# THE QUALITY QUESTION:
## Why Children's Media Must Aim High

**Recommendations for global children's media leaders**

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# INTRODUCTION

## THE QUEST

Can media help make children's lives better? I believe the answer to that question is "yes". But precisely how? Where? When? For the past few years I've been on a global quest to talk with industry experts, creators, researchers and children to gather the best thoughts and advice on this question. What follows is the outcome of that quest.

Inherent in my approach is a belief that quality media content for children will help make their lives better. I am connecting the notion of quality media with a lived experience. I am not naively assuming that a terrific television show can solve the ills of a child living in poverty or dealing with other stressors. But I am approaching the quest with an acknowledgment of the massive role media plays in the lives of children today, especially digital media. Children are increasingly interacting with media every waking moment. What does that mean for their development, their lives, their happiness?

All children have a need to feel safe, secure, loved, and respected (OECD, 2021). I hope that after they spend time with us (adults), or are taught by us, or play a game created by us, or watch a video produced by us, that they will finish that experience feeling good—whatever 'good' means to that child. If these goals seem too lofty, consider the opposite. A child should not have a media experience that leaves them feeling unsafe, insecure, unloved, or disrespected. They may feel other emotions too, like inspired, joyful, exhilarated, empathetic, competitive, or amused. They may have moments of sadness or anger or fear, depending on the story. But if we believe that media are influential, if we believe that media can shape how we think about the world and ourselves, then we must be mindful of how children's interactions with media either help or hurt that reality.

## CHILDHOOD AS A CONCEPT

An element that complicates this position is recognizing that ideas about children's agency, or the level of emotional and moral complexity children can handle, or the very notion of childhood evolves over time, and is understood differently in different cultures or regions of the world. In the United States, children often grow up in homes in which they are invited to give their opinion in a family discussion about what movie to watch, where to go on vacation, and even what car to purchase. But they are discouraged from participating in discussions about sexuality or from seeing nudity, even in a loving relationship. In Japan, parents are more likely to be the ones to make decisions about movies or vacations or cars. Children are not expected, nor invited to give their opinions



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## What does it mean to create quality media content for children?

on such issues. In Finland, nudity is more commonplace and regarded as a natural aspect of humanity, even in media for children. In Brazil, children are encouraged speak their minds, but the parent remains the authority. Even these generalities are difficult to make since parenting styles can vary from family to family, not just from country to country. In all cases, in all environments, children need to feel safe, secure, loved and respected for positive identity development.

### SAFE. SECURE. LOVED. RESPECTED.

Feeling *safe* and *secure* in a media environment means feeling confident that you will not be bullied, you won't be cyber-stalked, your personal information won't be taken or shared without your parent or caregiver's approval, you won't be tricked or misled into buying something, you won't be shown images or audio or text that may cause you harm.

Feeling *loved* in a media environment means feeling that the environment has a deep affection and appreciation for you as a person, not just as a consumer. The environment (platform, device, content) cares about what happens to you while you engage with it. It cares about how it makes you feel. It is an affirmation of all that makes you, you. Media may not be an actual source of love, but a child's interactions with media should support their feeling loved, not a source of feeling unloved.

Feeling *respected* in a media environment means feeling a recognition and appreciation for your interests, your hopes, your point of view, your culture, your traditions, your religion, your family structure and more. There is an honesty about respect. Respectful behavior shows regard for the other, even among people who are different or hold different views.

The foundation of a healthy child is built through *safety, security, love and respect.*

What does it mean to create video games, apps, artificial intelligence, movies, television shows, augmented reality experiences, books, podcasts, and other media for children that helps them feel good about themselves, helps them understand the world around them with hope, and engages them with a deep enjoyment summed up by the word **FUN**. With that goal in mind, what does it mean to create quality media content for children?

The pushback to my question came early and often among the people I interviewed. How can one answer such a question? It depends. What size is the budget? How fast is the timeline? Quality according to who? Corporate owners? Government? Researchers? Educators? Parents? Kids? The reality is that media is a business and people who have achieved success in the field have learned to ask those questions first. Who will be judging the success of this content? But we can pause and ask a different type of question. We can look beyond the narrow scope of a single determinant. The quality question is different. And it deserves to be addressed.

## INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP

The "quality" question was posed to over eighty producers, writers, directors, media development executives, researchers, and CEO's responsible for creating media content for children and youth. I posed the question to parents, educators, and even kids. I spoke to people in the United States, Brazil, England, Australia, Greece, and Canada. I talked to people who've been creating media for children for decades, and others in their first years out of university. I talked to people managing multi-million-dollar budgets and responsible to shareholders, and others managing their own production company or working with a freelance team of creators. (The full interview list is available in the appendix.)

You can probably guess the words shared most often. Over and over, I was told that quality content for children is authentic, diverse, representative, emotionally engaging, playful, relevant, empowering and fun. But what do those words really mean? How can we deepen our understanding of what is meant by those words, while still acknowledging two realities: first, that a three-year-old child's developmental needs are different from an eight-year-old or a thirteen-year-old, so those words might be defined differently depending on the age of the child. Second, the importance of certain words will vary depending on the child's home life, where in the world the child lives, their economic environment, and other variables. A six-year-old child living in a racial environment in which they are a minority, might feel that seeing themselves represented in their favorite television show is the most important aspect of a favorite television show, a goal that might have much less importance to the six-year-old in a racial environment in which they are a majority or frequently see themselves on television.

## INDUSTRY PRACTICE

Each media production or creative endeavor presents hundreds, perhaps thousands of decision-making moments. Each decision made by a creator builds a structure, a scaffold that leads to another decision. According to sociologist Anthony Giddens (1986), when a structure is transformed, and reproduced through the actions of agents (such as media creators), it is reinforced and creates more structures. This is the basis of practice theory; the notion that what we are saying + doing + relating equals our practice. Bundles of sayings + doings + relatings are basically how we move through life (Mahon et al, 2017). As media creators, it is the accumulated sayings + doings + relatings that become the practice of how the industry operates. It becomes industry practice. **Suzy Edwards** (Early Childhood Futures) saw a direct line between practice theory and choices made when creating children's media. She states, "practices are what people do in relationship with others. This means creators should be alert to the relationship they have with children through media and seek to create and involve children in media that is in their best interests."

