



Family Engagement in the Digital Age

Early Childhood Educators as Media Mentors

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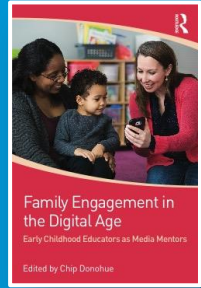
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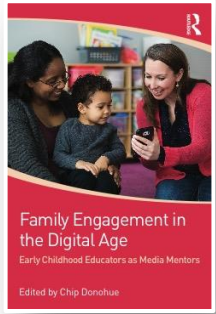
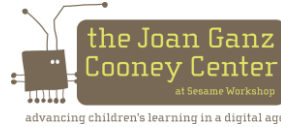
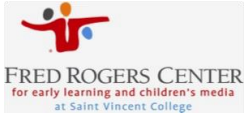


Family Engagement in the Digital Age

- Ellen Galinsky
- Lisa Guernsey
- Kevin Clark
- Sharon Thompson Hirschy
- Jeremy Boyle, Melisa Butler & Junlei Li
- M. Elena Lopez, Margaret Caspe & Heather Weiss
- Rafiq Dossani & Anamarie Auger
- Kate Highfield
- Kristy Goodwin
- Devorah Heitner
- Michael Rich & Kristelle Lavalley
- Fran Simon
- Faith Rogow & Cyndy Scheibe
- Amaya Garcia & Karen Nemeth
- Pamela Brillante
- Cen Campbell & Amy Koester
- Lisa Guernsey & Michael Levine
- EDC/SRI, KBTC & WGBH
- Edited by Chip Donohue



Family Engagement in the Digital Age



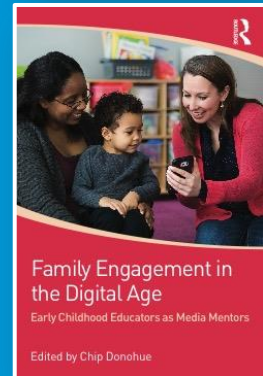
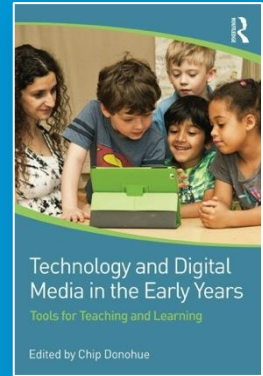
Acknowledge parent and family concerns

- Screen time confusion – *screenworried or screenwise*
 - How much is too much?
 - Passive versus interactive media
 - Inappropriate content, violence and commercial messages
- Negative impact on social-emotional development
- Decreases outdoor time and physical activity, increases obesity
- Links to behavioral issues and shorter attention span
- Desensitization to violence / Increase in aggressive behavior, bullying
- Increases sleep disruptions and related fatigue – impact on learning
- Impact of technology use on school readiness and success in school



Our goals for tech in ECE

- Do no harm
- Acknowledge and address the concerns
- Explore the intersection of child development, early learning, early literacy and children's media
- Strive for developmentally-informed tech integration and evidence-based practices with technology in the early years
- Focus on digital media literacy – for children, parents and us
- Become media mentors who engage and empower parents to become media mentors for their children



Empower parents and engage families



*Strengthen a parent...
and you strengthen a child.*

Fred Rogers

You already have what it takes.

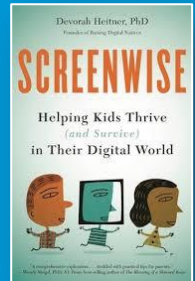
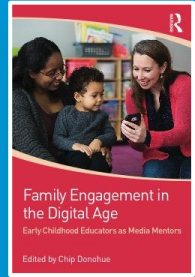
VROOM



Empower parents and engage families

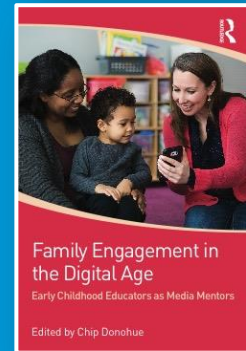
- *They have savvy, but you have wisdom.*
- *Spend less time monitoring and more time mentoring.*
- *Mentoring allows you to create an environment where kids feel comfortable talking to you about what they experience on social media, texting or online.*

Devorah Heitner, *Raising Digital Native* and Author
Screenwise: Helping Kids Thrive (and Survive) in their Digital World



Empower parents and engage families

- *Technology should allow young children to learn, play, collaborate, and create in ways different from those in traditional media.*
- *Play will always be essential, and play in the digital age should be supported and enhanced by technology, not displaced or replaced by it.*
- *Establish media management plans to proactively design learning experiences that consider what, when, with whom, where, why, how, and how much media will be used with young children.*



Family engagement outcomes matter

1. Family well-being – Parents and families are safe, healthy, and have increased financial security.
2. Positive parent-child relationships – Beginning with transitions to parenthood, parents and families develop warm relationships that nurture their child's learning and development.
3. Families as lifelong educators – Parents and families observe, guide, promote, and participate in the everyday learning of their children at home, school, and in their communities.
4. Families as learners – Parents and families advance their own learning interests through education, training and other experiences that support their parenting, careers, and life goals.

