



LEARNING IS  
*Child's Play*

2018 MONTESSORI  
EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE



Saturday & Sunday, 17-18 March 2018  
QT Gold Coast, 7 Staghorn Avenue, Surfers Paradise QLD 4217



## SCHEDULE

### SATURDAY 17 MARCH 2018

8:00am – 8:45am	Registration & Exhibitors
8:45am – 9:00am	Conference Welcome – <a href="#">Christine Harrison and Barbara Langford</a>
9:00am – 10:00am	<p><b>The Role of High-Quality Adult-Child Interactions in Promoting Physical Activity and Motor Skills in the Early Years</b> – <a href="#">Tony Okely</a></p> <p>High-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) environments are critical in optimising child health, learning, and development. Much focus has been on important domains such as school readiness, literacy, numeracy, and social and emotional wellbeing. Less is known about what constitutes a high-quality ECEC environment that will promote physical activity and motor development in children, especially the role played by interactions between educators and children. This presentation will review the evidence on the factors that are associated with high-quality physical activity and movement play environments, and how this can be measured and the results used to enhance such environments, with a specific focus on how to promote high-quality adult-child interactions in early childhood education and care settings.</p>
10:00am – 11:00am	<p><b>Montessori and Play</b> – <a href="#">Laura Flores Shaw</a></p> <p>There is no shortage of articles in the media extolling the virtues of play while demonising academic work for young children. But how do these articles define “play”? And what does the research literature actually tell us about children’s play? This talk not only provides a synthesis of the research, it also relates that research to Montessori practice. With a clear understanding of play, teachers and administrators can better explain to parents the benefits of Montessori education and ease parents’ concerns regarding work in Montessori environments.</p>
11:00am – 11:30am	Morning Tea
11:30am – 12:30pm	<p><b>Language Acquisition is Child’s Play</b> – <a href="#">Sarah Breckenridge</a></p> <p>Let us examine how children learn language and what language is. In the time since Montessori discussed the sensitive periods for learning, much has been discovered to support this observation. How is it that a child learns their mother tongue without formal tuition? How is it that the adult supports this process both consciously and subconsciously? Is this technique of learning for the child truly child’s play?</p>
12:30pm – 1:45pm	Lunch







## SCHEDULE

### SATURDAY 17 MARCH 2018 – CONTINUED

1:45pm – 2:45pm

**Play is Well-being – Well-being is Play – [Marc Armitage](#)**

The thing that children and young people do more than any other waking activity is play. They spend more time playing than eating, or being at school or kindergarten, more than resting, watching TV or playing on computer games – and they always have done. There must be a reason for this, so what is it? Why does play occupy some much time and energy in children's lives and what happens to them if we take a sizeable chunk of that time away from them?

2:45pm – 3:15pm

**Outdoor Play Environments – [Bruce Fisher, Eucalyptus Montessori](#) and [Carmel Ellis, Indooroopilly Montessori Children's House](#)**

This session will showcase two Montessori outside play environments and the elements each centre has incorporated to assist with children's development and natural love of the outdoors.

3:15pm – 3:45pm

**Afternoon tea**

3:45pm – 4:45pm

**Toddlers Would Rather Work Than Play – [Peta Gibson](#)**

Dr Montessori is famously quoted as saying that "play is the work of the child" – but she didn't perceive play and work quite the same way that most people do. This keynote will discuss the way young children's play develops. How do we create an environment where free play can thrive? And how can we create the respectful and trusting relationships that toddlers need to feel safe enough to play and work independently? As Dr Montessori herself said "The wise mother will remember that play time is never wasted. So long as the children are busily absorbed, they are working on their own development – for children would rather work than play"

4:45pm – 5:00pm

**Raffle Draw and Closing – [Christine Harrison](#) and [Barbara Langford](#)**

5:00pm – 7:00pm

**Conference Reception**





## SCHEDULE

### SUNDAY 18 MARCH 2018

8:30am – 9:30am

Exhibitors

Delegates select one of the following concurrent sessions to attend (sessions are continued after Morning Tea Break):

#### SESSION 1

9:30am – 11:00am

##### **WORKSHOP 1: Facilitating Effective Play and Identifying Problematic Play Behaviours** – [Laura Flores Shaw](#)

Based on our understanding of play as described in the keynote Montessori and Play, how can practitioners facilitate effective play in a variety of situations? And which play behaviours may be indicative of potential developmental issues for a child? This workshop provides concrete tools teachers can use to foster effective play behaviours as well as help them identify behaviours that may require further evaluation.