> **Creators should ... seek to create and involve children in media that is in their best interests.**
>
> **Suzy Edwards**

In what ways is industry practice serving the needs of children, and in what ways is it not? This is not just an issue of quality or of respecting children. This is a business necessity. When one creates media content that serves the needs of children, children will want to watch it, play it, download it, stream it. The quality question is not meant to be synonymous with education. The quality question is not secretly aiming to make all children's content educational. Anyone who has made content for children (or has spent any time with children) knows that it's all about fun first. No fun, no engagement. The quality question blends the "safe, secure, loved and respected" goal with the absolute necessity that kids will want to engage with that media; that they will find it fun.

Each person I interviewed thoughtfully considered the meaning behind the terms they so quickly offered. The interviews were then coded, revealing similar terms and themes. Those terms and themes were further explored through the children's media examples each interviewee highlighted. The synthesis of their feedback led to the development of the *Guidelines for Creating Quality Media for Children* detailed below.

# SUMMARY: THE GUIDELINES FOR CREATING QUALITY MEDIA FOR CHILDREN

Coding the terms proposed by the interviewees yielded five core categories:

- Child development guidelines
- Socio-emotional guidelines
- Entertainment guidelines
- Cultural understanding guidelines
- Representation guidelines

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

"It starts and ends with child development." That statement, offered by **Gary Pope** (Kids Industries) succinctly states a point of view echoed by many of the most experienced creators and leaders. Understanding children is the first and last consideration when aiming to make quality content for them. **Beth Carmona** (Midiativa), a global children's media leader agreed stating, "you can talk about any topic with children; it just needs to be age-appropriate for the child. Make the content right for the age and kids will watch and understand it". **Bernadette O'Mahony** (Australia Children's Television Foundation) stated, "There's isn't much you can't do for kids, it's how you do it, in a kid-friendly way." **Bryson Hall** (ABC Australia) suggests, "Deal with actual issues important to kids in a kid-appropriate way".

## SOCIO-EMOTIONAL GUIDELINES

The socio-emotional guidelines dovetail with the child development guidelines since both acknowledge what children understand and feel at specific ages. These are the guidelines that touched on how media makes children feel.

## ENTERTAINMENT GUIDELINES

The entertainment guidelines focus on media as a creative endeavor. How are character, story, environment, technology and interactivity impacting the quality decisions? **Chris Oliver-Taylor** (ABC Australia) states, "It needs to be the right topic at the right time; fit the zeitgeist of the time." And **Robyn Butler** (Gristmill Productions ) states, "We never think of it as children's television, we think of it as television for children. We make comedy. We make comedy for children."

## CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING GUIDELINES

The cultural understanding guidelines focus on the need for content to be relevant to a child's life; where they live, what they eat, what worries them, what makes them laugh.

## REPRESENTATION GUIDELINES

The representation guidelines focus on the person. Do I (as the child) see myself in this media? Do I see myself on screen? In the game? Do I hear my voice?

## THE 15 GUIDELINES

After synthesizing the interviews and coding for common words and concepts, a list of fifteen globally relevant guidelines emerged, connected to the core categories:

1. Lead with play and playfulness.
2. Reflect real kids today.
3. Center children's voices.
4. Support cultural identity.
5. Cultivate an appreciation for diversity and difference.
6. Encourage curiosity and an open learning mind.
7. Convey empathy for others.
8. Reveal that challenges happen, but perseverance builds resilience.
9. Engage senses emotionally, socially, and developmentally.
10. Let it be a little gritty, a little naughty.
11. Resonate with children's lived experiences.
12. Acknowledge health and wellness concerns.
13. Strengthen critical thinking to encourage media literacy.
14. Invite caring adults to participate.
15. Offer a hopeful ethos.

# THE 15 GUIDELINES FOR CREATING QUALITY MEDIA FOR CHILDREN

## 1. LEAD WITH PLAY AND PLAYFULNESS

Activating a playful mindset was a sentiment echoed by almost every person interviewed. The play can be gentle or raucous, joyful or mischievous, but without it, all the other Guidelines fall by the wayside. No play? No kids. **David Kleeman** (Dubit) sums up this point when he states, "Kids want to have fun. To engage kids, first they have to enjoy it."

**Nicole Cheek** (ABC Australia) considers, "Is it fun?". This was echoed by **Li-Kim Chuah** (Australia Children's Television Foundation) states, "It must be fun first. Entertaining. Not preachy."

Leading with play also enables creators to tackle more serious topics or scary plots. Balancing a somber or grim storyline with humor helps kids process the situation. It gives them a moment of calm or a moment of release in an otherwise emotionally filled moment. This enables their brains to take in the story points a bit more slowly and with less anxiety.

> **Kids want to have fun. To engage kids, first they have to enjoy (media).**
> David Kleeman

## 2. REFLECT REAL KIDS TODAY

Another frequently stated goal in creating media for children was authenticity. "Make sure it is authentic", was one of the first recommendations from almost every person interviewed. But what makes a character or content authentic? According to **Jon Hancock** (Three Arrows Media) it's "a genuine belief that the person is being themselves. It comes across in voice, tone, pure emotion, a smile. An honesty that comes from showing the good and the bad of a person, at their core." Jon continues, stating, to create authenticity and relevance "you have to take a step into the world as it looks to their eyes. What does the world look like to an eight-year-old today? Really. What are the common themes? How are those themes reflected in their relationships and friendships? What are their difficulties and challenges?"

**Bernadette O'Mahony** (Australia Children's Television Foundation) stated, "Authentic? The 11-year-old is behaving like an 11-year-old…They don't know more than they should know …And remember, you don't need to make the adults stupid to make the kids clever." **Robyn Butler** (Gristmill Productions) states, "We don't over-block the scenes. We let kids move. We don't shoot in studio- we are on location, so it looks more real. In dialogue, I often write intentionally 'clumsy' sentences or go the long way around to make a point, the way kids do when they talk." In casting, Robyn adds, "Character descriptions never state physicality, then we go to casting without any brief and just explore, who's Kyle going to be?"

> **An honesty that comes from showing the good and the bad of a person, at their core.**
> Jon Hancock

## 3. CENTER CHILDREN'S VOICES

Quality children's media tells stories central to children's lives, with children telling the story. Whether creating television programs or video games, books or podcasts, **Jenny Buckland** (Australia Children's Television Foundation) states, "children are visible. They are the protagonist of their own story. They speak for themselves. They have voice." Sometimes Jenny sees a show and thinks "This show seems to be made for adults, not kids. It's not in a kid's voice. It's not kid-centered. Children must identify and relate to the story. Their relating might be because it is humorous, or scary or edge of your seat. Whatever. But they see themselves in the story."

