

Media Literacy in Early Childhood Implementation Plan

This implementation resource consists of supporting skills, tips, and activities for the six actions of media literacy in early childhood with explicit cultural awareness and considerations. The contents within this implementation document have been developed by the attendees at the National Practitioners Forum. During the National Practitioners Forum, over 40 practitioners identified promising practices for the six fundamental actions of media literacy in early childhood. These practitioners represented early childhood learning settings such as libraries, museums, and school-, center-, and home-based programs. The practitioners identified the knowledge and experiences educators need to model and teach media literacy skills to children and their families.

Practitioners should embed media literacy across curricula and in current, daily interactions and practices. Practitioners do not need to squeeze in a new curriculum in order to support media literacy for the children they serve. Librarian and practitioner participant Claudia Haines explained, **“These aren’t lesson plans. They’re moments.”** The majority of these tips and activities may be used in all child settings including: library, museum, and school-, center-, and home-based programs.

Throughout the National Practitioners Forum, participants came up with many practices that should be woven into all of the six fundamental action-related practices. These common practices include prioritizing child development, valuing the adult’s role, and realizing that practice is influenced by culture.

Of course, as early childhood practitioners, it is imperative to prioritize child development first. During implementation, this means arranging

activities that are developmentally appropriate and that do not expect children to think and act beyond their abilities. This prioritization of child development must be reflected in all practice, regardless of the area of education and pedagogy.

Another practice that is common across all media literacy actions is the valuing of the adults’ role, both the caregivers’ and practitioners’. The adults’ role is to model and provide opportunities to learn, which includes sometimes taking a step back and allowing children to explore without verbal or physical intervening. In media literacy, this can look like adults reflecting on their own media use and how they are modeling appropriate behavior while encouraging children to take the six fundamental actions.

The final practice that should be applied across all media literacy actions is realizing that practice is influenced by culture. Practitioners reflect their culture through their practice, and practitioners must take into consideration the child’s culture while engaging with that child. Cultural considerations are included for each of the six actions in this Media Literacy in Early Childhood Implementation Plan.

Six Fundamental Actions of Media Literacy

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1 Access

Definition

Access: to effectively locate, use, and select media

Supporting Skills

- 1a. Manipulate the tools effectively and efficiently
- 1b. Understand the features of a given piece of media or digital tool, including a sense of how it may make them feel or whether it helps them learn and grow
- 1c. Critically think about why they are choosing media and for what purpose
- 1d. Seek help and assistance from caregivers, librarians, and other educators who serve as media mentors, providing access and use of media, technology, or other digital tools

Tips for Adults

- Curate high quality, educational media for children to learn uses of tools and media that nurtures joint media engagement.
- Develop a system such as a loaning library for sharing tools, devices, and materials with other libraries, museums, practitioners, and educators.
- Create a network of media mentors for yourself and for the children you serve. Media mentors are those who help and teach others how to engage with and choose media.
- Provide multiple entry points into a game, activity, or tool. For example, if the activity is to create a book, provide many tools for children to create with such as cameras, voice recording devices, a book creating app, paper and crayons. Providing many tools can support children gaining experience with a variety of tools.
- Encourage children to teach adults how to use media and technology, especially apps and artificial intelligence.

Activities

ACCESS ACTIVITY 1: Create a low-risk environment for children to learn how to use and select technologies such as makerspaces, STEM activities, or a technology “petting zoo.” **Allow children to explore** these spaces and materials without requiring a specific product as an outcome.

AGES: All
CONTEXT: Museum, Library, School/Center-Based Program
SUPPORTING SKILLS: 1a, 1b

ACCESS ACTIVITY 2: Build or make a **physical place for adults and older children to model** how to use, select, critically and thoughtfully question, and manipulate tools and provide opportunities for children to recreate the modeled practices.

