THE VALUE OF READY TO LEARN

BOOSTING KIDS' LEARNING, EMPOWERING PARENTS, PROVEN RESULTS

Through the competitively awarded Ready To Learn (RTL) grant, funded by the U.S. Department of Education and Congress, CPB and PBS develop and distribute high-quality, educational PBS KIDS content and resources to advance fundamental early learning skills for all children ages 2-8. CPB and PBS carry out this work in collaboration with media producers, researchers, educational advisors, and local PBS stations across the country. RTL funding enables PBS stations to tailor educational services and resources aligned to state standards to meet local needs. The current grant provides age-appropriate content for young children to build literacy and STEM skills while also providing an introduction into career or workforce options to help children succeed in school, work, and life.

Educational resources and tools are critical for children's long-term learning and success. Yet, more than half of children ages 3-4 do not attend preschool,[1] making RTL-funded PBS KIDS content, including videos, games, activities, and resources, more important than ever. PBS KIDS is available on more than 335 local PBS stations nationwide, across PBS KIDS digital platforms, connected TVs, the PBS KIDS YouTube channel, PBS KIDS for Parents, and more.

PBS KIDS channels are available to 98% of US TV households.[2]

NATIONAL REACH

PBS stations reach more parents of young children annually than any other children's TV network.[3]

PBS KIDS averages 16 million monthly users, and 350+ million monthly streams across digital platforms each month.[4]

TRUST & SAFETY

88% of parents agree that PBS is a trusted and safe source for children to watch television, and play digital games and mobile apps.[5]

COMMUNITY-CENTERED IMPACT & LOCAL STATION ENGAGEMENT

Leveraging the extensive reach of PBS KIDS, local public media stations utilize the content funded by RTL to empower parents, caregivers, and educators to support the children in their lives through in-person workshops and events that have proven, measurable impact on learning outcomes.

Partners include those with expertise in early childhood education, family engagement, content development, and workforce development skills. These include preschools, homeschools, daycare centers, local chambers of commerce, libraries, museums, and other youth-serving organizations to achieve meaningful local impact.

ECONOMIC VALUE

The investment in RTL provides exceptional educational and economic value, providing widely accessible and free programming that benefits millions of American families each year.

PROVEN EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS, RTL-FUNDED PBS KIDS CONTENT HAS DEMONSTRATED MEASURABLE, REAL-WORLD IMPACTS ON LEARNING.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Education

Use of RTL-funded PBS KIDS content and resources has proven to:

- enhance children's understanding of STEM concepts like movement and force, encouraging early exploration of scientific principles.[6]
- strengthen the foundational computational thinking skill of sequencing, which is critical for problem-solving and coding.[7]
- increase children's interest and positive attitudes toward science, fostering a foundation for future STEM learning.[6]
- increase children's use of science vocabulary.[6]

Mathematical Knowledge

- Children made significant gains in areas such as numbers and operations, pattern and 3-D shape recognition, and basic arithmetic skills (addition, subtraction, and number comparison).[8, 9]

Literacy Skills

- An independent review of 45 studies, which included nearly 25,000 children between the ages of 2 and 8 years old, found that PBS KIDS media and resources increased children's early literacy skills, such as letter recognition, vocabulary development, and phonological and phonemic awareness.[10]

Parental Empowerment

- Parents gained confidence in supporting their children's math and science learning through the use of RTL-funded resources.[11]
- Families engaged more in science-related activities, strengthening learning bonds at home.[12]

Ensuring Access

RTL has supported the development of:

- digital games with enhanced settings for children with low vision or hearing challenges, including adjustable captioning, brightness, and sound options, plus user-friendly interfaces that foster independence and engagement.
- episodes of PBS KIDS series with American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation, expanding access for the Deaf and hard-of-hearing community.
- closed captioning in multiple languages, audio descriptions for select content, and the ability to download content for offline use, ensuring access across different demographics, including those without reliable internet.
- video content and digital games available in both English and Spanish.

1. Annie E. Casey Kids Count Data Center, Children Ages 3-4 Not Attending Preschool (2024)
2. TracMedia, 7/7/24 - 7/21/2024, carriage summary.
3. Nielsen NPOWER, L+7, 9/25/23 - 9/29/24, M-Su 6A-6A Reach (000), PBS stations, select children's cable networks, 50% unif., 1+ min
4. Google Analytics, Jan - Dec 2024, pbskids.org, PBS KIDS mobile, CTV, and games app.
5. 2025 PBS Trust Survey, Proof Insights, 1/2025
6. Grindal, T., Silander, M., Gerard, S., Maxon, T., Garcia, E., Hupert, N., Vahey, P., Pasnik, S. (2019). Early Science and Engineering: The Impact of The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That! on Learning. New York, NY, & Menlo Park, CA: Education Development Center, Inc., & SRI International.
7. Relkin, E., Christensen, C., Silander, M., Gerard, S., Kook, J., Gardner, S., Vidiksis, R., Gaylor, E., Nelson, L., Hunt, E., Hupert, N., & Pasnik, S. (forthcoming) The Impact of computational thinking and related skills: An Evaluation of Work It Out Wombats! from PBS KIDS.
8. Tui, M. McCarthy, B., Li, L. (2015). Odd Squad: Learning math with PBS KIDS transmedia content at school and home. WestEd.
9. Pasnik, S., Moorthy, S., Llorente, C., Hupert, N., Dominguez, X., & Silander, M. (2015) Supporting Parent-Child Experiences with PEG+CAT Early Math Concepts: Report to the CPB-PBS Ready to Learn Initiative. Education Development Center & SRI International.
10. Hurwitz, L. B. (2019). Getting a read on Ready To Learn media: A meta-analytic review of effects on literacy. Child Development, 90(5), 1754–1771.
11. EDC. (2021). Go and explore: Elinor Wonders Why pilot study.
12. Christensen, C., Hoisington, C., Vahey, P., Hupert, N., & Pasnik, S. (2019). PBS KIDS Play & Learn Science Evaluation Report. New York, NY, & Menlo Park, CA: Education Development Center, Inc., & SRI International.)