

MEET THE MOMENT:
FOCUS On The Gap(s)!

GLR WEEK 2024 JULY 22-26

The Promise and Potential of Play-Based Learning
A GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinar

July 23, 2024 | 3-4:30 pm ET/12:00-1:30/pm PT

Panelist Bios

MODERATOR



William R. Hite, Jr., Ed.D.

**CEO and President
KnowledgeWorks**



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Dr. William R. Hite is the president and CEO of KnowledgeWorks. Prior to joining KnowledgeWorks Dr. Hite served as superintendent of The School District of Philadelphia, the largest public school system in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Under his leadership, the district expanded innovative school models — redesigning schools in partnership with communities. Dr. Hite was named the 2020 Superintendent of the Year by the National School Foundation Association. He holds a bachelor's degree in education from Virginia Tech, a master's degree in educational leadership from the University of Virginia and a doctorate in education specializing in educational leadership from Virginia Tech.

PRESENTERS



Kathy Baer

**Retired Kindergarten Teacher
Westchester Area School District, Pennsylvania
Purposeful PLAYground Consultant**

@Xhandle | @LinkedInHandle | @FacebookHandle

Kathy Baer taught Kindergarten for 36 years in Pennsylvania. She believes Kindergarten is the foundation of all learning and that PLAY is a child's occupation just as teaching is hers. In addition to teaching, Kathy has served on many educational committees.

She helped bring a full day, PLAY-based, Kindergarten to her district, a model that other districts want to emulate. She has shared her expertise and her classroom with neighboring district administrators, provided professional development for colleagues and guidance for future educators. Kathy would be happy to show *you* how to create a purposeful classroom playground. Are you ready to PLAY?



Andres Bustamante, Ph.D.

**Associate Professor, Human Development in Context, School of Education
University of California, Irvine**



[@Bustamante_AS](#) |



[@Andres Bustamante](#)

Andres is an Associate Professor at the University of California Irvine's School of Education. He designs and implements play-based early childhood STEM interventions in places and spaces that children and families spend time (e.g., parks, school yards, grocery stores etc.). He designs these spaces in partnership with local children and families, so they build from and sustain community values, goals, culture, and knowledge, while also maintaining connections to developmental and education sciences. Andres is invested in research that has practical implications for children and families from underserved communities. He is also committed to sharing and interpreting early childhood research with a broader audience through blog posts for the **Brookings Institution**, **Huffington Post**, **BOLD Blog**, and other media outlets.



Kate Dole

**Early Childhood Special Education Specialist
Minnesota Department of Education**



[@MnDeptEd](#) |



[@Kate Crosswell Dole](#) |



[@KMnDeptEd](#)

Kate is an Education Specialist at the Minnesota Department of Education. In her role at MDE, Kate provides technical assistance and professional development on due process and implementation of best practices in Early Childhood Special Education Part C and Part B/619. She also collaborates closely with her colleagues in general education to bring an ECSE perspective to work related to ongoing assessment, successful transitions from ECSE to kindergarten, multilingual learners, early literacy, and play-based learning. Prior to arriving at MDE, Kate spent 13 years as a speech-language pathologist in both ECSE and at the elementary level in Minnesota public schools. Kate holds an M.A. in Speech-Language Pathology from the University of Minnesota, an M.A. in Public Policy and Leadership from the University of St. Thomas, and a Certificate of Clinical Competence in Speech-Language Pathology from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.



Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, Ph.D.

