5th Annual Baby Room Conference

Tuesday 2 September 2014

9.30am - 5.30pm (registration 9.30am - 10.30am)
Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre (108 Stamford Street, South Bank, London, SE1 9NH)

This conference is for anyone whose work concerns the care, learning, development and wellbeing of babies and toddlers from birth to two.

Programme and Keynotes

Canterbury Christ Church University
Welcome to the 5th Annual Baby Room Conference

Hosted by the Research Centre for Children, Families and Communities at Canterbury Christ Church University

About our work

The Centre seeks to undertake research and knowledge exchange activities that enhance the lives and life chances of children and young people while building strong families and communities. We adopt a multi-disciplinary approach whereby children and young people are nested within dynamic systems of families, communities and services.

The Centre’s work is grouped under three inter-related themes:

- the politics of early childhood
- parents and families
- discourses of inclusion and exclusion

Staying informed

To receive newsletters; updates on our projects; advance notice of seminars and conferences and exclusive invitations to Centre events, please register as an RCfCFC Associate Member by emailing Charmian.cowie@canterbury.ac.uk

For up-to-the-minute news, comment and debate on national and international issues affecting the lives of children and families, follow us on twitter @ResearchforCFC

Our website www.canterbury.ac.uk/rcfcfc contains all the above information and more
## Programme

### 9.30am
Neighbourhood Room
- Coffee and registration

### 10.30am
Max Nasatyr Room
- Welcome
Professor Sacha Powell and Dr Kathy Gooch

### 10.45am
Max Nasatyr Room
- Keynote speech—Professor Annette Karmiloff-Smith
(Birkbeck, University of London)
Making conversation with babies and toddlers: its importance for all aspects of child development

### 11.30am-1.00pm
Parallel Presentations

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<th>Location</th>
<th>South Bank Room 2</th>
<th>Fred Miller Room</th>
<th>Max Nasatyr Room</th>
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<td>11.30am</td>
<td>Cliodhna Noonan – Time to Stop and Stare Silver Tree International Performance programme</td>
<td>Gill Rapley – Baby-led weaning and its relevance for the nursery</td>
<td>Dorothy Barcroft – Working with Birth to Three - Personal Theory of Scottish Early Years Practitioners</td>
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<td>12.00 noon</td>
<td>Stephanie Robertson – how do one year olds explore elementary mathematical concepts through their schematic play?</td>
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<td>Caroline Guard – The Confident Infant – Emergence of Pride</td>
<td>June O Sullivan – Pedagogical conversations with parents</td>
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### 1.00pm
Neighbourhood Room
- Lunch – networking and viewing of poster presentations:
  - Katie Dennis – *Attachment Parenting Approach*;
  - Heather Hutsby – *Care, Education and Messy Play*;
  - Sarah Christie – *Mothers and child care*.

### 2.00pm
Max Nasatyr Room
- Keynote speech – Dr Travis Wright (University of Wisconsin)
Teaching from Hope: Re-Thinking Resilience for Young Children with Challenging Lives
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Our keynote speakers

Professor Annette Karmiloff-Smith

Until 2006, when she officially “retired”, Professor Karmiloff-Smith was Head of the Neurocognitive Development Unit at UCL’s Institute of Child Health in London. She is now Professorial Research Fellow at the Centre for Brain & Cognitive Development at Birkbeck, University of London. Prior to her doctoral studies, Professor Karmiloff-Smith worked for two years in the Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut, and then obtained her doctorate from Geneva University, where she studied and worked with Jean Piaget. Professor Karmiloff-Smith is the author of over 300 articles and chapters and 11 books including Everything your baby would ask if only he/she could speak (Carroll & Brown, 1998), which was co-authored with her daughter, Kyra Karmiloff and was No.2 on the American List of Best Parenting Books. Professor Karmiloff-Smith has 2 daughters and 7 grandchildren.

