



2024 CASE STUDY

The 2024 Well-Being by Design Fellows participated in a four-month professional development program for designers and producers of interactive kids' technology and media. They met online to workshop their current projects, network with other fellows, and gain insights from research and industry leaders as they worked to incorporate principles of well-being into their designs. We are delighted to share highlights from each fellow's experience.

Melissa Gedney



Melissa Gedney is a learning designer, media producer, researcher, and performer living in Washington, DC, and is passionate about supporting joyful spaces where people can connect and create. She is currently the Senior Manager of the Learn Together Project at PBS KIDS, supporting co-design of content and experiences to foster intergenerational moments between kids and their grown-ups.



PRODUCT: Learn Together Project: Facilitating intergenerational learning moments between kids and their grown-ups with PBS KIDS

TARGET AGE: Kids ages 2-8 and their grown-ups

→ [PBSKIDS.ORG](https://pbskids.org)

PBS KIDS is dedicated to creating entertaining, educational content that reflects the unique and diverse experiences of children living in the United States. We strongly believe in the power and potential of quality media to inspire meaningful conversations and playful moments between kids and their grown-ups; we also believe that these moments are essential to helping kids grow and thrive.

The Learn Together Project is a strategy that aims to support *more* of those moments and conversations by (1) creating engaging intergenerational content that nurtures these interactions, and (2) supporting features and platforms that enable PBS KIDS and PBS member stations to share relevant content with families and educators.

With support from the CPB-PBS Ready To Learn Initiative, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, we have experimented with multiple ways to support intergenerational interactions grounded in our media. As children make more and more of their own media choices, a focus of my fellowship was thinking about the specific ways we may support kids in initiating these interactions with their grown-ups, rather than defaulting to a grown-up led experience.



LOOKING AHEAD

I am looking forward to sharing my experience and recommendations with internal teams connected to the Learn Together Project, specifically thinking about ways we could grow our design to include emphasis on autonomy, creativity, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

For the organization writ large, I will co-host a department-wide presentation on well-being and invite the team to join me in a reading group, which will borrow from our assignments. I'm eager to build shared language and a community of designers internally that has access to the resources the fellowship team curated. I'm tremendously grateful for the opportunity I had to work with the Cooney Center; I am eager to share what I learned so that other designers on the team (and our audience) may benefit.



I was motivated by hearing industry peers' reflections on centering well-being in their design processes and measures of success. How would childhood be different if the landscape of kids' digital lives was designed by people obsessed with (and held accountable to designing for) well-being? I got a peek into what that would look like in this fellowship community — and spoiler, it's hopeful!



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- + **Start from where you are:** Transparently, I found it difficult to imagine a product that adequately addressed all of the principles that comprise RITEC's framework at once; sometimes overperforming in one category leads to underperforming in another. However, I believe that using the framework to find out where you are and help shape where you want to go is powerful. The more designers that are centering well-being in their process, the better products will be, and the more balanced the landscape will be overall.
- + **Measure what matters:** With so many competing measures of success, it is important to set goals you can celebrate and motivate a team on that align to well-being; how do we change the rules of the game so that well-being wins? Something I really valued hearing from other industry peers was the ways they incorporated well-being into their design standards.



SESAME WORKSHOP

Joan Ganz Cooney Center

For more information about the Well-Being by Design Fellowship program, please visit joanganzcooneycenter.org/fellowship2024