



A resource for early childhood educators

Exploring Media Together

EYLF educator prompts for children aged 3–5



Children encounter stories, characters and screens in many parts of their day – at home, in the community and in the early childhood setting. Whether it's through beloved programs like Play School, games, apps or music, media plays an important part in young people's lives.

As one of the most trusted names in children's media, Play School and ABC Kids Early Education has a role to play in helping families and educators start these conversations early – building on the relationship children, families and early childhood educators have with the program, and the voices, research and expertise that go into its creation at every level, to open the door to something bigger: supporting educators to build children's early understandings of media, as a foundation for the more critical, reflective engagement that develops over time.

This set of eight prompt cards offers simple ways to sit alongside children as they watch, listen, play and talk about media, with open questions to help build children's media literacy skills and understandings from the earliest years.

Each card aligns with priorities within the Early Years Learning Framework and key concepts of media literacy. These concepts form the framework that is used to help people explore and question the media. The key concepts are: **Technologies, Representations, Audiences, Institutions, Media Languages and Relationships.**

Educators are encouraged to explore the definitions of each concept via the [Australian Media Literacy Alliance \(AMLA\)](#).

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OF 9

KEY MEDIA LITERACY CONCEPT:

- Audiences

EYLF LEARNING CONNECTIONS

- Communication
- Relationships
- Agency

TRY ASKING

- “What did you notice?”
- “What do you think might happen next?”
- “How did that make you feel?”
- “What did you like about it?”

We can watch together!

Explanation

When digital media is part of an experience, there may be opportunities to watch a short video or listen to an audio clip together. Share your own responses (for example, “that was funny!” or “that made me think about”) and invite children to predict, ask questions and share what they notice.

Why this matters

Shared media experiences give children opportunities to listen to others, express their ideas, ask questions and respond to what they see and hear. Co-viewing and co-listening helps children begin to understand that media is made for someone. It can also help children experience themselves and others as part of an audience.

Examples in practice

Watch or listen to a short segment of a program together. Invite children to share what they noticed, how it made them feel or what they think might happen next.

Children might respond through conversation, drawing, movement, dramatic play, taking photographs or creating their own story.



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OF 9

KEY MEDIA LITERACY CONCEPT:

- Languages

EYLF LEARNING CONNECTIONS

- Communication
- Learning through play
- Children as confident and involved learners

TRY ASKING

- “What is happening in this story?”
- “Who is in this story?”
- “What could happen next?”
- “Could we tell the story in a different way?”

It's story time!

Explanation

Stories are all around us – in books, songs, videos, games, family experiences, play and other forms of media. Children often create stories through play or retell stories they know. We can also encourage children to tell stories in many different ways. Creating and retelling stories helps children notice that media stories are made up of images, sounds and words.

Why this matters

Storytelling supports children to explore characters, events, sequence, perspective and meaning. Creating and retelling stories helps children develop their own ways of communicating ideas. When retelling media stories (such as from a TV show, podcast or magazine) children will learn that media texts are created using images, sounds and words (written and spoken).

Examples in practice

Invite children to arrange a series of photographs or images to create a story. Encourage them to explain what is happening, who is involved and what might happen next. There may be many different stories that can be created from the same images. Children could also use drawing, puppets, loose parts, movement or dramatic play to tell their stories.



3

OF 9

KEY MEDIA LITERACY CONCEPTS:

- Technologies

EYLF LEARNING CONNECTIONS

- Belonging
- Relationships
- Identity
- Communication

TRY ASKING

- “ How do you watch or listen to that at home?”
- “ Who do you enjoy doing that with?”
- “ What do you like about it?”
- “ What do you know about it already?”
- “ Could we make something like that here?”

I have this at home!

Explanation

Children encounter media in different ways at home and in their communities. They may watch programs on a television or tablet, listen to music or podcasts, use apps, look at photographs, play digital games or communicate with family through video calls. Invite children to share what they already know and experience.

Why this matters

Children bring rich knowledge, experiences and perspectives from their homes and communities. Valuing these experiences helps build connections between children's home lives and the early childhood setting and provides opportunities to extend their learning.

Examples in practice

When children talk about a favourite program, song, character, game or app, invite them to share what they know.

You might ask what technology children use to experience this - or simply what they use to watch or listen to these programs.



Exploring media with children aged 3-5

4

OF 9

KEY MEDIA LITERACY CONCEPTS:

- Languages and Technologies

EYLF LEARNING CONNECTIONS

- Agency
- Communication
- Learning through play
- Children as active learners

TRY ASKING

- “What would you like to photograph?”
- “What would you like to tell us about it?”
- “How could we show what you have been learning?”
- “Would you like to take the photo or would you like me to?”
- “What should we include?”

