

FIFTH ANNUAL SCHOOL READINESS SYMPOSIUM

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY: A KEY TO SCHOOL READINESS

SATURDAY, APRIL 25, 2009



PROGRAM

8:30—9 a.m.	Registration and Continental Breakfast	<i>(Forum)</i>
9—9:45 a.m.	Welcome and Introduction	<i>(Board Room)</i>
	Richard Moniuszko, Deputy Superintendent, Fairfax County Public Schools Anne-Marie Twohie, Acting Director, Fairfax County Office for Children Vera Steiner Blore, Executive Director, Fairfax Futures	
	Morning Keynote: Roberta Golinkoff, H. Rodney Sharp Chair in the School of Education, University of Delaware	
9:45—10 a.m.	Break / Resource Rooms	<i>(Room 7 and Room 8)</i>
10—11:30 a.m.	Breakout Sessions	
	Kathy Buerk and Jolie McHenry , Child Play Center, Harrisburg, PA Facilitating Play with Infants Through Nature and Technology	<i>(Rooms 4/5)</i>
	Roberta Golinkoff , University of Delaware, Newark, DE Playing Around	<i>(Board Room)</i>
	Joan Isenberg , George Mason University, Fairfax, VA The Role of Play for Elementary School Children: What, Why and How?	<i>(Rooms 2/3)</i>
	Sylvia Zwi , Oyster-Adams Bilingual School, Washington, DC Playful Thinking, Active Learning	<i>(Rooms 9/10)</i>
11:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.	Lunch Resource Rooms	<i>(Forum)</i> <i>(Room 7 and Room 8)</i>
12:30—1:30 p.m.	Presentation of School Readiness Educator Awards	<i>(Board Room)</i>
	Afternoon Keynote: Stuart Brown, Founder, National Institute for Play, Carmel Valley, CA	

SPEAKERS

STUART BROWN

Trained in general and internal medicine, psychiatry and clinical research, Stuart's years of clinical practice affirmed the importance and need for healthy play throughout the human life cycle. His later evaluation of highly creative individuals revealed the centrality of playfulness to their success and well-being. Stuart was the instigator and executive producer of the three-part PBS series, "The Promise of Play." His experience as medical administrator, producer, and scientific consultant or creator to numerous other productions, plus his scientific and popular writings, have identified him as the foremost "practical champion of the knowledge of play." His newest book, released in March and co-authored with Christopher Vaughan, is *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*.

KATHY BUERK

Kathy is an assistant group supervisor for an infant classroom at Harrisburg Area Community College in Pennsylvania where she has been working for the past 10 years. She has also served as a child care specialist, trainer and mentor for students studying early childhood education. Kathy has presented many training sessions related to infant and toddler development on topics such as science, math, nature, communication, technology, cultural diversity and creative arts. Kathy is co-author of the article "Infants and Toddlers Meet the Natural World" which was published in NAEYC's *Beyond the Journal: Young Children on the Web*, in January 2008.

ROBERTA MICHNICK GOLINKOFF

Roberta holds the H. Rodney Sharp Chair in the School of Education at the University of Delaware and is also a member of the Departments of Psychology and Linguistics. She directs the Infant Language Project, whose goal it is to understand how children tackle the amazing feat of learning language. She has started another line of research on the benefits of play believing that children learn best through play and when their learning is embedded in a playful context. Roberta is frequently quoted in newspapers and magazines as a scientific advocate for children. She has appeared on Good Morning America, CNN, many regional television morning shows and hundreds of radio programs around the country. She has written dozens of journal articles, chapters and academic books and presents at professional conferences all over the world. Among her many books is *Mandate for Playful Learning*.

