

From the Cradle to the Classroom: Teaching Media While Raising Kids in a Media Saturated World

Penny Dreadfuls, comic books, radio serials, teen magazines, television, movies, D&D, MTV, rap music, video games, the Internet, social media...From the moment media industries began specifically targeting children and teens, parents have been bombarded with warnings and guidelines about how to manage media's role in their kids' everyday lives. Each new format seems to trigger extensive studies and reports, often with conflicting information and advice for parents. As content spreads across a multitude of devices and an array of media forms, it's perhaps unsurprising that these concerns have only escalated. Parents now grapple not just with content but with how their kids (1) access that content and (2) even create and distribute their own media. And in 2020 and 2021, as many kids and parents spent the Coronavirus pandemic shuttered in their homes, the worlds of school, work and home blurred; the roles, limits, and uses for media and devices muddled even further.

Much of the mainstream literature discussing children's media use sets aside the lived realities of parents, focusing primarily on limitations. For example, the American Academy of Pediatrics intermittently updates their guidelines, but they often run in opposition to recommendations of pediatric ophthalmologists or behavioral therapists

(<https://www.pathwayped.com/american-academy-of-pediatrics-announces-new-recommendations-for-childrens-media-use/>). It is rare to hear from media scholars and researchers who are themselves parents, explicitly foregrounding how their dual roles intersect. We hope to use this opportunity to engender such a discussion among media scholar parents.

This proposed book project will take the form of an augmented anthology, with the author-editors writing structured chapters into which shorter pieces written by other scholar-parents will be placed and addressed. What issues face us as parents today in terms of our children's media use? How does being a media scholar filter how we approach our children's use of media and vice versa? How are we struggling just like everyone else to understand, control, and cultivate our kids' media engagement?

We invite media scholar parents to submit abstract proposals for contributions to an edited volume that will examine kids and media through the lens of this doubled position. A primary goal of this anthology is to reach beyond the circles of academia, so we are looking for short think pieces (1,000-2,000 words) that avoid jargon and that keep the direct use of theory to a minimum. Think "theory light." These pieces should reflect your personality as well, and be written in an open and approachable manner. (Examples of such writing include Susan Douglas' *Where the Girls Are* and *The Rise of Enlightened Sexism*, Peggy Orenstein's *Cinderella Ate My Daughter*, Kim Brooks' *Small Animals: Parenthood in the Age of Fear*, and Mary Dalton and Laura Linder's *Screen Lessons*.) We welcome any ideas that could take

alternate forms (e.g. comic strips, 2D or 3D art, doodles, poems, etc.) as well, and we encourage a broad array of topics. For this volume “children” range in age from infants to teens.

Possible questions to consider include but are not limited to:

- Despite your role as a media scholar, do you still view media as an obstacle you must “parent through?”
- How has media helped you parent better or smarter?
- How has the pandemic or your child’s own personal health, learning, or behavioral challenges put a wrinkle in how you approached media consumption or creation?
- How does media factor into how your children learn about structures of race and racism, gender and sexuality, class and other socio-cultural lived realities? How do you use—or avoid—media when it comes to related socio-cultural issues?
- How do you weigh the potential risks and rewards of media in your children’s lives?
- In what ways have your children voiced their own desires regarding media use and how did you work through that dialogue?
- In what ways has your job as a media scholar caused conflict between you and other parents when it came to media use?
- Has having children directly impacted the way you write about or research media?

For this volume, media is broadly and inclusively conceptualized:

- Media consumption or production via YouTube, Tik Tok, and social media
- Device culture (tablets, cell phones, laptops, computers, TV, video game platforms)
- Video games, movies, TV shows, educational media, news
- Streaming platforms, cable, broadcast
- Media safety in multiplayer environments
- Talking toys and AI objects
- Marketing and advertising to kids and/or to parents
- Media in schools, along with media literacy education

Important Dates

- CALL FOR ABSTRACT PROPOSALS: December 15, 2021
- DECISIONS ON ABSTRACT PROPOSALS: January 31, 2022
- FULL PAPER SUBMISSIONS: June 15, 2022

Please send 250-word abstract proposals with the submission form, attached, by December 15, 2021 to the three editors of the volume.

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SUBMISSION FORM FOR ABSTRACT PROPOSALS

Complete and submit the proposal form before the December 15, 2021 (11:59PM CST) deadline via email to all three of the editors:

- Kelly Kessler kkessle3@depaul.edu
- Katie Paciga kpaciga@colum.edu
- Sharon Ross sross@colum.edu

Proposed Title

Abstract

[250 words maximum]

Format

[Please indicate the format your proposed contribution will take.]

	short think piece (1,000-2,000 words)		poem
	comic or illustrated piece		script or screenplay snippet
	photograph(s) of 3D artwork		other (please indicate)
	short story (in prose)		

Author Information

[Please copy/paste author section as many times as needed (e.g., if there are three authors, include all three authors' names, titles, institutions, emails).]

Author Name

Title

Institution

Email address