

FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2026 - Sessions · London & Abu Dhabi (in person) + Online					
Abu Dhabi (GMT+4)	London (GMT+0)	Vision Room	Nurture Room	Mosaic Room	Discovery Room
9:30 AM – 10:00 AM	5:30 AM – 6:00 AM	Welcome tea / coffee (Abu Dhabi)			
10:00 AM – 10:30 AM	6:00 AM – 6:30 AM	Reggio Emilia and the Third Teacher: Reimagining Early Years Spaces for Child Agency and Inquiry Tasleem Kala, Sahbi Hidri, United Arab Emirates	Protecting Children's Right to Play in a Structured World Afaf Almenhali, United Arab Emirates		
10:30 AM – 11:00 AM	6:30 AM – 7:00 AM	Mapping the Developing Mind Beyond Five: Emerging Perspectives in Early Childhood Research Fatima Boush, United Arab Emirates	A Universal Language of Play: Fostering Child-Led Inquiry Through Open-Ended Environments Youqian Chen, Ana Olguin, United Arab Emirates		
11:00 AM – 11:30 AM	7:00 AM – 7:30 AM	Beyond Furniture: Trauma-Aware, Culturally Responsive Environments That Help Children Thrive Kathryn Murray, Australia			
11:30 AM – 12:00 PM	7:30 AM – 8:00 AM		Small Voices, Tiny Fingers, Big Decisions: Curriculum Choices That Honour Child-Led Play Reema Jebril Qaralleh, United Arab Emirates		
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM	8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	Networking lunch and poster viewing (Abu Dhabi)			
1:00 PM – 1:30 PM	9:00 AM – 9:30 AM	Extending Learning Beyond the Classroom: Family Engagement and Cultural Institutions in Early Childhood Michell Hackwelder, United Arab Emirates	Teaching Science in Early Childhood Through Inquiry, STREAM, and Design-Based Thinking: Exploring Food Preservation Through Cultural Inclusion Laila N. Boisselle, Nashwa Ahmed Salem Zaiter Alameri, Aysha Khalil Abdulla Ali Alshebli, Aysha Salah Shaef Abdu Alharbi, Latifa Salem Haman Awad Al Ahbbabi, Al Yazia Surour Obaid Mohammed Alshamsi, United Arab Emirates		
1:30 PM – 2:00 PM	9:30 AM – 10:00 AM	Beyond Compliance: Rethinking Quality in Early Childhood Care and Education Louise Pagden, Angela Brown, United Kingdom			
2:00 PM – 2:30 PM	10:00 AM – 10:30 AM	When Childhood Glows: How Changing Environments Are Shaping Young Brains Prof. Sam Wass, United Kingdom			
2:30 PM – 3:00 PM	10:30 AM – 11:00 AM	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, United Kingdom Expert panellists Rob Hughes, United Kingdom Alastair van Heerden, South Africa Jun Zhao, Emily Goodacre, United Kingdom		What Difference Does Light Make? Exploring Attention, Contingency, Stimulation and Participation in Early Childhood Adam Marycz, United Kingdom	From Chaos to Connection: Using Music to Restore and Revive Early Learning Settings Melissa Smile, Adam Isaacs, Australia
3:00 PM – 3:30 PM	11:00 AM – 11:30 AM	OECD High-Level Roundtable: Partnerships for Inclusive Development. Strengthening Global Collaboration for the Future of Early Childhood & Primary Education Chair James Searjeant, United Kingdom Co-chair Sean Slade, United States OECD lead discussant Priscilla Boiardi, France Roundtable contributors H.E Humaid AlHouti, United Arab Emirates David Goodger, Rob Hughes, United Kingdom Axel Mallmann, United Arab Emirates		Starcatchers Voice of the Baby: Transforming Early Years Practice Amy Hall Gibson, Rhona Matheson, United Kingdom	
3:30 PM – 4:00 PM	11:30 AM – 12:00 PM			Beyond the Classroom: Inclusive Outdoor and STEAM Pathways for Autistic and Neurodivergent Learners Janet Packer, United Kingdom	
4:00 PM – 4:30 PM	12:00 PM – 12:30 PM			Listen to Me: Building a Global Story Circle Through Children's Voices, Storytelling and Creative Exchange Prof. Gorana Henry, United Kingdom Elinah Matenda, Noria Muchembere, Astina Dani, Zimbabwe	
