



2023
IMPACT
REPORT



Early Learning

ninepbs.org X f @ y l n d

WHY NINE PBS?

HISTORY

Nine PBS's foundation, dating back to 1954, is deeply rooted in quality educational content. More than 6,000 mothers and PTA members played an influential role in our station's inception, going door to door to raise \$100,000 in only one evening. Schools were so eager to have televised programs in their classrooms that 25 school districts offered to pay the station \$1 per student for its services.

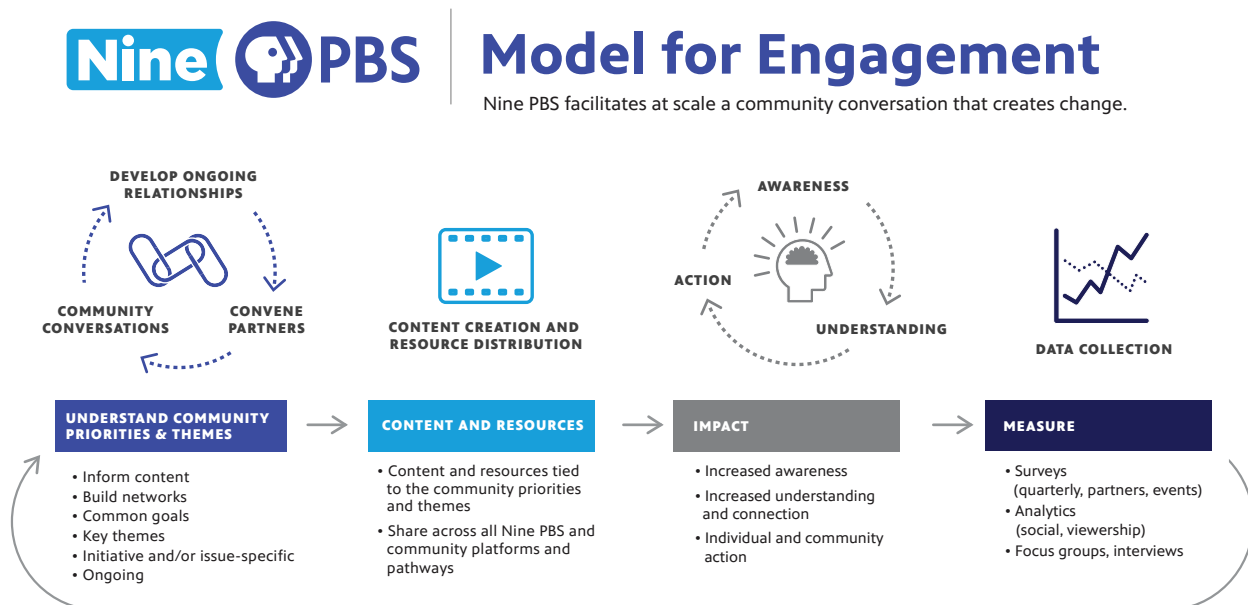
As Nine PBS's roots grew deeper into the community, the early learning team became a valued and trusted community partner in St. Louis's early education space. Community partners continued to imagine increased, varied, and more complex ways for Nine PBS to join in the work to advance outcomes for our youngest and most underserved learners.

The team is now proudly connected to more than 130 community partners, offering each partner a variety of support aligned with community priorities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MODEL

Nine PBS is ensuring our community knows what is holding us back and what will propel us forward. We do this by convening trusted community partners, using our nationally recognized Model for Community Engagement, so our community engagement and stories are anchored in community needs.

This model ensures that community engagement has real meaning: conversation, collaboration, and outcomes. **The partner meetings and community conversations facilitated by our community engagement model make Nine PBS a better community member and a relevant institution in the daily lives of our region.**



OUR VALUES

For nearly 70 years, our work has been rooted in early education, community impact, and telling stories that strengthen our region, with a focus on supporting children. At Nine PBS, we approach our work by addressing the most critical needs for the most significant impact, aiming to make long-term durable impact in the lives of our region's most underserved communities. This dedication is reflected in our organizational values of community, trust, equity, and learning.