AGES: All
CONTEXT: Museum, Library, School/Center-Based Program
SUPPORTING SKILLS: 1a, 1b, 1d

<p>ACCESS ACTIVITY 3: Discuss common symbols, colors, and images from the media and their culturally relevant meanings. Show pictures of signs from their neighborhoods including transportation, grocery store and park signs. For infants and toddlers, begin this practice by labeling symbols, colors, and images.</p> 	<p>AGES: All CONTEXT: Museum, School/ Center-Based Program, Home SUPPORTING SKILLS: 1a</p>
<p>ACCESS ACTIVITY 4: When using devices with many choices of content such as tablets, support the learning of the tools by choosing to have one app open/available at a time. This will allow children to focus on mastering one activity at a time. For example, there are many apps which can enable book making. Choose one so that children can master this one app without becoming overwhelmed by choice.</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 1a</p>
<p>ACCESS ACTIVITY 5: Assign media mentors in your class/program. Media mentors could be older children, children who are more experienced with technology and media, or children who are more comfortable taking risks and tinkering with technology and media. Introduce “media mentor” as a job which may change each week. Encourage children to ask the media mentor for help before asking an adult.</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: School/Center-Based Program SUPPORTING SKILLS: 1d</p>
<p>ACCESS ACTIVITY 6: Pose questions for children to answer by allowing them to select from available media such as books, information pamphlets, digital media devices, etc. Make sure to include a range of media that has been designed for different ages and levels of comprehension. Discuss which media they used to find information and how to use each available media to find the information. For example, for an information pamphlet for adults, point out the type size, word lengths, and images to explain why it is for adults or older children and the need to ask an adult or older child for help to use that media.</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTENT: School/Center-Based Program SUPPORTING SKILLS: 1b, 1c</p>

Cultural Considerations

There are many cultural considerations which affect the media children have access to, how they access media, and how the adults in their lives perceive the role of media. Practitioners must gain information about the families served, such as media and technology experiences, access, expectations, and typical media practices. Practitioners can obtain this information by creating a survey or hosting family focus groups and interviews with caregivers or by asking some general questions of caregivers.

When implementing access tips and activities, it’s important to utilize tools that families already have (e.g., smartphone, Facetime, and the games they play) or tools they can easily access such as tools through an existing loaning library or free wifi. It’s also incredibly important to understand the caregivers’ values, goals, and perceptions of media access for their children. This should guide the teaching and supporting of media literacy.

2 Engage and Explore

Definition

Engage and Explore: to intentionally use media for purpose and enjoyment

Supporting Skills

- 2a. Explore and engage with content of media in ways that gives them a sense of agency and control
- 2b. Follow curiosities and develop a flexible, growth-mindset while playing with technology through open-ended exploration, embracing opportunities to take risks and fail
- 2c. Engage in social play and exploration to learn from and with others when using media or technology tools

Tips for Adults

- Don't expect children to be media experts or engage and explore with overt purpose right away. Slow down. Pause. Give children space. This is very important.
- Support questioning throughout exploration and engagement. Acknowledge and value children's questioning. Model questioning language while using picture books and stories.
- Recognize intrinsic motivation by avoiding awards and points.
- Try to use some guided discovery teaching techniques, such as modeling student ideas and sharing exploratory work, while designing engagement and exploration.
- Align the materials provided to the learning goals.
- Explore how engagement impacts the experience and use of the tool.
- Encourage the use of media as tools to connect to others. When choosing media to incorporate, assess how collaborative the media type is and what it was designed for.
- Incorporate media into traditional early childhood activities such as sensory stations and dramatic play. Allow children to take apart old technology tools or destroyed books as a sensory experience. In the dramatic play area, incorporate a digital camera for children to take pictures and videos throughout their play.
- Support families too. Create "I wonder" cards which contain open-ended prompts for caregivers to support their children's engagement and exploration.
- Give caregivers an opportunity to learn about "cognitive load", a term in the learning sciences that refers to the total amount of mental activity that the brain can manage at a given time.

Activities

ENGAGE AND EXPLORE ACTIVITY 1: One way to introduce print or screen media into playtime at early ages is to **verbally label and draw connections**. Point out a familiar concept or element in the media and name it such as "bus", "dog", "Mom", etc. Additionally, vocalize a connection between the 3D world to 2D media for example, a stuffed elephant in the room and an elephant in a book. Labeling and mentioning these connections to a child may be the first step to the child incorporating media elements into their exploration.

