

CV – Sara Margrét Ólafsdóttir

Personal information

Name: Sara Margrét Ólafsdóttir
Date of birth: July 11th 1974
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Education

2019. Ph.D. Education – University of Iceland, School of Education
2013. M.Ed. Early childhood education – University of Iceland, School of Education
2003. B.Ed. Preschool teacher – Teacher University of Iceland

Work experience

2021-present – Associate Professor at the University of Iceland, School of Education
2019-2021 – Lecturer at the University of Iceland, School of Education
2017-2019 – Research assistant at the University of Iceland, School of Education
2013-2019 – Teacher assistant at the University of Iceland, School of Education
2016-2017 – Preschool teacher – Leikskólinn Skýjaborg, Hvalfjarðarsveit
2005-2012 – Preschool teacher/assistant head teacher – Leikskólinn Skýjaborg, Hvalfjarðarsveit
2004-2005 – Preschool teacher – Leikskólinn Vallarsel, Akranesi
2003-2004 – Preschool teacher – head of department – Leikskólinn Sóli Vestmannaeyjum
1997-2003 – Teacher assistant – Leikskólinn Kirkjugerði Vestmannaeyjum

Writing – book chapters and articles

(2022). Ólafsdóttir, S.M. Þáttaskil og samfella í námi barna á mótum leik og grunnskóla: Sjónarmið barna. [Children's perspectives on transition to school]. In J. Einarsdóttir (ed.), *Leik andinn: Greinar um menntun ungra barna [The play spirit: Articles on Early Childhood Education]* (p. 353–372). Háskólaútgáfan.

(2022). Karlsdóttir, K. og Ólafsdóttir, S.M. Gildi leiks í námi leikskólabarna [The value of play for children's learning in preschool]. In J. Einarsdóttir (ed.), *Leik andinn: Greinar um menntun ungra barna [The play spirit: Articles on Early childhood Education]* (p. 189–213). Háskólaútgáfan.

- (2022). Hreinsdóttir, A.M., Karlsdóttir, K., Björnsdóttir, M.S. og Ólafsdóttir, S.M. Undirbúningstími leikskólakennara: Fyrirkomulag og forgangs röðun verkefna. [Educator 's preparation time in preschools: Organisation and prioritisation of projects]. *Netla – Vef tímarit um uppeldi og menntun*. <https://doi.org/10.24270/netla.2022.10>
- (2022). Einarsdóttir, J., Juutinen, J., Emilson, A., Ólafsdóttir, S.M., Zachrisen, B., and Meuser, S. Children's Perspectives about Belonging in Educational Settings in five European Countries. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 30 (3). <https://doi.org/10.1080/1350293X.2022.2055099>
- (2021). Piskur, B., Takala, M., Berge, A., Karlsson, L.E., Ólafsdóttir, S.M., and Meuser, S. Belonging and participation as portrayed in the curriculum guidelines of five European countries. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2021.1986746>
- (2021). Einarsdóttir, J. and Ólafsdóttir, S.M. "Who belongs in preschool?": Perspectives of children and educators. *Early Years: an International Research Journal*. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09575146.2021.1916891>
- (2021). Ólafsdóttir, S.M. and Einarsdóttir, J. Peer culture in an Icelandic preschool and the engagement of children with diverse cultural backgrounds. *International Journal of Early Childhood* 53(1), bls. 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13158-021-00283-x>
- (2020). Ólafsdóttir, S.M., Karlsdóttir, K. and Sigurjónsdóttir, D.L. Sýn barna á Kórónuveiruna og áhrif hennar á þátttöku þeirra í daglegu starfi leikskóla. *Netla – Vef tímarit um uppeldi og menntun*. Sérít 2020 – Menntakerfi og heimili á tímum COVID-19. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24270/serritnetla.2020.23>
- (2020). Einarsdóttir, J. and Ólafsdóttir, S.M. Fullgildi í leikskóla: Sjónarmið barna og starfsfólks. *TUM- Tímarit um uppeldi og menntun* 29(2), 113–131. Doi: [10.24270/tuum.2020.29.6](https://doi.org/10.24270/tuum.2020.29.6)
- (2020). Karlsdóttir, K., Björnsdóttir, M.S. and Ólafsdóttir, S.M. Mat á námi og vellíðan barna: Lærdómur af samstarfsrannsókn í fimm leikskólum. *Netla – Vef tímarit um uppeldi og menntun*.
- (2020). Jóhannsdóttir, L.R. and Ólafsdóttir, S.M. "Þetta þarf að virka hratt og örugglega": Áskoranir við að innleiða mat á námi og vellíðan barna í einum leikskóla. *Netla – Vef tímarit um uppeldi og menntun*.
- (2020). Einarsdóttir, J. and Ólafsdóttir, S. M. Children's perspectives on belonging in Icelandic preschools. In J. Murray, B.B. Swadener and K. Smith (eds.), *The Routledge handbook on the rights of the young child* (p. 434 –446). London: Routledge.