THE VISION

Our long-term vision is to be a training hub for educators and caregivers across the region, where they can gain fluency using PBS KIDS® media, curriculum, and resources to improve the educational outcomes of young learners. By supporting underserved communities in our region, we ensure that our work aims to reduce barriers for children and families so two out of three kids who engage with Nine PBS are better prepared for school.

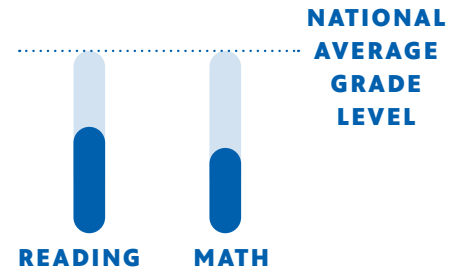
GOALS OF EARLY LEARNING INITIATIVE

- **Increase** third grade literacy
- **Increase** school readiness
- **Decrease** the digital divide

NINE PBS POWER HOURS

In St. Louis City, the average student is nearly **four years behind** grade level in reading and nearly **five years behind** grade level in math.

SOURCE: *Education Recovery Scorecard, 2023*



In 2023, Nine PBS Power Hours engaged more than **500 children throughout 164 sessions** across our priority neighborhoods of North St. Louis, North St. Louis County, and East St. Louis.

Nine PBS offers Literacy, STEM, and Financial Literacy Power Hour series to support children where they are—in and out of the classroom. Each session addresses at least three state curriculum standards that align with the greatest gaps in achievement for under-resourced schools. Using this approach, Nine PBS can support the key skills necessary for the kids of our region to have long-term success.

Power Hours incorporate video, print, and digital media with hands-on, playful learning strategies to boost children’s curiosity. In each session, kids experience new ways to learn in their everyday lives, and educators, teachers, and caregivers gain experience modeling learning activities that can advance at-home learning.

“ I WAS SO EXCITED TO SEE LESSONS APPLIED RIGHT AWAY. MY FOUR-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER JUST HAD A BIRTHDAY PARTY AND THE MONEY FROM CARDS SHE RECEIVED WENT DIRECTLY INTO HER SAVINGS JAR. WE SMILED SO BIG TO KNOW THAT SHE ALREADY KNOWS THAT SAVING IS IMPORTANT!

—2023 FINANCIAL LITERACY POWER HOURS PARENT





CAREGIVERS AGREE

- 100%** Their child is **more curious and enthusiastic about learning** because of participating in STEM Power Hours.
- 96%** Literacy Power Hours **helped them gain confidence** in supporting their child(ren)'s learning.
- 90%** Their child(ren) is/are **more prepared for school** because of participating in Literacy Power Hours.
- 82%** Caregivers said participating in the Power Hours **helped them learn something about their child(ren)**.

SOURCE: 2023 Power Hour Survey for Caregivers

To extend the reach and impact of Nine PBS Power Hours, we train partners and educators to use our high-quality Power Hours curriculum. To prepare our partners to lead children and families, members of the Nine PBS early learning team provide first-hand experience with the educational materials to guide educators through the activities. These partners then become facilitators of Nine PBS curriculum in their communities and classrooms. We continue to support our partners through resource distribution, site visits, and one-on-one coaching.

In 2023, Nine PBS supported **32 partners** through our train-the-trainer program, impacting nearly **500 children** in our region.

DRAWN IN

Nine PBS believes the role of public media is to help fill crucial gaps in learning resources, including BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) representation. We create kids' content intentionally designed to celebrate BIPOC and low-income communities, so that all early learners and families are represented. This removes barriers to education so we can further support greater grade-level proficiency across our region.

CULTURALLY COMPETENT AND DIVERSE MEDIA IS AN IMPACTFUL PART OF CHILDREN'S LIVES



6 in 10 parents say that media has prompted conversations about diversity with their children.



74% of parents say their children enjoy media with diverse characters.

SOURCE: *Common Sense Media, 2021*

Only 42% of preschool TV characters are human and, of those human characters, **only one-third are characters of color.**

SOURCE: *Embrace Race, 2023*



DRAWN IN

Drawn In is a 2023 Mid-America Regional Emmy-winning series of epic adventure stories set in a bustling Midwestern city. It follows the exploits of four kids who unabashedly love comic books: Tyler Agbani, Nevaeh Campbell, Jady Harris, and Yeong-Ja “Grace” Park. In every adventure, their real worlds collide with the comic world. Colorful heroes, villains, robots, and other fanciful creatures escape from the comic book pages. The kids use problem-solving and literacy skills to set their world right again from cartoon mayhem.

