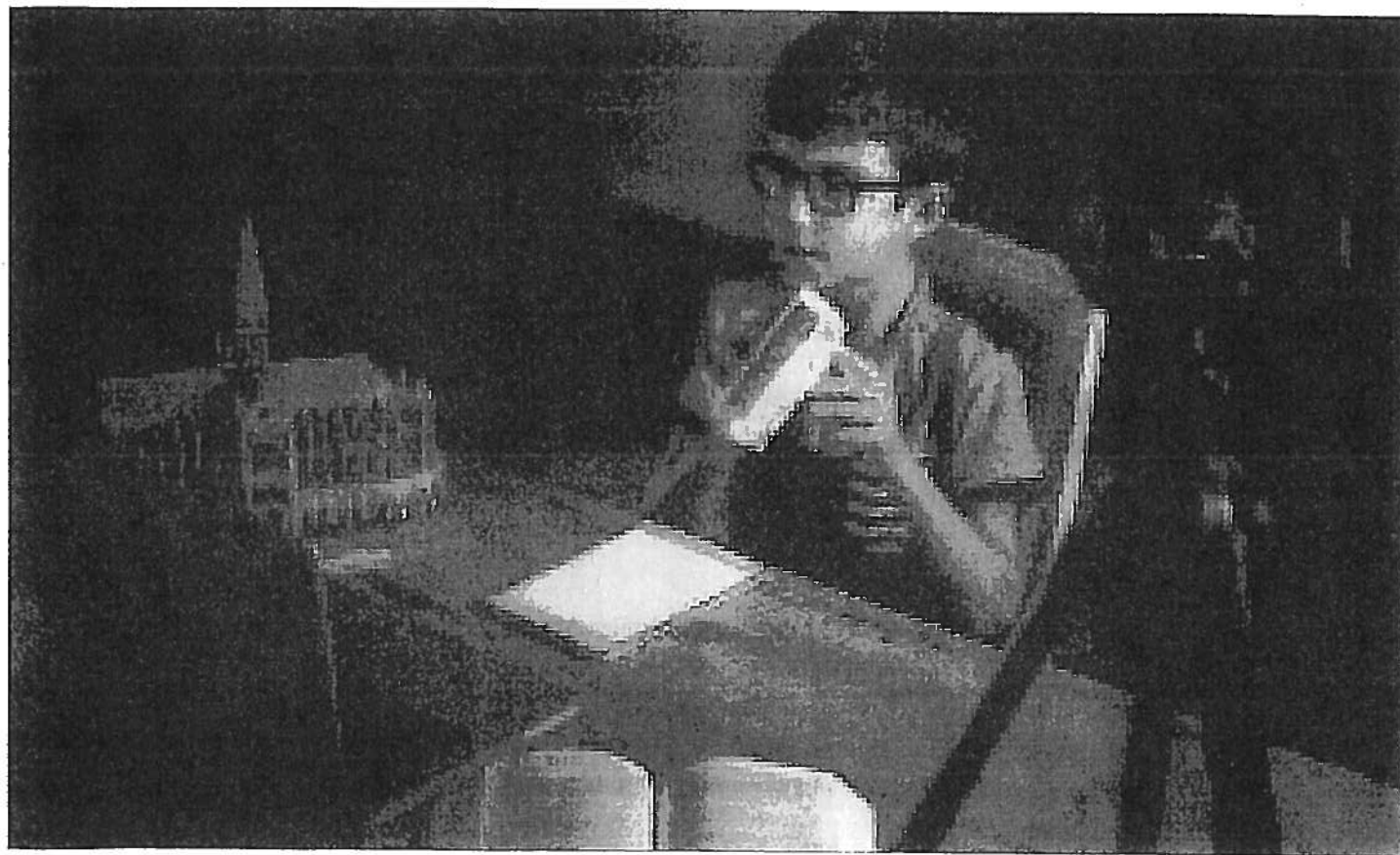

Parenting, Media, and Everything In Between

New Strategies to Get Kids to Create Media, Not Just Consume It

Instead of only watching and playing, encourage kids to make, code, and craft their own content.

By [Christine Elgersma](#) 1/24/2018

Topics: [Learning with Technology](#)



During a typical day, kids and teens check out [YouTube](#), watch [TV](#), play [video games](#), scroll through social media feeds, and listen to music. Overall, [they're passive consumers of the content they love](#) -- which is fine. But with a little nudging -- and the right tools -- they can be using that time to build creative skills while sharing their stories, opinions, and ideas.

Kids actually love to [express themselves](#), but sometimes they feel like they don't have much of a voice. Encouraging your kid to be more of a maker might just be a matter of pointing to someone or something they admire and giving them the technology to make their vision come alive. No matter your kids' ages and interests, there's a method and medium to encourage creativity.

