PBS SoCal Early Learning Programs

PBS SoCal’s Early Learning Initiative prepared children for kindergarten and beyond by providing the adults in their lives with training and resources, including fun and interactive virtual learning experiences. We partnered with schools, community organizations, and nonprofits to improve access to early education opportunities in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. We made technology, curriculum, bilingual parent workshops, family learning events, and educator training available to our partners virtually, strengthening services in the neighborhoods of Southern California with the highest need. Using age-appropriate hands-on activities, we empowered parents with strategies and skills to be their children’s first teachers. Strategies included:

- Creating co-designed digital content and curriculum resources for parents and caregivers
- Providing access to virtual and in-person family workshops that equip adults with skills and strategies to enhance their child’s learning
- Expanding our collaboration with the early childhood community locally, while engaging families across Southern California
Our Learning Neighborhoods

Over 30 local community partners worked with PBS SoCal to reach parents and children in the following communities across Southern California:

- 8,262 families in Orange County, including Santa Ana, Tustin, Garden Grove, and La Habra
- 2,806 families in Compton
- 2,353 families in East LA
- 976 families in Central LA
- 100 families in Antelope Valley
Early Learning Family Demographics

- 88% qualified for free lunch
- 56% English Language Learners
- 52% spoke mostly Spanish with their child
- 82% of families were Hispanic/Latino
- 96% Female
- 11% of families were Black
- 7% were White, Asian, or Multiracial
- 4% Male
- 7% were White, Asian, or Multiracial
- 82% of families were Hispanic/Latino
- 56% English Language Learners
- 88% qualified for free lunch
Early Learning Program Highlights

Workshops
- Over 17,000 parents and children received educational materials and resources through family workshops as well as outreach events and fairs (both in person and virtual).
- 4,273 parents participated in Family Math programming and received PBS KIDS resources.
- 1,210 parents were reached through PBS SoCal's Ready To Learn (RTL) program in East LA.
- 711 parents participated in STEM programming and received PBS KIDS resources.
- 218 educators were trained on how to use high-quality PBS resources in the classroom.

Digital
- Published 50 new activity and community videos and 19 bilingual editorial articles on the Family Math website, garnering over 11,000 page views.
- Translated 69 editorial articles and activities into Spanish to complete a mirror digital experience.
- Launched a free toolkit with more than 300 bilingual assets, available to organizations everywhere.
- Reached an average of 500,000 total monthly users across PBS KIDS platforms, including the PBS KIDS Video and PBS KIDS Games apps, and pbskids.org, which connects families with RTL content.

Broadcast
- Our broadcast channels provided access to educational content, including Family Math messaging, to 1.8 million families.
- The 24/7 KIDS Channel reached a large Hispanic population from lower-income households.
  - 81% of the audience was from Los Angeles County.
  - 78% of the audience was Hispanic. Of these viewers, 44% spoke mostly Spanish, and 24% spoke only Spanish.
  - 71% of the audience had an annual household income of less than $50,000.
Early Learning Convening

• We hosted our annual Early Learning Convening on May 24, 2023, a virtual event that brought together over 40 partner organizations, funders, and leaders in the early childhood space. We shared about our early learning work and resources, and provided a space for partners to choose a relevant topic for discussion.

• Dr. Shaun Nelms gave the keynote address. Dr. Nelms is vice president of community partnerships at the University of Rochester, and is also the director of the Center for Urban Education Success at the university’s Warner School of Education. Previously, he was the superintendent of East Upper and Lower Schools in Rochester, New York.

Summer Learning Day

• We hosted Summer Learning Day in person for the first time since 2019. The event took place on June 17, 2023, at La Habra Children’s Museum with the theme “Discover Learning Everywhere.”

• Over 3,000 families participated in the event and had the opportunity to engage in hands-on activities, meet their favorite PBS KIDS characters, and participate in educational performances led by local artists.
Family Math

PBS SoCal’s Family Math initiative is a research-based, multiplatform, bilingual program (in English and Spanish) that focuses on building math positivity, confidence, and knowledge of foundational math skills for families with children ages 2 through 5. Family Math equips parents and caregivers with strategies and resources to facilitate meaningful math experiences at home through playful learning and hands-on activities.

This year, Family Math continued to provide opportunities for the entire family to engage in workshops and events across Southern California. We expanded Family Math nationally with the release of the Family Math Toolkit and station grants.