Professor Karmiloff-Smith will speaking about:
Making conversation with babies and toddlers: its importance for all aspects of child development

Many studies of infants and toddlers in orphanages have demonstrated that a lack of emotional and verbal interaction with social partners has a serious impact on child development. But what is the best way to interact with preverbal children? How does it differ from interacting with adults? This talk will examine the importance of triadic interaction (adapting shared eye gaze and pointing), of employing exaggerated intonation patterns, and of using repetition, imitation and scaffolding, to encourage not only children’s language acquisition, but also their understanding of the social and physical worlds.
Dr Travis Wright

Dr Travis Wright is an Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His research focuses primarily on four interconnected areas: 1) documenting how young children, their teachers, and parents experience schools and other early childhood educational settings; 2) strengthening the capacity of early learning environments to serve young children developing in the midst of adversity; 3) the impact of poverty, trauma, and other forms of toxic stress on the resilience of young children and their families; and 4) qualitative research methodologies. Dr Wright has just launched the BASES Project, a school and community-based intervention for homeless preschool students, their families, and teachers. Dr Wright completed his doctoral studies in Human Development and Psychology at Harvard University. Previously, he worked as a school-based mental health counsellor, public school teacher, and early childhood educator in Washington, DC and Boston Public Schools.

Dr Wright will be speaking about:
Teaching from Hope: Re-Thinking Resilience for Young Children with Challenging Lives

For many children, such as those growing in the midst of poverty or trauma, the demands of the classroom and home may require very different skills and attitudes to succeed. This session will focus on the possibilities and challenges of educating children growing up in challenging circumstances. Through presentation of several case studies and a discussion of resilience, participants will leave with new perspectives and strategies for educational and clinical practice.
Professor Mary McMullen

Mary Benson McMullen, Ph.D. is Professor of Early Childhood Education in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction at Indiana University. She has worked in a teenage parent program; taught parenting skills to women who lost custody of children through the court system; worked as practitioner of babies and young children; and directed a preschool program. Professor McMullen has published widely and presented throughout the world on her work in the areas of: early childhood practitioners’ beliefs as they relate to practice; cross-cultural perspectives on ‘quality’ early childhood practice (environments, relationships and experiences); relationship-based systems of care; and conceptualizing wellbeing and understanding factors that impact the wellbeing of babies, families and professional caregivers in Birth-3 group care settings. Professor McMullen and her husband raised 3 sons.

Professor McMullen will be summarising the themes of the conference and also speaking about:

Moral, Ethical, and Responsive Care for Wellbeing in Birth to Three Settings
Summaries of presentations and workshops

In the South Bank Room 2

11.30am
Cliodhna Noonan – Time to Stop and Stare Silver Tree International Performance
This session will present the journey of Acting Up! Arts within the early years arts sector and the development of the Vintage Voices sessions in Ireland over the past 12 months.

Acting Up! began in Romania in 2009 and has since run in Egypt, Ireland, Italy and Tunisia. The Acting Up programmes, which include regular story and song sessions and early years theatre experiences, travel into early childhood settings or can be presented in small scale professional theatres with local mother and toddler groups. The presentation will also focus on the Silver Tree performance, its effect on babies and their accompanying carers and how Chliodha approached the writing of this piece from the outset. Acting Up! has been heavily influenced by the training and performance programmes of the smallsize EU network (www.smallsize.org) and this year partnered Fingal Arts Office to present a family festival at Farmleigh House in Dublin, with the support of Early Childhood Ireland and two major embassies in Dublin.

12 noon
Stephanie Robertson – How do one year olds explore elementary mathematical concepts through their schematic play?
This small-scale study sought to investigate how four one-year olds in two different daycare settings explored elementary mathematical concepts through their schematic play.

The paper will draw on qualitative data, including detailed observations of the children, a research journal and interviews with a setting manager and parent, providing different perspectives of the phenomenon in question. Well-being and Involvement Scales are used as a methodological tool. The study draws principally on the work of Piaget and Athey, confirming the constructivist position that young children’s thinking is not chaotic, unsystematic and idiosyncratic, but specific, focused and methodical. Suggestions are made as to how practitioners can support schema through language and interaction.