AGES: 0-2

CONTEXT: School/Center-Based, Home

SUPPORTING SKILLS: 2a, 2c

<p>ENGAGE AND EXPLORE ACTIVITY 2: Enable video chats during a whole group time. Libraries, School/Center-Based, and Home-Based Programs can use video chat to connect with professional experts, authors and illustrators, and partake in virtual tours in zoos and museums. Learn how Brooklyn Public Library’s TeleStory program utilizes televisiting, or video conferencing, to connect incarcerated caregivers with children.</p>	<p>AGES: All CONTEXT: Library, School/Center-Based Program, Home SUPPORTING SKILLS: 2a, 2c</p>
<p>ACTIVITY 3: Allow children to take apart old technology tools or destroyed books as a sensory play experience. For infants and toddlers, this can be destroyed books of various materials or broken keyboards. For preschool-age children, this can be technologies such as VCR tapes, broken digital cameras or broken robotics. For school-age children, this can be technologies such as broken computers or music players. For all ages, provide examples of the tool not destroyed or taken apart so children can see that the tool can be made as well as taken apart. The Huntington Branch Library’s (Shelton, Connecticut) Computer Part Art Program Model is one specific model for libraries and museums.</p>	<p>AGES: All CONTEXT: Library, Museum, School/Center-Based Program, Home SUPPORTING SKILLS: 2a, 2b</p>
<p>ENGAGE AND EXPLORE ACTIVITY 4: Incorporate child-led coding activities with and without technology. With technology may include coding with programmable robotics such as Code-a-Pillar and Ozobots or coding with apps such as Scratch Jr. Learn about Gombert Elementary School Library’s (Aurora, Illinois) Maker Monsters program where children create and program their own robotic monsters. Without technology, children can code an adult to dance or to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: Museum, Library, School/Center-Based, Home SUPPORTING SKILLS: 2a, 2b, 2c</p>
<p>ENGAGE AND EXPLORE ACTIVITY 5: Combine digital and non-digital media throughout storytime. Utilizing e-books, apps such as Book Creator, DoodleCast, and reading e-books created by the children and their families can diversify storytime while exposing children to more ways to read, hear, and create stories. For School/Center-Based Programs, and reoccurring storytime programs such as Prime Time Family Reading Time, ask children and their families to create a book using multiple types of media, and share their book at storytime with other children and families. Want to try something new? Films, videos, and podcasts are also ways to tell read, hear, and create stories.</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: Library, School/Center-Based Program, Home SUPPORTING SKILLS: 2a</p>

<p>ENGAGE AND EXPLORE ACTIVITY 6: Scaffold mixed media exploration opportunities by having children solve a challenge using many types of media. Provide books, magazines, tablets which contain apps, printed photographs, and field guides for children to find and use information in their exploration. Challenge children to use media to create a boat that floats or a ball that rolls down a ramp. Encourage children to take risks and recognize that failing is part of learning.</p>	<p>AGES: 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: Library, Museum, School/Center-Based Program SUPPORTING SKILLS: 2a, 2b</p>
<p>ENGAGE AND EXPLORE ACTIVITY 7: Add stop motion animation to playtime. Stop motion animation includes using props such as clay, puppets, or blocks and combining pictures taken of the props to form a movie such as the famous films, <i>Coraline</i>, <i>Chicken Run</i>, and <i>James and The Giant Peach</i>. Children can learn about stop motion animation while playing with various apps and props and take on roles and responsibilities while playing with other children. Read about Evansville (Ind.) Vanderburgh Public Library’s Pixilation Animation Technique program model.</p>	<p>AGES: 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 2a, 2b, 2c</p>
<p>ENGAGE AND EXPLORE ACTIVITY 8: Host a family night for families to explore together. Include intergenerational activities such as creating family photo albums, books, and oral histories using various types of media. Encourage families to share, play, and learn together. Learn about PBS KIDS’ Family Creative Learning program as a model for creating engaging family exploration experiences.</p>	<p>AGES: 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 2a, 2c</p>
<p>ENGAGE AND EXPLORE ACTIVITY 9: Build children’s sense of agency by giving them more control over their exploration time. Provide media materials to be used but allow children to create their own rules. Encourage children to work together to negotiate throughout the rule-making process. For example, if there are tablets, allow children to discuss the turn-taking and sharing rules. Should each child be allowed to explore one app for five minutes? If two children are exploring with an app together, should they be allowed to explore for 10 minutes?</p>	<p>AGES: 7-8 CONTEXT: School/Center-Based Program SUPPORTING SKILLS: 2c</p>
<p>ENGAGE AND EXPLORE ACTIVITY 10: Use media engagement to sustain communication and relationships. In ongoing programs such as School/Center-Based Programs, use activities such as Flat Stanley and postcards from pen pals to support collaboration and engagement across distance.</p>	<p>AGES: 7-8 CONTEXT: School/Center-Based Programs SUPPORTING SKILLS: 2c</p>