4:30 PM – 5:00 PM	12:30 PM – 1:00 PM		From Curriculum Delivery to Learning Design: How Hybrid AI Can Coach Playoneering in the Early Years Hayley Peacock, Jen Poulton, United Kingdom		
5:00 PM – 6:00 PM	1:00 PM – 2:00 PM	Networking lunch and poster viewing (London)			
6:00 PM – 6:30 PM	2:00 PM – 2:30 PM	Child-Led Play in the Age of Autoplay Protecting Curiosity, Agency & Imagination in a Digital World Sue Atkins, United Kingdom	Developing a Decolonising and Liberating Curriculum Audit Framework: Advancing Equity, Inclusion and Global Perspectives in Early Years and Primary Education Prof. Gideon Sappor, Prof. Eirini Gkouskou, United Kingdom	Mentorship in Motion: Cultivating Reflective, Sustainable Practice in Early Years Classrooms Prof. Kerry Drake, Canada	BE BRAVE IN EDUCATION: A High-Level Global Think Tank on the Future of Education Convenor James Searjeant, United Kingdom
6:30 PM – 7:00 PM	2:30 PM – 3:00 PM	The Outdoors as an Inspiring Learning Environment for Early Years Sirpa Turves-Mankila, Finland	Play as Pedagogy: Supporting Children's Voice, Agency, and Cognitive Development Through Meaningful Play Angela Bayer Persico, United States	Once Upon an Algorithm: AI-Generated Stories as Tools for Emotional Regulation in Early Childhood Annemieke Lais, Germany	
7:00 PM – 7:30 PM	3:00 PM – 3:30 PM	Enhancing Early Childhood Learning Environments: Integrating PERS and CERS with ECERS-3 within a Vygotskian Framework Nahla Gahwaji, Saudi Arabia	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, United Kingdom Maryna Stoliar, Ukraine		
7:30 PM – 8:00 PM	3:30 PM – 4:00 PM	From Play to Peace: Building Preventive Mental Health Infrastructure Through Collective Care in Action® Nakeya Fields, United States	From Compliance and Control to Collaboration and Connection in a Digital World Samantha Dholakia, United Kingdom	The Relationship Between Motor Development and Self-Efficacy in Early EAL Contexts: Integrating Practice and Theory from a Neurofunctional Perspective Maho Kabasawa, Japan Elke Landrock, Germany	
8:00 PM – 8:30 PM	4:00 PM – 4:30 PM	Coffee and poster viewing (London)			
8:30 PM – 9:00 PM	4:30 PM – 5:00 PM	Preferences for Protagonists: Analyzing the Role of Gender in the Reading Choices of Kindergarteners Prof. Rebecca Giles, Prof. Paige Vitulli, United States	Rethinking Taboos: Educator Attitudes on Death Education - A Canadian Perspective Delaney Carriere, Canada	Clarifying the Concept of Early Childhood to Unify the Standards, Competencies, and Practices that Shape the Profession Worldwide Prof. Isabel Lainez, United States	
9:00 PM – 9:30 PM	5:00 PM – 5:30 PM	Picturing Priorities: A Child-Led Inquiry in Türkiye's Container Camps Prof. Lucy Bassett, United States	Beyond Access: Why Cultural Responsiveness Must Be the Next Global Commitment in Nature-Based Early Childhood Education Deja Jones, United States	Rethinking Practice: Educator Self-Awareness as an Innovation in Early Learning Dhruti Dholakia, United States	
INTERACTIVE LEARNING ARENA · Open 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM London (3:00 PM – 8:00 PM Abu Dhabi) · runs alongside all sessions					
Open 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM London	Khalifa International Award Meet & Learn · Khalifa International Award for Early Learning 2027: Meet the Team		TTS: Hands-On Station Developing Computational thinking skills in the early years Gemma Koch, United Kingdom	Playoneering: Discovery Station Playoneering World: Where Children's Curiosity, Environments and Educators Grow Together Jen Poulton, Hayley Peacock, United Kingdom	Presenter Resource Hub Resources, tools, guides and materials shared directly by Bright Start 2026 presenters

FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2026 - Global Poster Gallery · London & Abu Dhabi				
