

Enhancing Education

A Childrens Producer's Guide

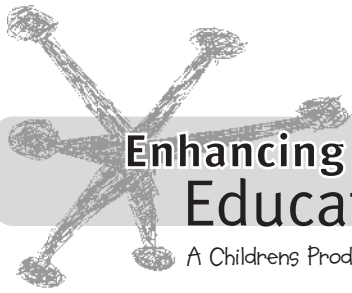
➤ Getting Started

What Is Educational Outreach?

In very broad terms, outreach extends the impact of public broadcasting through a variety of media services, educational materials, and collaborative activities designed to engage individuals and foster community participation in addressing issues of concern.

Educational outreach refers to activities that support formal or classroom-based education, as well as informal education that occurs outside the classroom. Educational outreach campaigns provide educational experiences for young people in classrooms, child care centers, Head Start programs, libraries, after-school programs, community-based organizations, and museums, as well as supporting the professional development of the professionals and paraprofessionals who work with the children. Educational outreach for children's programs can also target families with resources that improve parents' understanding of child development, their role as their child's first teacher, and strategies for using television as an educational tool.

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➤ *Getting Started: What Is Educational Outreach?*

Formal vs. Informal Education

Formal education is classroom-based, provided by certified teachers. Informal education happens outside the classroom, in after-school programs, child care centers, community-based organizations, museums, libraries, and at home. Pre-K education can fall anywhere between the two, although Head Start centers and many preschools are defining their learning outcomes more rigorously and requiring more professional training for teachers.

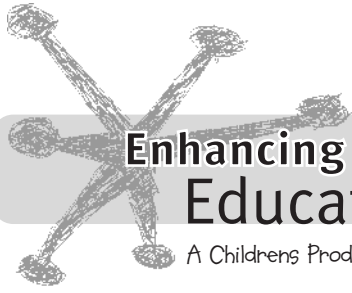
What are the main differences between formal and informal education?

- In general, classrooms have the same kids and teachers every day. After-school programs are often drop-in, so attendance is inconsistent and the staff may change from day to day.
- Classroom activities can last several days. After-school programs need to complete an activity within a day because a different group of kids could be in attendance tomorrow.
- You can assume that classroom-based teachers have a certain level of training in educational philosophy, effective teaching strategies, classroom management, and content. After-school providers and child care providers, by contrast, vary in experience and knowledge of teaching techniques, content expertise, and group management. Typically, materials for after-school programs and many child care settings include a lot more structure.
- School-based teachers need to meet educational standards and stick to a specified curriculum, which can make it difficult for them to incorporate nontraditional content. After-school programs, on the other hand, can be more flexible with their content, as can child care centers.

Both formal and informal educational settings offer different strengths to your educational outreach project. If your project fits in the classroom, it can have a very long life; teachers will use trusted resources for years. After-school programs offer a different kind of environment, where your activities don't need to be as formal and where you can reach a different audience.

While both schools and after-school programs serve students, many kids who feel disenfranchised at school blossom in after-school settings. Real learning can happen in a setting where kids feel less intimidated or more comfortable than they do in a formal classroom. The ultimate goal is that a child's success in an informal setting can lead to greater confidence in the formal classroom.

An additional benefit of developing materials for informal educational settings is that these materials may be useful to parents at home with their kids or in any number of settings, among them after-school centers, museum education programs, and libraries.



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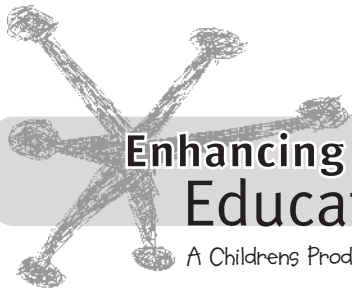
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Formal vs. Informal Education (cont'd)

An additional benefit of developing materials for informal educational settings is that they may be useful to parents at home with their kids, or to adult learners who are looking to expand their knowledge, either for their own enrichment or to increase their career options.



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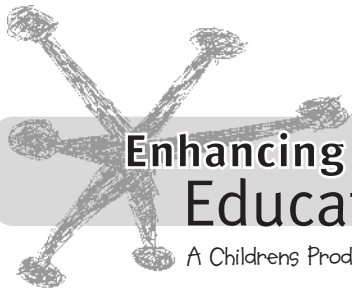
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Who Can Help Me?