Cultural Considerations

Early childhood practitioners must consider cultural aspects of young children's engagement and exploration with media. Ensure that there are diverse media mentors who can model and support media engagement and exploration with young children. Include diverse print and digital collections that reflect culturally pluralistic society. Additionally, ensure caregivers are valued and seen as partners by not only considering the school/library/museum/center-to-home connection, but also thinking about the home-to-school/library/museum/center connection. How do the child's family's values, beliefs, and experiences impact the child's engagement and exploration with media in this context? Cultural aspects such as gender roles and stereotypes impact how families engage and explore with media together. Include families in the implementation of media engagement and exploration through various activities, such as games that are nostalgic and familiar to caregivers.

3 Comprehend

Definition

Comprehend: to understand media messages and practices and transfer that knowledge appropriately

Supporting Skills

- 3a. Interpret content and utilize information gathered while using media
- 3b. Transfer information gathered from one media source or technology tool to another
- 3c. Understand commonly used visual, editorial, and technology design processes to communicate information (e.g., cuts, zooms, weblinks, etc.)

Tips for Adults

- Remember that processing and understanding media is hard for children and takes cognitive effort and while it may look like children are understanding what they are engaging with, often times they are not fully grasping the content.
- Slow the media use down and explain what is happening in terms of storyline and content but also what is being done with regard to the development of the media (e.g, special effects, etc.) to help the child better understand the content.
- Allow and encourage repetition, letting the child use the same media a few times to help them process and understand the content.
- Talk about the content with the children in the way you would when joint book reading.
- Talk about the ways the media was created and what parts of what they are using/seeing is realistic and what is pretend or fake.
- Explain why you are choosing a certain type of media and when children choose media ask them why they are choosing that type.
- Encourage children to integrate their favorite media characters into their play by providing them books, music, and toys that are related to that character (i.e. MANGA comics, Disney characters, etc.).

Activities

COMPREHEND ACTIVITY 1: Incorporate books into free play and dramatic play spaces. Allow children to use information such as storylines, images, and characters from the books into their play. Provide blocks, costumes, and/or dolls which relate to those books. Ask questions about the book children are reading and allow them time to engage with the book many times in order to notice more details.

AGES: All

CONTEXT: Library, Museum, School/Center-Based

SUPPORTING SKILLS: 3a, 3b

<p>COMPREHEND ACTIVITY 2: Encourage children to reenact parts of a book or a video clip. Discuss what it means when a book or video clip switch between scenes. For instance, if a book shows a queen in a room, and then standing outside of a castle, discuss how they could reenact that by having two scenes such as the inside of the castle, and a door that leads to the outside of the castle. In a museum, an exhibit that relates to media such as a popular children’s author or story, could have a book or video clip, as well as the life-size scenes. For the youngest children, having an adult connect the life-size scene to the media may serve as the first step to understanding cuts in digital media. Allow time for the children to absorb the concept.</p>	<p>AGES: All CONTEXT: Museum, School/Center-Based SUPPORTING SKILLS: 3c</p>
<p>COMPREHEND ACTIVITY 3: Introduce the idea of “types of media” by showing children examples of media they may engage with regularly such as a news segment on television, a nature documentary, or a commercial that targets children. Ask children questions to build their awareness of the different types of media such as what each type of media is, where they see it, and who watches or engages with that type of media. In a library or museum setting, provide prompts around the space which encourages these questions and labeling for caregivers and practitioners.</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: Library, Museum, School/Center-Based SUPPORTING SKILLS: 3a</p>
<p>COMPREHEND ACTIVITY 4: Provide a space for children to experience the construction of commonly used visual, editorial, and technology design processes such as cuts and zooms. Have children create a video, and they can use technology tools to create cuts and zooms in their video. Show them examples of a video that also has a “behind the scenes” or uncut edit.</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: Library, Museum, School/Center-Based SUPPORTING SKILLS: 3c</p>
<p>COMPREHEND ACTIVITY 5: Divide children into groups, teams, or pairs for a group research project. For example, if children are interested in trucks, they can divide into groups and research different aspects of trucks such as truck-related jobs, types of trucks, etc. Children can document their findings using various types of media such as crayons and paper, voice recording, hand-writing, or typing notes using a tablet. Groups can present their findings and bring their findings together to create one culminating understanding of trucks. Lead a conversation discussing the choices they made while creating media.</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: School/Center-Based SUPPORTING SKILLS: 3a, 3b</p>

