The Ready To Learn Initiative

Improving Early Learning Outcomes in Communities Across the Nation Through the Power of Public Media
Public Media is often one of the only sources of high-quality learning resources for the 54% of 3-4-year-olds in the U.S. who do not attend preschool.\(^1\) Children in Champaign County, Illinois Head Start classes use mobile devices to play PBS KIDS math and literacy learning games. Illinois Public Media provided two PBS KIDS Mobile Media Labs to the classrooms.

In an effort to bridge this achievement gap and improve the educational outcomes for all of America’s children, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), PBS KIDS and local stations are developing innovative educational content and services for kids ages 2-8, both inside and outside the classroom. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Ready To Learn (RTL) grant, these resources are focused to help children in low-income communities build the math and literacy skills they need for success in school and in life.

Since 2010, Ready To Learn funds have supported the development of:

- **2 math TV series** featuring 80 episodes
- **135+ educational online games**
- **10+ apps** distributed in low-income communities through the Mobile Learning Program
- **100+ at-home educational activities**

High-quality early childhood educational content has been shown to have an impact not only on immediate school readiness, but also on high school graduation, higher education and employment rates.\(^1\) And while some gains have been made in recent years, a learning disparity remains: kids from lower-income families often enter kindergarten less prepared to learn than their peers from higher-income households.

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Essential Early Learning Resources
**Proven Educational Impact**

Research consistently validates the positive impact of PBS KIDS’ on-air programming, digital content and hands-on resources developed through the Ready To Learn Initiative.

**Recent studies have shown gains in the following areas:**

- Mathematical knowledge, especially among children from low-income backgrounds \(^{ii, iii, iv}\)
- Children’s recognition of basic and advanced geometric shapes \(^{ii, iv}\)
- Children’s collaborative learning and discussion around math within the classroom \(^{iii}\)
- Parents’ awareness of their children’s math learning, as well as use of activities and strategies to support their children’s learning at home \(^{iv}\)
- Parents’ motivation to set aside time each day to perform math activities with their children \(^{iv}\)
- Teachers’ knowledge of individual student’s learning and mathematical development \(^{iii}\)

**Partnerships in Local Communities**

Local public television stations partner with schools, libraries and organizations to support children’s math and literacy skills in communities throughout the U.S. These efforts in the classroom, at home and in out-of-school settings offer children from low-income families access to free PBS KIDS educational materials, apps, games and more.

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\(^{i}\) WHUT Howard University Television works with KIPP DC schools for a 100th Day of School event that gave local children access to PBS KIDS RTL resources.

\(^{ii}\) Nashville Public Television (NPT) works with the Nashville Promise Neighborhood initiative to hold workshops that provide educational digital content to families.
New Educational Math Series

Peg + Cat

Winner of 3 EMMY® AWARDS

3.6 million children have tuned in to Peg + Cat every month
Streamed over 317 million times to date
Proven to increase children’s understanding of math concepts

Odd Squad

PBS KIDS’ newest series, Odd Squad, helps kids build math and problem-solving skills through on-air episodes and digital content, including streaming video and a mobile app.

3 EMMY® AWARDS

Among the top 10 shows for kids 2-8 in December 2014
Streamed more than 54 million times during first six weeks of digital launch

Upcoming Highlights from the CPB-PBS Ready To Learn Initiative

- Innovative tools that provide parents and educators insight into their children’s learning, including identifying problem areas and offering recommendations for educational games, video and offline activities that may help
- Distribution of educational mobile apps accompanied by hands-on learning resources in English and Spanish in low-income communities, where mobile device access continues to increase
- New episodes of Peg + Cat, a series that evaluations have shown helps preschool-aged children develop basic math skills
- New episodes of Odd Squad, a math series aimed at children ages 5-8
- Partnerships between PBS stations and more than 1,500 community organizations
- Extensive ongoing research and cumulative evaluation to measure the CPB-PBS Ready To Learn Initiative’s educational impact

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[iii] Li, L., McCarthy, B., Tu, M (2014). Learning Math with Curious George. PBS KIDS Transmedia and Digital Learning Games in the Pre-School Classroom: A report to the CPB-PBS Ready To Learn Initiative. Redwood City, CA; WestEd.