The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework (2011), p. 6

Family engagement outcomes matter

5. Family engagement in transitions – Parents and families support and advocate for their child's learning and development as they transition to new learning environments.
6. Family connections to peers and community – Parents and families form connections with peers and mentors in formal or informal social networks that are supportive and/or educational and that enhance social well-being and community life.
7. Families as advocates and leaders – Parents and families participate in activities to improve children's development and learning experiences.

The Head Start Parent, Family, and Community Engagement Framework (2011), p. 6

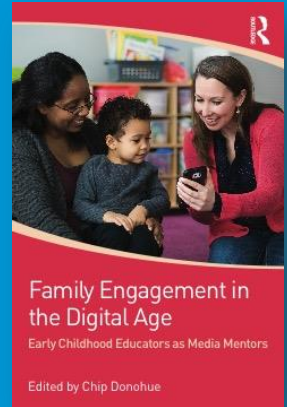
More thoughts on family engagement

Effective engagement depends on respectful relationships with families and valuing the diverse ways in which they promote their children's outcomes.

M. Elena Lopez, Margaret Caspe & Heather Weiss
Logging in to Family Engagement in the Digital Age

When family engagement really works, it goes well beyond inviting families to attend school events. True engagement is found in authentic, individual, mutually beneficial relationships between members of the school community and the members of each child's family.

Amaya Garcia & Karen Nemeth
Family Engagement Strategies for All Languages and Cultures



Thoughts on family engagement

Embrace technology. Empower the parents to understand how children learn and how technology can be a part of that. Help them know that when used appropriately, technology can support and empower the child to learn, participate and belong. Pamela Brillante

The early childhood educator is in a unique position to become a true media mentor, integrating conscious training in effective media use as part of twenty-first-century education. Michael Rich and Kristelle Lavallee

Digital age family engagement matters

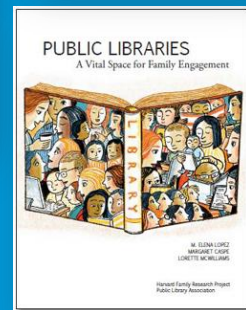
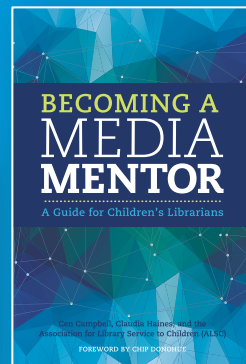
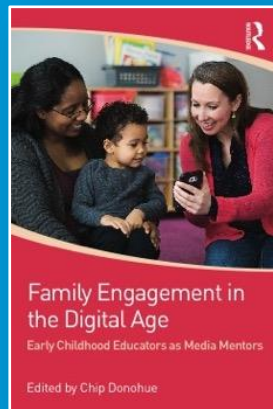
Technology tools offer new opportunities for educators to build relationships, maintain ongoing communication, and exchange information and share online resources with parents and families. Likewise, parents and families can use technology to ask questions, seek advice, share information about their child, and feel more engaged in the program and their child's experiences there.

NAEYC and Fred Rogers Center Joint Position Statement (2012)



Digital age family engagement matters

- Improve communication
- Strengthen the home school connection
- Build community / connect with communities
- Increase parent involvement
- Encourage parent-to-parent sharing
- Enhance family engagement
- Empower parents and families
- Promote family well-being



Family engagement (always) matters

In the digital age...

- Meet the parents where they are
- Provide multiple pathways
- Be aware of barriers to access
- Understand the power of “nudges”
- Be media mentors to parents so they can be media mentors to their children



What works? Can we push and pull?

- On-demand and just-in-time learning
- Public media – RTL
- Email campaigns, e-news and social media
- Websites
- Mobile – Text messages and apps
 - Customized tips (age, stage, culture, language...)
 - Behavioral “nudges”
 - Parenting tips and digital skill building
 - Empowering messages – “you already have what it takes
 - Address access, equity and digital use divide



What works? *Tech and early literacy*

- Using technology to support early literacy and digital equity
- InTEL, *Integrating Technology in Early Literacy*
 - How technology influences early language development and family engagement
 - “Evidence of impact” – what role a technological intervention has in improving child outcomes, adult behaviors in interacting with children, or teacher practice
- Put families first to design and implement successful solutions for early literacy that met community needs



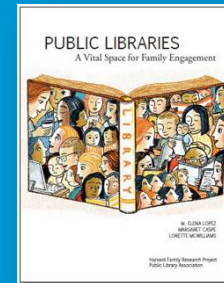
What works? *Anywhere, anytime learning*

