



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **FRED ROGERS CENTER EARLY CAREER FELLOW CREATES APP**

LATROBE, PA – The Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children’s Media at Saint Vincent College has launched ChromaKids, a new free iPad app for children and families to nurture children’s ability to connect and develop relationships through a visual arts activity.

This app was designed through the Fred Rogers Center Early Career Fellows program.

Brian Puerling, the Early Career Fellow creator of ChromaKids, is director of education technology at Catherine Cook School in Chicago.

Drawing on his experience as an educator, the app allows children 3 to 8 years old to co-create stories and illustrations with an adult, accompanied by an audio narrative. The children can send their creations to friends, who can add to the drawings and return them, sharing in the creative experience together. ChromaKids enables children to express what they are learning and thinking about, and can help children and adults who are far away from each other to stay in contact through storytelling and art.

ChromaKids was illustrated by renowned *New York Times* bestselling author and illustrator Todd Parr, who has collaborated with *People Magazine*, Target, Sesame Street, Hilton Hotels and General Mills. Technical programming was provided by Synvata, a Chicago-based enterprise software firm.

“This fellowship heightened my appreciation for the multi-touch mobile device application development process,” shared Puerling. “I am always looking for new ways to understand and appreciate trends and initiatives that look to promote developmentally appropriate practices with digital media and technology. ChromaKids was developed with the intention of providing a meaningful experience for children and their caregivers.”

Puerling is a national board-certified teacher and author of **Teaching in the Digital Age: Smart Tools for Age 3 to Grade 3**, a graduate of Erikson Institute, a member of the board of directors for Chicago Metro Association for the Education of Young Children and an active presenter, reviewer and consultant having worked with the Sesame Street Teacher Council and Nickelodeon Curriculum and Content Advisory Board as well as numerous other organizations serving young children and educators.

Established at Saint Vincent College in 2003, the Fred Rogers Center enriches the development of current and emerging leaders in the fields of early learning and children’s media by supporting the professional advancement and mentoring of the next generations of Fred Rogers through the Early Career Fellows program, educational opportunities for undergraduate Fred Rogers Scholars, research and special collaborations by Rogers Center Senior Fellows and resources and information on the developmentally appropriate use of media. The Center is the official home of the Fred Rogers Archive as well as a straightforward, understanding and compassionate voice for the healthy social and emotional development of children birth to age 8 ([www.fredrogerscenter.org](http://www.fredrogerscenter.org)).

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**Photo:** *Brian Puerling*

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