



Leveraging the Science of Play for Enhanced Learning

Who: Heads of School, Division Heads

Presenter: Mia Sundstrom, CEO of The National Institute for Play

When: Thursday, February 19th from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Where: Virtual on Zoom

Description:

Leveraging the Science of Play for Enhanced Learning

Play is hardwired into our brain. It's not a break from learning, it is learning. In fact, it's a biological necessity that fuels creativity, resilience, empathy, social competence, authenticity, and well-being. Join us for an enlivening discussion about what happens in the brain when we play, how it enhances growth and learning, and how to implement playful learning into the classroom.

Participants will:

- *Gain knowledge about the neuroscience of play*
- *Identify the benefits of play for learning*
- *Understand a basic framework for implementing play into their teaching practice (play styles)*
- *Create a plan to implement more play into the classroom to maximize engagement, love of learning, and productivity for the children*

Mia's Bio



[Mia Sundstrom](#) is the CEO of the National Institute for Play and the granddaughter of NIFPlay founder and play expert, Dr. Stuart Brown. Mia also works part-time for the Office of the Chancellor at the University of Denver as a project manager for character education.

Mia has reached global audiences through her speaking engagements, including recent presentations at Aspen Ideas and the World Expo in Osaka, Japan. She has appeared

on podcasts, delivered keynotes, led workshops, and consulted with schools and organizations to leverage the power of play to build strengths of character, enhance learning, improve leadership, strengthen community, and unlock innovation.

Mia was previously an NCAA D1 assistant coach for the University of Denver's top 10 gymnastics team. Before coaching, she was a student-athlete and captain for Denver Gymnastics, helping lead the program to a historic final four appearance while earning two degrees: a master's in public policy ('23) and a bachelor's in business information and Analytics ('21).

As Dr. Stuart Brown's granddaughter, Mia has chosen a career trajectory to enliven his legacy and build upon the incredible work he's contributed to the science and application of play.

The National Institute for Play

The National Institute for Play (NIFPlay) is the global leader in the neuroscience of play, curating and interpreting research that reveals how play fundamentally shapes cognitive, emotional, and social development to unlock human potential. Founded by Dr. Stuart Brown, the Institute has revolutionized our understanding of play as a biological necessity, not a luxury.

NIFPlay's insights have captured worldwide attention, with our research featured in major media including National Geographic, BBC, NPR, PBS, and TED Talks. Our evidence-based approach has transformed how educators, coaches, parents, healthcare professionals, and organizations view the critical role of play in human development and performance.

Through rigorous scientific research, NIFPlay demonstrates how play activates essential pathways for creativity, resilience, productivity, well-being, learning, purpose, and connection. Play isn't just for children—it's vital for adults too. In a time of widespread disconnection, loneliness, burnout, and polarization, play offers a path towards thriving.

As a predominant voice in play science, NIFPlay bridges the gap between cutting-edge neuroscience and practical application. We empower individuals and institutions worldwide to break through misconceptions about play and harness its transformative power.

- **Free for those schools who purchased a speaker series subscription.**
- **\$50 per attendee for those schools who have chosen “A la Carte”.**