

2012 Context Study of the Use of Technology and PBS KIDS Transmedia in the Home Environment

The 2012 Context Study of the Use of Technology and PBS KIDS Transmedia in the Home Environment is an important part of the multiyear CPB-PBS *Ready To Learn* summative evaluation being conducted by Education Development Center, Inc., and SRI International. The study addresses a need to understand family patterns of media use by examining how families adopt, use, and report benefitting from technology and PBS KIDS transmedia in their homes—a need recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and PBS. Fourteen low-income families with children ages 2–8, received laptop computers and tablets to support their participation in the study and agreed to home visits, in-person interviews, weekly phone check-ins, and completing weekly checklists.

Findings

Children

- Educational uses of media, including using media to support reading and math, were secondary to children's use of technology for entertainment.
- Game play was quite popular on all platforms, from stand-alone consoles to hand-held devices.

Families' Use of PBS KIDS Content and Study Technologies

- Parents called out the overall educational value of PBS KIDS content and activities.
- Families reported increased game play (generally on the study-provided iPads and laptops) and, in some cases, less television watching over the course of the study.
- Children overwhelmingly preferred using iPads to laptops, largely due to ease of use.
- Some parents said their conversations and social time had become more frequent or rich during the study's technology experiences.
- Siblings played together, and older siblings often supported their younger siblings' play and learning.

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Findings

Study Media Use as a Reflection of Family Life

- Parents' approaches to their children's technology use stemmed from their broader notions of childrearing and multiple demands of maintaining a household.
- Parents expressed a need to limit children's media experience, primarily out of concern that they would be exposed to inappropriate and/or violent content.

Interested in more?

For readers interested in a more detailed look at these findings, including: illustrative examples, recommendations, and a detailed description of research methods, the full-length report and executive summary for this study are available:

cct.edc.org/rtl

There you'll also find other current and past *Ready to Learn* summative research studies. And, to speak with the evaluation research team, please contact:



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