Nine PBS has partnered with Lion Forge Entertainment on this multimedia initiative, creating stories to share through animated video shorts, print and digital comic books, and a website with educational games for kids. *The Drawn In* initiative is designed to respond to stated community needs:

- Support the **improvement** of children’s literacy
- Celebrate media **representation** for Black and Brown kids

CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND CAREGIVERS ACROSS OUR REGION CONTINUED TO BE DRAWN IN IN 2023!

- More than **300 children, caregivers, and teachers** were supported through Literacy Power Hours.
- *Drawn In* videos, online comics, and web experiences were viewed more than 1 million times by more than **14,000 children**.
- More than **33,600 comic books** were distributed to the community.
- Nine PBS released **4 new comic books**, building on the previously released four issues.
- **New, extended learning resources** were published on [ninepbs.org/drawnin](https://www.ninepbs.org/drawnin) for families and classrooms to access digitally and print.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATORS

26% OF MISSOURI TEACHERS HAVE BEEN IN THE CLASSROOM FOR 5 years or less.

RETENTION RATES FOR NEW TEACHERS DECREASED FROM 52% AFTER 3 YEARS TO **38%** after 5 years.

SOURCE: Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, December 2022

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EDUCATORS enhances the quality of instruction AND STUDENT LEARNING, ESPECIALLY WHEN IT ALIGNS WITH CURRICULUM MATERIALS, STATE STANDARDS, AND ASSESSMENT MEASURES.

SOURCE: Learning for Justice, 2022



Nine PBS supports educators across the region with a particular focus on our priority neighborhoods: North St. Louis, North St. Louis County, and East St. Louis. We help educators gain fluency using PBS KIDS media, curriculum, and resources to improve the educational experiences of young learners. Our robust offering of professional development is geared specifically for early childhood educators teaching children from infancy to eight years old.

Each structured and unstructured session is designed to help educators bring media-rich, play-based, and learner-centered experiences to their classroom environments and communities. In each session, educators experience hands-on active play, which builds their confidence and interest with PBS KIDS resources.

“...I ALWAYS LIKE LEARNING NEW THINGS. ...AS I EVOLVE AS A TEACHER AND EDUCATOR, I WANT TO KNOW WHAT’S NEW, WHAT’S CURRENT.

—KAREN DOMESCIK, LOCAL EDUCATOR



EDCAMP

Each year, Nine PBS hosts Edcamp Unconference professional development opportunities to meet the demand for educator-led professional development. At each event, attendees set the agenda for the day to determine what topics of conversation are most needed to help educators advance outcomes for our most under-resourced learners.

Nine PBS's spring Edcamp was attended by 74 educators. In October 2023, Nine PBS hosted the first Edcamp in the country to welcome caregivers in addition to educators from formal and informal early learning environments. One hundred people attended the half-day event. Parents learned more about PBS KIDS resources and how they can support early childhood learning, and educators formed professional connections, gained support in their roles, and earned clock hours.

“ I THINK IT WAS GOOD FOR NINE PBS TO BRING PARENTS AND TEACHERS TOGETHER BECAUSE THEY’RE ONE AND THE SAME. PARENTS ARE THE TEACHERS, TEACHERS ARE PARENTS. WHEN PARENTS BRING THEIR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL OR THEY GET OFF THE BUS, THEY REALLY HOPE THAT WE [EDUCATORS] ARE AN EXTENSION OF THEIR FAMILY.”

—ROLAND SPEED, LOCAL EDUCATOR, OCTOBER 2023 EDCAMP ATTENDEE

98% Nine PBS Edcamp participants agree they **gained access to Nine PBS resources that will help prepare kids for success in school.**

95% Nine PBS Edcamp participants agree they **gained actionable information to serve the children they work with daily.**

SOURCE: *Nine PBS Edcamp Unconference Participant Survey, 2023.*

STORYTIME IN THE COMMONS



Quality time between caregivers and children is instrumental to healthy child development. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, dedicated time together can develop social-emotional, cognitive, language, and self-regulation skills.