##### **WORKSHOP 2: Communicating Effectively with the Child Under Three** – [Sarah Breckenridge](#)

Having gained some insight into how the child learns language, we will look more closely into how we, as the adult, can support this both in the actual words we use and how it is delivered. We will examine what words, body language and attitude communicate to the child and how to do this supporting the learning of language itself, emotional regulation and cultural acquisition.

##### **WORKSHOP 3: The Play Cycle** – [Marc Armitage](#)

This session explores the role of the adult in children's play and tackles the tricky question of when and how to intervene when children are playing. It also looks at the cycle of the playing child from an initial invitation to play, or 'play-cue' from the child to the 'play return' from the fellow play-mate or the adult.

11:00am – 11:45am

Morning Tea & Exhibitors

#### SESSION 2:

11:45am – 12:45pm

##### **WORKSHOP 1: Facilitating Effective Play and Identifying Problematic Play Behaviours** (Repeat of Session 1, Workshop 1) – [Laura Flores Shaw](#)

Based on our understanding of play as described in the keynote Montessori and Play, how can practitioners facilitate effective play in a variety of situations? And which play behaviours may be indicative of potential developmental issues for a child? This workshop provides concrete tools teachers can use to foster effective play behaviours as well as help them identify behaviours that may require further evaluation.

##### **WORKSHOP 2: Peaceful Toddlers: What Makes A Toddler Behave Like A Toddler?** – [Peta Gibson](#)

In this workshop will explore how to observe and support a very young child's earliest attempts to learn to follow social rules (or socialisation) during the period of development that Dr Silvana Montanaro called the Crisis of Opposition. We will focus on:

- How we can help toddler's through difficult situations without power struggles?
- How to handle tantrums
- How to manage conflict between toddlers
- Is it developmentally appropriate to expect toddlers to share?
- How the adult-toddler relationship based on cooperation and trust supports socialisation and the toddler's desire to be at peace with himself and others

"Real collaboration comes only from those who do not feel overpowered and can contribute freely. We are not risking anything by offering choices, while the child gains very much." Dr Montanaro.

##### **WORKSHOP 3: The Child as a Conscious Worker** – [Pam Nunn](#)

'Work – fun, effortless or tiresome? Dr Maria Montessori explained that learning for the child is a pathway from Unconscious Creator to Conscious Worker. How does that play out in our Centres today?



## OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES



### CONFERENCE RECEPTION

Come and play with us on the Calypso Terrace to celebrate this year's conference and the balmy nights of the twinkling Gold Coast. We'll party under the stars with music, food and fun after the first day of the conference on Saturday, 17 March from 5:00pm-7:00pm. Make sure you tick option box when you register so we'll know you'll be there.

### FRIDAY WELCOME

For those arriving on the Friday before the conference, we welcome you to the Stingray bar and lounge from 6:00pm to meet up with fellow Montessorians, catching up with friends old and new. Stingray mixes industrial chic with splashes of pop art to create a Californian style oasis. Settle in to admire ocean views or be tempted by a cocktail, or groove to a mix of pop, soul and Latin beats with the resident DJ. Food and beverages not included, please pay your own way, but do let us know if you'll be there when you register so we can reserve a space for the group.

### SPAQ

Pamper yourself at the in-house designer spa at the QT Hotel. spaQ offers six treatment rooms, perfect for an indulgent group activity with your team or simply a nice way to relax during your stay. For prices and bookings contact the hotel spa directly on 07 5584 1108.

### PACIFIC FAIR SHOPPING CENTRE

If you have spare time during your stay, why not pop over to the Pacific Fair Shopping Centre using their free shuttle bus service from the hotel. When you get there, show your ID at the Visitor Lounge for your Visitor Privileges Pass to access to over 120 exclusive retailer offers. For details, see [www.pacificfair.com.au](http://www.pacificfair.com.au)

### MORE PLAYTIME...

If you find yourself with more time on the Gold Coast, why not watch the sunset over the hinterland or the amazing view of Surfers Paradise at Burleigh Hill. If you've had too much of the glorious beaches, duck around the corner to Tallebudgera Creek to lay under palm trees as you dip your toes in the crystal-clear waters. For sensational 360 degree views of the Gold Coast, visit the Sky Point Observation Deck. Or if getting an Australian animal selfie is your thing, check out the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary. See [www.destinationgoldcoast.com](http://www.destinationgoldcoast.com) for more.