- Around the world, communities are working toward a shared goal of empowering families to have active roles in their children's education
- Community partnerships, grassroots organizations, national campaigns, early childhood initiatives are providing pathways for parents and caregivers to engage with children
- Families feeling welcomed, participating in programming and becoming active learners



What works? *Family engagement in third spaces*

- *Family engagement happens anywhere, anytime children learn.*
- *Family engagement is a shared responsibility among families, educators, and communities to support children's learning and development.*
- *Effective engagement depends on respectful relationships with families and valuing the diverse ways in which they promote their children's outcomes.*
- *Libraries are in a prime position to create and reinforce a pathway of family engagement that promotes children's learning across time and across community and virtual space.*
- *Today's libraries are forming partnerships...to combine resources, extend their range, and link families to new learning opportunities, reach more families and gain the capacity to improve community well being.*



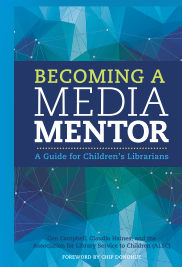
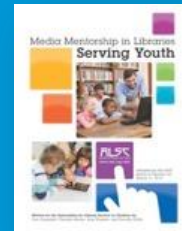
Public Libraries: A Vital Space for Family Engagement
Elena Lopez, Margaret Caspe & Heather Weiss
Harvard Family Research Project, 2016

Mano en Mano, *Comienza en Casa*

A nudge

- Every child needs a media mentor
- Every parent/family needs a media mentor
- Every educator needs to be a media mentor
- Who mentors the mentors?

...as much as media mentors are needed for families, they are also needed for teachers. Lisa Guernsey & Michael Levine, 2016



Media mentors matter

Today's young children who are using technology to learn and create while working with adults who can set good examples and guide them to new heights are receiving tremendous advantages. If only the privileged few have the opportunity for that kind of tech-assisted but human-powered learning, divides will only grow wider.

Lisa Guernsey, 2016



Thoughts about Media Mentors

Digital media can be used not only to provide families with information, but also, to increase their understanding to use that information effectively and creatively. By doing so, families take on the roles as lifelong educators and learners: they become powerful teachers for their own children who also gain new skills themselves.

Lopez, Caspe & Weiss, 2016



Media mentors are all around us

- Parents, caregivers and families
- Early childhood educators and teacher educators
- Informal educators in third spaces
- Pediatricians and allied health professionals
- Disability/Inclusion specialists
- Media developers
- Policy makers
- Others?



What parents need from media mentors

1. A role model, mentor and enthusiastic tour guide
2. A trusted source
3. Resources and recommendations
4. Opportunities for parent play time
5. Affirmation and empowering tips for promoting a healthy media diet and positive family media ecology at home



A healthy media diet matters

- Consider screen exposure all day and across settings
- Shift from “how much” they watch to “what they watch”
- Use media “with” rather than “instead of”
- Look for media experiences that are interactive, engaging, offer guided exploration and give the child control
- Emphasize interactions, relationships and social emotional learning
- Strive for balance



TV may be the only appliance that is more useful after it is turned off. Fred Rogers



Family media ecology matters

- Start healthy media habits early
- Understand that you are the primary media role model/mentor
- Establish media and technology rules for everyone in the family
- Turn off work – set boundaries for work time and family time
- Be aware when private tech replaces public use
- Family time can include screen time



Family media *Quick Wins*

- ✓ Rethink screen time – focus on quality, level of engagement, learning and interactions
- ✓ Be aware of your own screen use
- ✓ Avoid background TV and “always on” media
- ✓ Turn off media and devices during family meals
- ✓ Designate no tech zones and times



Family media *Quick Wins*

- ✓ Limit screen media before bedtime
- ✓ Keep TVs (screens?) out of children's bedrooms
- ✓ Watch together – interactional quality and joint engagement with media matters – *dialogic apping*
- ✓ Plan ahead for unplugged time

“What can we do when we turn off the screen?”

Use messages that engage and empower parents

Use technology to support human connection, in healthy ways, to engage, empower and inspire your child

- Relationships matter
- Use technology in ways that bring you closer
- Quality time together can include screens
- Connect screen experiences to real life
- Use media to encourage creativity, curiosity and wonder



Media mentors matter

Now it is time to both upgrade the skills of these professionals and envision new professional roles to help families understand and become savvy users of the digital media and interactive communication tools that are part of children's nested environments.

Guernsey & Levine, 2016



To “future ready” your tech skills for the digital age,
always remember that relationships matter most

*No matter how helpful computers are as tools
(and of course they can be very helpful tools),
they don't begin to compare in significance to the
teacher-child relationship which is human and
mutual. A computer can help you learn to spell
HUG, but it can never know the risk or the joy of
actually giving or receiving one.*



Fred Rogers



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Photos courtesy of Google Image Search, Fred Rogers Center, Fred Rogers Company, Erikson Institute, NAEYC, Early Learning Community at Pacific University, Burley Elementary School, Ravenswood Elementary School, Gail Lovely, University of Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies, Cassandra Mattoon and Chris Crowell

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