An hour dedicated to educational activities can offset the behavioral problems exasperated by 2.33 hours of unstructured time.

SOURCE: *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2016*

In September, Nine PBS partnered with Fred Rogers Productions to host Be My Neighbor Day. Over 400 community members gathered at Nine PBS's Jack Galmiche Public Media Commons to celebrate the occasion. Children and families explored what it means to be a caring neighbor, interacted with local community helpers such as the St. Louis Fire Department, and met beloved characters from *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood*. Families had the chance to engage in various creative activities aimed at fostering skills related to kindness, friendship, emotional regulation, and self-care while exploring innovative ways to learn and play.

“ WE HAD SUCH A GREAT TIME AT STORYTIME IN THE COMMONS! WE LOVED ALL THE INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES, MEETING THE CHARACTERS, AND THE MEMORIES WE WERE ABLE TO MAKE AS A FAMILY!

—STORYTIME IN THE COMMONS ATTENDEE

95% Caregivers who attended Storytime in the Commons agreed they **gained access to resources to help them engage with the child(ren) in their life.**

97% Caregivers who attended Storytime in the Commons agreed they **gained access to resources that help increase their children's confidence around learning.**

SOURCE: *Storytime in the Commons Participant Survey, 2023*

WITTCOFF FELLOWSHIP

In January 2021, Nine PBS began the Wittcoff Fellowship to carry on the legacy of one of the founding members of the station, Raymond H. Wittcoff, a real estate developer and philanthropist. He believed public television had a responsibility to ensure all people are “as wise as they are powerful.”

Since the beginning of the program, the Wittcoff Fellows have represented the founder’s philosophy. During their time with Nine PBS, each Fellow makes a lasting impact by building and sustaining community partner connections. From their year-long appointment, they have continued to work toward ensuring all community members are as wise as they are powerful.

- Meghan Steineker, 2021 cohort, is now the volunteer and community engagement coordinator at Rung for Women, helping women upskill and reskill into careers that offer economic empowerment.
- Paula-Breonne Vickers, 2021 cohort, is now the director of Early Childhood Power Building at WEPOWER, working toward just and equitable systems around education, economics, and justice systems.
- Terek Hawkins, 2022 cohort, is now a senior program manager at IFF, supporting nonprofits through community-centered development and real estate consulting.

Current Wittcoff Fellows continue to maintain and support seven Community Hubs across our region. Each Community Hub is hosted by a community partner to connect early learners to PBS LearningMedia resources to increase school readiness. Wittcoff Fellows furnish the hubs with bookshelves, tables, books, educational toys, PBS Playtime Pads, and other early learning resources.

COMMUNITY HUBS

- **Harris-Stowe State University**
- **Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House**
- **Magic Happens Here**
- **Morning Star Academy**
- **Small Steps Preschool**
- **Uni-Pres Kinder Cottage**
- **Wohl Recreation Center**



TEACHING IN ROOM 9

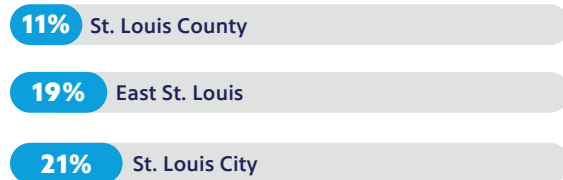
In our region, we continue to see a need for high-quality educational resources that children and families can access in their homes. Lack of access and the high cost of childcare and internet services are why Nine PBS and public media remain a vital source of early childhood education across our region.

KIDS 3-5-YEARS OLD IN MISSOURI WHO ARE UNENROLLED IN SCHOOL



SOURCE: *National Center for Education Statistics, 2022*

HOMES WITHOUT INTERNET ACCESS



SOURCE: *National Telecommunications and Information Administration, 2021*

In 2023, Nine PBS revamped *Teaching in Room 9*. Supported by the team of original, pandemic-era *Teaching in Room 9* educators, the new and improved look of the show is a result of in-studio production, a professionally designed set, and a dedicated camera crew and production team. *Teaching in Room 9*, in its new format, aired 390 times in 2023 and was viewed on-air more than 242,000 times.