As you develop your proposal, you may want to engage the services of either an educational outreach staff person from your presenting station or an independent consultant to serve as your project's educational outreach manager. If your series targets children ages 0 to 8, you should become familiar with the PBS Ready To Learn service.

National outreach campaigns are generally launched in one of two ways. If you are affiliated (either as staff or in a presenting-station relationship) with a major producing station, the station outreach department or the consultants it generally works with can help you develop and later implement your educational outreach initiatives. Try to involve the station's outreach staff as early as possible in your production development process. The more time you give staff members to develop the educational outreach elements of your project, the stronger your proposal and project will be.

If you're an independent producer without access to a presenting station's outreach department, an independent educational outreach consultant can help you develop, budget, and implement your educational outreach plan. The National Center for Outreach (NCO) maintains a list of educational outreach consultants that it will share with you. The NCO Pipeline, which lists on its Web site upcoming PBS-related outreach projects, is also a good resource. You could look for projects similar to yours in the Pipeline and see who is handling the outreach to try to identify a good match. PBS can also provide editorial assistance (see below). Check the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's (CPB) Web site (www.cpb.org/tv/funding/ or www.cpb.org/ed/funding/) to see if there are any systemwide initiatives around a similar topic that can serve as an umbrella for your project. In addition, you may also want to attend the PBS Ready To Learn annual professional development seminar and the NCO annual conference, where you can network with educational outreach professionals and consultants and hear about other projects.



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➤ Getting Started: Who Can Help Me?

PBS Ready To Learn

PBS is a valuable resource for shaping your project. The *Producing for PBS* manual (www.pbs.org/producers/) provides an overview of key PBS priorities and processes. All children's series become part of the PBS Kids programming block. PBS extends the impact of its children's programming through the PBS Ready To Learn Service. On occasion, Ready To Learn will issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) calling for submissions that meet specific educational criteria, which will be posted on the PBS Web site and sent directly to children's producers. Most commonly, however, children's producers turn to PBS Ready To Learn for help in defining the educational content of their projects and in integrating their projects into this amazing long-term educational outreach initiative.

PBS Ready To Learn

Launched in 1994/1995, the PBS Ready To Learn Service is a national effort to improve the school readiness of young children through quality educational children's television programming combined with extensive educational outreach services. Ready To Learn is funded by the U.S. Department of Education through a cooperative agreement with PBS.

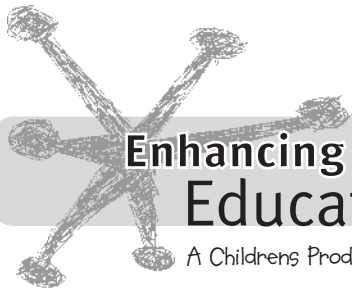
The core of Ready To Learn is a full day of nonviolent, commercial-free, educational children's television programming broadcast free of charge to every American household. Ready To Learn also provides extensive outreach services to parents, child care providers, pre-K through grade 2 teachers, and other early childhood professionals serving children ages 0 to 8.

How Ready To Learn Works

More than 145 PBS member stations provide a variety of services to children and their parents and caregivers. Local stations tailor these services to meet the needs of their communities.

Participating PBS member stations do the following:

- Broadcast at least 6.5 hours of educational children's programming each weekday
- Conduct at least 20 workshops (www.pbs.org/readytolearn/local/workshops.html) annually for parents and early childhood professionals
- Distribute at least 300 free books to children each month
- Widely distribute the *PBS Families* publication in English and Spanish, as well as other free resources about encouraging children to read and learn
- Partner with local Head Start centers, Even Start programs, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, libraries, child care providers, schools, and other organizations



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PBS Ready To Learn (cont'd)

The Impact of Ready To Learn Outreach Services

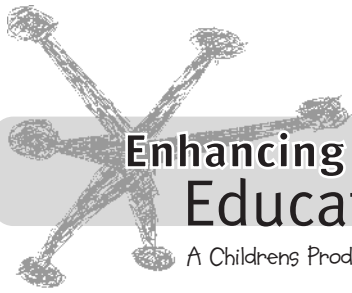
Approximately 900,000 parents and early childhood professionals have participated in more than 29,000 community-based Ready To Learn workshops on using television wisely, developing children's learning skills, and preparing children to read. Approximately seven million children have benefited from their parents' and teachers' participation in Ready To Learn services. More than three million new books have been distributed to disadvantaged children through a partnership with First Book.