- (2019). Ólafsdóttir, S. M. and Einarsdóttir, J. Following children's advice about transition activities. In S. Dockett, J. Einarsdóttir and B. Perry (eds.), *Listening to children's advice about starting school and school age care* (p. 69–83). London: Routledge.
- (2019). Ólafsdóttir, S. M. and Einarsdóttir, J. 'It will be difficult to practice something we don't know how to do': Listening to children as they transition to school. In L. Kocher and C. Patterson (eds.), *Pedagogies for children's perspectives* (18–32). London: Routledge.
- (2019). Ólafsdóttir, S.M. and Einarsdóttir, J. "Drawing and playing are not the same": Children's views on their activities in Icelandic preschools. *Early Years: an International Research Journal*, p. 1–13. doi: 10.1080/09575146.2017.1342224
- (2017). Ólafsdóttir, S. M., Danby, S., Einarsdóttir, J. and Theobald, M. "You need to own cats to be a part of the play": Icelandic preschool children challenge adult-initiated rules in play. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 25(6), 824–837. doi: 10.1080/1350293X.2017.1380880
- (2017). Ólafsdóttir, S.M. and Einarsdóttir, J. "Þeir vilja ekki leika, bara tala saman": Sýn barna á hlutverk fullorðinna í leik. *Netla – Vef tímarit um uppeldi og menntun: Sérítt 2017 – Innsýn í leikskólastarf*.
- (2017). Garðarsdóttir, B. and Ólafsdóttir, S.M. Preschool educator's views on transition: Influence on daily practice and children's well-being. In A. Garpelin, B. Perry, and N. Ballam (eds.), *Pedagogy of Educational transitions* (p. 151–166). Sviss: Springer.
- (2016). Ólafsdóttir, S.M. and Garðarsdóttir, B. Vellíðan barna í leikskóla - Samstarfsrannsókn. In Anna Magnea Hreinsdóttir og Kristín Karlsdóttir (eds.), *Leikum, lærum og lifum* (p. 31–56). Reykjavík: RannUng og Háskólaútgáfan
- (2016). Ólafsdóttir, S.M. and Garðarsdóttir, B. Flæði í leik og námi leikskólabarna. In Anna Magnea Hreinsdóttir og Kristín Karlsdóttir (eds.), *Leikum, lærum og lifum* (p. 57–76). Reykjavík: RannUng og Háskólaútgáfan
- (2016). Ólafsdóttir, S.M. and Jónsdóttir, S.R. Nýsköpunarmennt í leikskólastarfi: Hugmyndir barna um hönnun leikskólalóðar. *Netla – Vef tímarit um uppeldi og menntun*.

Participation in research projects

2019 – 2021 – *Leikur, styðjandi samskipti og lærdómssamfélag*. Rannsóknarsamstarf fimm leikskóla í Reykjavík og RannUng. Innleiðing á nýrri menntastefnu Reykjavíkurborgar.

