

**Screens in the First Five Years: What We Need to Know and Do**  
**GLR Learning Tuesdays | Learning Loss Recovery Challenge Series**

October 14, 2025 | 3 pm – 4:30 pm ET

**PRESENTER BIOS**

**PRESENTERS**



**Rachel Barr, Ph.D.**  
***Professor and Chair***  
***Department of Psychology***  
**Georgetown University**

Rachel Barr, Ph.D. is Professor of Psychology at Georgetown University and Director of the Georgetown Early Learning Project. Children are remarkable learners but many face remarkable challenges. Barr is primarily interested in how between how they pick up information so rapidly from the world around them. She has investigated how children bridge the gap between what they learn from media and how they apply that information in the real world. She is the author of the 2024 book *Early Childhood and Digital Media* and has worked with a parenting organization to disseminate the knowledge via Zero to Three's Screensense resources.



**Dimitri Christakis, MD, MPH**  
***Chief Science Officer***  
**Children and Screens: Institute of Digital Media and Child Development**  
***Chief Health Officer***  
**Special Olympics International**

Dimitri A. Christakis MD, MPH is Chief Health Officer at Special Olympics International, the George Adkins Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Washington, Chief Science Officer at Children & Screens Institute of Digital Media & Child Development, and Editor and Chief of *JAMA Pediatrics*. Professor Christakis graduated from Yale University, the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, and completed a pediatric residency followed by a Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholarship at the University of Washington from which he received his MPH. He is the author of over 230 original research articles, a textbook of pediatrics and *The Elephant in the Living Room: Make Television work for your kids.* (September 2006; Rodale). In 2010 he was awarded the Academic Pediatric Association Research Award for outstanding contributions to pediatric research over his career. His passion is developing actionable strategies to optimize the cognitive, emotional, and social development of preschool children. The pursuit of that passion has taken him from the exam room, to the community and most recently to cages of newborn mice.

Christakis' laboratory focuses on the effects of early environmental influences on child health and development and his work has been featured on all major international news outlets as well as all major

national and international newspapers. He speaks frequently to international audiences of pediatricians, parents, educators and policy makers about the impact of early learning on brain development.



**Rachel Franz, M.Ed.**  
***Program Director***  
***Young Children Thrive Offline***  
**Fairplay**

Rachel Franz is the "Young Children Thrive Offline" Program Director at the non-profit Fairplay, an independent nonprofit dedicated to enhancing children's well-being by eliminating the exploitative and harmful business practices of marketers and Big Tech. She is an international speaker, consultant, researcher, and published author on various topics related to child development, such as harmful technology design, curriculum, equitable outdoor play, and materialism. At Fairplay, Rachel has led and contributed to a variety of campaigns, research, and writing; currently, she specializes in the impacts of unfair and deceptive marketing and manipulative design of technology for children under 8.



**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 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.



**Michelle Kang**  
**CEO**  
**National Association for the Education of Young Children, NAEYC**

Michelle serves as the Chief Executive Officer for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), a global association dedicated to high quality early learning for all children.

Prior to becoming CEO, Michelle served as NAEYC's inaugural Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer where she oversaw the strategy and daily operations for Membership, Early Learning Program Accreditation, Publications, Conference, Market Solutions and Global Engagement. She has guided the substantial system adjustments necessary to support child care and preschools attaining and maintaining accreditation through the pandemic and shepherded the development and launch of the fourth edition of NAEYC's Developmentally Appropriate Practice book.

Drawing on her experiences as the daughter of Korean immigrants, Michelle is committed to creating belonging within organizations, and developing inclusive leadership and mentoring opportunities.

#### **MODERATOR**



**Kris Perry, MSW**  
**Executive Director**  
**Children and Screens: Institute of Digital Media and Child Development**

Kris is the Executive Director of Children and Screens: Institute of Digital Media and Child Development, an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to helping children thrive in a digital world. Under her leadership, the Institute advances interdisciplinary dialogue, drives scientific research, and delivers accessible evidence-based guidance to families, educators, and policymakers. Perry works closely with federal agencies, state leaders, and national advocates to ensure child and teen-focused digital media, tech, and online safety policy is grounded in science. She also hosts *Screen Deep* and *#Ask the Experts*, the Institute's Webby-nominated programs, featuring conversations with leading voices in child development and digital well-being.

Prior to joining Children and Screens, Perry served as Senior Advisor to Governor Gavin Newsom of California and Deputy Secretary of the California Health and Human Services Agency where she spearheaded the development of the state's Master Plan for Early Learning and Care and the expansion of access to high-quality early childhood programs. A longtime champion for equity in early childhood, she also held executive leadership roles at First 5 San Mateo, First 5 California, and at the First Five Years Fund, driving transformative systems change efforts at the local, state and national levels.

In 2024, Kris was inducted into the California Social Workers Hall of Distinction for her outstanding contributions to child-well being. She serves on multiple boards including Raising a Reader, Too Small To Fail, and The Canadian Pediatric Society.

A nationally-recognized leader, Perry also played an instrumental role in restoring marriage equality to California following the landmark 2013 U.S. Supreme Court decision *Hollingsworth v. Perry*, a journey she recounts in her book *Love on Trial* (Roaring Forties Press, 2017). She lives in Berkeley with her wife Sandy where they raised their four sons.

Learn more about Kris via [LinkedIn](#).