12.30pm
Debbie Ravenscroft - Babies and Blankies – the use of transitional objects in early years settings
This paper will summarise the findings of a case study research project that explored the way babies and toddlers are supported to use comfort objects in an out of home setting. The primary research took place in one nursery, supported by discussions from senior practitioners from other day nurseries. The paper draws on the perspectives of Winnicott, as well as wider theories and literature, providing insight into the grief experienced by babies when separated from their mother and the reactions and responses given by practitioners. The findings highlight the perceptions of some staff that transitional objects are the tool of ‘lazy’ parents and that babies should not only endure separation from their primary care giver but also be refused their way of seeking comfort and succour when faced with situations of heightened anxiety. The research was at times controversial and confrontational as practitioners came to acknowledge that the ‘big’ children they spoke of were in fact aged 2 years and under and issues of professional bias arose.
In the Fred Miller Room

11.30am
Gill Rapley – Baby-led weaning and its relevance for the nursery
This paper will present an overview of the approach to the introduction of solid foods in the second half of the first year, known as baby-led weaning, or ‘BLW’. The paper will outline the evidence that supports BLW and address some of the common misconceptions and concerns about its safety and appropriateness for normally developing infants. The potential benefits of the approach for babies and their parents will be explored and possible advantages suggested, for both babies and staff, of its implementation in a nursery setting.

12 noon
Heather Cobb – The impact of an individual’s research upon their future working practice and leadership within a nursery environment
This paper will present an analysis of a small-scale research project, which explored how one-year-olds interacted with the resources provided at nursery. The presentation will explore the importance of the ‘practitioner as a resource’ within the nursery environment and the value of the key person approach on a baby’s nursery experience.

The outcome of this study will also be considered in relation to the professional journey undertaken by the researcher, from Baby-Room Practitioner to Nursery Manager, following the unforeseen outcomes of the research. The presentation will outline how the research informed and developed the researcher’s practice and professional confidence, enabling her to become a stronger leader and Manager. More widely, the use of research studies within nurseries, as a tool to inform and develop working practice and improve practitioner knowledge will be considered, alongside the practicalities of research within busy nursery environments.

12.30pm
Caroline Guard – The Confident Infant – The Emergence of Pride
The internal world of the infant is fascinating and still yet to be fully understood. Our current understanding largely relies on researchers’ documentations of infant behaviours and reactions to their socio-cultural context which have been collated over the years in some controlled and very few naturalistic environments. Well published accounts document the importance of the child’s early socialisation and it is understood that higher quality experiences result in more advanced cognitive and emotional competencies.

However, there appears to remain a founded belief that complex self-conscious emotions such as pride and shame only emerge once an infant develops a sense of self at around the age of two years. Using evidence collated applying the Tavistock Infant Observation Method (Bick 1964) and drawing on respected research in the field, this paper aims to highlight the capability of the infant’s emotional competence and focuses particularly on their ability to express pride following intentional attempts of ‘showing off’ their proficiencies to observing adults. Aimed primarily at Early Years Practitioners and people working closely with infants.
In the Max Nasatyr Room

11.30am
Dorothy Barcroft – Working with Birth to Three – Personal Theory of Scottish Early Years Practitioners
Presently, professionalism in Early Years is often focused on the embodiment of prescribed sets of rational knowledge and public theory (Urban, 2010) to the exclusion of knowledge learned through experience. As the literature indicates, particular and personal constructions of care, learning and children shape what is seen as desirable in educational practice. These constructions form the basis of personal theory.

This research’s aim is to understand how practitioners’ personal and professional experiences contribute to practitioners’ construction of personal theory. The research demonstrates that although personal theory is tacit, linking to specific instances of practice enables practitioners to articulate personal constructions of care, learning and children. A key finding is that practitioners spoke of working with children aged birth to three as a distinctive practice. Two particular aspects of children’s development contribute to this distinction: communication and independence. These constructions subsequently influence practice, engagement with children and their families and outcomes for children’s care and learning. This paper highlights how the ability to articulate and share personal theory enables a richer construction of Early Years professionalism within Birth to Three settings. Findings discussed in the paper should resonate with both practitioners and academics.