This Guideline flows from the actantial model, a narrative schema developed by **A.J. Greimas** (Hébert, 2019). The model can be used to break down an action into six facets, or actants, including subject, object, sender, receiver, helper and opponent. When children's voices are at the center, a child is the subject of the narrative. It is the child who must accomplish an action in the story, a child who has goals to achieve and problems to solve through their actions in diegetic time; that is the time through which the actions of the narrative take place. **Mary-Ellen Mullane** (ABC Australia) states, "the audience, the kids, must be put first. Not the messaging. There's a difference." **Chris Oliver-Taylor** (ABC Australia) states, "It must be their own voice, their experience"

**Jo Kasch** (Australia Children's Television Foundation) states, "The kid is front and center—not the adult. Not through the lens of an adult writer. Real concerns from kids – not where the child is just a stand-in for the adult's experience of the world. It should be for kids, not just about kids."

> **Children are ... the protagonist of their own story. They speak for themselves. They have voice.**
>
> Jenny Buckland

## 4. SUPPORT CULTURAL IDENTITY

Relatable stories and characters help children understand their community, their history, and their connection to others. Universal themes and emotions, such as empathy, jealousy, loneliness and joy can highlight the unique aspects of a child's life or their culture or lend understanding to the struggles of someone else. Supporting cultural identity means balancing the need for children to see their own lives reflected, with the value of sharing the lives of others. **Patricia Hidalgo** (BBC) expressed this when she stated, "Children learn from what they see and experience. It's important to expose them to other cultures to be accepting of them, but children also need to see themselves and others reflected on screen. We want children to be open minded in a global world and at the same time to learn from and understand their own culture."

The success of recent television series connected to specific geographic regions or countries, such as Molly of Denali (Alaska), Bluey (Australia), Masha and the Bear (Russia), Peppa Pig (England) and others have shown that children can enjoy content that reflects localized cultures or regions, even if it is not their own. Children revel in mimicking accents or referencing culturally specific terms, such as different words for toilet/bathroom/loo/washroom/water closet/comfort room, etc. The globalization of YouTube and Netflix are strong reasons for this shift. Algorithms now suggest content from another country after a child watches an episode of a global hit, such as Paw Patrol, or even their own locally-focused content, such as Monica (Brazil). **Cecilia Persson** (BBC) states, "In the past, there might have been concern that a story that was too specifically connected to a region or a culture might not be of interest to others,

> **It's important to expose them to other cultures to be accepting of them.**
>
> Patricia Hidalgo

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## 4. SUPPORT CULTURAL IDENTITY - CONT.

but we're not as worried now. As long as there are quirky characters and interesting stories to tell, we are interested and kids are open to it."

Understanding these global hits is possible if the show speaks the same language as the child or if the show has been dubbed in a local language, or if the show relies only on music or sound effects. **Cecilia Persson** (BBC) states, "We can now be more culturally specific because there is so much more content, and streaming opened up the ability to share that content with a global audience. Still, there are challenges with subtitles for young kids and (voice) dubbing is more expensive." If "global" is actually code for "coming from the United States" or an English-first culture, that could lead to cultural cringe, a term referring to the dismissing of one's culture due to the perception of its inferiority (Jensen & McCutcheon, 2020).
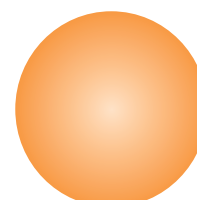
Creating content that feels global but lacks authentic cultural markers can destroy that feeling of authenticity. **Jackie Edwards** (British Film Institute YACF) refers to this as "global nowhereness". The wide adoption and celebration of the United States holidays of Halloween and Thanksgiving are examples of this creeping global nowhereness. **Patricia Hidalgo** (BBC) states, these celebrations have "now been adopted by kids and families across many other countries internationally who did not have this custom and were introduced to the idea of dressing up [for Halloween] … through watching US kids TV shows … and the American festivity [Thanksgiving] is now widely known by audiences internationally, so studios will now include and sell the episodes with references to Thanksgiving and face little or no  issues from international TV content buyers."

Animation further enables global nowhereness since animators can easily omit specific cultural markers in their designs, such as omitting the pyramids in a program set in Egypt. Contrast the use of animation with "live action". **Sally Ann Keizer** (Six Sense Productions) believes strongly that "live action content gives every child a chance to see themselves truly reflected on screen – allowing authentic representation culturally and otherwise." **Alison Stewart** (children's media producer/writer) agrees, stating, "Accents, background locales, and other culturally specific elements are just clearer in live action shows than in animation, where content tends to be made less specific for global consumption".

> **Live action content gives every child a chance to see themselves truly reflected on screen.**
> **Alison Stewart**

## 5. CULTIVATE AN APPRECIATION FOR DIVERSITY AND DIFFERENCE

Discussions about diversity often focus on racial and ethnic identity, and more recently disabilities (or differently-abled) and gender identity. This Guideline speaks to a "yes, and" approach. Yes, it is about an appreciation for each of the areas mentioned, and an appreciation for difference overall. It is an approach that communicates the value of difference throughout life. Different people. Different approaches. Different ways of thinking and being. Recognition and support for a point of view that understands others as having value and deserving respect.

In media, an appreciation for diversity and difference is communicated through on-screen actors and images, and also through story lines and the story focus, the casting of the hero/heroine, the dialogue communicating who and what has value; and the myriad of people behind the scenes, the writers in the writer's room, the key decision-makers, the funders of the project, the merchandising decisions about which character(s) will get promoted, the diversity of voices around the decision-making table.

**Cecilia Persson** (BBC) takes a leadership perspective and communicates a goal to "find talent with great stories to tell, that's the driver...I am not looking for a show about a specific topic", but rather "what unique, compelling story do you have to tell? Something that will cut through with the audience". **Makeda Mays Green** (Nickelodeon) sums up this need in the sentence, "You have to see it to be it". This reflects deep support for the value of inclusion and belonging.

> **You have to see it to be it.**
> **Makeda Mays Green**

There are differing opinions about how purposefully diversity should be included in the actors or animated characters. Some creators feel strongly that diversity must be reflected within each show or game or podcast since no one can assume the messages the child is receiving from other content. Other creators echoed this point from **David Kleeman** (Dubit) that "inclusivity has to be natural to the show. Kids have to find it across all the content they watch. Not forced into every individual program."

