

GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinar

Play-Based Learning in the Kindergarten Classroom & Beyond

October 15, 2024

Moderator and Presenter Bios

MODERATOR

Diana Greene, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer
Children's Literacy Initiative



Dr. Diana Greene has served in public education for over 37 years, previously holding roles as a classroom teacher, school principal, director of professional learning, deputy superintendent and most recently serving as the Superintendent of Duval County Public Schools (DCPS), the 20th-largest school district in the nation. A champion of children, families, and educators, Dr. Greene oversaw many transformative changes in her role as a superintendent including increasing and maintaining the district's highest graduation rates over her five-year tenure, removing all schools from the state's turnaround list, and cutting the number of low-performing schools by more than half. In addition, she led the effort to pass two referendums for improved and new facilities and teacher compensation. She was the 2021 Florida Superintendent of the Year and the 2022 Florida Star Superintendent of the Year. Dr. Diana Greene concluded her exceptional tenure as one of only a handful of Black women in the country serving as superintendents of large school districts. With a deep commitment to social justice and racial healing, Dr. Greene leads Children's Literacy Initiative as its Chief Executive Officer, spearheading the organization's work of partnering with early learning centers and school systems across the nation to provide the antiracist early literacy instruction, support, and advocacy needed to create equity in education."

PRESENTER

Kathy Hirsh Pasek, Ph.D.
Professor of Psychology
Temple University



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 16 books and 250+ publications, she served as President of the International Congress for Infant Studies and 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 (2016) reaching the NYTimes Best Sellers List in education. Her newest book Making Schools Work came out in November of 2022. 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. A founding member of 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, 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.

COMMENTATORS

Loretta Brady, Ph.D.

Professor

Saint Anselm College



Loretta L.C. Brady, PhD, is a licensed clinical psychologist and Professor of psychology at Saint Anselm College where she directs Community Resilience and Social Equity Lab (CRSEL). She previously served as co-director for the Center for Teaching Excellence. She serves on the boards of several task forces and local non-profits including youth serving organizations and healthcare systems. She is the author of *Bad Ass & Bold: A Transformative Approach to Planning with Your Loves, Dreams, and Realities in Mind*(www.badassandbold.com). Her award-winning writing has been recognized by the New England Society of Children’s Book Writers & Illustrators, Jack Jones Literary Arts, and the New England Press Association. Her work has appeared in *New Hampshire Business Review*, *Business NH Magazine*, and she has been a source for the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *the Washington Post*.

Kristi Kallam

Early Childhood Educator



Kristi Kallam is an accomplished early childhood educator with over 25 years of experience. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Elementary and Early Childhood Education from Temple University. Currently teaching kindergarten, Kristi is passionate about creating a learning environment that is creative, explorative, collaborative, active, and immersive.

Believing that early childhood education lays the foundation for lifelong learning, Kristi strives to foster curiosity and a love for discovery in her students. Her approach emphasizes hands-on experiences and encourages children to engage with the world around them, nurturing their social, emotional, and cognitive development. Kristi is dedicated to building strong relationships with her students and their families, ensuring every child feels valued and supported in their educational journey.

Debbie Leslie, Ph.D.

Director of Early Childhood Initiatives, UChicago STEM Education

University of Chicago



Debbie Leslie has been connected with UChicago STEM Education since 1992, when she worked on a longitudinal study of *Everyday Mathematics* while a graduate student at the University of Chicago. After spending 11 years as a classroom teacher, she returned to UC STEM Ed full time in 2004. At the Center, Debbie draws on her math and science background, as well as her interests and expertise in early childhood education, professional development, curriculum development, and organizational leadership to work on a wide range of projects. In recent years, Debbie's work has included teaching math and science methods courses to pre-service teachers in the University of Chicago's Urban Teacher Education Program, leading the *Everyday Mathematics* early childhood team for the 3rd and 4th editions, developing early childhood STEM curriculum materials and programs for teachers and families, collaborating with UChicago faculty on multiple research and development projects, and designing and leading several long-term partnerships with schools focused on improving mathematics teaching and learning school-wide. These partnerships have included support and mentoring for administrators and leadership teams, as well as coaching and other professional development for teachers. In partnership with colleagues at Erikson University and UChicago STEM Education, Debbie was part of the group that convened the Early Childhood STEM Working Group from 2014–16 and produced the Working Group's Early STEM Matters report. She has also co-written published multiple chapters and articles on leadership for mathematics reforms in elementary schools and a chapter on innovations in elementary-school science curriculum development.

Kimberly Nesbitt, Ph.D.

Primary Investigator, Early Childhood Initiative

University of New Hampshire



Dr. Kimberly Nesbitt is Primary Investigator, Early Childhood Initiative at the University of New Hampshire. She received her Ph.D. in Lifespan Developmental Psychology from North Carolina State University and was an Institute of Education Sciences Postdoctoral Fellow at Vanderbilt University. Her research focuses on the development of cognition in early childhood, with a focus on identifying instructional practices that enable young children from diverse backgrounds to learn and achieve in early educational environments. Her work is published in both psychological and educational journals including *Child Development*, *Developmental Psychology*, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, and *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*. Kimberly is the instructor for practicum courses in teaching and learning in early childhood settings and is the program coordinator for UNH's accredited undergraduate teacher certification program in early childhood education. She is dedicated to improving the quality of early childhood education in our community through collaborations with schools and community organizations across New Hampshire, including serving on numerous early learning and childhood committees for the state.