Ready To Learn Initiative

Improving Early Educational Outcomes for America's Children through the Power of Public Media
The CPB-PBS RTL Initiative enhances learning, providing content for out-of-school time and fostering intergenerational engagement. Eleven public television stations have developed partnerships with local organizations to directly respond to the early education needs of families, children, and educators in their communities. The RTL Initiative also includes key partnerships with the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the School of Education at Boston University, creating professional development resources that help educators learn how to effectively use RTL content.

Children from low-income families often attend schools with fewer resources, and have less access to after-school and summer learning programs. A growing body of evidence confirms that this lack of access contributes to significant learning gaps in a child’s development.

Through the Ready To Learn (RTL) Initiative, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), PBS, and local stations provide free, evidence-based educational resources that help teachers, caregivers, and parents build early science and literacy skills for America’s children, especially those in underserved families.

More than half of America’s three- to four-year-olds do not attend preschool. For many of these children, PBS KIDS is their main source of educational media content that supports school readiness. The U.S. Department of Education CPB-PBS RTL grant introduces children to key STEM concepts early, better preparing them for school and boosting their long-term education opportunities.

Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB) partnered with Springboard To Opportunities, an affordable housing service in Jackson, to teach parents and caregivers how to use technology and PBS KIDS interactive content to positively impact children’s educational development at home.

Kentucky Educational Television (KET) piloted PBS KIDS Family Creative Learning Workshops in Jefferson and Harlan Counties, helping families to learn together while developing key STEM skills that are foundational for academic success.

Parents of young children rank PBS KIDS as the most trusted and relied-upon media service for school readiness.

The new PBS KIDS 24/7 channel and live stream increase access to high-quality educational media, anytime, anywhere.

PBS stations reach more children ages 2-5 in low-income homes than any other children’s TV network.

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The Mission of Ready To Learn

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Engagement and Collaboration in Underserved Communities

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Educational Impact

Years of research confirms the efficacy of high-quality PBS KIDS RTL resources that connect television programming with apps, games, hands-on activities, and supporting materials for caregivers and teachers.

After using PBS KIDS RTL content, parents’ confidence in supporting their children’s learning increased, as did the use of activities and strategies to support learning at home. 6, 7

Children who engaged with Odd Squad content improved their average scores from pre-test to post-test in the following foundational math skills: 6

- Skip counting – 25%
- Simple addition and subtraction – 12%
- Pattern recognition – 7%

Upcoming RTL Activities

- Developing new science content for READY JET GO! and THE CAT IN THE HAT KNOWS A LOT ABOUT THAT!
- Piloting two series focused on science and literacy
- Building partnerships between stations and local organizations through the expansion of Community Collaboratives for Early Learning Media in additional communities
- Producing personalized and adaptive content to meet the individual learning needs of children, and supporting family involvement through parent reporting tools
- Implementing research studies on the educational impact of RTL content conducted by a research consortium led by Education Development Center (EDC) with SRI International, UCLA CRESST, and Rockman et. al.

Learn more at: pbslearningmedia.org/readytolearn

8. Source: Odd Squad Learning Math with PBS KIDS Transmedia Content at School and at Home, WestEd (2015)

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