



FRED ROGERS CENTER
for early learning and children's media
at Saint Vincent College

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 23, 2012

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**2012 Fred Forward Conference to Advance
Quality in Children's Digital Media**

*Leaders in Early Childhood Education and Media Consider
"Framework for Quality in Digital Media for Young Children"*

LATROBE, PA – In a time of explosive growth in digital media for young children birth through age 8, the *Fred Forward Conference* will convene June 3-5 to consider principles and actions that would provide guidance to parents, educators, and media creators.

Organized by the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, PA, the biennial *Fred Forward Conference* series is a national forum for thought leadership on the positive potential of technology and interactive media.

With an attendance of 160, the 2012 *Fred Forward Conference* will convene national and international leaders, along with early-career professionals, in early childhood development and early learning, research, media creation and production, and related fields. This year's *Fred Forward* keynote speaker is Jerlean Daniel, Ph.D., Executive Director of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. The featured speaker is Joe D'Ambrosia, Vice President of Original Programming for Disney Junior.

The nearly 30 conference panelists include panel moderators Chip Donohue, Ph.D., from the Erikson Institute and a Fred Rogers Center Senior Fellow; Lisa Guernsey from the New America Foundation; Rob Lippincott from PBS; Barbara Minzenberg, Ph.D., from the Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning; Kevin Morrison from The Fred Rogers Company; Ellen Wartella, Ph.D., from Northwestern University and PNC Grow Up Great-Fred Rogers Center Endowed Senior Fellow; and Alice Wilder, Ed.D., educational psychologist and Co-Creator and Head of Research and Education for *Super Why!* A special panel, to be videoconferenced from Munich and the Prix Jeunesse International children's television awards, will be moderated by David Kleeman from the American Center for Children and Media.

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Building a Framework for Quality

The centerpiece of the deliberations at the 2012 *Fred Forward Conference* will be a new Fred Rogers Center initiative, “A Framework for Quality in Digital Media for Young Children: Considerations for Parents, Educators, and Media Creators.”

Planning of the Framework began in 2010, when the Fred Rogers Center partnered with colleagues at the Northwestern University Center on Media and Human Development, the Erikson Institute, the American Center for Children and Media, and the Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop.

Fred Forward Conference participants will consider a draft Framework document, including discussions of three “guiding principles of quality” and the five “action areas” of research, professional development, curation and crowdsourcing, communication and awareness, and policy. The draft document draws from roundtable discussions, organized by the Rogers Center in 2011, with more than 50 experts in related fields. It also builds upon the recent position statement by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the Fred Rogers Center, “Technology and Interactive Media as Tools in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children Birth through Age 8.”

“Today, the ubiquity of digital media in homes, schools and early learning centers, and community sites for informal learning provides both the opportunity and the responsibility to use these new and rapidly developing tools with care,” says Rita Catalano, Executive Director of the Fred Rogers Center.

“Our goal with the Framework initiative is to find the areas of consensus, and to inspire new partnerships, among the many organizations, developers and producers, and other child advocates who are working in their own ways to carry forward Fred Rogers’ commitment to always “think of the children first,” Catalano explains. Next steps in the Framework development process will be announced sometime following the conference.

Showcasing Innovation

The *Fred Forward Conference* also will showcase a variety of media-based and hands-on activities designed for playful learning. Sixteen “Play-to-Learn” projects will engage conference attendees in demonstrations of digital media and other creative activities supporting the healthy social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development of young children. Among the highlights:

Big Top Fitness—A series of pilot interstitials, Big Top Fitness uses circus arts to promote physical activity. It was created with funding from the Fred Rogers Memorial Scholarship of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Foundation.

Fred Rogers Center Early Learning Environment™ (Ele)—An innovative web-based system in early language literacy and media literacy, **Ele** provides some of the best, free digital content available online, as well as a social networking opportunity for teachers, family child care providers, and families of children birth to age 5. Visit **Ele** at www.yourele.org.

Everyday Grooves, a Project of the Fred Rogers Center Early Career Fellows Program—An iOS app for parents, teachers, and other caregivers of children ages 3-5, *Everyday Grooves* uses songs and music to encourage children to develop routines and structure in their lives. Users set up prompts (pop-style original songs) throughout the day to help children transition to new activities.

KaBOOM Imagination Playground, Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children—This interactive, transformable environment prompts children to create a play-space of their own with sand, water, and loose parts, encouraging them to be active on many levels, exercising their minds as well as their muscles.

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MAKESHOP on the Road, Children's Museum of Pittsburgh—An informal learning environment engaging Museum visitors in authentic making experiences, such as tinkering, testing, and playful intergenerational collaboration, MAKESHOP is a partnership of the Children's Museum, the University of Pittsburgh Center for Learning In and Out of School Environments (UPCLOSE), and Carnegie Mellon University's Entertainment Technology Center (ETC).

Message from Me, a Spark Project—Developed by Carnegie Mellon University's CREATE lab, this kiosk prototype interactively combines digital photography and sound to enable young children to better communicate with their parents about their daytime activities. More information available at www.sproutfund.org/sparkpgh/project/message-from-me/

Thanks to Conference Sponsors

The 2012 Fred Forward Conference is made possible by the support of The Grable Foundation, The Pittsburgh Foundation, PNC Foundation, and Saint Vincent College.

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*The mission of the **Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College** is to advance the fields of early learning and children's media by acting as a catalyst for communication, collaboration, and creative change. The Center houses the Fred Rogers Archive including videos and materials from Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. National signature programs of the Center are the Fred Rogers Center Early Learning Environment (**Ele**), the Early Career Fellows program, and the Fred Forward Conference series. Additional information about the **Fred Rogers Center** is available at www.fredrogerscenter.org or 724-805-2750.*

***Saint Vincent College** is an educational community rooted in the tradition of the Catholic faith, the heritage of Benedictine monasticism, and the love of values inherent in the liberal approach to life and learning. Its mission is to provide quality undergraduate and graduate education for men and women to enable them to integrate their professional aims with the broader purposes of human life. The programs, activities, and encounters that make up student life at Saint Vincent College encourage the intellectual gifts, professional aptitudes and personal aspirations of students to mature harmoniously.*