Dear Colleagues:

We hope that 2015 is off to a great start for everyone! We have had a very productive winter so far, and are thrilled to share the results of some of our work with you. Last week we released three reports that take a close look at Hispanic-Latino families and the ways they engage with digital media for learning at home. These studies represent national surveys, field research, and literature reviews that provide a deeper, and we think, provocative look at a growing population in the U.S. We have also launched a new survey with our partners at New America that aims to map early learning initiatives and programs that use technology in innovative ways. And we’re looking for a jolly good fellow! Read on for more details.

The Cooney Center team is also hard at work on some exciting new projects that we think you will be eager to hear more about, so check out our blog and follow us on Facebook and Twitter for more updates about forthcoming reports scanning the market for literacy apps and the results of our parent video game survey later this spring.

Families & Media

A Spotlight on Hispanic–Latino Families and Digital Media

Last week, the Cooney Center and members of the Aprendiendo Juntos Council (AJC) released three new publications that take a closer look at the way Hispanic-Latino families engage with media. Aprendiendo en casa, by June Lee and Brigid Barron, zeroes in on data about Hispanic-Latino families collected during our 2014 national survey of parents on educational media use. Connecting to Learn by Vikki S. Katz and Michael H. Levine analyzes the impact of digital equity programs such as the public–private partnership Connect2Compete and offers recommendations for policymakers. Digital Media Use and Latino Families, by Bruce Fuller, José Ramón Lizárraga, and James Gray, takes a close look at the ways families adopt and use digital media and offers recommendations for producers of digital media, those hoping to engage Latino families, along with the growing range of nonprofits, schools and funders that hold faith in digital technologies.

Learn more about our new reports »

What Are Your Favorite Apps for Family Time?

Earlier this winter, we released Family Time with Apps: A Guide to Using Apps with Your Kids, a guide that provides tips on how apps can be a part of family learning, communication, and connecting to one another. The book features comic strips of family life that can be enjoyed by parents and children together, as well as resources to help parents find the kinds of high–quality apps that help transform screen time into family time.

Over the next few months, we are inviting experts to share their perspectives on the scenarios from the guide. Jens Peter de Pedro of Toca Boca gives us a peek into his own household with A Mouse in the House and the Desire to Learn, and how he might have transferred some of his own stress about learning to his daughters. His advice to other parents? Lighten up and play! And with For the Love of Routines—and Research, Shelley Pasnik of the Center for Children and Technology and Education Development Center shares her expertise on a topic on almost every parent’s mind. Not only do good routines help maintain structure in our daily lives, they can promote creativity by providing children with the freedom to explore within established boundaries.

We’d love to know what YOUR favorite apps or tips for making the best of family time together. Please let us know by sharing it on Twitter or Facebook with the hashtag #familytimewithapps.

Learn more about Family Time with Apps »
Download from the iBook Store: itunes.com/familytimewithapps »
Games & Learning

Happy Birthday, GamesandLearning.org!

This month marks the first full year that we have covered the learning games industry with our GamesandLearning.org website. We are thrilled that we’ve received such strong support from our colleagues. We have had over 110,000 visitors to the site from over 170 different countries and have built a growing social media following.

We are looking forward to an even more exciting second year! And to kick it off, we will be hosting a panel discussion at SXSW Interactive on Monday, March 16. Join us for Playing to Learn: Lessons from Game Design Gurus, featuring Cecilia Weckstrom of LEGO.com; Makeda Mays Green of DigiPlay; Tinsley Galyean of the Global Literacy Project; and moderated by the Cooney Center’s Michelle Miller.

View gamesandlearning.org »

The 4th National STEM Video Game Challenge: Deadline Extended

Due to popular demand, the deadline for the National STEM Video Game Challenge has been extended to March 30. The Challenge, presented with our partners at The Smithsonian Institution and E-Line Media, aims to motivate interest in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) learning among youth by tapping into their natural passions for playing and making video games. The competition represents an ongoing partnership with founding sponsor the Entertainment Software Association. We are also pleased to have generous support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the Grable Foundation, AARP, and Mentor Up.

E-Line Media and the Cooney Center have been hosting workshops across the country, and there are several more planned before the deadline. Check our events calendar to see if there’s a STEM Challenge workshop taking place near you!

Learn more at stemchallenge.org »

Literacy by 10

Map, Link, and Rethink: Survey to Map Early Literacy Initiatives

Today’s children are surrounded by digital media of all kinds. How will they ever learn to read?

Most children today are exposed to media and interactive technology on a daily basis, and more and more parents are accustomed to communicating via mobile phones and other tools. Many early learning initiatives are beginning to determine how they might harness these tools to engage with parents, work with teachers, or otherwise augment efforts to help children develop early literacy skills.

Over the next few months, New America’s Education Policy Program and the Cooney Center are collecting information to create a map of where these programs may be located and how they are going about their work. This map is part of a broader effort called Map, Link, and Rethink: Early Learning in a Digital Age, which aims to identify, categorize, and examine initiatives underway across the country targeted at supporting young children (ages 0 to 8). This particular survey is focused on early literacy, and we are asking early learning programs and literacy programs experimenting with tech tools to complete our questionnaire.

Learn more about the survey »

Team Work

Cooney Center 2015–2016 Fellows Program: Now Accepting Applications

The Joan Ganz Cooney Center is accepting fellowship applications now through April 15, 2015. Cooney Center Fellows participate in a wide range of projects and, in doing so, develop broad exposure to scholarship, policy, and practice in the field of digital media and learning. This professional development program offers opportunities to:

• Conduct research on digital media use among children and families;
• Publish research that responds to practical industry and practitioner needs;
• Expand the influence research has in government, education, philanthropy, and industry decision making; and
• Develop new skills and perspectives that are critical to becoming a leader in the field of digital media and learning.

If you’re interested in learning more about what our fellowship is like, check out what two of our recent
fellow, Jason Yip and Sarah Vaala, have to say about their experience here!

Apply now »

Congratulations

Please join us in congratulating Sadaf Sajwani for her recent promotion to Director of Partnerships and Planning, and to Briana Pressey for her promotion to Research Manager! We are so lucky to have Sadaf and Briana on our team. Their enthusiasm and hard work make our team so much stronger!

Join us!

We hope that you will join us as an active contributor and a member of our growing community on the web and on Facebook and Twitter as we partner with foundations, policy, industry and academic leaders to advance learning in our digital age!