> **Inclusivity has to be natural to the show.**
> **David Kleeman**

Agreement was universal that creating authentically diverse characters means a commitment to creating those characters in partnership with people for whom this is their lived experience. In Australia, Ned Lander Media created the series, "Little J and Big Cuz" using Screen Australia's 'Pathways & Protocols: A Filmmaker's Guide to Working with Indigenous People, Culture and Concepts' to ensure that the ethical and legal issues involved in transferring Indigenous cultural material to the screen was done appropriately and respectfully. The series was commissioned by National Indigenous Television (NITV). "If it's an indigenous story, then Indigenous lead the story telling", states **Mary-Ellen Mullane** (ABC Australia) who commissioned the series at NITV. The series is distributed by the Australia Children's Television Foundation.

## 6. ENCOURAGE CURIOSITY AND AN OPEN LEARNING MIND

**[Media] should generate interest and awaken curiosity and a taste for knowledge.**

Beth Carmona

Streaming services and social media offer millions of hours of instantly available television shows, shorts, podcasts, movies and video games. And yet, talk to children (or their parents) and stories abound of children watching the same three episodes of their favorite show, or the same movie or listening to the same four songs on repeat. They want the newest, the latest, the most popular, but they also want comfort and assurance, and that is most easily obtained by watching or listening or playing with something they have used before. Both choices have value. Both choices merit encouragement. **Beth Carmona** (Midiativa) speaks to this need for encouragement when she states, "More than transmitting information, (media) should generate interest and awaken curiosity and a taste for knowledge." Quality content supports children's innate curiosity. It helps them understand the value of keeping an open mind, balancing the knowledge and opinions they already have, with new perspectives and information.

Algorithms used in streaming platforms and VSP's (video sharing platforms) can recommend a range of different types of content and genres from different countries, but that is rarely how algorithms are utilized. More typically, recommendation algorithms suggest new videos based on what the viewer has already watched. Children scroll through recommendation grids and thumbnails that have been selected specifically for them, based on their prior viewing. These thumbnails represent decision points for children. They scroll through attention-capture designs and select future viewing from those choices (Radeskey et al, 2024). **Greg Childs** (Children's Media Foundation) states, "If platforms are only showing more of what the algorithm says the child wants, we are only showing them self-justification. What you already like. We are not cultivating an appreciation for variety. Difference. Other viewpoints." **Alison Stewart** (children's media producer/writer) states, "The range of content that kids engage with should broaden their minds. Unfortunately, algorithms on nonlinear platforms can run contrary to this goal and mean that the audience is just served more of the same. If you put kids in front of a range of good stuff, they'll like it; if you don't, they won't get the broader picture."

**The range of content that kids engage with should broaden their minds.**

Alison Stewart

**Everything that children see on television is teaching them something.**

Joan Ganz Cooney

Supporting a child's curiosity and interest in learning should not be seen as running counter to entertainment goals. **Marshall McLuhan** boldly stated in the early years of television, "Anyone who tries to make a distinction between education and entertainment, doesn't know the first thing about either one" (Logan, 2022). In the words of Sesame Workshop co-founder **Joan Ganz Cooney** (1966), "It's not whether children learn from television, it's what children learn from television, because everything that children see on television is teaching them something". All television, all media is teaching children something. How can we best catalyze children to think, learn, participate, and engage through the media they consume, versus kept in a feedback loop of the previous choices they made based on the clickbait of the loudest, shiniest, most surprising, embarrassing, prank-filled content? Creating media that speaks to the curiosity of a child is content that respects the child. **Eneas Carlos Pereira** (TV Cultura) cuts to the heart of this guideline when he states, "the alliance between education and communication transforms people and society."

## 7. CONVEY EMPATHY FOR OTHERS

Stories, whether fictional narratives or reality television, whether created through personalized avatars or hosted podcasts, create emotional engagement, and through that engagement, create empathy. Empathy is about feeling for the "other". It is a core developmental step for children, when they move from a purely ego-centered view of the world, to one that acknowledges the joys and hardships of others. Children want to feel that they belong: to their family, to their friend group, to their community. Stories resonate with children when they reflect support for the values of inclusion and belonging.

Emotional engagement between characters creates a story with empathy. The audience feels for them and sometimes with them. **Bernadette O'Mahony** (Australia Children's Television Foundation) states that 'heart' is important because it helps children empathize with the character and feel drawn to the story. "Heart" is important to help the audience like the character. "If creators want to tackle serious topics, "the audience must care about the character(s)."

**Beth Carmona** (Midiativa) & **Eneas Carlos Pereira** (TV Cultura) worked together to produce the popular Brazilian television series, Castelo Ha Chi Moon (Hai Chi Moon Castle). When considering empathy, they consider the importance of both local stories and universal stories. "Children build their knowledge from all contacts, all inputs, that's why getting information from different cultures is so important. We understand our connection to one another through the small stories. Empathy is a universal emotion, but it's conveyed in the small stories. The local stories that have relevance to the child's life." **Patricia Duraes** (Escola no Cinema Project) creates media with children and understands that "living with creativity brings children empathy, puts them in the "others" place, helps them see the world through someone else's eyes, inspires them, exposes them to beauty and other cultures."

Even when creating comedy, **Robyn Butler** (Gristmill Productions) asks, "What is the emotional truth? What's the emotional landscape? What are they feeling truly? That's how you build empathy."

> **"Heart is important because it helps children empathize with the character and be drawn to the story.**
>
> **Bernadette O'Mahony**



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## 8. REVEAL THAT CHALLENGES HAPPEN, BUT PERSEVERANCE BUILDS RESILIENCE

On Sesame Street, **Kermit the Frog** famously sang, "It's not easy being green". His struggles resonated with children not because they understood what it meant to be a green frog, but because they understood what it felt like to struggle, for life not to go their way, and to feel sad. But in the end of the song, Kermit sings "I'm green and it'll do fine. It's beautiful and I think it's what I want to be" (Raposo, 1970). The lyrics reflect Kermit's willingness to reframe his place in the world and simply continue being who he is. The lyrics communicate resilience. The best of children's media does that; it acknowledges that life has difficulties, while simultaneously conveying that we can rise above our challenges to imagine new solutions, new ways to understand our sadness. **Mister Rogers** communicated this in his song "You've Got To Do It" when he sang, "It's not easy to keep trying, but it's one way to grow" (Rogers, 1969). He is encouraging perseverance and resilience to overcome obstacles. **Laura Stone** (ABC Education) makes this point when she states, "It's important to show what's fair and what's not fair- not just fairy tales- but recognizing the grey in life."