If they have a story to share

As soon as kids start talking, it's great to get them to tell stories. For younger kids, encourage them to narrate their activities as they build, climb, and pretend by asking questions such as, "What are you building? Who will use it? Tell me about your adventure!" There are also apps that let kids record their stories as they play. With older kids, some will naturally put pencil to paper, but others take a bit more prodding. For those kids, digital book creation can make their writing process feel more grown-up and tangible. Having a real audience also shows kids that their writing can matter, so tweens and teens can use sites and apps where they can share creations, and they can even riff off their obsessions in the form of fan fiction. Finally, if your tween or teen has strong opinions about issues or interesting people in their lives, they can use tools to document and share those stories, too.

Storytelling tools

- For younger kids: [Toca Life: School](#), [Diary Zapp](#), [Me by Tinybop](#), [Storybird](#)
- For older kids: [Write About This](#), [Book Creator](#), [Scholastic Kids Press Corps](#), [StoryCorps](#), [We Are Here DIYdoc](#)

If they have a directorial vision

For kids who love to watch television and movies (spoiler: Most do!), it can be exciting for them to get in on the action. When they're younger, kids love to combine their toys with storytelling, which is not unlike directing a movie. To share those stories, they can play around with animated storytelling apps that let them record a mini-movie with movable characters, props, and settings. As they get older, stop-motion animation might be more their jam, and there are apps for that, too. And if you'd prefer tweens and teens to not have their own YouTube channels but you want to encourage the fun of making videos, there are tools that let kids record, edit, and share in a more limited way.

Video-creation tools

- For younger kids: [Toontastic 3D](#), [Lipa Theater: Story Maker](#)
- For older kids: [Goldieblox and the Movie Machine](#), [SKIT! Kids - Video Maker](#), [VidMaker - 3D Moviemaker for Kids](#), [Magisto](#)

If they have an inner artist

When your kid is naturally artistic, it probably won't take much prompting to get them to draw or paint. But sooner or later, they'll want to expand their horizons. If your little kid loves to color, give them more inspiration with apps that introduce famous artists. Older kids who don't claim to be artists but love superheroes, comics, or manga can create their own cartoons with panels, dialogue balloons, and unique characters. Even emerging fashion designers can find a tool to help them express their inner Versace. Of course, for tweens and teens, there are more advanced digital drawing and painting products to create sophisticated designs.

Artistic tools

- For younger kids: [ExplorArt Klee - The Art of Paul Klee for Kids](#), [PlayART by Tapook](#)
- For older kids: [Comics Head Lite - Create Your Own Comic](#), [Strip Designer](#), [Art Set](#), [Procreate](#)

If they have an ear for music

Most kids love music right out of the womb, so transferring that love into creation isn't hard when they're little. Banging on pots and pans is a good place to start — but they can take that experience with them using apps that let them play around with sound. Little kids can start to learn about instruments and how sounds fit together into music. Whether

they're budding musicians or just appreciators, older kids can use tools to compose, stay motivated, and practice regularly. And when tweens and teens want to start laying down some tracks, they can record, edit, and share their stuff.

Music tools

- For younger kids: [Duckie Deck Homemade Orchestra](#), [Bandimal](#), [Mussila](#)
- For older kids: [Moana: Rhythm Run](#), [The Orchestra](#), [Bandblast](#), [Coach Guitar Chords Tuner Tabs](#), [Piano Practice with Wolfie](#), [GarageBand](#)

If they have the next big game idea

[Learning to code](#) may seem intimidating, but there are a ton of fun apps that teach programming basics in a way that doesn't feel like work. Young kids who learn to code get introduced to ideas such as cause and effect, thinking ahead, and how little steps add up to a final product. When they're **older**, they can make and share simple games using some basic block-coding tools. Tweens and teens can learn actual coding languages so they can create more complex games.

Coding tools

- For younger kids: [Code Karts](#), [codeSpark Academy](#), [TinyTap](#)
- Older kids: [Scratch](#), [ScreenPlay - program your story](#), [Hopscotch](#), [Swift Playgrounds](#), [SoloLearn: Learn to Code](#)

If they don't consider themselves to be creative

Some kids are sure they don't have a creative bone in their bodies -- but they'll play [Minecraft](#) for hours. Others will turn their noses up at art -- but will jump at the chance to design a robot. If this sounds like your kid, rest assured that -- no matter their age -- their bones are actually brimming with creativity. Even if kids aren't painting masterpieces, playing the trombone, or writing the next hit for [Netflix](#), there are lots of ways for them to make things, especially using digital tools. Any app that requires kids to create a world or creature -- especially those that allow them to test their designs -- teaches the creative process. Even silly apps that only focus on the process and not the product can free up kids who might feel stuck.