JOAN ISENBERG

Joan is Associate Dean for Outreach and Professional Development and Professor of Education in the College of Education and Human Development at George Mason University. Prior to her appointment as Associate Dean at George Mason, Joan was responsible for designing and developing the early childhood licensure and post-licensure programs and the advanced master's degree program aligned with standards from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Her primary teaching interests include teaching and learning, arts integration and teacher research. Before joining the Mason faculty, Joan taught young children and held administrative positions in both public and private school settings. She has published books, journal articles and review articles on early childhood education and early childhood teacher education, particularly in the areas of teachers' professional development, early childhood curriculum and arts integration. All of her writings and publications are integrally connected with her teaching.

JOLIE MCHENRY

Jolie is an infant education specialist at Harrisburg Area Community College in Pennsylvania and serves as the lead infant teacher. She helped develop the infant program as part of the lab school for the college in 2005. She also serves as an adjunct faculty member, child care specialist, behavior specialist, trainer and mentor to early childhood education students. Jolie received her Bachelor of Science degree in early/elementary education from Bloomsburg University and her Master of Education degree in teaching and curriculum from Pennsylvania State University. Jolie is co-author of the article "Infants and Toddlers Meet the Natural World" which was published in NAEYC's *Beyond the Journal: Young Children on the Web*, in January 2008.

SYLVIA ZWI

Sylvia arrived in New York from Brazil over two decades ago and has established herself as a dynamic and innovative educator. Among many disciplines and schools, she taught at Woodmere Academy and Stecher and Horowitz School for the Arts in Long Island, NY. Throughout her 17 years in D.C., she has been active with numerous arts organizations including Levine School of Music, Wolf Trap Institute, Sitar Arts Center and the Choral Arts Society. Sylvia is a music teacher at Oyster-Adams Bilingual School (DCPS - English/Spanish) and provides professional training in both English and Spanish for Fairfax County Office for Children. With the support of the U.S. Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Arts, she has taught in regular classrooms as well as participating in several pilot projects such as F.L.O.C., The Devereux Foundation, Project DAISY, Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Project Opportunity, Project Family and Zero to Three. Sylvia has a private studio of piano students and is a consultant for arts in education and arts integration.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Facilitating Play with Infants Through Nature and Technology

Rooms 4/5

Kathy Buerk and Jolie McHenry, Child Play Center, Harrisburg, PA

This session explores the introduction of scientific materials from nature for infants to investigate. Through teacher-guided, hands-on explorations, the path for lifelong learning can be created. When practitioners introduce nature in the earliest stages of development, young minds will be open to new ideas and skills. Learning through nature can provide infants with experiences that lead to a greater understanding of our dependence on the earth's physical environment. Incorporating play and investigations of nature can provide opportunities for infants to grow in all areas of development. Also, learn about ideas related to introducing technology into the classroom by providing young children with materials that they see in their every day lives.

Playing Around

Board Room

Roberta Golinkoff, University of Delaware, Newark, DE

Play is unpredictable and learning opportunities are everywhere! Together, we will think about how to find those delicious teachable moments in everyday experiences that delight children and fuel their curiosity. Places you would never imagine are magical for children when we see them through a playful learning lens. We will also think about how we are meeting the "6Cs" in our programs - the skills children will need to be successful in this new century's work force.

The Role of Play for Elementary School Children: What, Why and How?

Rooms 2/3

Joan Isenberg, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA

At a time when children are under increased pressure to focus on academics, often beginning earlier than preschool, and play is sometimes viewed as "a waste of time" in school, there is little time for young children to actively engage in playful learning. In this breakout session, participants will find out how to balance child-initiated play with more focused experiential learning that is guided by teachers.

Playful Thinking, Active Learning

Rooms 9/10

Sylvia Zwi, Oyster-Adams Bilingual School, Washington, DC

Through play, children rehearse the patterns and social behaviors they experience everyday including emotions, language, communication, relationships, interactions and critical thinking. Explore how best to encourage self-initiated play to support children's imagining, creating, inventing and transforming – all components of active learning. Through movement, songs, literature and language, this breakout session will help participants explore the active world of playful thinking.