

A celebration of

Play: Rights & Possibilities

22nd IPA Triennial World Conference

6th-9th June 2023 Glasgow, Scotland

IPAGlasgow2023



IPAGlasgow2023 – the 22nd IPA Triennial World Conference

IPA Scotland and conference partners Play Scotland, Early Years Scotland and Inspiring Scotland were honoured to host the 22nd IPA Triennial World Conference in Glasgow in June 2023.

IPAGlasgow2023 saw the return of a face-to-face conference after an enforced break of six years due to the Covid-19 pandemic - the first such break in the 60 year history of the International Play Association: Promoting the Child’s Right to Play (IPA).

IPA’s purpose is purpose is to protect, preserve and promote the child’s right to play as a fundamental human right. The IPA World Conferences play a pivotal role in achieving our shared goal. We were delighted that in the year incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scots law was unanimously approved by the Scottish government, IPAGlasgow2023 brought together a global community of advocates for children’s right to play.

“It was a privilege to be part of a wonderful team of people, working on a project we all believed in, culminating in a truly memorable event. Thanks to everyone involved in the planning and execution - especially the participants who filled the space we created with their magical contributions to the conference.” Tam Baillie, Chair of the Steering Group



Delegates gather for the opening plenary

From the youngest child participants to the longest serving IPA members, from the musicians to the presenters, guests and dignitaries, an atmosphere of energy, resolve and fun prevailed.

“My favourite part of the conference was connecting with colleagues with whom I collaborate but have never met; talking to other participants about their work; getting re-inspired for my own work.”

Delegate feedback



Welcome reception at Glasgow City Chambers



Delegates describe their conference experience



Tickets and lanyards in readiness for delegates

IPAGlasgow2023 inspired action! Commitments following the conference ranged from “dedicate one of our Masters courses to teach Designing for Children’s Right to Play”, to “start sitting on advisory boards to influence funding decisions”; from “continue pushing to have children’s voices reflected in decision making” to “pursue the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Children in the US”.



IPA Scotland Board

“My favourite part of the conference was the weaving together of practitioner expertise, scholarship & research, innovation and leadership.”

Delegate feedback

“Bringing the global community of IPA to Scotland in 2023 was a dream come true. Perseverance and a deep belief in what we are doing to promote children’s right to play resulted in a wonderfully joyous conference.”

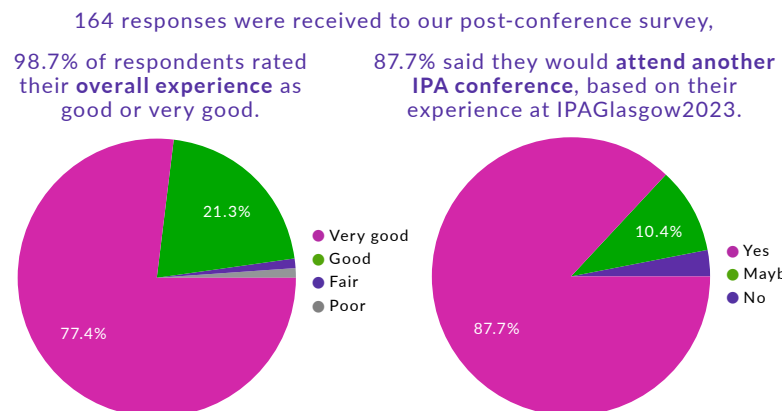
Margaret Westwood, Chair of IPA Scotland



Outdoor gathering

Things that mattered to us in the conference planning

- ✓ Children’s participation
- ✓ An inclusive and welcoming event
- ✓ The conference volunteers
- ✓ Opportunities for participation from around the world
- ✓ Consideration of climate impact



Two conference publications: *Inspirationally Playful* and *Priorities for Play* plus journals, special collections and an upcoming book with Scottish Universities Press.

The conference programme – a rich mix

The IPAGlasgow2023 programme consisted of plenary sessions, parallel sessions (papers, panels, play breaks, workshops), posters, generous breaks for coffee, lunch and informal conferencing, visits, the social programme and IPA members' events.

Play: Rights and Possibilities

- Play and the realisation of other rights
- Play and the creation of environments
- Play and the quality of childhood
- Play and children's entitlement to optimum development
- Play and resilience.



International State of Play Panel



Enjoying conference visits

"My favourite part of the conference? How do you choose one?! Top three is the best I can do - Adam Burley plenary, children's participation (Q&A with Philip Jaffé and play experts at International Day of Play lantern session), play film at closing ceremony." Delegate feedback

"My favourite part of the conference was being able to sit with people from all over the world who have similar passions and beliefs but a variety of experiences and paths."