TEACHING IN ROOM 9

Tuning into the 30-minute program provides high exposure to literacy, math, science, and social emotional concepts for all ages, especially the kids at home unenrolled in preschool or kindergarten. In addition to offering young children access to free standards-aligned, high-quality lessons on-air, *Teaching in Room 9* aims to amplify the voices of diverse educators and increase representation of people of color in kids programming.

72%

Community members who report watching *Teaching in Room 9* STEM lessons agreed that the show helped their children continue learning STEM concepts at home.



“TELEVISION CAN BE USED TO EXTEND ENORMOUSLY THOSE FEW TEACHERS WHO HAVE THE PRECIOUS POWER TO LIFT THE MINDS AND HEARTS OF STUDENTS.

—RAYMOND H. WITTCOFF, NINE PBS FOUNDING MEMBER, *SATURDAY REVIEW*, 1954

OF ALL PEOPLE WHO WATCH *TEACHING IN ROOM 9*

33% identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color

32% are part of a household with income less than \$50,000

SOURCE: Nielsen/
TRAC Media Services,
October 2023

PBS KIDS

Curriculum-based PBS KIDS® content is unique in the children’s media landscape. PBS KIDS is the only free, over-the-air, 24/7 television service for young children in our region. PBS KIDS digital resources are also available 24/7 online. This constant presence ensures Nine PBS remains a trusted and reliable community resource for our most vulnerable community members.



LOCAL VIEWS

20+
MILLION

SOURCE: *Nielson/TRAC Media Services, January-December 2023*

ON DEMAND / LIVESTREAM

45+
MILLION

SOURCE: *PBS Business Intelligence Domo Report, January-December 2023*



PBS LEARNING MEDIA

Nine PBS LearningMedia provides educational content online that supports classroom educators. These resources are easily searchable by subject, school standard, and grade. They are also easily converted for at-home learning.

USERS: 103,455 IN THE ST. LOUIS REGION

PAGEVIEWS: 312,532

SOURCE: *PBS Business Intelligence Domo Reports, November 2023*

BRIGHT BY TEXT

Families and educators can text the word CARE to 274448 to receive educational tips from trusted experts to support healthy child development, prenatal to age 18, available in English and Spanish.

THESE HELPFUL TEXT MESSAGES INCLUDE:

- Age-specific information that changes as children grow
- Timely news on local resources and events
- Links to online learning materials
- Advice on challenging behaviors, when caregivers need it most



80%

Caregivers report **Bright by Text increased their knowledge of parenting and caring for children.**

SOURCE: *Bright by Text Survey, November 2023*

MENTAL WELL-BEING

In recent years, Nine PBS has consistently received requests from partners, caregivers, educators, and school districts to support the mental health and well-being of children in our region by focusing on trauma-informed, social-emotional skill-building content and resources. Mental health data in our region reinforces the importance of our partners' requests.



Rates of childhood depression and anxiety **doubled** during 2020-2021.

SOURCE: *JAMA Pediatrics, 2021*



In Missouri, **35%** of adults living in households with children reported those **children feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge most of the time.**

SOURCE: *Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2023*



Missouri ranks **41st** in access to mental health care.

SOURCE: *Mental Health America, 2023*

Nine PBS's Mental Well-Being Initiative works with a network of trusted partners to support the day-to-day social, emotional, and cognitive needs of kids from infancy to eight and the adults in their lives through culturally relevant content and resources that promote healthy conversation.

In 2023, Nine PBS hosted four convenings to learn from more than 30 community organizations and families. Over the course of these meetings, Nine PBS gained greater understanding of barriers to mental well-being, key priorities of our community partners, and perceptions of families in our region. Learning from our community partners in this way directly informed the content we created in 2023.

Created **more than 30** stories that align with our Mental Well-Being initiative

Number of times stories **viewed**

11.4+
MILLION

on-air

SOURCE: *Nielson/TRAC media, January 2023*

86%

Viewers agreed they **gained a better understanding of what mental well-being means** through our content

SOURCE: *2023 Community Survey*

Nine  PBS

PBS
KIDS



SUPPORTED BY



**Joseph and Sandra Lehrer,
in memory of Ted Koplar**



**Norman J. Stupp
FOUNDATION**

