

Dr. Emma Reay
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Interdisciplinary researcher and dedicated educator whose work explores how videogame aesthetics, technologies, and narratives shape contemporary society.

Personal Details

Name: Emma Reay
 Date of Birth: 19/07/1991
 Nationality: British
 Sex: Female

Education

2017 - 2021 Ph.D. in Education – 'The Child in Games'
University of Cambridge
 2015 - 2016 MPhil in Children's Literature (Distinction, 91)
University of Cambridge
 2012-2013 MA in English Literature
University of Oxford
 2009-2012 BA Hons in English Literature
University of Oxford

Teaching Qualifications

2024 PGCAP (M1 & M2) Qualified

Publications

- Monograph

1. Reay, E. (2024) 'The Child in Video Games: From the Meek to the Mighty to the Monstrous', *Palgrave MacMillan*

- Peer-reviewed Articles

2. Reay, E. Heath, J., & Davies, L., (2025) 'Playing at Dying: Using table top games to improve conversations about death', *BGA*, 4:1
3. Pavarini, G., Smith, L. & Reay, E. (2025, forthcoming) Ethical Implications of Digital Gaming Interventions for Mental Health: Systematic Review and Critical Appraisal, *British Journal of Psychiatry*
4. Reay, E. (2024) 'Side Eye from the Side Kid: Child Sidekicks as Interdisciplinary Tools in Contemporary Videogames', *Literature*
5. Reay, E. (2024) 'Treating Symptoms or Treating Causes? Therapeutic Videogames for Mental Health', *ACM: Games*
6. Reay, E. (2023) 'Videogames as an Unheroic Medium: The Child Hero's Journey', *Games and Culture*, 18:5, p.559-577
7. Reay, E. (2023) 'The-Kid-in-the-Fridge', *Journal of Games Criticism*
8. Reay, E. (2023) 'Grief in Mobile Games', *DiGRA Proceedings*
9. Reay, E. et al. (2023) 'Playfulness in Mobile Apps for Mental Health', *Simulation and Games*

10. Reay, E. (2022) 'Immateriality and Immortality: Digital Toys in Games', chapter in edited anthology *Playful Materialities*, Bielefeld
11. Reay, E. (2022) 'Skins in the Game: Fashion Brands and Videogames', chapter in edited anthology *Reinventing Fashion Retailing*, Springer
12. Reay, E. (2021) 'The Silent Child in *Little Nightmares* and *INSIDE*' chapter in edited anthology *Silence and Silencing in Children's Literature*, Makadam
13. Reay, E. (2021) 'Cute, Cuddly, and Completely Crushable: Toys as Avatars in Games', *Journal of Gaming and Virtual Worlds*, 13:2
14. Reay, E. (2021) 'The Child in Games: Representations of Children in Contemporary Video Games', *Game Studies*, 21:1
15. Reay, E. (2020) 'Empathy Puzzles: Resolving Intergenerational Conflict in Young Adult Video Games', *International Journal of Young Adult Literature*
16. Reay, E. (2020) 'Who Thinks Beating a Child is Entertainment?': Ideological Constructions of the Child in *Detroit: Become Human*' DiGRA Conference Proceedings
17. Reay, E. (2020) 'Secrets, Stealth, and Survival: The Silent Child in Video Games', *Barnböken*
18. Reay, E. (2020) 'Hands Up! Close Reading of the Book and Interview with Breanna J. McDaniel', *Bookbird*
19. Reay, E. (2019) 'Kideogames: Reimagining the Fringe of Literary Studies as the Forefront' in *Games and Culture*
20. Reay, E. (2018) 'Appraising the Poetic Power of Children's Videogames' in *International Research Society for Children's Literature*