12 noon
Sarah Heale – What about the children? Strengthening attachment in nurseries
This paper will explore themes of attachment, drawing on literature, case studies and best practice examples to address areas such as: why attachment is important in nurseries, what it looks like in practice, what happens if attachment is weak (and the effects of stress on brain development) and practical implications for nurseries. The paper will discuss the key person and other attachment figures in a young child’s life.

12.30pm
June O Sullivan – Pedagogical conversations with parents
This paper explores why and how staff working in nurseries should and can extend home learning, through regular pedagogical conversations with parents. It argues that this is a sensible and appropriate means of expanding parents knowledge about supporting their children to learn.

The paper explores the value of improving parent-staff conversations, from sharing regular domestic and routine updates such as nappies, food and play experiences, to introducing child development or learning interests. The presentation will explore how this can strengthen children's learning, extending home learning in the nursery and vice versa. It argues that many parents are reluctant to embrace the language of learning but if its introduced in a relevant way, using vocabulary and examples relevant to the family, it will be positively received and acted upon. The paper gives examples of how to do this.
In the Fred Miller Room

2.45pm
CANparent – supporting parents through parenting class programmes with Vera Azuike
The CANparent programme is a government funded project (run by the charity Family Lives) looking at improving awareness of and access to high quality support and advice to all parents through universal parenting classes. We know that universal parenting classes are effective and make a positive difference to parents and families, especially in the early years.

We will review the outcomes of a 2012-14 CANparent trail and a wider programme, which commenced in 2013, concentrating on developing the provision of quality assured classes with the aim that parenting classes be seen as a sign of strength, in the same way as antenatal support.

The evaluation of the trial carried out by CEDAR at Warwick University shows classes to be effective in their aim of improving parent confidence and reducing heightened parent stress levels. The trial was also successful in stimulating demand from parents across the spectrum of parent level of education, socioeconomic status and ethnicity.

This paper will look in more detail at the final evaluation of the trial and provide learning opportunities for the future development of universal parenting classes and support, focusing on parents of babies and young children.

3.15pm
Mothers and Baby Rooms with Dr Sarah Christie
Mothers are the sleeping partners in any Baby Room. Generally accepted as the parent most likely to be primary caregiver, to make decisions about child care and to be key point of contact for day care staff, mothers exert an inevitable influence on the child-practitioner relationship. Research findings could provide practitioners with an enhanced awareness of the psychology of mothers - their motivations, attitudes and emotional responses - in relation to choosing and utilising childcare provision. This enhanced awareness is likely to facilitate stronger relationships between the two parties and, in turn, improve outcomes for children. This brief presentation will examine the key findings of 21st century research studies relating to mothers and childcare and will consider opportunities for future research directions.

3.30pm
Acting Up Early Arts Workshop – The Suitcase of Tales, with Cliodhna Noonan
This fun and practical workshop will explore the telling of stories and tales using the Kamishibai frame, an ancient and timeless technique, which can provide starting points for work with babies. We will also bring in simple musical instruments, working as a whole group, as well as in small groups.
In the South Bank Room 1

2.45pm
Sensory Starting Points workshop, with Gail DuBock and Yvonne Au of Enable Children, in partnership with Octopus Inc.
This workshop will provide an inspiring and stimulating multi-sensory hands-on experience, giving opportunity for delegates to explore, play and reflect on provision and practice for babies, particularly in relation to the EYFS Characteristics of Effective Learning and Prime Areas of Learning and Development.

We will create an environment that aims to provide a springboard for reflective discussions around observations, following infant interests and fascinations, sustained shared thinking, adult-child relationships and purposeful play.

In the South Bank Room 2

these sessions sponsored by

2.45
Outdoor Matters - Getting Outdoors with Babies, with Gail Ryder Richardson
This workshop will focus on the importance of the outdoor environment for babies and toddlers, offering ideas and inspiration, examining some of the common challenges and dilemmas, and sharing potential solutions. We will consider the following elements:

- enabling environments and outdoor play experiences
- risk assessing to enable high quality outdoor play
- promoting the value of outdoors to parents

Gail has a Masters in Early Childhood Education and has worked in the early years sector for over 30 years in a wide range of roles including advice and support, education inspections and quality assurance. Gail’s professional knowledge and her practical and creative approach to overcoming problems, is combined with a genuine understanding of the issues practitioners face.

