

Fred Rogers Center organizes national roundtable at Erikson Institute in Chicago



The Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children’s Media at Saint Vincent College organized a national roundtable, hosted by Erikson Institute, in Chicago, on January 31, 2011. The roundtable—to explore issues and potential partnerships for a national framework for excellence in children’s media—was an invited meeting of 30 national leaders in media research, media literacy, child development, education, entertainment and educational media, policy, and philanthropy.

Fred Rogers Center Executive Director Rita Catalano described the January 31 roundtable as “an opportunity for those who create, those who study, and those who support parents and educators as they make decisions about the use of media with young children to discuss key issues from their variety of perspectives and interests. We see the roundtable as a first step in achieving broad-based consensus on the important elements of excellence in media for young children across platforms and across formal and informal settings for learning.” Catalano noted that “the roundtable is in keeping with the mission of the Fred Rogers Center to bridge the fields of early learning and children’s media through a variety of programs and initiatives that address the needs of young children and the adults responsible for their learning and development.”

Erikson President Samuel J. Meisels welcomed the roundtable participants to the Institute. “Rapid advances in technology and in digital and social media are transforming how young children are taught and how they interact with the world. But what is the best role for these new technologies and media in early childhood settings? How should parents, teachers, and others who care for young children respond to the world of technology? Erikson has committed itself to

helping answer these important questions,” says Meisels. “To that end, I am tremendously excited by the group assembled today at the roundtable and its commitment to developing a meaningful framework for child-centered media.”

The Fred Rogers Center and Erikson are longtime collaborators. Barbara Bowman, Irving B. Harris Professor of Child Development and Co-Founder of Erikson Institute, is a founding member of the Fred Rogers Center Advisory Council. Chip Donohue, Erikson’s director of distance learning, has been a Fred Rogers Center Senior Fellow since 2009.

Erikson Institute (<http://www.erikson.edu/>), a graduate school in child development, is a hub of complex, creative thinking that brings the newest scientific knowledge and theories of children’s development and learning into graduate education, professional training, community programs, and policy making. Its goal is to improve the lives of children and families.

The Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children’s Media at Saint Vincent College (www.fredrogerscenter.org) was established in 2003. The Center houses the official archive of Fred Rogers’ work including scripts, videos, and artifacts from *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*. The Center’s national programs include the Early Career Fellows; the Fred Rogers Center Early Learning Environment™ under development as a web-based resource for teachers, home-based caregivers, and families; and the Fred Forward Conference Series and issues roundtables.

Pictured at the roundtable are Samuel J. Meisels, Barbara Bowman, and members of the roundtable planning group Michael Levine, Executive Director of the Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop, David Kleeman, President, American Center for Children and Media, Ellen Wartella, Director, Center on Media and Human Development, Northwestern University and PNC Grow Up Great Endowed Fred Rogers Center Fellow, Chip Donohue, Rita Catalano, and Michael Robb, Early Learning Environment Program Manager, Fred Rogers Center.