasek and Dr. Roberta Golinkoff - collaboration, communication, content, critical thinking, creativity, and confidence - into elementary school classrooms through partnerships with educational administrators and teachers. His newest area of “6 Cs” research explores how the same skills apply in higher education. Elias also conducts research on the relation between inquiry and vocabulary development in preschool literacy instruction.



### Keith Griffin

Born and raised in Cambridge, Keith Griffin has been involved with youth physical education for the past 27 years. He coached multiple youth sports leagues for ages 4 through 12. Keith serves on the Cambridge Family Council policy board to help build equity in health and educational opportunities across the city. In 2018, Keith joined MathTalk where he applies his carpentry skills to help create and develop math installations in public spaces throughout the community where he currently lives and raises his 6 children. Keith works in Family and Community Engagement for MathTalk. He enjoys the outdoors. In his spare-time he likes to fish, cook/grill and spend time with family.



### Katherine Gullone

Katherine Gullone is the Program Director for Message from Me at Trying Together. In her work, Katherine leads the project development of Message from Me, an innovative digital tool co-designed by Carnegie Mellon University’s CREATE Lab and Trying Together. She holds a Master of Education with a focus in Early Childhood Education from Carlow University and a Bachelor of Arts in Interpersonal Communication with a minor in Spanish from Meredith College. Additionally, Katherine is a certified Pre-K-4th grade teacher in Pennsylvania and a Certified Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System Instructor.



### Javier Maisonet

Javier Maisonet started working with MathTalk in 2017 as a Project Management Consultant, since August of 2020 Javier has transitioned fulltime to the role of MathTalk Director of Partnerships and Strategic Initiatives. Javier has worked with youth and children since he was 16 working at the Pre-School his Mother oversaw. Since that time Javier has earned a Bachelor's Degree from DePaul University in Public Policy and a Master's Degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago in Educational Leadership. Javier has worked in the nonprofit sector for 20 years having led the Chicago Site of the National Organization The Young People's Project and most recently held the position of Youth Development Director for ASPIRA of Illinois. Javier lives in Chicago, IL with his wife and 3 children who are 8, 6, and 2, years old. MathTalk has excited Javier since he was presented with the idea and enjoys playing with the emerging technology and installations with his kids and their friends.

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### **Karishma Menon**

Karishma graduated from college with a B.A in English Literature. She worked as a documentary film maker in Bombay before moving to Mallorca to work for acclaimed production company - Palma Pictures. She transitioned from there to blueFROG, a live music venture based in Bombay as its first employee involved in executing the launch of its flagship music club in Bombay which was later rated by the Independent (UK) as one of the top ten music venues in the world. She's a co-founder at Project Rangeet where she works at the confluence of music, design, education and technology.



### **Simran Mulchandani**

Simran is a Director of Singaporean NGO, Global Mangrove Trust, that has built a peer to peer platform for Mangrove Reforestation. He was a Director at Lykke Corp, a Swiss Fintech company building a marketplace for blockchain assets. Earlier, Simran completed his B.Sc. in Computer Science from Brown University and worked at J.P. Morgan before setting up and running internationally acclaimed live music venture blueFROG. He is a Founder and Director of Business Development at Project Rangeet, and hopes to establish a framework in which nature and society are at peace.



### **Megan Rooney**

Megan Rooney is the Founder and Director of Education of La Escuelita Arcoiris, a Spanish Immersion Program in Pittsburgh, PA. At the forefront of La Escuelita's philosophy are the ideas of children as constructors of their own curriculum, and the joy inherent in creating and collaborating. These values guide us in our journey to become lifelong learners and competent problem solvers.



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## Acknowledgements

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The opinions expressed in this conference are those of the presenters and do not necessarily reflect the views of the William Penn foundation.