**Professor of Psychology
Temple University**

Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution



Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, a Professor of Psychology at Temple University and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution was declared a “scientific entrepreneur” from the American Association of Psychology. Writing 17 books and 250+ publications, she served as President of the International Congress for Infant Studies, was on the Governing Board of the *Society for Research in Child Development* and is on the board of *Zero to Three*. Her *Einstein Never Used Flashcards* won the Book for a Better Life Award in 2003 with her *Becoming Brilliant: What the science tells us about raising successful children* (2016) reaching the NYTimes Best Sellers List in education. Her newest book *Making Schools Work: Bringing the Science of Learning to Joyful Classroom Practice (2022)* is the first education book co-written with teachers, administrators and scientists. It already sparked a national grant to re-imagine education. Hirsh-Pasek won awards from every psychological and educational society for her basic science and translational work designed to bridge basic science and educational impact. She also was honored with the Simms Mann Award and the Association of Children’s Museum *Great Friend to Kids Award*. She is a founding member of the *the Latin American School for Educational and Cognitive Neuroscience*, she spearheaded a global network of scientists devoted to educational science. Co-founder of the global Learning Science Exchange Fellowship (LSX), she brings together scientists, journalists, policy makers and entertainers, to put learning science in the hands of educators. In 2021, she was elected as a member of the National Academy of Education. Her initiative *Playful Learning Landscapes* re-imagines cities and public squares as places with science infused designs that enhance academic and social opportunities. Hirsh-Pasek frequently comments for the press (e.g. NPR, NYT) and blogs for the Brookings Institution. In December 2021, *Encantos*, the global creator platform empowering Storyteachers from around the world to help kids learn 21st-century skills, announced that Kathy became Encantos’ *first Creator-in-Residence*. In May 2023, Kathy and her team received a *\$19.98 million grant from the LEGO Foundation* in support of her work on playful learning.



Abby Jenkins
Senior Director of Content
PBS



As Senior Director of Content, Abby Jenkins leads innovative content development and cross-platform strategies for PBS KIDS. Abby oversees content for the Webby award-winning pbskids.org and PBS KIDS Games app, including hundreds of educational games, apps and interactive experiences for children from series like Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood, Wild Kratts, and more. She has also led development of new series formats, including original integrated game and video series, such as Scribbles and Ink, podcasts, and experimental interactive videos, in collaboration with PBS KIDS series Producers. With 17 years in public media, Abby has produced experiences with a range of technologies, from AR to voice to adaptive games, across platforms in service of supporting impactful learning and broadening accessibility. Abby also loves to connect with

kids and families through the PBS KIDS play-testing program, in which the team tests work in-development with children to inform design approaches that maximize learning and engagement. She holds an MA from Georgetown University, where she conducted research on children’s social interactions in virtual environments.



Ryan Lee-James, Ph.D.

Chief Academic Officer, Atlanta Speech School

Director, Rollins Center for Language and Literacy and its Cox Campus



[@CoxCampus](#)



[@Ryan Lee-James, PhD, CCC-SLP](#)



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Dr. Ryan Lee-James is a speech-language pathologist and researcher with expertise in language development, language disorders, and reading disabilities with emphasis on African American English and other nonmainstream dialects. Her rigorous academic training prepared her to chart her own course. Having worked as a research assistant on National Institutes of Health (NIH)–funded grants during her doctoral program under internationally recognized scholars, Dr. Lee-James was poised to be successful in a tenure-track university position. With a focus on equity in higher education and improving service delivery for students of the global majority, she spent 3 years as an assistant professor, cultivating a research program, teaching, mentoring, and innovating coursework for graduate-level, pre-service SLPs as well as serving her institution through various committees—namely, those aimed at diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB). Although this work was enjoyable and rewarding, Dr. Lee-James decided to transition from academia in pursuit of an opportunity to be more deeply engaged in the community. In her current role as Chief Academic Officer and Director of the Rollins Center for Language and Literacy at the Atlanta Speech School, she develops and curates academic programming for children who have hearing loss, speech-language delays, and dyslexia. She leads the development and advancement initiatives for the school’s free, equity-based, online professional learning community, Cox Campus. Dr. Lee-James is also responsible for overseeing and designing the implementation and evaluation of large-scale, community-based projects aimed at improving language and literacy outcomes for children from birth through 3rd grade. She continues to publish, present, mentor, and consult on research projects geared toward advancing equity and dismantling inequitable systems. Her professional pursuits reflect her belief that all children will be liberated through language and literacy.