



CASE STUDY

The 2026 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.

Téo Xisto



Téo Xisto (they/them) is the Creative Learning Coordinator at the Lifelong Kindergarten research group. Téo is also a graduate of the group, where they researched learning environments that foster critical consciousness. They now help develop learning resources, workshops, videos, and partnerships to foster caring and creative communities around the world.

Play is foundational to child development, supporting the growth of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical abilities. OctoStudio is a free creative coding platform that supports the type of play and creativity that children need. By using OctoStudio to create their own games, children begin to see themselves not just as consumers of technology, but as capable computational creators. We facilitate workshops for families because identity shifts rooted in shared experiences are more durable. When caregivers also see themselves as computational creators, they model and reinforce this belonging for their children. Yet adults often approach the idea of coding with more hesitation than their children do.

The Family Game Night project emerged from the insight that a lower-stakes way of tinkering with OctoStudio was needed. By starting with fun and accessible games, families can experience the joy of play together and gradually begin creating themselves. Because OctoStudio is designed to be open and accessible, every game is designed with natural remixing pathways. This invites families to progress from players to creators at their own pace, building shared identity as they tinker together.



PRODUCT: Family Game Night with OctoStudio

TARGET AGE: 7–12, and their adult caretakers

Remixable family games that turn dinner table play into opportunities for shared coding explorations

→ OCTOSTUDIO.ORG

WHAT COMPONENTS OF WELL-BEING DOES MY PROJECT ADDRESS?

Relationships deepen through Family Game Nights, which create space for authentic connection. Adults model vulnerability through play while witnessing children's creativity and humor. **Competence** grows through creative iteration. Visual coding blocks remove technical barriers, and each game is designed as an invitation to bring in your own ideas through remixing. **Diversity, equity, and inclusion** are centered through platform and game design choices. OctoStudio is completely free, doesn't rely on extractive business practices, and is available in over 35 languages. Each game requires only one device per family and will make use of common household materials.

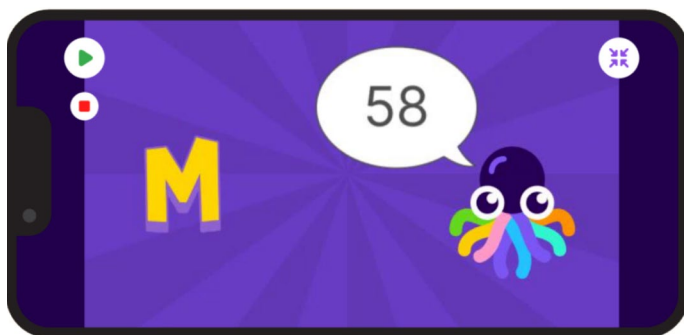
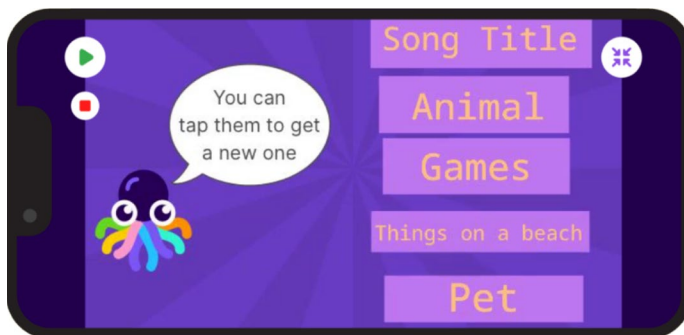
HOW CAN MY PRODUCT BETTER ADDRESS CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING?

- + **Emotions:** The instructions for each game can explicitly normalize emotions and model healthy responses. Instructions can also prompt caregivers to name feelings ("It's disappointing to lose, huh?") and celebrate resilience. The way a game is introduced can create opportunities to practice emotional regulation throughout the game night.
- + **Creativity:** Game instructions can include creative prompts and scaffolding that invite families to imagine variations of a game. For example, including a prompt like "What categories would you add?" can help families see the games as invitations for their own creative expression rather than fixed experiences.
- + **Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion:** Although OctoStudio is available in over 35 languages, this set of games and their corresponding instructions are currently in English. I'm translating all materials into Spanish and Portuguese so more families can engage in their home languages.

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REFLECTION

Using frameworks like RITEC to audit well-being components of my project was a helpful starting point, but what I learned throughout this fellowship is that well-being must permeate the entire design process. This became clear to me while planning my Youth Design Team feedback session. I thought about well-being not just in relation to my final product, but also in relation to my session design. The [Youth Voice Playbook](#) reminded me to center belonging, create multiple pathways for youth engagement, and build flexibility into my structured plan. Going forward, I'll keep asking: *Does my design process mirror the values I'm trying to cultivate in the product itself?*



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LOOKING AHEAD

My immediate next step will be to share a recap of and reflections from my fellowship experience with my coworkers at Lifelong Kindergarten during an upcoming lunch session. I'm also planning local playtests with children and families this summer. The work being done by KidsTeam and the resources Jason Yip shared with us have given me tons of inspiration on design techniques for co-designing with children, and also helpful advice for co-designing with parents. I will also be referencing the Cooney Center's recently launched resource, [Co-Design with Kids](#), as I get ready for my summer sessions. Beyond testing and creating new games, I'm interested in designing a physical Family Game Night kit containing printed instructions and materials for gameplay. My local library system already loans similar educational kits with preloaded tablets, so I'm curious about partnership opportunities to distribute Family Game Nights through this channel since it is economically accessible to the families I want to center with this project.



Joan Ganz Cooney Center

For more information about the Well-Being by Design Fellowship program, please visit joanganzcooneycenter.org/fellowship2026