Abu Dhabi (GMT+4)	London (GMT+0)	Venue	Screen	Poster title & presenter(s)
12:10 PM – 12:20 PM	8:10 AM – 8:20 AM	Abu Dhabi	A2	Mothers, Communities and Anganwadis: Community-Centred Early Learning at Scale in India Brototy Mishra , India
12:20 PM – 12:30 PM	8:20 AM – 8:30 AM	Abu Dhabi	A1	Teachers’ Perceptions of Play and Early Literacy Development in a Dubai Elementary School Mona Jomaa , United Arab Emirates
12:30 PM – 12:40 PM	8:30 AM – 8:40 AM	Abu Dhabi	A1	From Dependence to Agency: Protecting Children's Capacity to Think, Initiate, and Participate in Early Childhood (Ages 3-6) Maisa Almatrafi , Saudi Arabia
12:30 PM – 12:40 PM	8:30 AM – 8:40 AM	Abu Dhabi	A2	Culturally Responsive Parent Coaching Models for Speech and Language Intervention in Multicultural Families in the UAE Shabnam Abdoola , Rouxjeanne Vermeulen , United Arab Emirates
12:30 PM – 12:40 PM	8:30 AM – 8:40 AM	Abu Dhabi	A3	From Fragmentation to a Unified System: Bahrain's National Reform of Early Childhood Education from Birth to School Entry Fathiya Aish , Bahrain
12:40 PM – 12:50 PM	8:40 AM – 8:50 AM	Abu Dhabi	A2	Future Innovative Preschool: A Laboratory-Based, Competency-Centred Learning Ecosystem for Real-Life Learning Nasiba Hamroyeva , Uzbekistan
5:15 PM – 5:25 PM	1:15 PM – 1:25 PM	London	L1	A journey towards capturing the voices and lived experiences of our youngest children with SEND: A hermeneutic phenomenological study. Hannah McCormack , United Kingdom
5:15 PM – 5:25 PM	1:15 PM – 1:25 PM	London	L2	From Vision to System Reform: Reimagining Early Childhood Education in Public Sector Education, Punjab Pakistan Sana Zulqarnain , Khurram Shahzad , Pakistan
5:15 PM – 5:25 PM	1:15 PM – 1:25 PM	London	L3	When the Policy No Longer Fits Lisa Catherine Low , United Kingdom
5:25 PM – 5:35 PM	1:25 PM – 1:35 PM	London	L1	Seeing Through Their Lenses: Perspectives of Kindergarten Teachers on Implementing Purposeful Play for Children’s Academic and Developmental Learning Subarna Basu , United States
5:25 PM – 5:35 PM	1:25 PM – 1:35 PM	London	L2	Documenting Children’s Free Play in Singapore: An Approach to Understanding Cross-Cultural Expressions of Agency Hui Wen Chin , Singapore
5:25 PM – 5:35 PM	1:25 PM – 1:35 PM	London	L3	Parental Perceptions of Outdoor Play Engagement in Toddlers in an Urban City of India Rujuta Bhave , United States
5:35 PM – 5:45 PM	1:35 PM – 1:45 PM	London	L1	Piecing Together Perspectives: Friendship, Conflict and Collaboration in a Grade Two Classroom Madonna Chidwick , United Kingdom
5:35 PM – 5:45 PM	1:35 PM – 1:45 PM	London	L3	Hands-On Minds in an AI-Led World Iris Sofikiti , Greece
5:45 PM – 5:55 PM	1:45 PM – 1:55 PM	London	L1	Voice it up! Participation, Inclusion and well-being in early childhood education: from the perspectives of professionals to the voices of children Susana Martins Sousa , Portugal
5:45 PM – 5:55 PM	1:45 PM – 1:55 PM	London	L2	Play Material Development: Engaging parents and communities for their children Shariful Alam , Bangladesh
5:45 PM – 5:55 PM	1:45 PM – 1:55 PM	London	L3	Nothing Becomes Alone: The Conditions Lens™ and the Modern Ecology of Children’s Voice, Agency and Becoming Thomas Mountney , Ireland
8:05 PM – 8:15 PM	4:05 PM – 4:15 PM	London	L1	Walking With Children: Making Young Children’s Thinking and Voices Visible Through Pedagogical Documentation in Nature Allison Trapp , United States
8:05 PM – 8:15 PM	4:05 PM – 4:15 PM	London	L2	Exploring Educational Equity in Early Childhood Education: Emerging Insights from Rural and Urban Saudi Kindergarten Teachers Anjad Bensalloom , United Kingdom
8:05 PM – 8:15 PM	4:05 PM – 4:15 PM	London	L3	Creative Learning: beyond enrichment to curriculum core Paul Hougham , United Kingdom