Covert creative tools

- For younger kids: [Plum's Creaturizer](#), [Dr. Panda Plus: Home Designer](#), [The Robot Factory by Tinybop](#), [Blox 3D World Creator](#)
- For older kids: [Diary Zapp](#), [Minecraft](#), [The Tune Zoo](#), [DIY App - Creative Community for Kids](#), [Scribblenauts Remix](#), [SoundForest](#), [Orb](#)

[About Christine Elgersma](#)

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Comments (1)

Uncle of a 12 year old written by [andreiairiscord...](#)

Family Media Agreement: 6-8

I will ...

stay safe.

- ☐ I will not create accounts or give out any private information – such as my full name, date of birth, address, phone number, or photos – without my family's permission.
- ☐ I will not share my passwords with anyone other than my family. I will ask my family to help me with privacy settings if I want to set up devices, accounts, or profiles.
- ☐ If anyone makes me feel pressured or uncomfortable, or acts inappropriately toward me online, I'll stop talking to that person and will tell a friend or family member I trust about it.
- ☐

think first.

- ☐ I will not bully, humiliate, or upset anyone online or with my phone – whether through sharing photos, videos, or screenshots, spreading rumors or gossip, or setting up fake profiles – and I will stand up to those who do.
- ☐ I know that whatever I share online or with my cell phone can spread fast and far. I will not post anything online that could harm my reputation.
- ☐ Whenever I use, reference, or share someone else's creative work online, I will give proper credit to the author or artist.
- ☐

stay balanced.

- ☐ I know that not everything I read, hear, or see online is true. I will consider whether a source or author is credible.
- ☐ I will help my family set media time limits that make sense, and then I will follow them.
- ☐ I will be mindful of how much time I spend in front of screens, and I will continue to enjoy the other activities – and people – in my life.
- ☐

In exchange, my family agrees to ...

- ☐ recognize that media is a big part of my life, even if they don't always understand why.
- ☐ talk with me about what worries them and why, before saying "no."
- ☐ talk to me about my interests and embrace my world, including helping me find media that's appropriate and fun.

X

signed by me

X

signed by my parent or caregiver

Acuerdo familiar sobre el uso de los medios: 6-8

Me comprometo a ...

protegerme.

- ☐ No abriré cuentas o daré información privada – por ejemplo, mi nombre completo, fecha de nacimiento, dirección, número de teléfono o fotos – sin el permiso de mi familia.
- ☐ No compartiré mis contraseñas con personas que no sean de mi familia. Si quiero configurar un dispositivo, una cuenta o un perfil, le pediré a mi familia que me ayude con las configuraciones de privacidad.
- ☐ Si alguien me presiona, me hace sentir incómodo o tiene comportamientos inadecuados hacia mí por Internet, dejaré de hablar con esa persona y se lo contaré a un amigo o familiar de confianza.
- ☐ _____

pensar primero.

- ☐ No agrediré, humillaré o haré enojar a otros por Internet o con mi teléfono – ya sea compartiendo fotos, videos o impresiones de pantalla, haciendo correr rumores o chismes o creando perfiles falsos— y me enfrentaré a quienes lo hagan.
- ☐ Sé que todo lo que comparto por Internet o con mi teléfono celular se puede difundir rápidamente a todas partes. No publicaré nada por Internet que pueda dañar mi reputación.
- ☐ Cada vez que use, mencione o comparta el trabajo creativo de otra persona por Internet, daré al autor o al artista el reconocimiento que merecen.
- ☐ _____

mantener un equilibrio.

- ☐ Sé que no todo lo que leo, escucho o veo por Internet es cierto. Evaluaré si una fuente o autor es confiable.
- ☐ Ayudaré a mi familia a poner límites de tiempo para usar los medios que tengan sentido y luego los respetaré.
- ☐ Seré consciente de cuánto tiempo paso frente a una pantalla y seguiré disfrutando de otras actividades y personas que forman parte de mi vida.
- ☐ _____

A cambio de ello, mi familia acuerda ...

- ☐ Reconocer que los medios son parte importante de mi vida, incluso cuando ellos no siempre entiendan porqué.
- ☐ Hablar conmigo acerca de las cosas que los preocupan antes de decir que "no".
- ☐ Hablar conmigo acerca de mis intereses y entender mi mundo, lo que incluye ayudarme a encontrar medios que sean adecuados y divertidos.

Firmado por mi

Firmado por mi padre o tutor