Children understand that although they might want life to always go their way, in reality, it doesn't. Communicating disappointment, frustration, anxiety, embarrassment and other difficult emotions conveys honesty to children. It shows a respect for the complexity of their lives and the challenges they face growing up. Preschool age children feel that connection when they watch Kermit or Mister Rogers express themselves in

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their songs, but older children and teenagers still need the reminder that life can be difficult, but you'll be OK, you can make it through.

The global television series, The Day I Became Strong (Gotz, 2018) focuses on that moment of perseverance. Each episode focuses on a moment of confidence, sometimes small, sometimes big, from a childhood experience. The Australian television series First Day (Epic Films, Koko Entertainment and Screen Australia, 2020) shares the story of a young transgender girl. When the series was produced, the creators helped networks and audiences connect to the show by explaining it not as an exclusively trans child story, but as a story about a child who feels like an outsider, showing it as an example of the struggles kids go through. **Jo Kasch** (Australia Children's Television Foundation) states, "Have a journey. Show that (the child is) capable of change—but also failing."

> **Show that (the child is) capable of change—but also failing.**
> Jo Kasch

> **A little complexity in the content can intrigue kids … simplify but do not condescend.**
> Emma Gibbs

> **(Content) doesn't need to change hearts and minds, but it needs to talk to hearts and minds.**
> Chris Oliver-Taylor

## 9. ENGAGE SENSES EMOTIONALLY, SOCIALLY, AND DEVELOPMENTALLY

Emotional engagement connects child and story. **Gary Pope** (Kids Industries) is laser focused on the question, "Does the story or game elicit an emotional response? The more we engage with the story, the more we find it easy to empathize and understand other people … and that understanding, if you're little, helps you find your way in the world." Gary highlights the value of "powerful sensory cues" when aiming to engage children; colorful or striking visuals, unusual sounds, rhythm in pacing. "Going beyond simply eliciting a response to helping the child understand their responses, their emotions." Ultimately, this is content that helps them to better understand themselves and their world. The emotional engagement isn't just between the story and the child in the audience. **Bernadette O'Mahony** (Australia Children's Television Foundation) emphasizes that "there needs to be emotional engagement between characters. You feel for them (through the story)."

Awareness of child developmental stages is vitally important if the aim is to create media that children will understand and enjoy. "Formal features need to adequately match children's perceptual maturity according to their age" (Wartella & Anderson, 2008). The elements that attract a five-year-old are different than those for an eight-year-old or an eleven-year-old. On the other hand, media doesn't need to be fully understandable to children on the first play. **Emma Gibbs** (Kids Listen podcast) states, "A little complexity in the content can intrigue kids since they love to watch and listen to content they've seen and heard before. When content is designed for repeat consumption, stories can be a little more complex, sounds can be a little more layered, characters can integrate different quirks that reveal gently with repeated watching and listening. Simplify but do not condescend."

Media content often aims to broaden a child's understanding of their world or teach the child social, emotional, or academic topics. But **Chris Oliver-Taylor** (ABC Australia) articulates a point of view conveyed by many in the industry when he states that content "doesn't need to change hearts and minds, but it needs to talk to hearts and minds."

## 10. LET IT BE A LITTLE GRITTY, A LITTLE NAUGHTY

Networks and distribution platforms often hesitate to feature stories of unusual people or unusual circumstances or plucky storytelling. It can be tempting to chase another programs' success when there is so much money riding on every decision. If another series was successful with talking dogs, networks and creators often feel pressure to do the same and come up with another idea featuring talking dogs. **Nicole Cheek** (ABC Australia) acknowledges the pressure to chase success, but also recognizes the value of imperfection. "We don't want to make shows that are too perfect. Too performative. The idea doesn't have to be this shiny version. Can we be open to a bit of risk? Can we aim for impact? Does it innovate? Is there an editorial "voice"? A strong voice is important." **Sarah Wallendjack** (PBS Kids) deepens that point when she asks, "whose stories are we telling? Is there a personal connection to the content. We invest in people, not ideas. The right person has a specific perspective."

> **We don't want to make shows that are too perfect. Too performative. The idea doesn't have to be this shiny version.**
> Nicole Cheek

Stories that resonate with children are stories that resonate with their lived experiences. Stories can also allow children to experience something they may not be allowed to experience in their real lives, or would be too self-conscious to experience, or too afraid. **Bridget Hanan** (Australia Children's Television Foundation) states, "Children like to feel that what they're watching is on the edge of gross and naughty. Lean into the gruesome and the toilet humor. Kids want permission to laugh and use their imagination." She continues, "great children's television acknowledges the codes and conventions of screen texts but also undercuts the audience's expectations. For example, tropes from the detective genre in The Inbestigators or horror genre in Crazy Fun Park. When children's television includes known tropes and flips them, it encourages questioning and deeper watching. This allows children to feel 'in on the joke' because they understand the tropes, codes and conventions."

> **When children's television includes known tropes and flips them, it encourages questioning and deeper watching.**
> Bridget Hanan

Finding the balance between gross humor and thoughtful storytelling takes a skilled creator. **Jo Kasch** (Australia Children's Television Foundation) understands the value of the gritty story or the edgy story, but she is ready to reject stories that are overly negative for no good reason. She acknowledges, "It is challenging to create content for teens that is edgy enough—but still age-appropriate."

The blending of sci-fi + horror + humor has become a popular genre used to bridge that gap. This three-part blend can be used to create content that is compelling enough to attract tweens, complex enough to engage parents/adults, and yet reassuring enough to be acceptable for (mature) children. The popularity of Stranger Things (Netflix) solidified this genre. **Jessica Balanzategui** (RMIT) writes, "creators know that a certain subversiveness is necessary for tween's to engage with television. If the goal is to create content the family can watch together, sci-fi and horror genres provide the necessary subversiveness. Humor helps to make it appropriate for kids in the family."

> **Creators know that a certain subversiveness is necessary for tween's to engage with television.**
> Jessica Balanzategui

> remind t... people they know, or characters they want to be like.
> **Amanda Isdale**

> Elements that are at the core of all children's lives are going to travel.
> **David Kleeman**

> Kids want to (see) ... ordinary characters in extraordinary circumstances.
> **Li-Kim Chuah**

## 11. RESONATE WITH CHILDREN'S LIVED EXPERIENCES

It is natural for people to be drawn to engage with media that reflects their lives, but children have a deeper need for this resonance. Most of a child's daily experiences are new, so they seek comparisons that affirm for them that their life, their behavior, their family is like other children's. When a child watches a program that reflects their lived experience, it provides comfort. It affirms their place in the world. **Laura Stone** (ABC Australia) refers to this as the "genuine experiences of children". **Amanda Isdale** (ABC Australia) states that children, "like to see characters that remind them of people they know, or characters they want to be like, or characters they want to be friends with."

