



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.



Addressing Equity Issues Through Playful Learning

**February 4, 2021
3-5 PM (ET)**

The freedom to play improves children's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive skills. All children deserve equitable opportunities to experience the joy of playful learning. This workshop will focus on resources and strategies to promote equitable and meaningful learning opportunities.

Opening and Introduction – Dr. Helen Hadani

Featured Speakers

**Dr. Nikole Hollins-Sims, Pennsylvania Training and Technical
Assistance Network**

Dr. Mandy Maguire, University of Texas at Dallas

Q&A with Panel – Dr. Helen Hadani

Breakout Rooms for Discussion

Closing and Feedback – Dr. Helen Hadani



Moderator

Dr. Helen Shwe Hadani

As a fellow at the Brookings Institution, Helen leads Playful Learning Landscapes—an initiative that brings together the fields of developmental science and placemaking with the goal of improving child and community outcomes. She has more than 20 years of experience in research and has worked with toy and media companies, including Disney, Sesame Workshop, Apple, LEGO, and Fisher-Price. Helen holds a Bachelor of Arts in Cognitive Science from the University of Rochester and a Doctorate in Psychology from Stanford University.

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Dr. Nikole Hollins-Sims

Nikole Y. Hollins-Sims, Ed.D., is an educational consultant for the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN)-Harrisburg Office. She currently serves as the co-statewide lead for the Behavior initiative, as well as an active member of the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) initiative. In addition, she is a Special Advisor for Equity for the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Dr. Hollins-Sims is also involved in the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) with a focus on increasing the graduation rates of students with disabilities. Finally, Dr. Hollins-Sims is a Pennsylvania certified school psychologist with a specific interest in social justice. She has also conducted research around caregivers of children of incarcerated parents and their motivation to engage in family-school partnerships.



Dr. Mandy Maguire

Dr. Maguire is an associate professor at the University of Texas at Dallas. Her research explores language development using behavioral and neural measures. Her current work focuses on how and why poverty influences language development in the school years.

Talk Overview: In this presentation we will discuss current findings related to how and why poverty impacts brain development as well as new insights into how we can use brain function to guide interventions such as Playful Learning Landscapes. Yvonne Ralph is joining Dr. Maguire to facilitate the discussion.



Acknowledgements

We'd like to thank the William Penn Foundation for supporting this initiative. We express our gratitude to all of the speakers for their time and expertise and to Kevin Conner from the Allegheny Intermediate Unit for tech hosting the conference. Our appreciation to our Trying Together planning team including Maria Pisano, Emily Neff, and Cara Ciminillo, and to our Playful Learning Landscapes Action Network team including Doug Piper, Rachael Todaro, Ph.D., and Shelly Kessler. Without you, this couldn't have been possible. Finally, thank you to all who attended this conference and support playful learning in their communities.

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