2020 Impact Report
EARLY EDUCATION INITIATIVE
Since our founding in 1954, free educational content has been a core part of Nine PBS’s mission. From *The Finder* and *The Letter People* to *Teaching in Room 9*, as well as national PBS programming, Nine PBS continues to be a trusted learning guide for kids and families in the St. Louis region. Over the past few years, we have expanded on this educational mission. Our work has grown on air, online, and in the community, reaching over 2.4 million viewers. We work closely with more than 60 community partners that serve thousands of our region’s educators, families, and kids.

**NINE PBS’S EARLY LEARNING GOALS**

Our work connects partners and childcare providers with PBS KIDS® resources, opportunities, and information to advance outcomes in our youngest and most vulnerable learners.

**OUR EARLY LEARNING WORK SERVES TO:**

- Increase **KINDERGARTEN READINESS**
- Decrease **THE DIGITAL DIVIDE**
- Increase **THE QUALITY OF CHILDCARE AND EDUCATION**
- Increase **FAMILY CONNECTIONS**

Our long-term goal is for **NINE PBS TO BE A TRAINING HUB FOR EDUCATORS AND CAREGIVERS ACROSS THE REGION** to gain fluency using PBS KIDS media, curriculum, and resources that improve the educational experiences of young learners, impact kindergarten readiness, and close third-grade reading level gaps.
COMMUNITY NEED
Starting at birth, daily learning is essential for kids. It prepares them for kindergarten and sets them up for long-term success in school and life.

40% of kids live in poverty in St. Louis City
(Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data, 2016-2019)

60% of 4th graders in Missouri are not proficient in math
(NAEP, 2020)

66% of 4th graders in Missouri are not proficient in reading
(NAEP, 2020)

94% of kids live in poverty in East St. Louis School District 189
(Annie E. Casey Foundation Kids Count Data, 2016-2019)

62% of 4th graders in Illinois are not proficient in math
(NAEP, 2020)

66% of 4th graders in Illinois are not proficient in reading
(NAEP, 2020)

At the beginning of the pandemic, ONE IN THREE CHILDREN in the St. Louis region had limited access to the digital devices or reliable internet necessary for remote learning (Common Sense, 2020).

With so many early learners delaying preschool or kindergarten and/or impacted by the digital divide, easy access to free learning resources at home is more crucial than ever. Nine PBS has been an important part of addressing this crisis with partners such as Saint Louis Public Schools, East St. Louis 189, St. Louis County Public Library, Turn the Page STL, STL MADE, and St. Louis Black Authors.
Nine PBS began Teaching in Room 9 as a response to calls from education leaders, district superintendents, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MO DESE), and the St. Louis Metropolitan Pandemic Task Force to meet the emerging learning needs of the one in three children without reliable access to digital devices or internet access.

Teaching in Room 9 broadcasts previously recorded 30-minute lessons for students in prekindergarten through fourth grade led by area teachers throughout the region, representing public, charter, and private schools and urban, suburban, and rural districts. Lessons in literacy, math, science, social studies, and related arts are available free in most households on Nine PBS from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm, Monday through Friday, and online on YouTube.com. Curriculum for each lesson is guided by Missouri state standards and learning objectives that were created specifically for Teaching in Room 9 by MO DESE.

“It is incredible how many kids are really watching Teaching in Room 9, and even how many kids that I know personally are like, ‘oh, I watch you and follow along with your lessons!’ I think it just shows how much kids miss that interaction with teachers, and they miss school. The fact that Nine PBS was able to come up with this idea and give them a very small piece of ‘normal’ is kind of amazing.” — Hannah Wright, Teaching in Room 9 Educator

Teaching in Room 9 is supported by Bank of America, Berges Family Foundation, Dana Brown Charitable Trust, Emerson, Edward Jones, Pershing Charitable Trust, and STEMpact.
Since first airing on April 27, *Teaching in Room 9* has garnered a devoted audience of young learners.

**AIRED 850 EPISODES**

**ATTRACTED 908,000 VIEWS FROM KIDS AGES 2-11**

**VIEWED 1.9 MILLION TIMES ON AIR**

**VIEWED 568,058 TIMES ONLINE**

Sources: TRAC Media Services and Google Analytics

*Teaching in Room 9* has been successful in reaching vulnerable families.