Relevance is created through content that reflects a child's inner life as well as their outer life. Their inner life is reflected in characters that share similar feelings; perhaps worries about moving to a new town, anxiety about making the team, fears about the environment, or the joy of a family vacation, or the delight in getting an ice cream cone in a favorite flavor. It's the child's inner voice.

The power of these resonant words and images is also in how content connects across cultures. **David Kleeman** (Dubit) states that "elements that are at the core of all children's lives are going to travel. It doesn't have to look specifically like your town. Kids can take in a lot of difference if you give them a handhold of familiarity. A kid doing an odd job to save up money to buy a bicycle—all kids (in all parts of the world) can relate to that." Perhaps that is one reason why the Alaska-focused Molly of Denali on PBS Kids is popular, or the First Nations-focused television series Little J and Big Cuz from Australia. These shows help children to recognize themselves in the world and helps children from other parts of the world get a clearer grasp on the world as a massive and diverse place.

**Beth Carmona** (Midiativa) has spent many hours watching children watch television through her festival comKids in Brazil and through the international Prix Jeunesse festival. She watches children to see how and where stories resonate. This gives her insightful feedback for her own television productions. Sometimes the children react in a way that goes against her own assumptions, and she values the importance of that feedback stating, "Watching children watch is an experience. Sometimes shows I think would work, don't. Some I think are really bad, kids may really like. The kids' emotional reaction is immediate and genuine".

The stories must resonate with children, but that doesn't mean they are restricted in storytelling. **Li-Kim Chuah** (Australia Children's Television Foundation) stresses the need for "an active driven main character—a character on a mission. Kids want to go along for the ride. Kids can see themselves reflected in the story, but it's also aspirational. Ordinary characters in extraordinary circumstances."

# 12. ACKNOWLEDGE HEALTH AND WELLNESS CONCERNS

There is growing global awareness that everyday stressors are affecting children's mental health (Abrams, 2023). Children may feel comfortable sharing details about a physical pain in their knee, a lingering earache, or an upset stomach, but feelings of sadness, anxiety or loneliness are not voiced quite as easily. Of course, adults struggle with those behaviors as well, so it's no wonder children also need help in this area.

Acknowledging that mental health issues are at an all-time high for children and youth is an important first step. **Sally Ann Keizer** (Sixth Sense Media) has put this issue front and center. When she considers content decisions, she first asks, "What would love say?" and "What would love do?" An increasing number of children's media is integrating socio-emotional learning and even self-regulating skills such as meditation, yoga, finger tapping, and other calming methods. **Bridget Hanan** (Australia Children's Television Foundation) believes it is important to "convey an understanding of emotional gravity, the breath of social moments in their lives and others. For example, the worry surrounding the first day of school in First Day or grieving the loss of a friend in Dance Academy." Characters can show empathy for one another and scenes can show how they cope with their struggles.

> **What would love say? What would love do?**
> Sally Ann Keizer

> **Their brains are plastic at this young age. The things you drum into them matter.**
> Greg Childs

**Florencia Donagaray** (BBC) urges creators to align the issues important to children with an honest look at the ways they live. She states, "We should not do a show on fine dining when there is hardship in the economy. Not do a show on flying when we are concerned about sustainability. We need to be aware of the issues discussed by charities about kids and families. What are they concerned about? How can and should that be considered in the creation of new content?"

Improving children's mental health means focusing, at least in part, on building their resilience and the skills needed to deal effectively with hardship. **Emma Field** (Australia Children's Television Foundation) states, "There is immense value in creating content which helps children to build resilience, for example, by showing characters dealing with failure. Kids get into all kinds of anxiety producing situations every day, and television can play a valuable role in resilience development through portrayals of characters using strategies to overcome fears, worries and challenges, both big and small." **Greg Childs** (Children's Media Foundation) describes this attention to mental health as a core responsibility for children's media creators. He states, "Their brains are plastic at this young age. The things you drum into them matter. You (as a creator) have power. Use the power appropriately."

## 13. STRENGTHEN CRITICAL THINKING TO ENCOURAGE MEDIA LITERACY

Thinking critically about media is not a guarantee that a child (or anyone) will decrease their use of media. That is not and should not be the goal. The goal of building media literacy skills is to encourage mindful, intentional media use. Determining a child's "appropriate" use of media will vary from family to family, depending on a family's needs, socio-economic status, number and age of siblings, parent's work schedule, entertainment preferences and more. Does the family have the financial ability to purchase multiple computers or streaming devices? Does everyone in the family love scary movies except one sibling? Does mom have deep nostalgia for the hours she spent playing video games with her friends? A child with solid media literacy skills can bring that critical thinking to any and all of these interactions with media.

The National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) defines media literacy as "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication".

> **Media literacy creates more discerning and active media consumers and that's good for everyone.**
>
> Michelle Cuilla Lipkin

> **All media contain value messages.**
>
> Alexandre Le Voci Sayad

There are differing views on whether media creators should integrate media literacy into their content. Some creators worry that awakening a critical mindset in a child will discourage the child from consuming media, but "there is no evidence to support that position", states **Michelle Cuilla Lipkin** (NAMLE). "Critical thinking about media may lead a child to different choices, but children love their TV shows, video games and time spent online. Media literacy gives them the tools to make more informed choices that align with their interests, their knowledge, and considers their mental health. Media literacy creates more discerning and active media consumers and that's good for everyone."

**Alexandre Le Voci Sayad** (Zeitgeist) refers to this as "awakening the critical sense." "Whether or not media creators consider media literacy skills doesn't change the fact that all media convey value messages." A creator may not intend to convey a message about gender stereotypes or racial bias or climate change but that doesn't mean the message isn't there.

Seize the opportunity to encourage media literacy alongside creative entertainment choices, so these considerations are aligned right from the start. If a child is old enough to consume media, a child is old enough to develop (age appropriate) media literacy skills.