COMPREHEND ACTIVITY 6: Create a place for children to ask questions and document the answer. This may be an area on the wall titled something similar to “What we’ve learned and where we learned it from”. In a museum setting, create a place for children and families to search for answers to questions the museum may have not addressed. This is an opportunity for children to not only document their findings from multiple sources, but is also an opportunity for children to contribute to the knowledge and content of the library, museum, or school/center.

AGES: 5-6, 7-8
CONTEXT: Library, Museum, School/Center-Based
SUPPORTING SKILLS: 3a, 3b

Cultural Considerations

For the action of comprehension, there are many cultural aspects an early childhood practitioner must consider. Much of media content being developed is being created by non-diverse creators and often times does not reflect the lives of diverse populations. This can be seen in the lack of representation of diverse characters as well as the focus on western standards of educational content. As a result, we must recognize that not all children are approaching media with the same background experiences, expectations, and knowledge base, which may influence their comprehension of the content. Adults must make an effort to support their understanding and application of that content in the context of each individual child’s life experience.

4 Critically Inquire

Definition

Critically Inquire: to question and analyze media messages

Supporting Skills

- 4a. Demonstrate knowledge of the inquiry process which includes posing questions, seeking information from a variety of sources, asking for evidence and providing evidence for their own conclusions, interpreting and analyzing information, and documenting
- 4b. Decipher the elements that make media accurate, appropriate, reliable, fact/fiction, real, and/or pretend
- 4c. Consider media's point of view and potential bias and critically question the development of media content
- 4d. Inquire about media's intended audiences and the impact of media on different people

Tips for Adults

- Create an environment of respect and safety to question the representations of media including the questioning of media creators as well as the assumptions, beliefs, norms, and stereotypes portrayed by the media.
- Document and showcase children's process of questioning, seeking, and being curious.
- Model that a reliable answer may not be available.
- While engaging in the inquiry process, remain present to the child. Explain what you are doing when using media.
- Provide a variety of media, including print and digital, for children to use to search for answers.
- Children need a safe place to find answers. Take the time to weigh the pros and cons of limiting children's access to search engines and certain media.
- Know that it's okay to not find the answer and for adults to not have all the answers. The inquiry process is about exploring many possible answers and not about finding the one right answer.
- For specific questions to ask during inquiry, See Chapter 7, Media Literacy in Early Childhood Education: Inquiry-Based Technology Integration in *Technology and Digital Media in the Early Years* (Rogow, 2015, p. 97).

Activities

CRITICALLY INQUIRE ACTIVITY 1: Model identifying sources. Use prompts such as "I wonder about... We have a book/device to search for that answer." Model comparing sources for children. Discuss how certain sources such as a search engine on the Internet or a voice assistant such as Apple Siri, Amazon Alexa, or Google Assistant, could be useful while looking up very broad, open-ended questions, while if you're searching for specific information that you know is in a book, the book may be a better choice to search first.