- 20% live in homes with an annual income of $25,000 or less
- 30% are a minority
- 85% are from households with no college degree

96% of viewers surveyed rated the program as **GOOD, VERY GOOD, OR EXCELLENT.**

(Source: Community Survey, November 2020)

93% of Saint Louis Public Schools teachers implementing *Teaching in Room 9* reported that it addressed their students’ education needs.

(Source: Teacher Survey, November 2020)

This growing and diverse audience shows just how popular and necessary *Teaching in Room 9* is for our region. Compared to the popular *Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood*, *Teaching in Room 9* reaches:

- **2 times as many homes WITH NO COLLEGE EDUCATION WITH KIDS AGES 2-11.**
- **3 times as many Black homes WITH NO COLLEGE EDUCATION WITH KIDS AGES 2-11.**

(Source: TRAC Media Services November 12, 2020)

**BE MY NEIGHBOR WEEK | AUGUST 17-21**

Inspired by *Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood*, a show that highlights the power of kindness and compassion, Be My Neighbor Week on *Teaching in Room 9* explored empathy, respect, and social skills.

Be My Neighbor Week is supported by Fred Rogers Productions and PNC Grow Up Great.
Channel 9,
Hi! My name is Katy I am 9 years old.
I’m writing to say thank you for making Teaching in Room 9.
I’m going to be in 4th grade in August.
I really miss going to school. Teaching in Room 9 helps me continue learning.
I like all the teachers. My favorite is Mr. Speed.
I enjoy listening to the stories from the lower grade episodes. The math teachers helped me review the math I learned in school so I don’t forget.
Even though I’m learning new things from the science teachers, I wish they had more classes.

Thank you so much!
Katy 😊

P.S. Could you please tell Mr. Speed he makes learning fun and his thinking hats are awesome.
IN THE CLASSROOM

DIGITAL LITERACY

Nine PBS has been a trusted convener in helping community partners bridge the digital divide and prevent learning loss during the pandemic. Nine PBS has worked with 24 community partners to connect 6,571 vulnerable families with the following education resources:

- **4,525 Learning Kits** with printed PBS KIDS education and activity materials, the Nine PBS Learning Guide, school supplies, and directions for at-home learning
- **2,047 PBS KIDS Playtime Pads** with educational videos and games for use with or without internet access

One such partner was Saint Louis Public Schools. In November, Nine PBS coordinated the distribution of resources for 900 preschool children in the district, made possible in part by funding through the Missouri CARES Act.

"**THE CHILDREN WERE EXCITED TO RECEIVE THE PLAYTIME PADS AND SUPPLIES. THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO TO HELP OUR CHILDREN.**"

— TEACHER, Saint Louis Public Schools

"**TEACHERS WERE EXCITED ABOUT THE PBS RESOURCES THAT WERE USED DURING CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES. WE LOOK FORWARD TO THEM BECOMING A REGULAR PART OF OUR SCHOOL DAY!**"

— CARLYNDA COLEMAN, Principal, Dunbar Elementary, East St. Louis 189
EDCAMP “UNCONFERENCE”
Nine PBS’s third annual PBS KIDS Edcamp, generously sponsored by PNC, connected educators and caregivers with key PBS KIDS media and curriculum to promote early learning. This opportunity is offered at no cost to attendees and remains accessible to those working in low-income communities.

Due to the pandemic, our PBS KIDS Edcamp was held virtually on October 17 for educators, administrators, and partners from public, private, and informal education centers, who collectively reach 825 high-need children from birth through age eight.

82% of attendees reported that Edcamp met their professional development needs.
70% of attendees saw themselves using the ideas and/or resources they learned.

EDUCATOR AND CAREGIVER TOOLKIT
Nine PBS has curated its vast library of PBS KIDS content and resources into an online toolkit so that educators and caregivers have easy access to tools to serve students while schools are shut down during the COVID-19 pandemic. The toolkit includes a broadcast and streaming schedule of kids’ programs available by targeted ages, learning goals, air times, and links to PBS KIDS apps.