## 14. INVITE CARING ADULTS TO PARTICIPATE

> **The media must have some value for parents and any caring adults in a child's world. Parents are the catalyst.**
>
> Gary Pope

Who are the adults helping a child make sense of the world? Whether that role is filled by a parent, grandparent, aunt, teacher, coach or other adult, these are the central players in the child's universe. They help the child to understand the role of family, how friendships are started, when it's ok to be angry, how to spend money, and how to navigate the world. Since children spend hours every day consuming digital media, podcasts, video games and other screen media, these caring adults are also advising and modeling, directly or indirectly, what media is ok to use, when, and how. This is why **Robyn Butler** (Gristmill Productions) states, "media must operate on two levels. Adults and kids." **Gary Pope** (Kids Industries) deepens the point when he states, "the media must have some value for parents and any caring adults in a child's world. Parents are the catalyst." This isn't just a necessity, to media creators it should be seen as an opportunity. Families that connect over a favorite television show or other media are more likely to want to connect with it again and again. Engaging caring adults in a child's media use isn't just good for the child, it's good for the creator who wants to build a connected, engaged audience.

**Emma Gibbs** (Kids Listen podcast) reminds creators, that content, "must be entertaining and interesting to parents and caregivers too" and she reminds creators to pay attention to, "the kid that comes out when parents are listening to kid's content ... releasing the kid within." Watching a child-friendly movie gives adults permission to tap into their child-side, their imagination and wonder, and their silliness. Emma suggests leaning into those co-listening opportunities. "Leave a show with a prompt for discussion or a prompt for an activity. Such as with (the podcasts) News Time and Story Salad." Her examples focus on podcasts, but the recommendation works for any media. Caring adults can use media as a jumping off point for real life excursions, experiences, learning and fun!

> **(Pay attention to) the kid that comes out when parents are listening to kid's content ... releasing the kid within.**
>
> Emma Gibbs

The inclusion of parents is likely a core reason why the television series Bluey is a breakout hit. When both parents and children enjoy a program, they are likely to watch it together, or "co-view" the program. **Anna Potter** (Queensland University) states, "The creator, Joe Brumm, is a dedicated parent and takes parenting seriously. He is also very funny. So, grownups enjoy Bluey's humor on one level and kids laugh at it on another. Bluey also represents the kind of parenting many will aspire to, without being remotely preachy about it." **Sarah Wallendjack** (PBS) communicates the value of co-viewing when producing educational content, when she states, "we know that co-viewing is the best way to envelop the learning."

When the content assumes a caring adult is there with the child, the jokes and fun can be conveyed on multiple levels so there is something for everyone to enjoy. Sesame Street has used this tactic for decades, featuring celebrities in its songs and as visitors to the "street."

> **We know that co-viewing is the best way to envelop the learning.**
>
> Sarah Wallendjack

## 15. OFFER A HOPEFUL ETHOS

Everything will be alright. At the end of the day, that's a message children need to hear. Media can share stories about struggling friendships or homework frustrations, family illnesses or hardships for children in other parts of the world. But within that information, children need to know that life will be ok. They will be ok. Seek to find the optimism without pretending challenges don't exist. **Li-Kim Chuah** (Australia Children's Television Foundation) suggests," include a bit of hope, not all doom and gloom. If you do dramas about social issues you have to offer a way out." This can be reflected through positive, empowered role models or characters. Content can convey a positive ethos even while tackling difficult topics.

One way to convey a hopeful ethos is by including actionable behaviors that aim towards solutions. Actionable behaviors don't guarantee the elimination of a problem, but they can help children shift from apathy or cynicism to a more positive outlook. **Bryson Hall** (ABC Australia) encourages "doable things- not just watching. Encourage children to do something. In The Gardening Show the host ends by asking," What are you waiting for? Provide a call to action."

**Sarah Wallendjack** (PBS) recognizes that this need for hope isn't just about serious content when she states, "Kids can watch comedy. They find pranks and prat falls hilarious, but what do you want them to do when they turn the content off? Can we help them find humor in the world around them and healthy ways to express it?"

> **Include a bit of hope, not all doom and gloom.**
> Li-Kim Chuah

> **What are you waiting for? Provide a call to action.**
> Sarah Wallendjack



Pexels | Alex Green

# BUSINESS CONSIDERATIONS

These guidelines are achievable while still acknowledging that media is a business. Producers and creators must always balance their creative ideas with the need to generate profit for their employers and/or themselves. Experienced creators know that choices in character design will affect the popularity of branded products for children. **Traci Paige Johnson** (Gabby's Dollhouse) considers how choices in hair color, eye color, clothing, or personal items, such as the notebook in Blues Clues, or the play ears Gabby uses to shrink down and play in the dollhouse can "expand the play so that preschoolers — when the show is off — can play Gabby on their own" (White, 2022)  These choices can affect whether a child connects to a character and whether she wants to purchase merchandise emblazoned with that character's face. These are crucial decisions made at the very start of development. This opportunity for "extended play" has financial value for the intellectual property (I.P.), but it also adds value to the child who wants to continue playing with that character beyond their media experience.

Merchandising is a business reality in the children's media industry. **Patricia Hidalgo** (BBC) states, "TV networks need to work more and more with global partners to afford producing their own local children's content. Advertising and/or licensing and merchandising will need to be part of this global equation if you want to make healthy returns on your investments".

**Sarah Wallendjack** (PBS) considers why someone wants to produce any particular content. "If your answer is, because we want to make money, that's not enough. It may be important— but it shouldn't be the driver."

# ASPIRATIONAL OR APATHETIC?

Whether one sees the Guidelines as aspirational, or as simply a business necessity does not change the reality that these are the elements needed to create quality children's media; media that resonates with children, respects their point of view, and acknowledges the influence of media in shaping their behaviors and actions.

But what is the price of apathy or disregard? What happens when creators or industry leaders resist, negate or otherwise avoid being concerned about the need to aim for quality content for children?

## RAMPANT COMMERCIALISM / CONSUMERISM

Children will always want to immerse themselves in the tangible worlds of their favorite characters (witness the Mario-loving crowds at Super Nintendo World at Universal Studios California) but treating children as consumers first misaligns profit over development. There's a difference between children who are informed about the merchandise from characters they love, versus children made to feel as if they are not true fans without a specific, often expensive, item. Content should not value their purchase more than their growth or development or joy.

## ALGORITHMIC RELIANCE

Childhood is a time of exploration, including exploring preferences. A child wonders, "Do I like pizza best or sushi? Do I like Bingo best or Peppa? Do I like Fortnite best or Roblox?", because those are the choices they know. Children need to be presented opportunities that widen their media choices, not fed more of the same content simply because that's what they watched or played yesterday. Algorithmic leadership lets the algorithm lead, instead of leading with a respect for the child. Children may be drawn to watch or play with the same content day after day because it makes them feel smart and understood. But real media leadership acknowledges the myriad ways children are introduced to new ideas and content. It helps a child understand the joy of serendipity and discovering their own preferences. Children fed a media diet of pre-selected "favorites" could lead to adults uncomfortable with exploring alternate options or other ways to think.

