

**Educational Studies Association of Ireland (ESAI)**

**ESAI Critical and Feminist Special Interest Group (SIG)**

JOIN US FOR OUR FIRST FIRESIDE CHAT FOR 2025:

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2025, 19.00 hrs. to 20.15 hrs.**

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83894778211>

Meeting ID: 838 9477 8211

## **Title: Worlding Approaches in Early Childhood: pursuing multispecies flourishing on a damaged planet**



### **Abstract**

In this presentation I argue that playful approaches in childhood research can operate as subversive acts of refusal. Insights from a current research project ([www.minibeasts.org](http://www.minibeasts.org)) are presented within the broader context of contemporary schooling which is shaped by intensified regulation of young child body-minds in the name of developmental progress. Bringing arts-based, playful interventions into the classrooms of four-year-olds, to explore multispecies relationalities, caused all manner of trouble. The ultimate aim though was to pursue less human-centred narratives concerning ways to live together on a dying planet. Haraway's practice of 'serious play' provided a mode of getting caught up in the knots and tangles of life in the Anthropocene without clear direction, prescribed outcomes or a firm agenda. Yet the chaotic wildness that ensued generated acute discomfort for adults caught up in this praxis. Reconfiguring play - as serious, nonsensical, worldly and not the exclusive preserve of children - relies upon a close attunement to what else play can potentiate when it is (permitted to be) emergent and unbounded. Harney & Moten's (2013) invitation to join 'the undercommons' is taken up to illustrate how open-ended, exploratory, playful, worldly encounters have capacities to simultaneously turn attention to the mechanisms of control that regulate and govern body-minds, and highlight the activist potential for play to reach alternative ways of being, seeing and relating.

Dr Jayne Osgood is Professor of Education Childhood Studies based at the Centre for Education Research & Scholarship, Middlesex University, London (UK). Her present methodologies and research practices are framed by critical feminist posthumanities. Through her work she seeks to foreground a concern with worldly justice by working directly with children and early childhood communities and through critical engagements with early childhood policy, curricular frameworks and pedagogical approaches. She has over 100 publications. Her books include *Narratives from the Nursery: negotiating professional identities in Early Childhood* (2012); *Post-developmental Approaches to Childhood Art* (2019); *Feminists Researching Gendered Childhoods* (2019) *Postdevelopmental Approaches to Play* (2025) and *Gender Un/bound: Traversing Educational Possibilities* (2025). She is book series editor of *Feminist Thought in Childhood Research* (Bloomsbury) and *Key Thinkers in Education* (Springer). She serves on several editorial boards including *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, is recently retired as Editor at *Gender & Education Journal*; and continues to serve as Editor for *Reconceptualising Education Research Methodology Journal*.

**Profile:** <https://www.mdx.ac.uk/about-us/our-people/staff-directory/prof-jayne-osgood/>