



advancing
children's learning
in a digital age

BUILDING ON A LEGACY

In 1966, Joan Ganz Cooney and her colleagues at what would become Sesame Workshop charted new territory by harnessing the power of television to educate underserved preschoolers. Their efforts led to the creation of *Sesame Street*, now the single largest and most important source of informal education in the world.

Forty years after the landmark study that led to the creation of *Sesame Street*, the Workshop is establishing a new center to perpetuate Mrs. Cooney's vision in a rapidly changing world. The Joan Ganz Cooney Center will focus new resources on the challenges children face today, asking the 21st century equivalent of her original question, "How can emerging media help children learn?"

THE JOAN GANZ COONEY CENTER

The mission of the Center is to catalyze and support research, innovation and investment in digital media technologies to advance children's learning.

The Center will:

- **Catalyze partnerships:** Identify and create partnerships to harness new media technologies that connect child development experts and educators with interactive media and technology leaders.
- **Support research:** Build interdisciplinary knowledge development by funding applied research and synthesizing and disseminating findings to support innovative applications of media technologies in schools, extended learning settings, and at home.
- **Mobilize resources:** Champion best practices and develop policy agendas to stimulate investment in promising and proven new media technologies for children.

While educational content delivered through new media can provide access to many kinds of learning for children of all ages, the inaugural focus of the Center – given the national need – will be on helping those in the primary grades develop literacy skills. These skills include the vital reading, writing, speaking and listening capabilities that all children must develop during the primary grades, with a special emphasis on struggling readers who risk educational failure if they do not catch up to their peers by grade 4. The Center will also bring national attention to the evolving "new literacies" that students will need to compete and cooperate in the 21st century by focusing on how technology can advance second language acquisition, inter-cultural

understanding, and media literacy—all global competencies that have become critical in our interconnected world.

CORE FOCUS AREAS

The Joan Ganz Cooney Center will concentrate its activities on four distinct yet integrated areas:

- Research – The Center will initiate and support a consortium of interdisciplinary research with and among leading universities that are engaged in the cultural, educational, and/or developmental aspects of new media research.
- Production – The Center will commission media companies (commercial and not-for-profit) and independent producers to build pilot programs that are based on academic research.
- Investment – The Center will facilitate public/private partnerships, making new applications available to commercial investment for further development and collaborating with distributors on experimental approaches to product launches. Within such ventures, the Center will retain partial ownership of new intellectual properties.
- Advocacy – The Center will be a change catalyst, disseminating critical findings to inform the national debate, stimulating private and public investment in effective reforms.

CONCLUSION

The Joan Ganz Cooney Center is being designed by Sesame Workshop and leaders in the field to harness the power of new media. The Center will be a trusted and creative force in leveraging the new tools and available knowledge in the service of children’s learning for generations to come.