Delegate feedback

"I witnessed the fun-filled and participatory Lickityspit opening. We all enjoyed their amazingness."

Delegate feedback



The Tartan Dinner

"My favourite part of the conference was the breaks that gave occasion to meet interesting people whilst enjoying a good coffee and sweet."

"I really enjoyed the format of the "In Conversation" sessions in the Lantern Room which gave insights from the speakers we might not have heard otherwise."

Delegate feedback

"Shout out to the staff of the Glasgow Caledonian University staff. From top to bottom, they were pitch perfect."

Delegate feedback



Ukrainian translation of IPA "Play in Crisis" guide



Film premiere



Conference visits



Children from St Mirin's Primary School



Fresh air and fizz

"It was deeply affirming to find people whose thinking and approach felt so important to me and should be to all those working in the field of mental health."

Dr Adam Burley, invited keynote speaker



Ceilidh dancing in full swing



Pass the Baton ceremony



The ceilidh band



Tartan dinner conversations

Bursary fund

IPAGlasgow2023 managed the largest bursary fund of any IPA Triennial World conference to-date, with donations from generous individuals and IPA Branches in Scotland, Japan, Wales and the USA.

16 bursaries were distributed enabling the participation of delegates from Bangladesh, England, India, Nigeria, Scotland, Turkey, Ukraine and the USA.

"This was a magical experience, listening to people talk about everything Play for a whole week!! We had conversations and discussions that were far beyond 'Why Play is important' and instead directly focused on, 'How can we build entire programmes, communities, cities and even countries with Play at its central core?' I felt at home with all the beautiful 'Play People' all around me... I felt proud, humbled and super excited through this entire experience at the conference!"

Bursary recipient, India



Thursday's "In conversation" panel



Delegates meet a keynote speaker



Children's participation

We wanted IPAGlasgow2023 to showcase, enable and facilitate genuine engagement with children and young people, and ensure their experiences and perspectives were heard. Children's experience and participation was woven through the conference, delegates visited local projects and the conference closed with a Playday event on Glasgow Green.

"One of my most favourite aspects of the conference. Incredibly powerful and continues to impact me. Just wonderful!" Delegate feedback

Some of the ways children's participation was supported:

- Children's participation plan, principles and guidance
- Participation webpage
- Professional support package from journalist
- Keepsake Bags for children.

The role of children in papers, research and projects submitted through the abstracts:

- 167 submissions – children active in research
- 137 submissions – children active in shaping findings
- 11 submissions – children presenting through video.

At the conference

- Lorne Street Primary School opened the conference with the UNCRC Vice Chair.
- St Mirin's Primary School presented Litter Pick and Play and participated in the World Cafe workshop for the International Day of Play.
- Young clarsach players opened the conference and Gaelic School fiddlers closed the conference.
- 'The Aileymillers' led a participatory workshop.
- Licketyspit Storyplay Champions led the full conference in a Playful Start, a Storyplay session and interviewed delegates.
- PEEK Young Roving Reporters interviewed delegates for a [podcast](#).

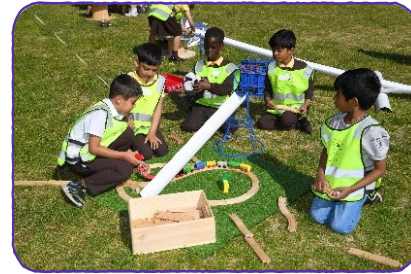


Young Reporters in action at Playday

"It's been the best day of my life so far, and it's only lunchtime!"

Child participant

"Fantastic! Made the conference more memorable and significant." Delegate feedback



Loose parts play at Playday



Children quiz UN expert on the right to play!

Children from Glasgow's Lorne Street Primary School led the opening plenary, posing questions they had gathered from children in Nigeria, India, Brazil, Taiwan, Canada and the USA to Prof. Philip D. Jaffé, Vice Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Broadcast on the national STV evening news.

Conference volunteering

As well as the numerous members of committees planning the conference behind the scenes, volunteers were recruited to help with the smooth running of the event. They helped with a host of tasks - welcoming delegates, giving out conference packs, signposting to workshops and facilities etc. They were described as "the heroes of the conference."

"As a volunteer I have felt welcomed and included. It has been simply joyful! Can Scotland take a cohort of volunteers to NZ?!"

Volunteer feedback



The conference "green t-shirt" volunteers

"It was very diverse and the presentations I was lucky enough to attend were very interesting. I feel I learned a lot, met lots of lovely people from around the world."