Impact
Gains by parents and caregivers who participated in Family Math programming included:

- 10% increase in their confidence to support their child’s learning of early math skills
- 11% increase in their knowledge and awareness of foundational math skills
- 9% increase in their feelings of positivity and enjoyment about helping their child with math

Reach
- Hosted 107 Family Math workshops and events, including introductory workshops, Parent Academies, “Peg + Cat” Family & Community Learning (FCL) workshops, Family Math Nights, and Family Story Time events
- Reached a total of 4,273 parents and caregivers, 4,924 children, and 228 educators/providers
- Distributed over 13,000 educational resources, including activity kits, books, and iPads

National Expansion
- The Family Math Toolkit, which includes over 350 bilingual, research-based, math-focused assets, was released in May 2023.
- Public media stations and community organizations gained free access to the Toolkit’s workshop materials, facilitator guides, printables, broadcast videos, and activity videos to bring Family Math to the communities they serve. The website has had over 1,200 visitors.
- Ten PBS Stations nationwide received grants from PBS SoCal to support their implementation and evaluation of Family Math in their local communities.
Deeper Exploration of Family Experiences

This year, PBS SoCal expanded the Early Learning research agenda to include interviews and focus groups. Collecting qualitative data from families who participated in the Family Math Parent Academy and Family Math “Peg + Cat” FCL helped us continue to uplift the voices of the communities we serve, and gave us a deeper understanding of the impact our programs make in families’ lives every day. The stories families shared suggested that our family workshop series empowered parents to transform the way they see themselves as thinkers and doers of math, allowing them to fully embrace their role as their children’s first teacher.

Parents who joined the five-week Family Math Parent Academy emerged more confident in their ability to have conversations that involve math during everyday routines with their child, such as cooking, shopping, or doing laundry.

“Had I not been in the Parent Academy, I wouldn't have been able to motivate [my daughter] to have the energy and the motivation to learn. As I said, I'm her first teacher, someone to look up to and motivate herself. I like to get involved in what my children do because it's part of their development, but my role is to provide knowledge to them as well. I admire myself as a mother, and I feel very proud that I can do this now.”
—Family Math Mom

Children who joined the four-week “Peg + Cat” Family Community Workshop Series with their parents showed improvement in essential math areas including sorting and classifying, identifying and describing shapes, completing patterns, and comparing measurements.

“I think the workshops have helped because I know a little bit more about how to help [my daughter] not get bored of doing math. They have given me more ideas. I think this workshop is helping me learn and use my daily activities to transform them into math problems so that she can learn.”
—Family Math Mom
Ready to Learn

The PBS SoCal Ready To Learn (RTL) Learning Neighborhood is an innovative model of community engagement. Through the 2020–2025 Ready To Learn grant, Corporation for Public Broadcasting and PBS SoCal provide resources that support intergenerational learning and skill development for children in literacy, critical thinking, and collaborative problem solving, while providing opportunities to explore world of work knowledge and skills in age-appropriate ways.

Grounded in listening to and honoring history and culture in the East Los Angeles community, PBS SoCal and local partners engage parents and caregivers in the co-design of family engagement experiences. The Learning Neighborhood provides access to a comprehensive set of touchpoints, content, and learning resources to encourage the sustained use and impact of the Ready To Learn Initiative.

Reach

- Hosted 35 RTL workshops and events, including introductory workshops, Molly of Denali FCLs, Play & Learn Science FCLs, and outreach events
- Reached a total of 1,921 caregivers and 2,190 children
- Distributed over 4,050 educational resources, including activity kits, books, and iPads

Impact

Gains by parents and caregivers who participated in RTL programming included:

- 10% increase in their confidence to support their child’s learning of early literacy skills
- 7% increase in their enjoyment in helping their child with early literacy
- 12% increase in their confidence in helping their child learn early critical thinking and science skills
- 11% increase in their enjoyment in helping their child with problem solving and science

“I learned that we can use basic household items to create activities for our children to have fun and learn at the same time. For example, in one of the activities we cut out shapes from sponges to use for painting and creating patterns. Now we have made a lot of different shapes in various sizes from sponges that we use to paint. The sponges are also very easy to access at the [discount] store.”

—RTL mom
Program Highlights

- We partnered with East Los Angeles College’s (ELAC) Child Development Center to engage families through PBS KIDS screenings and Family & Community Learning workshops.

- We invited the Child Development Club at ELAC to participate and support portions of the workshops, yielding a strong interest from ELAC’s Child, Family, & Education Studies Department and sowing the seeds for the cocreation of preservice educator courses.

- We hosted two Family Engagement days at Plaza La Roca Verde and ELAC’s Child Development Center. Both events invited families to explore the World of Work, Functional Literacy, and Computational Thinking.

- Family Engagement days served as an additional opportunity to collaborate with ELAC’s Child Development Club whose members apply their expertise in support of RTL activities.

RTL Statewide Expansion

- We began a new initiative this year to expand the reach of Ready To Learn resources statewide. The goal of this project is to leverage statewide networks to scale Ready To Learn resources across California in alignment with our state's Preschool Development Grant priorities and maximize the program’s impact on our early learners.

- We are working with four key organizations at the state level that have significant interactions with children from birth to age 5 (and their caregivers) to increase reach and impact: California State Library, California Department of Social Services, California Department of Education, and California Department of Public Health.