AGES: All

CONTEXT: All

SUPPORTING SKILLS: 4b

<p>CRITICALLY INQUIRE ACTIVITY 2: Guide investigation by facilitating the brainstorm of how and where to find answers. Encourage the use of multiple types of media. Utilize the following questions to guide investigation: What are your observations? Are there multiple answers? What’s similar in all these answers? Where can we get more information? What other questions could we ask? Who else has researched this? In museums and libraries, provide caregivers the questions prompts to share with their child.</p>	<p>AGES: All CONTEXT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 4a, 4b, 4c</p>
<p>CRITICALLY INQUIRE ACTIVITY 3: Support children’s questioning by providing a systematic way to develop questions such as the Question Formulation Technique. Provide children with a topic they have expressed interest in and allow them a specific amount of time such as five or ten minutes to ask and record as many questions as possible. Children can work as groups or with family members to ask and record questions. Stimulate thoughtful questions by explaining the differences between open- and closed-ended questions as well as the affordances of the two types of questions. Facilitate discussion about the priorities and complexities of the questions, as well as the possible next steps for using the questions.</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 4a</p>
<p>CRITICALLY INQUIRE ACTIVITY 4: Showcase children’s questioning and seeking by documenting their questions throughout the day and designating a time of day, or part of routine when the questions can be revisited and next steps discussed. Create a “Question Time” after a meal or snack. In libraries, schools and center-based programs, families can document children’s questions at home and submit the questions during the program. Caregivers often become overwhelmed by all the questions children ask so encourage caregivers to capture the questions to show that the questions are valued.</p>	<p>AGES: All CONTEXT: Library, School/ Center-Based, Home SUPPORTING SKILLS: 4a</p>
<p>CRITICALLY INQUIRE ACTIVITY 5: Utilize the media already used with young children. Discuss what elements make media accurate and how to check if the information is accurate. With younger children, provide them with cues such as “books in this one section of the bookshelf are fantasy” and for older children, the cue may be about trusting certain well known websites, government resources, or trusted authors, as well as checking multiple sources. Facilitate questioning of media sources by discussing the intended purposes. In museums, this could be set up as a station challenging families to discuss and question if sources are accurate or not.</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 4b</p>

<p>CRITICALLY INQUIRE ACTIVITY 6: Lead a discussion exploring the messages of media children see everyday such as ads visible during neighborhood walks, children’s media including commercials, ads in apps, and even on children’s apparel. Facilitate discussion using open-ended questions such as: What is this media telling me? How do you know? Should I believe it? Why? Is some piece of information missing? Should it tell me more or less information? Why?</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 4b, 4c</p>
<p>CRITICALLY INQUIRE ACTIVITY 7: Throughout the use of children’s media, mention the presence of stereotypes and biases. Create a conversation first by providing many accurate representations of people, places, and experiences in media for young children. As children grow, start a conversation about representation accuracy, stereotypes, and biases. Encourage children to form the habit of questioning representation, the viewpoint of the creators(s) and the implications. Additionally, ask children how the representations make them feel when media does and doesn’t represent them, their family, their experiences, and their friends accurately.</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 4b, 4c</p>

Cultural Considerations

Throughout the inquiry process, there are many cultural implications that early childhood practitioners must consider. The action and habit of questioning authority and media is not universal for all cultures. Families from across the United States, as well as across the world have their own experiences with authority and media. Thus, for many children and families, to encourage the questioning of authority and media, specifically the questioning of media representations and those creating the representations, may be counter to the child and family’s experiences and beliefs. Support families while they compare their values and beliefs to those portrayed by various media sources. Support families’ awareness of stereotypes portrayed by the media and how they could continue the conversation with their children. Additionally, in some cultures, children are not seen as the expert, but through the inquiry process, it is possible that children may know more than adults about a topic such as boats or dinosaurs. Caregivers may need extra support while navigating the inquiry process if they believe they should always be the expert. It’s okay to not know the answer and to see this experience as an opportunity for children to lead the investigation.

5 Evaluate

Definition

Evaluate: to ask “is this media right for me or my task?”

Supporting Skills

- 5a. Identify and compare types of media sources
- 5b. Choose media that matches and supports their goal/task
- 5c. Understand that a media source is reliable for one thing is not necessarily reliable for everything
- 5d. Reflect on their experiences with media

Tips for Adults

- Prioritize learning about children and family privacy rights. Children’s safety and privacy are incredibly important. When caregivers have an understanding of privacy rights and the importance of data privacy to a child’s security, they can take steps to inquire about how their child’s data is being used and change settings on various games and apps so that data is only used with a caregivers’ permission.
- Support evaluation of many types of media including books, magazines, ads intended for children, as well as apps, television programs, and other screen-based media.
- Show caregivers how to use the device prior to expecting them to evaluate the content. Create and provide caregivers documents and information which support their evaluation of media including indicators of high quality and developmental appropriateness, and information about in-app purchases and children and family privacy rights. Additionally, discuss with caregivers what it means to share information about their child and the uncertainty of what and how technology companies use that data.

Activities

EVALUATE ACTIVITY 1: In order for children to be able to evaluate media, they must have exposure to different types of media. Provide many types and types of media for children, but also **identify and compare types of media**. Label “print media”, “television”, “video game”, “music”, etc. Notice and discuss how print media and digital media are similar and different. Compare visual-only (print ads) and auditory-only (music) media. In museums, libraries, and school/center-based programs, add labels including symbols and words indicating the type of media on technology devices, shelves or bins.

