

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PLAY

Media Kit

nifplay.org

Founded by Dr. Stuart Brown, The National Institute for Play champions play as a public health necessity across the lifespan. NIFPlay is internationally recognized as a leading authority on the science of play, advancing evidence demonstrating that play functions as a biological necessity for cognitive, social, emotional, and physical health at all ages.

Built to Play. Built by Play.

MEDIA CONTACT

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IMAGES & ASSETS

[See Headshots and Speaking Photos \(High-Resolution\)](#)

[See Logos & Brand Assets](#)

SOCIAL LINKS

Instagram: [@playinstitute](#)

LinkedIn: [The National Institute for Play](#)

Substack: [Mia Sunstrom | NIFPlay](#)

Storefront: nifplaystore.org

Website: nifplay.org

[LinkTree](#)

NOTABLE MEDIA COVERAGE

See [Mia's Media page](#) for all past engagements and speaking, article, and podcast samples.



The Washington Post



Outside

Chicago Tribune



Forbes

Newsweek

BEING
KRISTA TIPPETT

FAST COMPANY



The New York Times Magazine



LEADERSHIP

Mia Sundstrom

Chief Executive Officer, National Institute for Play

Mia leads NIFPlay's mission to translate the neuroscience of play into practical applications across education, health, sport, work, and culture. The granddaughter of NIFPlay founder Dr. Stuart Brown, she brings lived experience and contemporary leadership to the organization. Mia is an internationally recognized speaker. A former NCAA Division I gymnast, team captain, and coach, Mia holds a BA in Business Information & Analytics and an MA in Public Policy, Mia brings tremendous passion and expertise to her work.

Lauren Sundstrom

Chief Operating Officer, National Institute for Play

Lauren oversees partnerships, operations, and strategic growth at NIFPlay. She previously served as a Strategic Advisor and Board Member, helping shape the Institute's expansion. Her background spans public policy, law, and negotiation, including work as a legislative aide in the U.S. Senate and as a partner in public-private development. The daughter of NIFPlay founder Dr. Stuart Brown, Lauren is a frequent contributor to public conversations on play, purpose, and human development.

Stuart Brown, MD

Founder, National Institute for Play

Dr. Stuart Brown is a physician and pioneering researcher whose work helped establish play as a biological necessity for healthy human development. Trained at Baylor College of Medicine and the Mayo Clinic, his research was shaped by early findings linking severe play deprivation to later social and emotional dysfunction.

He founded the National Institute for Play and brought play science to global audiences through his National Geographic cover story "Animals at Play" and his book *Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*. His work continues to influence research, education, health, and organizational culture worldwide.

AREAS OF FOCUS

- The science and practice of play
- Play, mental health, and wellness
- Play in education, sports, and the workplace
- Play, creativity, resilience, and leadership
- Play frameworks: Play Styles and Play Portals