Employment

Maternity Leave: September 2025 to April 2026

Maternity Leave: March 2024 to March 2025

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|----------------|---|
| 2022 – Present | <p>Assistant Professor in Emerging Media Programme Lead for MSc Creative Technologies Module Lead for BA in Game Design and Art <i>University of Southampton</i></p> |
| 2023 - Present | <p>Co-Investigator for 'A Good Death' A public impact and research project based in the Faculty of English <i>University of Cambridge</i> https://good-death.english.cam.ac.uk/team/</p> |
| 2022 | <p>Research Fellow ATTUNE Mobile Games for Mental Health <i>Falmouth University</i></p> |
| 2022 | <p>Lecturer in Youth Culture and Digital Media Studies Undergraduate Course in Media and Communication <i>Anglia Ruskin University</i></p> |
| 2021 - 2022 | <p>Research Assistant RA for 'A Good Death' project in Faculty of English <i>University of Cambridge</i></p> |

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| 2021 - Present | <p>Consultant Research Consultant on 'Changing the Narrative' and 'Playing with Age' <i>Geena Davis Institute, California</i></p> <p>Narrative Consultant for Forthcoming Project <i>Taralumen Games, California</i></p> <p>Narrative Consultant for Forthcoming Project <i>Ninja Theory, Cambridge</i></p> <p>Game Design Lead for 'Crewel Work' feature film <i>Unquiet Skull, London</i></p> <p>Lead Narrative Consultant for 'Paradise Hacked' television series <i>Treehouse Digital, Bournemouth</i></p> |
| 2020 | Design Consultant and Developer for 'Sustainable Futures Academy' <i>University of Berlin x University of Cambridge</i> |
| 2019 | Narrative Designer and Research Lead for 'Cenotaph: Voices of WWI' <i>Table Flip Games, Cambridge</i> |
| 2019 - 2020 | <p>Associate Lecturer in 'Critical Approaches to Video Games' Undergraduate course in Media Studies <i>Anglia Ruskin University</i></p> <p>Associate Lecturer in 'Children's Literature Studies' Undergraduate course and Masters Course <i>Anglia Ruskin University</i></p> |
| 2017 – 2021 | Supervisor for 'Poetics, Aesthetics, and Criticism', 'Research Design in Education', and 'Play, Imagination, and Creativities' Undergraduate course, Faculty of Education <i>University of Cambridge</i> |
| 2015 - 2017 | Teacher, Key Stage 2-5, Literacy, Numeracy, Arts & Humanities, Physical Education <i>Enjoy Education, London</i> |
| Committees, Industry Collectives, and Volunteering | |
| 2025 | Editor-in-Chief of <i>Journal of Gaming & Virtual Worlds</i> |
| 2023 – Present | Clinical Trustee and Board Member for mental health and gaming charity 'Safe in Our World' https://safeinourworld.org/about-us/emma-reay/ |

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| 2023 – Present | Advisor for Taralumen Games https://taralumen.com/team/ |
| 2021 – Present | Associate Lecturer for Cambridge Digital Humanities centre https://www.cdh.cam.ac.uk/about/people/ |
| 2020 – Present | Board Member of REIYL (Researchers Exploring Inclusive Youth Literature) https://www.reiyl.com/team |
| 2020 – Present | Co-founder of STARYL (Striving Towards Antiracist Research in Youth Literature – www.staryl.org) |
| 2020 – 2022 | DiGRA Diversity Working Group (member) |
| 2020 – 2021 | Welfare Officer, Faculty of Education |
| 2019 – 2020 | Research Committee Representative, Faculty of Education |
| 2018 - 2019 | Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award Committee MCR Entertainment Officer for Homerton College |

Awards

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| 2023 | AHRC IAA (£10,000) |
| 2017 – 2022 | Arts and Humanities Research Council (Full Scholarship & Stipend) Digital Humanities Fellowship (9-months Scholarship & Stipend, £11,500) AHRC Colloquium Fund (£2,000) University Diversity Fund (£1,000) British Association for American Studies (£5,000) Jean Rudduck Memorial Bursary Vice Chancellors Award Pigott Award |
| 2016 | Jacqueline Wilson Award for Best Masters Thesis (£1,000) Graduate Tutors Prize for Distinction (Fitzwilliam College) |