Friday 20 November 2026

London, Royal National Hotel · hybrid (in person and online) · early-morning sessions online only

All times are UK time (GMT)
Full programme, Zoom access and live updates in the Whova app

Session (hybrid) · Online only · OECD · ParentBench · Be Brave · Voices of Children Pedagogy™ Summit · Breaks & Poster Gallery

The Vision Room

10:00–10:30
When Childhood Glows: How Changing Environments Are Shaping Young Brains
Sam Wass

10:30–12:00
AI Is Advising Parents. What Is It Telling Them? Launching ParentBench: The World's First Open Benchmark of AI-Generated Parenting Advice
Chair: Will Quince · Rob Hughes, Alastair van Heerden, Jun Zhao, Emily Goodacre, Karina Rios Michel, Sweta Shah

12:00–14:30
OECD High-Level Roundtable: Partnerships for Inclusive Development. Strengthening Global Collaboration for the Future of Early Childhood & Primary Education
Chair: James Searjeant · Co-chair: Sean Slade · OECD lead discussant: Esme Stout · 4 contributors

14:30–16:00
BE BRAVE IN EDUCATION: A High-Level Global Think Tank on the Future of Education
Convenor: James Searjeant

16:30–17:00
From Play to Peace: Building Preventive Mental Health Infrastructure Through Collective Care in Action®
Nakeya Fields

17:00–17:30
Preferences for Protagonists: Analyzing the Role of Gender in the Reading Choices of Kindergarteners
Rebecca Giles, Paige Vitulli

The Mosaic Room

07:30–08:00 ONLINE
Global Online Poster Gallery (12): Systems, Families and Futures: Reimagining Early Childhood Across the Region
Chair: Shabnam Abdoola · Rouxieanne Vermeulen, Fathiya Aish, Nasiba Hamroyeva

08:00–08:30 ONLINE
Working Towards a UAE Early Childhood Curriculum Framework
Youqian Chen

09:30–10:00 ONLINE
Building Inclusive Families: Raising Inclusive Children
Sarah Mead Jasperse, Mariam Al Marzooqi

10:30–11:00
What Difference Does Light Make? Exploring Attention, Contingency, Stimulation and Participation in Early Childhood
Adam Marycz

11:00–11:30
Developing a Decolonising and Liberating Curriculum Audit Framework: Advancing Equity, Inclusion and Global Perspectives in Early Years and Primary Education
Gideon Sappor, Eirini Gkouskou

11:30–12:00
Starcatchers Voice of the Baby: Transforming Early Years Practice
Amy Hall Gibson, Rhona Matheson

12:00–12:30
Listen to Me: Building a Global Story Circle Through Children's Voices, Storytelling and Creative Exchange
Gorana Henry, Elinah Matenda, Noria Muchembere, Astina Dani

12:30–13:00
From Curriculum Delivery to Learning Design: How Hybrid AI Can Coach Playoneering in the Early Years
Hayley Peacock, Jen Poulton

LUNCH BREAK & POSTER GALLERY · Windsor Suite · see page 2

14:00–14:30
Mentorship in Motion: Cultivating Reflective, Sustainable Practice in Early Years Classrooms
Kerry Drake

14:30–15:00
Once Upon an Algorithm: AI-Generated Stories as Tools for Emotional Regulation in Early Childhood
Annemieke Lais

15:00–15:30
Play, Empathy and Possibility: Theatre Tools for Creative Classrooms
Laura James

15:30–16:00
The Relationship Between Motor Development and Self-Efficacy in Early EAL Contexts: Integrating Practice and Theory from a Neurofunctional Perspective
Maho Kabasawa, Elke Landrock

COFFEE BREAK & POSTER GALLERY · Windsor Suite

16:30–17:00
Clarifying the Concept of Early Childhood to Unify the Standards, Competencies, and Practices that Shape the Profession Worldwide
Isabel Lainez

17:00–17:30 ONLINE
Picturing Priorities: A Child-Led Inquiry in Türkiye's Container Camps
Lucy Bassett

The Discovery Room

07:30–08:00 ONLINE
From Protection to Participation: Social and Emotional Learning and Children's Digital Rights
Garene Kaloustian, Joe Khalil

08:00–08:30 ONLINE
Global Online Poster Gallery (13): Play, Agency and Creativity: From STEAM and AI to Early Literacy
Chair: Maisa Almatrafi · Aikaterini Akritidou, Mona Jomaa

09:30–10:00 ONLINE
Babilou/Blossom Pedagogy in Action: From Vision to Everyday Practice
Maha Eid

10:30–11:00
Beyond Access: Why Cultural Responsiveness Must Be the Next Global Commitment in Nature-Based Early Childhood Education
Deja Jones

11:00–11:30
Beyond the Classroom: Inclusive Outdoor and STEAM Pathways for Autistic and Neurodivergent Learners
Janet Packer

11:30–12:00
From Chaos to Connection: Using Music to Restore and Revive Early Learning Settings
Melissa Smile, Adam Isaacs

12:00–12:30
Creative Learning: beyond enrichment to curriculum core
Paul Hougham

12:30–13:00
Responding in parallel to dual education priorities of humanitarian response and system building: The advancement of Early Childhood Education and Care in Ukraine
Louise Ruskin, Maryna Stoliar

14:00–14:30
From Compliance and Control to Collaboration and Connection in a Digital World
Samantha Dholakia

