**[Karen]:** The Irish playwright, George Bernard Shaw is quoted as saying, “We don't stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing”. What do you think this is? What do you think this quote says about the importance of educators playing themselves?

**[Sarah]:** So, we don't stop playing because we grow old. Yeah, look, I'm not sure about the quote because I think it puts a lot of pressure. If I think of what teachers and I really want to acknowledge what educators and teachers as frontline professionals who are supporting children, families at such a challenging time and ongoing. And early childhood are so responsive and adaptive on a daily basis, more so than ever before because of what we are going through. And now I've got to be playful. But what I will say about being playful in children's play and to be playful means we've got to accept that we're not sure where it's going. We've got to improvise. We've got to listen to what children are saying and add your part of that space with children. So, to be playful, as we started off thinking, has many emotions. And if we circle back to that first question, play can be joyful and humorous and being in the creative space can be highly engaging.

**[Sarah]:** So that could have a positive affect for teachers too, while finding out about their ideas and curiosities as well as expressing yours in that space. So, I would say that to be playful, to think about what that does to our day and our emotional landscape, particularly at this challenging time. But sometimes we may feel discomfort if we are getting the hang of what it is to be playful and you sort of talked about it before, Karen about being spontaneous and improvising. You said about a disposition, well, I would say they’re skills, they’re learnt skills. So, when we go in that space, there may be some discomfort if we want to enter that space because it takes a while to get the hang of things, but children can co guide, remember that triple helix, they're guiding us and we can follow those unknown play landscapes, take risks and create narratives together.

**[Sarah]:** And I think to enter those space at times and I'm going to give you a quote that I wrote down here, which really talks about how when teachers take on role in children's play, so this is by some research by Hakkarainen and it talks about, it wakes up the adult own imagination and helps with their emotional involvement in play. And I think that's such a lovely idea that I don't know... do sometimes we need help in waking up our imagination and...

**[Karen]:** I think you're right there, Sarah because I hadn't thought about it like that before and waking up implies it's there already, doesn't it?

**[Sarah]:** It's absolutely there.

**[Karen]:** You need someone to activate it.

**[Sarah]:** Yeah. We are highly imaginative, all of us are highly imaginative, highly creative. So, I would say that that idea of waking up our own imagination and entering that space when you think it's appropriate, when you think it's an opportunity to do that, really has that idea of operating of a space where you can respond to children in that imaginative creative space. Of course, you're still a teacher in there, but you can also enter with this dual subjectivity to play in this playful learning space with children in their play landscapes.

**[Karen]:** Since I wrote that question, Sarah, with the quote from George Bernard Shaw about the importance of educators playing and having conversations with you last week and, tonight I've actually kind of thought about that a lot more and wondered whether it's not so much about the importance of educators playing, but about the importance of educators remembering that they are creative, spontaneous co players. It's more maybe about that and working, trying to find spaces to work in that encourages and supports that.

**[Sarah]:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. And I think that... Some work I did talked about that, the space, just as you're saying, and I've talked about this double subjectivity but also talked about a third subjectivity and I've just written about it, about others watching who maybe aren't supportive of that because... I'll go back to that idea that when we improvise, we have to be at... we're taking risks. Improvisation means you are operating in the moment, and you don't know the outcome. Well, that can be quite scary for some of us, especially if we are doing it with children who some children may be highly skilled, so that having a space where it's okay to make mistakes and that element of risk that we are so good with letting children explore that but risking our pedagogy. I'm trying this out, it didn't work, what could I do? That's really helpful to have that in our mind too, as educators.

**[Karen]:** Because I think the idea of coming into your workspace and saying, look, I don't know if this is going to work, but I really want to give it a try to... If you find yourself working in teams of people like that, then you hold onto that, because I think the capacity for growth there as an educator is huge.

**[Sarah]:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Nice. Yeah.

**[Karen]:** I'm just conscious of time and wondered... I just want to back track a little bit to something you said in one of the questions that really piqued my interest and I thought I'd wait till the end to kind of re-visit this and it's about the interests kind of, not versus but I can't think of another word here, interest versus learning, when we sometimes think about... And interest is a word we use a lot in early learning. And can you just explain, tease that out a little bit more for me when you were talking about perhaps one learning versus interests, perhaps might be an alternative way of looking at it?

**[Sarah]:** Yeah. I suppose what... I think when we talk about interests and we know what we mean, right? The voice of the child is key, children's agency to have agency over their own learning. So, we all know that and we all support that, but when we use the word interest, sometimes I think that can stay in the space of specifics, objects, or sort of closed concepts rather than open up the possibility. Sure, I like a car. It's not the car I like, it's the fact that I really want to go fast. I'm really interested in force and power with my body. So sometimes when we just look at interest, it can just limit our understanding to objects or a particular area where it might be what I do with those objects, what my body is doing, remembering that play is embodied. Children are working in this way. So, the car, my car might be really a place where I can explore force and speed and I'm wanting to do that in multiple ways.

**[Karen]:** That explains it beautifully and it really made me think that I have interests, but they might not be the same next week.

**[Sarah]:** Yeah.

**[Karen]:** And while, the genesis of it might be the same. And if you think about something like cooking, you might like cooking this one thing, but you... it's the actual alchemy of it all and the creating something and preparing food for someone, it's not actually the fact that you made scones. It's actually the fact that it's the cooking that's the thing and you can't... Thinking about interest only can make you very linear.

**[Sarah]:** Yes. Yes. And I think that's about broadening it up to what is it that I'm actually engaged in, because really what we are talking about, is what are children engaged in and all the wonderful conversations we talk about, of what they do at home, the conversations with their families, about what they're doing at home, that is their learning. What are they learning at home, how can we engage that here? So that idea that it's... To me, it's more than an interest. Yes, it's an interest, but it's also their learning, what are they doing with that? Does that make sense?

**[Karen]:** It does make sense. I'm just conscious we're getting towards the end of our time together. And I wondered, thinking about how many educators have dialled in tonight to hear you speaking and thinking about them going into their respective workspaces tomorrow, is there a take home... I'm putting you on the spot here, but is there a take home message that you would like to leave them with, thinking about them going to work with our youngest citizens in the morning?

**[Sarah]:** I think the first thing I just want to say is, thank you. Thank you for doing that. Thank you for doing that such important work. And I suppose my... What would... I think it's just that opportunity for creativity in our day and play is a great place for that. Play and creativity is not limited to the young. Play is not playfulness, is available to all of us and how are we playful in our workplaces and how can we be playful with children. That would be it because I think I'll go back to that idea of being in that shared space is complex and offers many emotions, many actions and many ideas, and that creative space is a great space.

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