Verkefnið er styrkt af Skóla- og frístundasviði Reykjavíkur.

2017 – 2021 - *Educational continuity (i. Fararheill)*. Research assistant in an ongoing research project. The project is a part of an international project *The Politics of Belonging*, in collaboration with universities in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Netherland and Iceland.

2015 – 2016 – *Mat á námi og vellíðan barna*. Participant in a collaboration action research project, working with a Master student and preschool staff in one preschool. Center for research in early childhood education (RannUng).

2014 – 2017 – *Pedagogies of educational transitions (POET)*, a research collaboration with group of researchers from Sweden, Scotland, Australia, New Zealand and Iceland.

2014 - 2019 – *Children's view of play*. Collaboration with researchers and teachers from Australia and Iceland with the aim to build a range of understandings of children's perspectives of play.

2012 - 2013 – *Leikum, lærum, lifum*. Participant in a collaboration action research, contact between preschool teachers and the University. Center for Research in early childhood education (RannUng).

Conferences and seminars

(2022). Leikur sem meginnámsleið barna. Paper presented at Menntakvika Conference held in Reykjavik, Iceland, October 7th (Co-author Kristín Karlsdóttir). [Dagskrá – 7. október, 2022 – Menntakvika \(hi.is\)](#)

(2022). Að skrá og meta leikskólastarf í undirbúningstíma. Paper presented at Menntakvika Conference held in Reykjavik, Iceland, October 7th (Co-authors Kristín Karlsdóttir, Margrét S. Björnsdóttir, non-presenting co-author Anna Magnea Hreinsdóttir). [Dagskrá – 7. október, 2022 – Menntakvika \(hi.is\)](#)

(2022). Child free time? Teachers' preparation time in preschools. Paper presented at NERA Conference. Reykjavík, Iceland June 1st. (Co-author Anna Magnea Hreinsdóttir, Kristín Karlsdóttir and Margrét S. Björnsdóttir). [Program All Sessions NERA .2022 0.pdf \(hi.is\)](#)

(2021). Children's perspectives about belonging in educational settings in five European countries. Paper presented at NERA Conference. Odense, Denmark November 3rd. (non-presenting co-authors Jaana Juutinen and Jóhanna Einarsdóttir). [NERA 2021 3.-5. november 2021 \(sdu.dk\)](#)

(2021). Peer culture in Icelandic Preschool and the engagement of children with diverse cultural backgrounds. Paper presented at NERA Conference. Odense, Denmark November 4th. (non-presenting co-author Jóhanna Einarsdóttir). [NERA 2021 3.-5. november 2021 \(sdu.dk\)](#)

(2021). Leikur, styðjandi samskipti og lærdómssamfélag. Paper presented at Menntakvika, Conference at the University of Iceland, School of Education. Reykjavík, Iceland October 15th.

(2021). Undirbúningstímar í leikskólum. Paper presented at Menntakvika, Conference at the University of Iceland, School of Education. Reykjavík, Iceland October 15th (Co-presenter Anna Magnea Hreinsdóttir and Kristín Karlsdóttir)

(2021). The challenges of fulfilling ethical responsibilities when researching children's play. Paper presented at the EECERA conference held online September 7th.

(2021). "Það kom ein padda í leðurblöku og einn maður fékk hana í magann": Sýn barna á Kórónuveiruna. Paper presented at an online conference Morgunverðarfundur held by RannUng (Rannsóknarstofu í menntunarfræði ungra barna). Reykjavík, Iceland February 5th.

(2020). Leikur er ekkert "bara": Sýn barna á gildi leiks. Paper presented at conference, Bara leikur? Málþing um frjálsan leik, held by FL (Félag leikskólakennara). Reykjavík, Iceland October 27th.