14:30–15:00
Child-Led Play in the Age of Autoplay Protecting Curiosity, Agency & Imagination in a Digital World
Sue Atkins

15:00–15:30
The Outdoors as an Inspiring Learning Environment for Early Years
Sirpa Turves-Mankila

15:30–16:00
Enhancing Early Childhood Learning Environments: Integrating PERS and CERS with ECERS-3 within a Vygotskian Framework
Nahla Gahwaji

16:30–17:00
Rethinking Practice: Educator Self-Awareness as an Innovation in Early Learning
Dhruti Dholakia

17:00–17:30
Rethinking Taboos: Educator Attitudes on Death Education - A Canadian Perspective
Delaney Carriere

Interactive Learning Arena open 11:00–16:00 · Poster Gallery programme and Arena stations: see page 2

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POSTER GALLERY LONDON · Windsor Suite · screens L1–L3

Lunch Break & Poster Gallery London · Windsor Suite — 13:00–14:00

13:15–13:25	L1	**A journey towards capturing the voices and lived experiences of our youngest children with SEND: A hermeneutic phenomenological study.** Hannah McCormack · United Kingdom
13:15–13:25	L2	**From Vision to System Reform: Reimagining Early Childhood Education in Public Sector Education, Punjab Pakistan** Sana Zulqarnain, Khurram Shahzad · Pakistan
13:15–13:25	L3	**When the Policy No Longer Fits** Lisa Low · United Kingdom
13:25–13:35	L1	**Seeing Through Their Lenses: Perspectives of Kindergarten Teachers on Implementing Purposeful Play for Children's Academic and Developmental Learning** Subarna Basu · Pennsylvania
13:25–13:35	L2	**Documenting Children's Free Play in Singapore: An Approach to Understanding Cross-Cultural Expressions of Agency** Hui Wen Chin · Singapore
13:25–13:35	L3	**Parental Perceptions of Outdoor Play Engagement in Toddlers in an Urban City of India** Rujuta Bhave · United States
13:35–13:45	L1	**Piecing Together Perspectives: Friendship, Conflict and Collaboration in a Grade Two Classroom** Madonna Chidwick · United Kingdom
13:45–13:55	L1	**Voice it up! Participation, Inclusion and well-being in early childhood education: from the perspectives of professionals to the voices of children** Susana Sousa · Portugal
13:45–13:55	L2	**Play Material Development: Engaging parents and communities for their children** Shariful Alam · Bangladesh
13:45–13:55	L3	**Nothing Becomes Alone: The Conditions Lens™ and the Modern Ecology of Children's Voice, Agency and Becoming** Thomas Mountney · Ireland

Coffee Break & Poster Gallery London · Windsor Suite — 16:00–16:30

16:05–16:15	L1	**Walking With Children: Making Young Children's Thinking and Voices Visible Through Pedagogical Documentation in Nature** Allison Trapp · United States
16:05–16:15	L2	**Exploring Educational Equity in Early Childhood Education: Emerging Insights from Rural and Urban Saudi Kindergarten Teachers** Anjad Bensalloom · United Kingdom
16:05–16:15	L3	**Creative Learning: beyond enrichment to curriculum core** Paul Hougham · United Kingdom

Each poster presentation lasts 10 minutes, including questions.

INTERACTIVE LEARNING ARENA · 11:00–16:00

Drop in throughout the day: explore, play, ask questions and take ideas back to your practice.

HANDS-ON STATION — 11:00–16:00

Developing Computational thinking skills in the early years

It is widely understood that developing Computational thinking skills supports all areas of learning across the curriculum. This session will explore how curated (screen free!) technology resources in an early years setting can promote the development of Abstraction, Pattern recognition, Algorithmic design and Decomposition skills, what they are, and why the underpin our ability to problem solve in all areas of learning. Hands-on sessions will run every hour in the Interactive Learning Arena , each welcoming a small group of educators to explore the resources, try practical activities and consider how to apply them in their own practice.

Gemma Koch · presented by TTS

11:00 · 12:00 · 13:00 · 14:00 · 15:00

Hourly hands-on sessions for small groups of educators

DISCOVERY STATION — 11:00–16:00

Playoneering World: Where Children's Curiosity, Environments and Educators Grow Together

The Playoneering World App is an AI-supported platform bringing enquiry-led, play-based pedagogy into everyday practice. Built on over sixteen years of Playoneering practice developed by Hayley Peacock, it connects children's curiosity, intentionally designed learning environments and educators' professional development. In partnership with the Bright Start Foundation and within the framework of Voices of Children Pedagogy™, Playoneering World provides a way to capture and document children's voices, questions, ideas and emerging theories, making their thinking visible and helping educators build meaningful enquiries around what matters to children.

Jen Poulton, Hayley Peacock · Playoneering®

MEET & LEARN — 11:00–16:00

Khalifa International Award for Early Learning 2027: Meet the Team

Discover the Khalifa International Award for Early Learning 2027, learn about the opportunities it offers and meet the team to ask your questions about the application process.

PRESENTER RESOURCE HUB — 11:00–16:00

Resources from Our Presenters. Ideas for Your Practice. Discover practical resources, tools, guides and materials shared directly by Bright Start 2026 presenters

Explore practical resources, tools, guides and materials shared by Bright Start 2026 presenters. Take away ideas and resources to inspire and support your own practice.