3.30pm
Marjorie Ouvry
Outdoors for Movement and Learning - applying Froebelian principles

In this workshop Marjorie will outline how movement is the common denominator of all learning for two year olds and toddlers. Frequent access to space outdoors is necessary if young children are to be fully active. The nursery garden is the effective and efficient medium for their development. Marjorie will explore how the Froebelian principles act as a touchstone for practitioners as they plan and interact with very young children preventing the one-size-fits-all approach which denies the uniqueness of the child.

Marjorie Ouvry is still fascinated by how young children think and learn after over 40 years experience as teacher, lecturer, Headteacher, researcher, author and writer, consultant, and moderator for the Froebel courses in England and Scotland.
In the Neighbourhood Room

2.45pm
Making the Music Miracle Available to All - Boogie Mites Workshop with Liv McLennan
In this workshop, we will briefly review research demonstrating the vital role of music in the development of babies, giving practical ideas about how practitioners and parents can use music to support child development and demonstrating the role of music as a tool for parent engagement, strengthening the home learning environment.

We will look at:

1. how to deliver songs with props and actions to maximise their multi-sensory potential
2. how to make music part of every child’s daily experience
3. how to link music making activities to specific learning outcomes
4. how to use music to increase parent awareness of EYFS and child development.

Boogie Mites music and movement programmes were the subject of research by Nikki Fairchild of Chichester University in 2013 and our workshop is based on 15 years’ experience of delivering Early Years music sessions, family learning courses and practitioner training workshops. In the Early Years, music is something that everyone can be an expert at and it is fun and uplifting too.

3.30pm
Calm, Confident and Connected - How the use of signing impacts on Maternal Depression, Bonding, Attachment and Responsive Care.
Little Signers Club with Shelley Ensor and Louise Jones
Little Signers Club offers the opportunity for Early Years Professionals and Practitioners to take part in our interactive, fun and inspirational workshop looking at the benefits of using signing with young children.

Drawing from decades of practical experience, as well as the research of Dr Joseph Garcia, Marilyn Daniels, Magda Gerber, Margot Sunderland, Sue Gerhardt, Maslow and The Gessell Institute, this will be of particular appeal to those who have an interest in attachment theory, the effects of maternal depression, communication development and respectful care of children. We will learn about the benefits of signing, how to support speech development and first signs.

Little Signers Club highlights include: Lead practitioners for the Early Language Development Programme, Featured on BBC1, Contributor to ToddlerCalm; A guide for calmer toddlers, Official Partner for Hello, The Year of Communication.
About our exhibitors

Community Playthings

A sound understanding of child development underpins Community Playthings’ product design. Manufactured in the UK, furniture and equipment supports children’s creativity, learning and play in schools and nurseries across the private, voluntary and public sectors. In collaboration with leading educators and early years consultants, Community Playthings also publishes authoritative staff training resources that are offered free to those working in Schools and Nurseries. The two pertaining to 0-3’s are What Happens in the Baby Room and A good place to be Two, both resources will be available at the conference.

You can contact Community Playthings on 0800 387 457 www.communityplaythings.co.uk

Bright Horizons Nurseries

A leading child care provider across the UK and Ireland
Our employees play a crucial role in our success; we care deeply that the people we employ to deliver world class outcomes for children are highly engaged, well rewarded and care passionately about what they do. We believe our staff are truly the HEART of our Mission of providing the highest-quality child care and early education possible. Our culture is one in which people can feel relaxed, be themselves, and be able to bring their whole self to work. It’s a culture where people are not expected to leave who they really are at home. Working for Bright Horizons you are fulfilling our commitment to parents to prepare their children for success in school and life. From teaching toddlers about the world through books, music, and art, through to preparing pre-school children for success at school and beyond. We are the only childcare company recognised by the Great Place to Work Institute as one of the Top 50 Best Workplaces in the UK for the 9th consecutive year. Bright Horizons have a number of Nurseries across the UK that are currently recruiting.

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