AGES: All
CONTEXT: All
SUPPORTING SKILLS: 5a

EVALUATE ACTIVITY 2: Evaluate books during storytime. Allow children to choose a book to read and invite adults to discuss why the book choice is or isn’t developmentally appropriate. Facilitate discussion about what children like about books and don’t enjoy about certain books. What makes a book “just right” for one child and not for another child? What elements in a book support discussion and engagement? You could repeat similar discussions for other media, like apps, games, movies, or short videos.

AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8
CONTEXT: Library, School/ Center-Based, Home
SUPPORTING SKILLS: 5b, 5d

<p>EVALUATE ACTIVITY 3: Help children pinpoint and label what feelings they have surrounding an experience with a piece of media. Children could take pictures of themselves with different facial expressions to represent emotions such as joy, sad, scared, mad, etc. Practitioners could also provide images of emojis which represent emotions. Children can utilize these images to support the labeling of their feelings during media use. Engage in discussion with your child as to why they may or may not enjoy the media content. Encourage and empower children to form a habit of labeling their feelings throughout viewing, playing, and engaging with media.</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 5d</p>
<p>EVALUATE ACTIVITY 4: While engaging in ads intended for children, facilitate children’s understanding of the ad. Ask questions such as, “What are the main messages? How do we know this? What is real and what is fantasy? Do the people in the ad look like you and your family? Why might that matter? Who is missing in the ad?”</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 5c</p>
<p>EVALUATE ACTIVITY 5: With children, create a checklist of what is high quality and “just right for me” digital media. Facilitate discussion about reading level, adult-only words and images, and the pace of the media. Provide guidance for what children should do when the media is not appropriate such as closing the app, talking to an adult, or closing their eyes and covering their ears.</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 5b, 5d</p>
<p>EVALUATE ACTIVITY 6: Model comparing sources and possible varying answers of sources. Challenge children to see how many different answers there are to questions they pose. Analyze how each answer is similar or different and connect this to the reliability of the source. For an example, while learning about planets, an older book may say that Pluto is a planet, while another source may not mention Pluto. Discuss how the age of the source impacts the accuracy of the information and the reliability of the source.</p>	<p>AGES: 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 5a, 5b, 5c</p>

<p>EVALUATE ACTIVITY 7: Understanding that the makers of media have perspectives other than the child is an essential part of media literacy. Support children beginning to understand perspective-taking with a concrete example. Ask each child to write or voice record one part of the day when everyone (in the program or class) was together, a time of the day that you chose ahead of time. This could be snack, circle time, or storytime. Have each child share what they wrote or recorded. Compare and contrast the stories. There are elements missing and differences in each story but does that mean the story is not true? Discuss this with the children. Each story, each representation has a perspective. The perspective may not see or tell everything. Then be sure to help them connect what they've learned to the media they use.</p>	<p>AGES: 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: Library, School/ Center-Based, Home SUPPORTING SKILLS: 5c</p>
<p>EVALUATE ACTIVITY 8: During any media use around young children, explain why that particular media was chosen. For example, explain the benefits of choosing a large book during circle time compared to using a small tablet, or when to use an online search engine compared to the local print newspaper. When children are using media, point out the benefits and challenges of the media they are using. For older children, challenge them to ask and reflect on these decisions themselves.</p>	<p>AGES: 5-6, 7-8 CONTENT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 5b</p>

Cultural Considerations

The ability, knowledge, and the practice of evaluating media is culturally dependent. Each family has their own priorities, values, and beliefs. One family may believe that the media is more knowledgeable than them about child rearing while another family may believe that children should have time to use a certain type of media, even a book, as a distraction. Families and their children will evaluate media based on what they believe the purpose of media is as well as their beliefs about how children should be using, consuming, and producing media. Practitioners must take this into consideration while supporting the evaluation of media by children as well as their families.