Volunteer feedback

"IPAGlasgow23 was a great example of teamwork making the dreamwork! A strong, experienced, enthusiastic Conference Steering Group providing an engaging and interactive programme. A fantastic venue with a hardworking, friendly team, and an award winning Convention Bureau facilitating the city support guaranteeing a warm welcome to Glasgow for IPAGlasgow23."

Feedback from the Glasgow Convention Bureau



Preparing to welcome delegates

Welcoming, accessible, inclusive

What we did:

- Signposting to accessibility information and virtual tours.
- Volunteers and information desk.
- Relaxed space to spend time away from the hustle and bustle.
- Plenary streaming into a separate, smaller room.
- Language 'buddies' to support informal translation.
- Inclusive lanyards with personal pronouns, languages spoken, and coloured dots to indicate comfort levels.
- Guidance with inclusive tips for moderators and presenters.
- Bursaries to widen participation.

"Thank you for including neurodiverse speakers, it felt amazing to know that one day I myself could speak at a conference and be accepted." Delegate feedback

"I was delighted to see the personalised lanyards and quiet/outdoor spaces being so well promoted and used. The sharing of information in advance including virtual venue maps really helped my anxiety." Delegate feedback

"I thought there was a welcome presence from low- and middle-income countries and from marginalized groups." Delegate feedback

Our sincere thanks to the main conference sponsors Richter Spielgeräte, Timberplay Ltd and the Glasgow Convention Bureau for their generous support, to Sutcliffe Play-Scotland for their support of children's participation and the GB Sasakawa Foundation and IPA Canada for support of the programme. Thank you to Glasgow Caledonian University and Glasgow City Council for helping to make this a truly friendly and welcoming experience for delegates arriving from around the world.

We would especially like to acknowledge and thank the benefactors who supported the conference with other donations, particularly those individuals who contributed to our bursary fund and the many people who gave freely of their time and expertise to make IPAGlasgow2023 happen at all.

In addition to this short report, IPA Scotland prepared a full report as a contribution to the planning of future IPA World Conferences. Use this QR code to find out more.



Inspired to join the next IPA World Conference? It will be hosted by IPA Aotearoa/New Zealand in 2026. Join IPA as a member for all the latest news, plans and membership benefits!

The main conference programme in short, complementing the 400 parallel sessions.

<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>
Morning	Morning	Morning	Morning
<p>Welcome</p> <p>Opening ceremony</p> <p>Opening panel Professor Philip D. Jaffé, UNCRC Vice Chair and children from Lorne Street Primary School, Glasgow</p>	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The State of Play in Scotland Panel</p> <p>Address by the Minister for Children, Young People and Keeping the Promise (Natalie Don, Member of the Scottish Parliament)</p>	<p>Welcome</p> <p>Playful Start with Licketyspit Storyplay Champions</p> <p>Keynote address: Play as a Second Language: Trauma, Relationships and Recovery. Dr. Adam Burley</p>	<p>Extended morning coffee</p> <p>Closing Ceremony</p> <p>“Pass the baton” ceremony from previous conferences hosts to the next conference (Hong Kong, Wales, Turkey, Canada, India, Scotland)</p> <p>Closing message from Professor Jaffe</p>
Afternoon	Afternoon	Afternoon	Afternoon
<p>Lantern “in conversation”</p> <p>Growing play from the grass roots up: a conversation from Hong Kong and Scotland</p> <p>Kathy Wong Kin-ho in conversation with Melodie Crumlin</p>	<p>Lantern “in conversation”</p> <p>Love is Medicine</p> <p>Monique Gray Smith in conversation with Cameron Sprague</p> <p>Keynote address: How play drives public spaces for children in cities. Dr. Sudeshna Chatterjee</p>	<p>Lantern “in conversation”</p> <p>Purposively Researching Play Across the Generations</p> <p>Prof. Roger Hart and Silvia Veiga-Seijo, in conversation with Prof. John McKendrick</p> <p>The State of Play International Panel</p>	<p>Playday</p> <p>Fun, active, creative and inclusive play opportunities at the much-loved Glasgow Green</p>
Evening	Evening	Evening	Evening
<p>Scottish Ceilidh with Life O'Reilly at Òran Mór</p>	<p>Screening of Yumepa no Jikan in association with Tokyo Play at Glasgow Film Theatre</p>	<p>Tartan Dinner and dance at the Glasgow Science Centre</p>	<p>*Monday evening reception at Glasgow City Cambers</p>



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