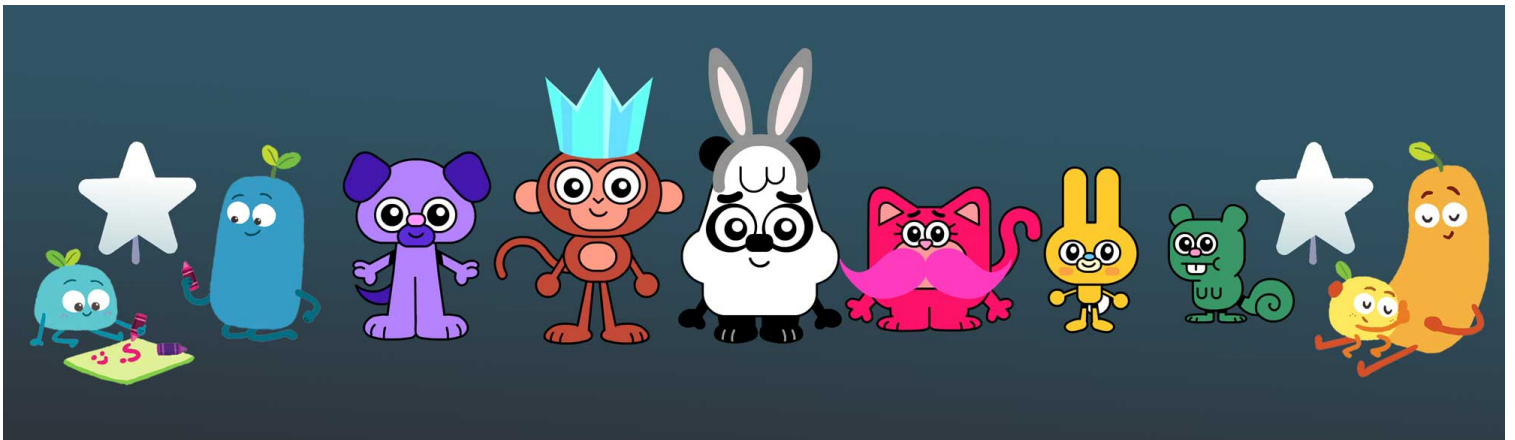


Cultivating Early Literacy



New Apps to Spark Family Conversation

Critical pre-literacy skills are developed long before elementary school, through play and interactive conversations with caregivers at home. Three new early-literacy apps — released for free from the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) and its Reach Every Reader (<https://reacheveryreader.gse.harvard.edu/our-tools/pre-k-and-home-apps/>) initiative — are designed for parents and caregivers to use with their children to encourage fun and rewarding interactions, promote dialogue, and give children the foundations they need to read, learn, and thrive.

Throughout its 100-year history, HGSE has pioneered innovative approaches to language and literacy (<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/hgse100/story/literacy-pioneer>) — generating breakthroughs in understanding the cognitive and developmental processes that govern how we learn to speak and read, as well as about the best ways to nurture readers from preschool to high school. (<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/hgse100/story/language-and-literacy-pioneer>) That tradition continues with Reach Every Reader, a multi-institutional effort to harness emerging research and technology to end to a crisis in literacy that leaves more than half of all students in the United States struggling to read well by the end of third grade.

The new apps for mobile devices were developed by a team led by Joe Blatt (/node/125512), senior lecturer on education at HGSE and principal investigator; Meredith Rowe (/node/422741), Saul Zaentz Professor of Early Learning and Development; and Paola Uccelli (/node/127422), professor of education at HGSE. The research team partnered with public media producer GBH (<https://www.wgbh.org/>) and educational media developer FableVision Studios (<https://www.fablevisionstudios.com/>). To learn more about the research behind the apps and stay connected to updates, new releases, and literacy resources, visit Reach Every Reader.

HGSE Launches Early Learning Apps



HGSE's learning apps: talking, sharing, and playing together

- Engaging parents and caregivers in enjoyable and rewarding interactions with their young children
- Stimulating sustained conversations between caregivers and children, laying the foundations for learning and reading
- Over time, broadening these conversations to include richer vocabulary and more abstract references
- Empowering and supporting caregivers to talk with their young ones all day — both at home and while doing everyday activities outside of the home

Small Wonders

Small Wonders (For Families) is specially designed for caregivers and children to use together, with games, songs, and activity ideas that can be the start of many back-and-forth conversations — ideal for preparing children to read. It offers tips to help you build your child's language skills off-screen, too, while running errands or doing other everyday activities.