In 2020 the toolkit attracted:
36,514 pageviews
22,921 sessions
20,774 users
(Source: Google Analytics, March 17—December 22, 2020)

“DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, NINE PBS REALLY STEPPED UP AND CREATED AN EDUCATOR TOOLKIT...STUDENTS AND TEACHERS CAN COORDINATE VIEWINGS AND WATCH PARTIES AND THEN UNPACK WHAT THEY JUST SAW.”
— ART MCCOY, Superintendent, Jennings School District
CONTENT AND EVENTS
In 2020, Nine PBS saw increased engagement of our children’s content on air and online.

ON AIR
UNIQUE LOCAL VIEWERS OF PBS KIDS SHOWS increased 73%.
(Source: Nielsen, TRAC Media Services, January–December 2020)

ONLINE
IN 2020, WE SAW A 39% increase in PBS KIDS local users across our online platforms: PBSKIDS.ORG STREAMING, PBS KIDS VIDEO APP, PBS KIDS GAMES APP, PBS KIDS OVER-THE-TOP APPS.
(Source: PBS DOMO Data, December 29, 2020)

NINE PBS KIDS
Curriculum-based PBS KIDS content is unique in the children’s media landscape. It exists to excite children, parents, and caregivers about the wonder and possibilities of learning and to help children realize their fullest potential. Nine PBS KIDS is the only free, over-the-air 24/7 television service for young children in our region.

NO SMALL MATTER
Virtual Screening and Discussion | July 8
Nine PBS hosted a screening and discussion with local childcare advocates of No Small Matter ahead of its national release. The film explored one of the most overlooked, underestimated, and powerful forces for change in the U.S. today: early childhood education.
Living St. Louis:
KIDS, RACE, AND RACISM
Broadcast | November 23

This special, presented by PNC, featured local children and parents modeling ways to talk about racial identity and anti-Black racism. Through interviews with experts Dr. Kira Hudson Banks of Raising Equity and Maggie Klonsky of We Stories, the special stressed how important it is for children and their parents to be involved in building a more equitable society.

On ninepbs.org/talkingwithkids, Nine PBS aggregated resources that support families and educators of young children as they talk, watch, read, and learn about race and racism.

Living St. Louis:
BACK TO SCHOOL?
Broadcast | July 27

This wide-ranging Living St. Louis special explored educational and public health questions and decisions facing families, teachers, and superintendents. Producers Jim Kircherr and Anne-Marie Berger spoke to experts including public health professor Dr. Enbal Schacham of St. Louis University; Dr. Paul Ziegler, CEO of EducationPlus; and Dr. Art McCoy, Superintendent of the Jennings School District, as well as parents and educators.
IN THE COMMUNITY

**FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEARNING SESSIONS**

Nine PBS engages with families with kids ages 2-8 through our Family and Community Learning sessions. The sessions take place once a week for four weeks in a community-based setting (library, school cafeteria, apartment complex community room, etc.) or on a virtual platform. Each two-hour session explores a theme through hands-on, project-based learning. In 2020, sessions were grounded in the PBS KIDS show *Molly of Denali* to create a multigenerational learning experience that blended educational goals, Alaska Native values, social-emotional skills, and subject-related knowledge in science and social studies.

In addition to the in-person sessions held in January and February, Nine PBS piloted our first virtual Family and Community Learning session for 15 families through the Parents as Teachers program at the Maplewood Richmond Heights Early Childhood Center.

**WITHIN 30 DAYS OF SIGNING UP, SUBSCRIBERS REPORTED PARTICIPATING IN THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES WITH THEIR CHILD:**

- 16% enjoyed another activity
- 14% explored science
- 25% found a fun way to put learning into everyday activities
- 17% read or told a story
- 16% played with their child
- 16% worked on numbers, shapes, or other math skills

**BRIGHT BY TEXT**

Bright by Text provides free tips, information, and resources to help all parents and caregivers give every child a “bright beginning.” The goal of the service is to make the most of everyday interactions between parent and child. The text service delivers age-targeted and actionable information from trusted early childhood experts to parents and caregivers of young children—from prenatal to age eight—to support healthy child development and build strong, resilient families.

82% of subscribers agreed that Bright by Text increased their knowledge of what they should do as a parent or caregiver.