6 Create

Definition

Create: to make media with intention

Supporting Skills

- 6a. See themselves as creators and active influencers of media
- 6b. Explore, brainstorm, and convey ideas through creation, hacking, remixing, tinkering, and/or destruction
- 6c. Explain intention of decisions throughout the creation process and reflect on the process after
- 6d. Connect media content created to the broader world

Tips for Adults

- Create an environment which supports emotional safety, allows space for boredom, as well as provides freedom to create “mess”.
- Talk with children about the production choices they make. Use the conversation to help them see that all media are “constructed” (i.e., people make decisions about what to leave out, what to include, and how to include it).
- Include opportunities for collaboration during the creation process.
- Focus on valuing the creation process and effort rather than a final product.
- Foster a connection between the media they create and the media they consume.
- Help children understand how various platforms may restrict creation such as provided avatars that may not have options that represent the wide range of diversity of children/people.
- Encourage children to respect others by asking for permission before taking a photo or video of someone.

Activities

CREATE ACTIVITY 1: Children must have familiarity with various tools before they can use them to create. Allow children physical and mental space and time for **free play and exploration of media creation tools**. For the youngest children, creating media may look like finger painting, while older children may be drawing with a stylus on a tablet to create books or voice recording to create podcasts. At first, provide children with the materials so that they can explore and see themselves as the one deciding what to do with the materials.

AGES: All

CONTEXT: All

SUPPORTING SKILLS: 6a, 6b

<p>CREATE ACTIVITY 2: Provide children connections to media creators. Educate children about producers of media, specifically those who represent the races, ethnicities, genders, nationalities, religions, socioeconomic statuses, languages, etc. of the children you serve. Show children the media produced by that specific person and try to find information in biographies, children’s books, and other media sources. Introduce children to the title of the media producers and creators. If available and able, ask the creator to join virtually during a video interview! Children can ask them questions and engage in conversation about media creation.</p>	<p>AGES: All CONTEXT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 6a, 6d</p>
<p>CREATE ACTIVITY 3: Provide opportunities to make creation more relevant by asking children to draw connections to their experiences at home or with their family. This could include creating a book about a routine with family at home or including voice recording of family members. For younger children, caregivers may help the child voice record talking about a routine or toy from home.</p>	<p>AGES: All CONTEXT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 6b</p>
<p>CREATE ACTIVITY 4: Ask children to create a new character from a familiar book, television program, app, etc. Children can explore and create what that character would sound like, look like, and act like. Children can use green screen and props to create a scene with their new character. Support reflection by asking about their decision-making process. Why did they make the new character an animal, a human, an alien? Is the character friends with the other characters? Why or why not? What does the character’s voice (low or high pitched) or their accent or the language they speak tell others about their character?</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: Library, Museum, School/Center-Based Programs SUPPORTING SKILLS: 6b, 6c</p>
<p>CREATE ACTIVITY 5: Support authorship. Encourage children to include an authorship piece to their creation. Children can add an author page to their book, or a creator piece to their video, ad, piece of re-mixed music, etc. Use the accurate titles such as “author,” “publisher,” “illustrator,” etc. The ownership/authorship piece could include an explanation of decisions throughout the creation process and artistic direction.</p>	<p>AGES: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 6a, 6c</p>

<p>CREATE ACTIVITY 6: All media is constructed. Children need to be explicitly told this. They are participants in a larger media ecosystem. Help children articulate and identify the choices they make and reflect upon the process. Ask children questions such as, “How does the picture you took help you do that? Are there other pictures you could include that would help you communicate your message?” “What do you want to communicate?” Compare the media children create to similar media produced for the mass public. Discuss the similarities and differences in the construction and decisions made by the creators.</p>	<p>AGES: 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: All SUPPORTING SKILLS: 6c, 6d</p>
<p>CREATE ACTIVITY 7: Assign classroom jobs such as camera-person, videographer, documentarian, and journalist. Each week, different children can have the opportunity to contribute to the weekly or monthly e-newsletter for caregivers. The camera-person can take photos, the videographer or documentarian can record videos, while the journalist can voice-record the classroom events, schedule, or interview classmates. Include a conversation with children about their media-making choices. Extend learning by discussing and comparing these jobs to related adult careers and their impact on media.</p>	<p>AGES: 5-6, 7-8 CONTEXT: School/Center-Based SUPPORTING SKILLS: 6a, 6d</p>

Cultural Considerations

Practitioners must take into consideration the cultural value of child-created media. Children creating media is not just playing with paint for enjoyment, but is an opportunity for children to view themselves as an agent influencing how others act and feel as a result of something they create. Every piece of media should be valued as an artifact and a product of free speech.

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