An evaluation of Ready To Learn workshops documented a lasting, positive impact on the behavior of parents and children. As a result of workshop participation, the television-viewing habits of families improved. As parents learned to become better television gatekeepers, their families spent more time together reading and doing education-related activities. In addition, children watched less television overall, and the programs they did watch included more educational content.

How Producers Can Work with PBS Ready To Learn

Once your program has been accepted by PBS, the Ready To Learn staff can consult with you to shape the educational content of your program and outreach plan to ensure that they meet the goals of Ready To Learn and can be easily incorporated into this powerful local educational outreach initiative. The staff can also help you reach Ready To Learn coordinators around the country by providing contact information. In addition, they organize an annual professional development seminar which all Ready To Learn coordinators are required to attend and where you can present your project's curriculum goals and materials through concurrent workshops. For more information about Ready To Learn, visit the PBS Ready To Learn Web site (pbs.org/readytolearn) or contact the national office:

PBS Ready To Learn
1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA 22314
Senior Director: Charlotte Brantley, 703-739-5445, cbrantley@pbs.org



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National Center for Outreach

The National Center for Outreach (NCO) is a professional association for outreach practitioners. Its goals are to provide resources, training, and funding for public television stations, promote meaningful outreach at the local level, and expand the presence of outreach within public broadcasting. The NCO is committed to supporting producers as they develop and implement national educational outreach initiatives.

The following are among the many services the NCO provides:

- Outreach consultation and technical assistance
- Contact lists of outreach consultants and PTV station outreach coordinators
- Annual NCO conference
- Presentations at national conferences in and beyond the industry
- A producer outreach day camp (in planning process)
- Pipeline, a listing of upcoming broadcasts/initiatives with related outreach, available online and in print
- Grants to public television stations to support local outreach initiatives
- Developing and modeling best outreach practices
- Fostering local and national outreach partnerships
- Facilitating national evaluation initiatives

For more information, contact the NCO's national office:

National Center for Outreach

975 Observatory Drive

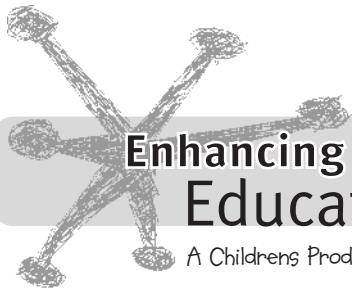
Madison, WI 53706

Tel: 1-866-234-2016

Fax: 608-265-5039

www.nationaloutreach.org

Executive Director: Maria Alvarez Stroud, 603-263-9295, alvarez-stroud@wpt.org



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Educational Outreach Manager

Why do you need someone dedicated to managing your educational outreach efforts if you already have staff creating all your different educational outreach components? An educational outreach manager can help you do the following:

- Define the overall goals and target audience as you begin your project
- Determine who is doing what, what the educational needs and opportunities are, and where your project best fits into that landscape
- Cultivate partnerships to help reach your target audience, and then manage the ongoing support of those relationships
- Create a distribution plan for any print materials and work with print staff to revise these as needs change. (Some educational outreach managers may also oversee the development of the print and online curricula resources.)
- Develop person-to-person activities to bring your project's resources directly to the target audience, and identify new opportunities to leverage these resources throughout the project

An educational outreach manager also brings valuable knowledge and experience to your project: She's learned from mistakes that would cost you money and time if you were to repeat them.

So when should you engage the services of an educational outreach manager? The manager should be involved both before and after your broadcast premiere. In general, bring in an educational outreach manager during the early stages of your project's development. The benefit of her early involvement will far outweigh the small additional cost that you might incur. As you prepare your proposal, a manager can establish partnerships, develop the schedule, and lay the groundwork for the overall educational outreach campaign. Once that baseline is established, the manager need not stay on the payroll through your funding period, but her early work will pay off enormously in the long run, enabling the educational outreach team to hit the ground running once your project launches.

Your educational outreach manager should also be on board for some months after the premiere to ensure that your project's resources are getting out there and getting used. Ultimately, how long the coordinator stays on will depend in large part on the size and scope of your project. Because most children's series plan to be ongoing at the outset, your educational outreach manager may stay on the project season after season, although the activities and staff time allotted may change. If or when the series does end, the educational outreach coordinator can play a big role in extending the impact of your project well beyond the broadcast period.