



FRED ROGERS CENTER
EARLY LEARNING
ENVIRONMENT™

www.yourEle.org

A Signature Program of the

**Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media
at Saint Vincent College**

The Fred Rogers Center Early Learning Environment (**Ele**) is an innovative online space for community building and sharing digital resources among early learning teachers, home-based providers, and families of young children birth through age 5. The primary target audience is underserved adult caregivers. By focusing on Early Literacy and Digital Media Literacy, the information, media-based activities, and social networking opportunities within **Ele** advance learning, healthy child development, and school success.

Ele aggregates and organizes many of the best *free* trusted materials from around the web, including videos, games, ebooks, music, and other interactive tools. **Ele** also provides a platform to connect and discuss with others who care about issues affecting young children.

The Fred Rogers Center believes that *Talking is Teaching*, and the research on the importance of early language development is clear. Early literacy starts well before children can read – talking to and with children from the time they are born helps them feel loved and valued and gets them started on the path to learning language.

The ubiquity of technology and digital media in the lives of adults and even the youngest children, across all socioeconomic groups, also makes digital media literacy more important than ever—being able to select, use, participate in, and reflect on media use in an informed way. **Ele** encourages caregivers to treat media more like they would treat a book: as a chance to sit with a child, share time together, and talk about what children are seeing and hearing. In this way, media and technology can be motivating, entertaining, and helpful tools. Used properly, they can spur conversation and encourage children's interaction with their peers and with the caring adults in their lives. **Ele** suggests ways to develop such healthy media habits.

Ele is a signature program of the Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College (www.fredrogerscenter.org). The mission of the Center is to advance the fields of early learning and children's media by acting as a catalyst for communication, collaboration, and creative change. All of the Center's work resonates with Fred Rogers' own belief in the positive potential of media to support the healthy social, emotional, intellectual and physical development of young children.

***Ele* will ...**

- **Redefine and expand the early learning environment by providing a platform for coordinating the content and the delivery of resources within and across schools, centers, community organizations, and homes**
- **Build identity and a sense of competence within and across groups of teachers, home-based providers, and family members through social networking**
- **Increase access to professional development for early childhood educators**
- **Positively affect family members' understanding and use of digital media in educational, developmentally appropriate ways**
- **Catalyze innovation in media-based content and delivery formats geared to the target groups of adult learners**
- **Make a positive impact on school readiness through early literacy as well as social-emotional development**
- **Demonstrate the sustainability and the scalability of an online resource that provides up-to-date content and interactivity in response to user interests, support needs, and technology capabilities**

Members of the National *Ele* Advisory Group:

Warren Buckleitner, Ph.D. (Editor, *Children's Technology Review*)

Kevin Clark, Ph.D. (Associate Professor; Director, Center for Digital Media Innovation and Diversity, George Mason University)

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