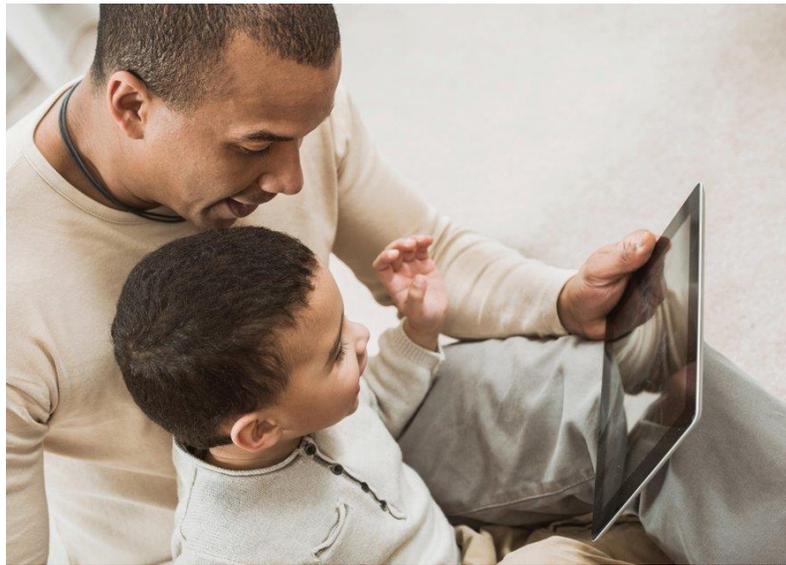


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Erikson Institute's TEC Center releases new report on childhood media literacy

With the announcement of continued remote learning in Chicago and across the country, a new report from Erikson's TEC Center underscores the need for media literacy to be included in school curriculum



CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, August 24, 2020 — Erikson Institute has released a groundbreaking report from its [Technology in Early Childhood \(TEC\) Center](#) that presents best practices for engaging young children with technology in their homes, schools, museums, and libraries.

The **Media Literacy in Early Childhood Report** is available for [download here](#).

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, young children and their families are relying more than ever before on media tools, particularly digital media, for both education and entertainment purposes. However, there remains a lack of consensus about what media literacy education for young children means, what media experiences in early childhood settings should look like, and how to empower parents and other adults as media literacy role models and mentors. **The report underscores the importance of media literacy education being a key component of school curriculum, while also emphasizing the role that parents and caregivers play in educating children about media usage at home.**

Funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the report is published by Erikson's TEC Center in partnership with the National Association for Media Literacy Education, the Association for Library Service to Children, and the Association of Children's Museums.

The **Media Literacy in Early Childhood Report** utilizes what we know about media literacy, child development, and early education to develop educational materials for those working with young children including families, librarians, museum staff, and educators. It advocates for increased media literacy education in a child's earliest years.

Key takeaways of the report include:

- Young children are regular and frequent media users, but they are not digital media experts
- Young children need support from adults to develop media literacy skills as early as possible
- Currently, young children are expected to use digital tools frequently, but they are not given enough supports to develop skills for understanding, questioning, and evaluating these digital tools
- We cannot expect young children to become media literate without providing supports for educators and caregivers

In the new report, media literacy in early childhood is defined as the child's emerging ability to access, engage, explore, comprehend, critically inquire, evaluate, and create with **developmentally-appropriate media**. This updated framework places an emphasis on supporting young children as they begin to understand the role of media. Improved media literacy skills prepares them to be creative and healthy consumers and creators of media throughout their lives.

“Young children are active and frequent media users, so it’s critical they are taught media literacy skills from the moment they start using technology devices,” said **Alexis Lauricella**, Director of Erikson’s TEC Center. “Media literacy should be incorporated into all subjects and curriculum areas, particularly as many areas of the nation continue utilizing remote learning for the upcoming Fall semesters.”

The report contains many helpful tips and tools for caregivers, educators, libraries, and museums to incorporate and implement media literacy in their unique settings. This includes:

- 1) An updated definition of media literacy in early childhood; 2) An explanation of developmentally appropriate

media literacy education for children under age eight; 3) Background on the developmental abilities and expectations of young children with regards to media use and media literacy; and 4) Guidelines to support media literacy in early childhood.

To interview an Erikson expert on technology and media literacy in early childhood, please contact Kamaria Morris at kmorris@erikson.edu or call 773-454-3590.

Erikson Institute educates, inspires, and promotes leadership to serve the needs of children and families. We have the premier graduate school dedicated to child development. We provide direct services to our community's children and families. We are leaders in influencing early childhood policy. We work tirelessly every day so that all children can achieve optimal educational, social, emotional, and physical well-being. At Erikson Institute, we know that investing in the early years of children will last a lifetime.

*Erikson Institute's innovative **Technology in Early Childhood (TEC) Center** is a trusted source for digital-age educators and parents seeking information about the intersection of child development, early learning, and children's media for children up to age 8. Through carefully selected resources and real-world examples, we strengthen educators' digital literacy and their ability to intentionally select, use, integrate, and evaluate technology in the classroom and other early childhood settings. Our thought leadership augments our mission, with expertise in social-emotional learning, early literacy, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education, family engagement, media mentorship, and teacher preparation.*

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