## SPEAKERS



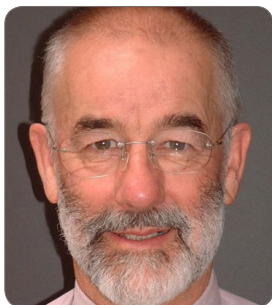
**MARC ARMITAGE** is an independent professional Playwork consultant, writer and researcher in children's play and the wider social worlds of children and young people, travelling the world lecturing, researching, consulting and imparting his knowledge on the importance of playing in learning in both school and non school sectors. Marc's particular area of research is in studying what and how children play when they are not usually in the presence of adults and asks how this knowledge impacts on our practice and delivery in early childhood education, school and playwork. Marc offers a wide range of professional development opportunities, for those working in the children and young peoples workforce, through his 'Playwork Perspectives' series of topics. His range of topics is varied yet all connected by the theme of play. His workshops offer a fun and valuable learning experience for his participants that stays with them long after the session has finished.



**SARAH BRECKENRIDGE** is an AMI Assistant to Infancy Director of an under three programme at Inner Sydney Montessori School (ISMS), Balmain. She coordinates an extensive programme of classes from pregnancy through to three year olds. She works with a hundred families each week to support the child's independence in a prepared environment, guiding parents through the developmental stages of infancy and how best to support it. Sarah has a background in nursing and paediatrics and previously worked with the NSW Cancer Council running support groups.



**CARMEL ELLIS** is the Manager/Director of the Indooroopilly Montessori Children's House (IMCH), a 168 place Long Day Care Centre in Brisbane, Queensland. Carmel ran her own business, Indooroopilly Montessori Pre-school Centre for over 20 years before selling and working for Edmund Rice Education Australia. Carmel worked in close consultation with a behaviour change specialist and was involved in the early writing of the internationally published "You Can Do It" Early Childhood Programme and the introduction into the Centre of a social/emotional guidance programme titled "Guided Choices". Carmel has ensured that the Centre encompasses an inclusion programme and she has been recognised personally as a winner of the ECIA Qld Chapter Quality Inclusive Practice Award in 2005, with staff at the Centre winning the team award for 2007.



**BRUCE FISHER** As a commercial Architect, Bruce has worked for many years on site as the coordinating architect on Commonwealth Department projects well as several large restoration and refurbishment projects in Sydney and Canberra. His constructional, administrative and supervisory experience is strengthened with 6 years working for design construction firms in Australia and Britain, as design and supervising architect. Bruce has extensive experience in the design of high quality Montessori schools and early childhood education and care centres. He lead the development of the Canberra Montessori School and has designed Montessori long-day care centres in Cairns and Cape York. Bruce acts as the principal design consultant to Montessori Centre Management Australia. He is a registered Architect in the ACT, NSW and Victoria.



**LAURA FLORES SHAW** is the lead editor, writer, and founder of White Paper Press, a think tank specialising in translating scientific research into terms that allows people to make informed decisions about their lives. She holds bachelors and master degrees in psychology and is currently working towards a doctorate in education with a specialisation in mind, brain and teaching at Johns Hopkins University School of Education. Laura previously worked as a family therapist in the public school system where she realised her desire to work on the prevention rather than intervention side of mental health. That led her to reviving a failing Montessori school where she became passionate about creating environments that allow children to thrive in every way. In 2014, she retired from school administration to focus on advocating at a broader level for frameworks that can improve the lives of children and their families. She currently writes, speaks and consults internationally on education, brain development and parenting.



## SPEAKERS



**PETA GIBSON** is the Director of a popular and innovative Under Three's Programme at Cameragal Montessori School in Sydney that successfully combines best practice from both Montessori pedagogy and the Piklerian approach. She has a special interest in infant and toddler development and has presented workshops and keynotes for educators and parents at Montessori Conferences in Australia and New Zealand. She is an AMI Assistant to Infancy and a Pikler Pedagogue Candidate While completing the RIE Foundations: Theory and Observation at the RIE Centre in Los Angeles in 2013 Peta first heard about the work of Dr Emmi Pikler and a she instantly knew what direction her professional development would take to enable her to understand and support the development of infants and toddlers. Since then she has completed the Pikler Summer Course for Professionals at the Pikler Institute in Budapest in 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 and Advanced Level Pikler Training through Pikler Loczy USA in 2015 & 2016. Peta also has extensive personal experience with babies and toddlers as the mother of five children who are currently aged between 22 and 7.



