

Reflecting on the PEDAL Play Conference 2022

On **8th September 2022**, we were thrilled to welcome over 100 attendees to the Donald McIntyre Building to discuss all things play at our first in-person conference since the pandemic.

This event gave guests the opportunity to engage with cutting edge research & practice in the fields of play in different cultures, learning environments, and promoting positive health and wellbeing outcomes for young people. Alongside breakout sessions, PEDAL staff and students showcased their own work with research posters and short tours of our purpose-built Play Observation Lab. We were also delighted to be joined by colleagues from the LEGO Foundation, whose generous funding makes events like this possible.

We welcomed speakers from across the UK and abroad to take part, each of whom offered a unique perspective on play's key issues.

We were especially excited to be joined by the following **keynote speakers**, who flew in from the Netherlands and the United States respectively to share their research with us:

[Marian Bakermans-Kranenburg](#) - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (Clinical Child and Family Studies) and Leiden University:

'Play and more: links between behaviour and neurobiology in new fathers'

[Ben Mardell](#) - Project Director of the Pedagogy of Play at Harvard University, in collaboration with the LEGO Foundation and the International School of Billund:

'Pedagogy of Play: What playful learning involves (and why it is important)'

Our other speakers included:

Laura Walsh from Starlight: 'Play as resilience, play as mastery; supporting practitioners and families across the UK.'

Helen Dodd from the University of Exeter: 'The links between play and children's mental health.'

Gina Gomez de la Cuesta from Play Included: 'Using LEGO bricks to support social and emotional wellbeing in neurodivergent children: An introduction to the Brick-by-Brick® programme.'

Kate Cowan and **Yinka Olusoga** from UCL: 'Young children's play experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic: Insights from the play observatory.'

We also heard from some of the fantastic emerging researchers in the PEDAL Centre, including:

Kelsey Graber. 'Children's perspectives and experiences of play in hospital.'

Zhen Rao. 'Play and emotion in Chinese children: research findings and reflections.'

Domnick Okullo. 'Exploring the perceptions of teachers and parents on the use of play-based pedagogy in Kenya.'

Beth Barker. 'Children's voices in research.'

We'll be posting presentations from this event to our YouTube channel over the next few weeks, so make sure to subscribe using the link below to stay updated!



[**PEDAL on YouTube**](#)

Subscribe to our YouTube channel to keep up to date with all of the latest news, events and activities happening at PEDAL.



[**Play Pieces**](#)

Got a question about play?

Check out our 'Play Pieces' – short blogs written by the PEDAL team and other play specialists that summarise current and trustworthy research evidence to answer play's biggest questions.

Recent News



[Exploring 'Encanto' and intergenerational trauma](#)

21 September 2022

A new research paper published by PEDAL PhD student Sydney Conroy, entitled 'Narrative Matters: Encanto and intergenerational trauma', suggests that engaging with popular children's films might be the key to unlocking conversations around intergenerational trauma with young people and their families. In her analysis of the 2021 Disney hit, Conroy highlights that the relationship between [...]



[PEDAL's Dr Ciara Lavery in PlayFutures webinar](#)

28 March 2018

Watch the webinar about playing with infants and toddlers, featuring Dr Vicky Leong (Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge), Dr Ciara Lavery (Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge), and Dr Melissa Scarpate (Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge).

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