(<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=edu.harvard.smallwonder>)

(<https://apps.apple.com/nl/app/small-wonders-for-families/id1557771417?l=en>)



(<https://apps.apple.com/nl/app/small-wonders-for-families/id1557771417?l=en>)

Small Wonders: A free early-literacy app from HGSE



Photo Play



In **Photo Play (For Families)**, caregivers and children choose a photo of their own and have fun drawing on it, decorating it, playing hide and seek with it, and talking about people and events that the photo brings to mind. Like HGSE's other apps, it offers tips to help you build your child's language skills off-screen, too, as you go about your daily activities.



(<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=edu.harvard.photoplay>)

(<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/photo-play-for-families/id1560679751>)



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(<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/photo-play-for-families/id1560679751>)

Photo Play: A free early-literacy app from HGSE



Animal Antics



In **Animal Antics (For Families)**, caregivers and children take on the personalities of lovable animal characters in a variety of story settings. In each scenario, take turns choosing facial expressions and recording dialogue; then, play back the entire story! Like HGSE's other apps, Animal Antics offers tips to help you build your child's language skills off-screen, too.



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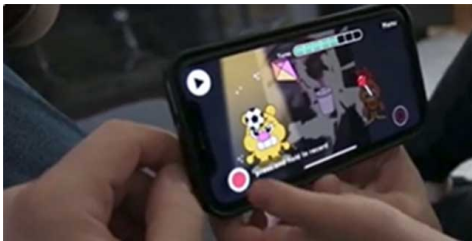
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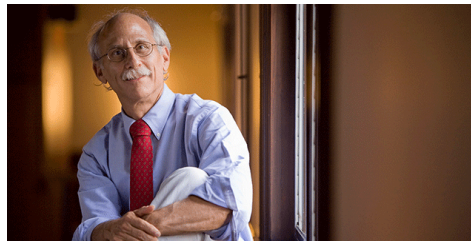
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(https://www.gse.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Press_Release_HGSE_literacy_apps/2017)

Announcing Three New Literacy Apps from HGSE

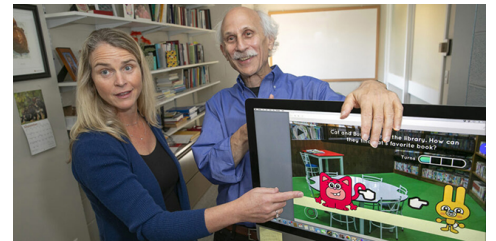
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An Interview with Children's Media Specialist Joe Blatt

([/news/21/03/qa-joe-blatt-re-early-learning-apps](https://www.gse.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Press_Release_HGSE_literacy_apps/2017))



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Read About the Project to Develop HGSE's First Apps

([/news/20/07/hgse-faculty-ready-new-app-targeting-childrens-literacy-skills](https://www.gse.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Press_Release_HGSE_literacy_apps/2017))

Leadership in the Field



"We started thinking about apps because everyone is spending so much time on screens. We know that smartphones detract from parent-child interaction. The goal was really to create apps that require interaction between the child and someone else, designed as something to do together."

From **Running Out of Things to Talk with Your Toddler About? These Apps Can Help** (<https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/04/30/lifestyle/tired-talking-your-toddler-all-day-long-these-apps-can-help/>) via *Boston Globe*

HGSE and Early Literacy Innovation

- Ph.D. student Rosa Guzman Turco, part of the Reach Every Reader team, on how technology can support literacy development (</node/631701>)
- A tradition of early childhood innovation: Sona Jho, Ed.M.'97, and the Mother Goose Club (</node/624691>)
- A tradition of early childhood innovation: Dorothea Gillim, Ed.M.'91, and Molly of Denali (</node/622211>)

HGSE APPS: PRIVACY POLICY (<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Privacy-Statement-Apps.pdf>)

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