

Media Literacy Definitions and Key Concepts

Media: Any means of communication that reach or influence people widely. It's important to remember that media isn't only electronic technology such as TV, computers, video games, and smart phones; it includes print media like newspapers and magazines that also communicate and influence people.

Educational media: Media that claim to have educational and/or developmental value.

Commercial media: Media that is available for purchase and/or commercial use.

Media literacy: The ability to access, analyze, evaluate and/or create media in a variety of forms. It is the ability to think critically about all the messages that inform, entertain, and sell to us, and then make the most appropriate choices for ourselves and families.

Three Stages of Media Literacy (paraphrased by Katie from Elizabeth Thoman):

1. Understand that media use has both positive and negative effects on child development and learning, and that managing a child's exposure to media is the critical factor in determining how it will impact that child.
2. Learn how manage your child's expose to and use of media by asking questions about the content and context of a specific item (show, game, magazine) to make better choices for your child.
3. Analyze specific media by asking the deeper questions such as the social, political, and economic means behind the media. Who profits from it, what is the real purpose driving production and distribution, and what does the research really indicate.

"Three C's" Approach to Kid's Media (Lisa Guernsey):

1. Content – What is the basic premise? How is it designed? Does it have repetition? Are new words defined by pointing or labeling? *Can I teach my child these skills and concepts without this media?*
2. Context – Who is interacting with the child? How do parents talk about what's on the screen? Is the child learning through a game, then applying that in another activity? Is the child telling stories about what he or she has experienced?
3. Child – How much stimulation can this child take? What scares her? What types of media trigger the most curious questions, playful reenactments, engagement and joy? *Does this child have the skills required to do this activity successfully? How will this child react to or engage with this media?*

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Research and Resources on Media Literacy

American Academy of Pediatrics:

- Children's Health Topics: Internet/Media Use <http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/mediause.cfm>
- Media Matters: A National Media Education Campaign <http://www.aap.org/advocacy/mediamatters.htm>
- Healthy Children: Media <http://www.healthychildren.org/english/family-life/media/Pages/default.aspx>

Center for Media Literacy: <http://www.medialit.org/>

Educational resources for people interesting in media literacy education. Includes: best practices, professional development, research, and more.

Center on Media and Child Health: <http://www.cmch.tv/mentors/default.asp>

Research summaries, parent tips, news, hot topics, and research

Kaiser Family Foundation: Study Media & Health: <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/index.cfm>

Health news and research, includes children and the media. Of particular interest:

- The Role of Media in Childhood Obesity <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia022404pkg.cfm>
- The Effects of Electronic Media on Children Ages Zero to Six <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/upload/The-Effects-of-Electronic-Media-on-Children-Ages-Zero-to-Six-A-History-of-Research-Issue-Brief.pdf>
- A Teacher in the Living Room: Educational Media for Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/upload/7427.pdf>
- Children's Media Use and Sleep Problems <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/7674.cfm>
- The Media Family: Electronic Media in the Lives of Infants, Toddlers, Preschoolers, and Their Parents <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia052406pkg.cfm>

Media Awareness Network: <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/index.cfm>

Resources for people interested in media literacy for youth. Includes: research, issues in the news, free online games for kids to help teach them to use media wisely, and more.

PBS

- Kids & Family (handouts) <http://www.opb.org/kidsfamily/parents/3/>
- Children & Media (excellent Q & A) <http://www.pbs.org/parents/childrenandmedia/article-faq.html#backgroundtv>

Reading Rockets: Educational Media: <http://www.readingrockets.org/webcasts/3005>

Webcasts of experts Deb Linebarger, Lisa Guernsey, and Marnie Lewis discussing educational media and related research. Links to related websites, articles and research.

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