

Call for Participation:



Designing for Play in New Nordic Childhood

The recognition of the importance of play in childhood is deeply rooted in the Nordic research on child culture, who has not least defended children's right to free and unguided play as a basic condition for the development of fantasy, creativity, social skills, and many other vital life skills. The idea of play as having something to say about developing a holistic being, has recently gained new attention in conjunction with a rising concern about an uncertain future in a rapidly changing world. Human life skills, and as part hereof play, are currently becoming a matter of growing interest in pedagogical debates, in research, and even in the political agenda when looking for answers to new challenges. We are seemingly in the beginning of a revival of some of the essential values that BIN Norden research network has promoted for decades: Play, children's culture, aesthetic and creative activities.

At the same time the conditions for children's play has changed fundamentally. Childhood has not escaped the many changes contemporary societies has undergone, socially, culturally, demographically and physically. We have seen a decline of children's traditional and self-governed play culture as space and time unguarded play has become scarce, replaced by monitored places in daycare, kindergarten, schools and at home. It is increasingly difficult to maintain the advocacy for free play understood as unguarded play, free from adults and professional caregivers, and it seems unlikely that any defense of play will be able to reverse the many societal changes during recent history. This creates new challenges for contemporary play research and practice if we still want to promote free play and harvest the benefits.

The question is: How can we design for play, driven by the participants – without sacrificing play by turning it into a means for planned learning of, for example, creativity? While the question is not entirely new, since most places and equipment for play today are designed, the conditions for children's play are as mentioned changed, which calls for higher consciousness on how places, equipment, environments, toys, media, etc. can generate (free) play under these conditions.

Design for play in that sense demands high awareness on how we think and define play in theory as well as in everyday practice. It is our assertion that much of the existing design for

play, for example toys, play equipment, and playgrounds, is based on intuitions and traditions, and there is a need for empirical and theoretical play research that can inform design. Furthermore, material design is only a precondition. Even in the best designed playgrounds children's play are dependent on how the caregivers understand play and manage activities with more or less prohibitions and rules.

With the conference we wish to initiate a discussion of design for play that take as a starting point the existing conditions for children's play in present-day society.

Possible themes/topics for abstracts, panels, demos and workshops include:

- Play in children's everyday life
- Play and technology
- Play and materialities
- Play and creativity
- Playful in institutional settings
- Play and music
- Playful didactics
- Play as aesthetic practices
- Play as a democratic practice
- Play and digital media
- Designing for play
- Play as business
- Play and education
- Play and humour

The conference is aimed at researchers, educators and others with an interest in design, play, education, and child culture research. Students with relevant research projects are also encouraged to submit contributions to the conference. The aim of the Nordic conference is to strengthen the Nordic community on child culture research and promote the formation of a Nordic network of researchers bringing child culture research and design research together.

Conference language is English.

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Submission Guidelines:

Abstracts:

Submission deadline - March 15 2020

Camera ready version- September 1 2020

Abstracts must not exceed 1500 words ex. reference list and should include the following:

- Introduction
- Research question
- Theory
- Method
- Results
- Conclusion

Submissions for review should be anonymized. All submissions will go through a double-blind review process. All accepted abstracts will be published in the conference proceedings. Publication of the abstracts is dependent on there being at least one author of the abstract registered and participated in the conference.

Selected abstracts will be invited to a full paper in a special issue of <https://www.conjunctions-tjcp.com> or BUKS <https://tidsskrift.dk/buks>

Workshop proposals:

Submission Deadline - April 15 2020

We invite workshops related to the overall theme of the conference. Workshops provide a forum for in-depth discussions, resource exchange and networking related to specific topics. Because focused interaction among participants is important, participants should have informed positions based on prior experience, as expressed in their position papers. Workshops should not be miniature paper presentation sessions, but focus on community building and communal knowledge creation. Workshops are an opportunity to create a session where relation to the practice of playfulness becomes apparent. Therefore, organizers of workshops are encouraged to plan for a session, where participants will be involved in playful practices that can be used in practical situations in for example, but not limited to, day-care, school, higher education etc.

Workshops will run the 3rd day of the conference in Copenhagen. A workshop session has a length of one hour and thirty minutes. Typically, it has 15 to 20 participants with a minimum of 8 participants (organizers not included).

Panel proposals should include:

- The title of the session and a description of the content (max. 500 words)
- 3-5 keywords (continues in next page)