## A HOMOGENEOUS GLOBAL

There is a vast world of media that children can theoretically access through global streaming services and social media, but efforts to maximize profits has led to a small number of media options repeatedly pushed to the forefront. Children across many countries see the same shows highlighted at the top of their streaming feed, the same movies at their multiplex, the same songs offered in their music apps. Media companies license content for one region and then distribute the same content to additional locations with minimal additional cost. This leads to children deprived of original local media or regional stories. Content is everywhere, but with no discernible cultural connection. It cultivates the "global nowhereness" **Jackie Edwards** (British Film Institute YACF) spoke of, rather than an appreciation for one's unique culture as well as the culture of others.

## A MONETIZED AUDIENCE- OR NONE AT ALL

If the evaluation of media success is based solely on profit, then media without a direct line to profit is quickly canceled. However, the media children need and want is not always a direct line to profit. **Jackie Edwards** (British Film Institute YACF) asks, "What will it take to do things for the good of a child, purely? Children are serially neglected. We say children are our future, but our actions do not reflect the need. Regulatory leadership is needed." **Sonia Livingstone** (London School of Economics) concurs when she states, "Our actions do not reflect the need. Children are seriously neglected in digital contexts. Tech leadership is needed. Regulatory leadership is needed. Child Rights by Design is needed."

Media habits are shaped during childhood. Where, when, and how children access and consume media follows them to their teen years and adulthood. That is why profit must be second to the value to children when creating media. Any activity occupying children's hearts and minds for hours every day must be created with the realities of child development top of mind. It is also why media literacy is vitally important, starting with the moment children begin using media. **Faith Rogow** is a media literacy educator focusing on young children. She states, "media literacy is about helping children develop the life skills they need to become thinkers and makers in the multimedia environment that is their reality" (2014).

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The Guidelines are a blueprint of actionable recommendations. The Guidelines speak directly to creators, but the Guidelines can also be read as a checklist for parents and caregivers when seeking quality media for the children in their lives.

1. Lead with play and playfulness.

2. Reflect real kids today.

3. Center children's voices.

4. Support cultural identity.

5. Cultivate an appreciation for diversity and difference.

6. Encourage curiosity and an open learning mind.

7. Convey empathy for others.

8. Reveal that challenges happen, but perseverance builds resilience.

9. Engage senses emotionally, socially, and developmentally.

10. Let it be a little gritty, a little naughty.

11. Resonate with children's lived experiences.

12. Acknowledge health and wellness concerns.

13. Strengthen critical thinking to encourage media literacy.

14. Invite caring adults to participate.

15. Offer a hopeful ethos.

**CREATORS** can...

Take the high road by aiming for quality first.

Spend time listening to children directly.

Weave media literacy concepts throughout content.

**PARENTS** can...

Watch, play, listen, and enjoy media with their children.

Model positive media habits and model thinking critically about media.

Encourage questions about media always.

**GOVERNMENT** can...

Implement policies that acknowledge the unique needs of children in a digital world.

Provide funds that encourage the creation of quality media for children and related research.

Think beyond regulations to support media literacy education.

**INDUSTRY** can...

Focus on the needs of the child.

Make room for a focus on children over profit.

Separate advertising and consumerism from media content for children.

# CONCLUSION

Why should we be concerned about creating quality media for children? Because we know that media is an influential component in children's lives. We may argue about whether it is the most influential, or mostly a negative influence, or who bears the most responsibility for improvement, but the intersecting point in all of these arguments is the reality that media has influence. It influences what we know, what we believe, and what we value. It does this for all of us, adults and children. But whatever influence it has on adults, that influence is greater for children because children have less critical thinking skills, less overall knowledge, and less maturity and experience to make positive choices about their own needs. Children need us to be the ones to consider their needs first.

This is our "duty of care" as creators and as people that care about children. It is our obligation to create quality media content for children precisely because we know that media is highly influential. The right of all children to be heard and taken seriously is one of the fundamental values of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

To companies or people that don't worry about their effect on children, **Greg Childs** (Children's Media Foundation) asks, "Is it too easy to shrug off responsibility when you know there are other people creating content? ... it all matters when it comes to kids."

Many of the people interviewed for this report voiced concerns about the digital environment for children but struggled to designate a specific person, people, or group responsible for improving it. They recognize it is the collective community of stakeholders, the creators, industry, government, educators, and parents that are necessary to work towards improving the media environment for children. They see a role for legislation, for media literacy education, for parental responsibility, and for improvements to content. They see a role for everyone, in fact they repeatedly asserted a responsibility for everyone.

Aiming high for quality children's media is the very least and the very best children deserve.

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**Leite, Daniel**. Executive Secretary. Midiativa. Coordinator comKids Festival. October 14, 2022. Brazil.

**Livingstone, Sonia**. Professor. London School of Economics. November 1, 2022. England.

**Och, Mariana**. Pedagogical coordinator. EducaMidia. October 4, 2022. Brazil.

**Mills, Adrian**. Chief Operating Officer. BBC England. October 24, 2022. England.

**Nuttall, Emma**. Lecturer. University of Salford. November 3, 2022. England.

**Pereira, Eneas Carlos**. Vice President Programming. TV Cultura. September 30, 2022.

**Parry, Dominic**. Chief Operating Officer. Three Arrows Media. October 27, 2022. England.

**Poli, Cristina**. Host. ABC da Notícia. October 11, 2022. Brazil.

**Pope, Gary**. Co-founder. Kids Industries. November 1, 2022. England.

**Ramos, Ana Barba**ra. Semente Cinematografica. September 26, 2022. Brazil.

**Robinson, Annabeth**. Head of animation. University of Salford. October 25, 2022. England.

**Rseis, Ana Helena Meirelles**. President. Multifocus. September 26, 2022. Brazil.

**Sayad, Alexander Le Voci**. CEO. Zeitgeist. October 11, 2022. Brazil.

**Stewart, Alison**. Children's media producer/writer. November 8, 2022. England.

**Tomaz, Renata**. Assistant professor. School of Communication, Media and Information. Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV ECMI) September 28, 2022. Brazil.

**Tomlinson, Andrew**. Head of content and commissioning. BBC Bitesize, BBC Teach, & BBC Food at BBC Children's and Education. October 25, 2022. England.

**Wanderly, Claudia**. Researcher. Universidade Estadual de Campinas. October 11, 2022.

**Yamada Rice, Dylan**. Associate professor immersive storytelling. University of Plymouth. October 26, 2022. England.