(2020). Fullgildi barna með fjölbreyttan bakgrunn í íslenskum leikskólum. Paper presented at Menntakvika conference at the University of Iceland, school of Education. Reykjavík, Iceland October 1st (co-presenter Jóhanna Einarsdóttir)

(2019). 'They do not want to play': Children's views of educators' role in play. Paper presented at EECERA conference. Thessaloniki, Greece August 22nd. (non-presenting co-author Jóhanna Einarsdóttir)

(2018). Hvar er leikurinn í forgansröðuninni? Mikilvægi leiks í námi leikskólabarna. Paper presented at the regional conference, Félag leikskólakennara, 8th division. Selfoss, Iceland Oktober 15th.

(2018). Following children's advice on transition from preschool to primary school. Paper presented at EECERA conference. Budapest, Hungary August 28-31. (co-author Jóhanna Einarsdóttir).

(2018). Hvar er leikurinn í forgangsröðinni? Mikilvægi leiks í námi leikskólabarna. Paper presented at Annual general meeting Félag Leikskólakennara. Hveragerði, Iceland May 14th

(2017). "You need to own cats to be a part of the play": Icelandic preschool children challenge adult initiated rules. Paper presented at the EECERA conference. Bologna, Italy August 30th (co-author Jóhanna Einarsdóttir).

(2017). "Drawing and playing are not the same": Children's views on play in Icelandic preschools. Paper presented at NERA conference. Copenhagen, Denmark March 24th. (co-author Jóhanna Einarsdóttir)

(2017). Þeir vilja ekki leika bara tala saman: Sýn barna á hlutverk fullorðinna í leik. Paper presented at a conference by Skóla- og frístundasvið. Reykjavík February 3rd.

(2016). Continuity in children's education: Icelandic policy and practice. Paper presented at POET conference. Hamilton, New Zealand March 21st. (co-author Kristín Karlsdóttir).

(2016). "You need to own cats to be a part of the play": Children's views of their activities in play. Paper presented at a seminar at QUT. Brisbane, Australia March 8th.

(2015). Children's wellbeing in preschool: active participation and uninterrupted time for play. Paper presented at the EECERA conference. Barcelona, Spain September 9th (co-presenter Bryndís Garðarsdóttir).

(2014). Flæði í leikskólastarfi. Paper presented at the conference, *Stóri leikskóladagurinn*. Reykjavík May 23rd.

(2014). Early childhood education in Iceland. Paper presented at a seminar in QUT. Brisbane, Australia March 19th.

Children's play in peer cultures: Icelandic preschool children's views on play, the rules in play, and the role of educators in their play

Children's play in preschools is a complicated phenomenon studied extensively from different perspectives and paradigms. This study draws on the work of William Corsaro, to develop a study that used the sociology of childhood perspective, with particular focus on understanding children's knowledge and experiences. The aim of the study is to gain a better understanding of how children explain their activities in their preschool settings, how they experience rules in their play activities, and how they see the role of educators in their play. The purpose is to better understand children's play by seeking their views on their participation in peer cultures.

This thesis reports on a multiple-case study inspired by ethnographic approaches. The study was conducted with two groups of children in two preschools in Reykjavík, Iceland, with children aged 3-6. Video-recordings from the ethnographic approach were used to support children's conversations about their participation in the preschool activities. These conversations were captured through video-simulated accounts.

The main findings indicate that most children explained activities in which they could take on various roles and make decisions about how to use the material as play. The children's explanations are related to how make-believe play has been defined. This means that the children were playing when they created an imaginary situation, took on roles, and followed the rules relevant for the play. The children used different strategies to challenge adult-initiated rules, which often were related to who could play, and who could not, in the activity. The children's status and power in their peer culture influenced how they saw the educator's role in their play. They agreed that the educators seldom took part in their play; their role was often to be close to the children, observe and react when the children needed help or when something went wrong.

A major implication of the study is a better understanding of children's play in peer cultures from the children's perspectives. The study highlights the importance of listening to children's views of activities that concern them. The findings are valuable for early childhood educators to support understandings of how children explain their activities in their preschool settings, including the different strategies they use to include some and not others in their play, and how educators might reconsider their participation in children's play by observing their status and power in the peer culture.