**CHRISTINE HARRISON** has been involved in Montessori education since 1985 and was Principal of the Canberra Montessori School, one of the largest Montessori schools in Australia, for over ten years. She is the founding Chair of the Montessori Australia Foundation and was Chair of the Association of Independent Schools in the ACT and on the Board of the Independent Schools Council of Australia. Christine has been involved in policy development, compliance, student care, curriculum development and educational leadership in schools and has a background in mediation, conflict resolution, adult education and a particular interest in governance in community organisations.



**BARBARA LANGFORD** has been a Montessori teacher for the past 25 years during which time she has established six highly regarded Montessori ECEC centres in Adelaide. Barbara is a passionate advocate for raising the quality of education and care for young children. She spent many years as the President of both Childcare SA and also Childcare Associations Australia enabling her to champion at both a State and Federal Government level for the benefits of high quality early education for children. Barbara also runs a consultancy business called Montessori Management and Mentoring (MMM) through which she offers her expertise to assist others in the establishment of new centres and the training of staff. Barbara is a consultant for Montessori Early Childhood Australia (MECA), a division of the Montessori Australia Foundation.



**PAMELA NUNN** has worked in the field of education for young children for 30 years and is an AMI 3-6 Teacher Trainer for the Australian Centre for Montessori Studies (ACMS) as well as courses in New Zealand and Vietnam. Pam has been involved with professional development of Montessori teachers through workshops and national conferences in Australia and overseas. She is a Board member of both the Montessori Children's Foundation and Montessori Australia Foundation and is involved in Montessori Quality Assurance and mentor training in Australia. Pam's AMI Examiner appointments have occurred in Melbourne, New Zealand, Thailand, China, Japan, Finland and UK. In 2010 she was appointed as a member of the AMI Training Group. Pam and is also involved in Montessori Ageing Support Services, bringing Montessori philosophy of independence, respect and individual care to senior people.



**PROFESSOR ANTHONY (TONY) OKELY** is Director of Research at Early Start at the University of Wollongong, Australia. He has been awarded over \$11 Million in competitive funding, and published over 190 peer-reviewed journal articles which have been cited nearly 10,000 times. Tony's research focuses on physical activity, sedentary behaviour, and motor development in children. Tony led the research team that developed and recently updated the Australian Physical Activity Recommendations for Children 0-5 years, and the Australian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines for Children and Young People. He is also part of the Guideline Development Group for the upcoming WHO guidelines on physical activity, sedentary and sleep behaviours in children under 5 years of age.



## VENUE ACCOMMODATION DETAILS:

### QT Gold Coast

7 Staghorn Avenue, Surfers Paradise QLD 4217

Delegates are to book their own accommodation by contacting the hotel reservations department directly on 07 5584 1200 or [reservations\\_qtgoldcoast@evt.com](mailto:reservations_qtgoldcoast@evt.com) and advise that they are part of the Montessori conference for the discounted rates of:

\$179 Room only – Mountain River View

\$204 B&B – Mountain River View

\$209 Room only – Ocean View

\$234 B&B – Ocean View.

Note that they are not holding any room blocks so early bookings are recommended.



**REGISTER** online at <https://montessori.org.au/EC18> or fill in and return the form below

RATES	MEMBER*	NON-MEMBER
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 day Conference including Conference Reception	\$540	\$720

\*Discounted rates for Montessori Australia Individual Members or Staff and Parents of School/Centre Members.

**REGISTRATIONS CLOSE FRIDAY 9 MARCH 2018:** A Late booking fee of \$20 applies thereafter, places permitting

**WILL YOU BE ATTENDING:** **FRIDAY WELCOME** – Friday, 16 March from 6:00pm ☐ Yes ☐ No  
**COCKTAIL RECEPTION** – Saturday, 17 March 5:00pm-7:00pm ☐ Yes ☐ No

### SUNDAY WORKSHOP PREFERENCES – PLEASE SELECT ONE FROM EACH SESSION:

Session 1 (morning):

- ☐ **Workshop 1:** Facilitating Effective Play and Identifying Problematic Play Behaviours
- ☐ **Workshop 2:** Communicating Effectively with the Child Under Three
- ☐ **Workshop 3:** The Play Cycle

Session 2 (afternoon):

- ☐ **Workshop 1 (repeated):** Facilitating Effective Play and Identifying Problematic Play Behaviours
- ☐ **Workshop 2:** Peaceful Toddlers: What makes a toddler behave like a toddler
- ☐ **Workshop 3:** The Child as Conscious Worker

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY:

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School/Centre Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please indicate if you have special dietary requirements:

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