Let's make it together!

Explanation

Photographs, videos and audio recordings can be used to document children's learning. What opportunities might there be for children to be involved in creating, choosing and talking about what is documented?

Why this matters

When children create photographs, videos or audio recordings, they can explore how different forms of media communicate ideas, experiences and perspectives. Being involved in documentation can also support children's agency and participation in their learning.

Examples in practice

Children have drawn their family. Invite them to photograph their drawing and record themselves talking about it.

They might explain who is in their family, what they were doing or why they chose particular colours or materials. The recording could become part of the learning documentation.

Children could also photograph their block construction, record a story they have created or make a short video explaining something they have discovered.



Exploring media with children aged 3-5

5

OF 9

KEY MEDIA LITERACY CONCEPT:

- Relationships

EYLF LEARNING CONNECTIONS

- Identity
- Belonging
- Relationships
- Agency

TRY ASKING

- “ How do you know about that?”
- “ What can you tell me about it?”
- “ What do you like about it?”
- “ What could we make or do with that idea?”
- “ Does anyone else know about this?”

I know this!

Explanation

Children bring media experiences, knowledge and ideas from their homes and communities. They may have favourite characters or songs, communicate with family through video calls, or use digital and non-digital media for enjoyment, connection and learning.

Why this matters

Recognising and building on children’s existing knowledge shows that their experiences, ideas and perspectives are valued. It also helps educators identify opportunities to extend children’s learning. Sharing our favourite things, including media stories, is also part of the relationships we develop with other people, and it lets other people know something about who we are.

Examples in practice

A child regularly talks about a favourite character, song or story. You might provide puppets, loose parts, drawing materials or dress-ups that invite the child and others to create their own stories inspired by what they know.

Children could also share a song, game, story or media experience from home with the group, where appropriate, explaining something they have discovered.



Exploring media with children aged 3-5

KEY MEDIA LITERACY CONCEPTS:

- Relationships
- Representations
- Audiences

EYLF LEARNING CONNECTIONS

- Identity
- Relationships
- Communication
- Learning through play

TRY ASKING

- “Who are you pretending to be?”
- “What is happening in your story?”
- “Is your story the same as the program or different?”
- “What happened to your character?”
- “What could happen next?”

Can I be...?

Explanation

Children may draw on familiar characters, stories and media experiences in their dramatic and imaginative play. They might recreate something they have seen, change the story or invent something completely new.

Why this matters

Dramatic play gives children opportunities to explore characters, relationships, settings and storylines. It also provides opportunities for children to adapt familiar stories and create their own meanings.

Examples in practice

A group of children are pretending to be characters from a favourite program. They might recreate a familiar story or invent a new one.

Afterwards, invite children to talk about their play. They might explain which characters they chose, what happened in their story and how their version was similar to or different from the original.



KEY MEDIA LITERACY CONCEPT:

- Institutions

EYLF LEARNING CONNECTIONS

- Communication
- Critical thinking
- Children as confident and involved learners

TRY ASKING

- “ Why do you think they made this?”
- “ What do you think they want us to know?”
- “ How do you think they want us to feel?”
- “ What do you think they want us to do?”
- “ Is this trying to tell us something, entertain us or sell us something?”

Why did they make that?

Explanation

Different types of media are created for different purposes. A video might want us to learn something, a story might make us laugh or feel something, and an advertisement might encourage us to want or buy something. With young children, noticing what a piece of media is trying to do is an important first step in developing critical thinking.

Why this matters

Children encounter many different forms of media. Exploring why something was made can help children begin to notice that media is created by people for particular purposes and audiences.

Examples in practice

After watching a short video, invite children to think about why it was made.

You might ask, “Why do you think they made this?” or “What do you think they want us to know, feel or do?”

If an advertisement appears before a video, you could talk about how it is different from the video itself and what the advertisement is asking people to do.



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OF 9

KEY MEDIA LITERACY CONCEPT:

- Audiences

EYLF LEARNING CONNECTIONS

- Communication
- Relationships
- Identity
- Agency

TRY ASKING

- “What did you think about it?”
- “What was your favourite part?”
- “How did it make you feel?”
- “Did anyone think something different?”
- “Would you tell the story differently?”
- “What would you change?”

My opinion matters!

Explanation

We all have different views about what we see, hear and experience. A story, song, advertisement, video, game or app might make different people feel or think differently. Give children opportunities to share their ideas about the media they watch, listen to and play with.

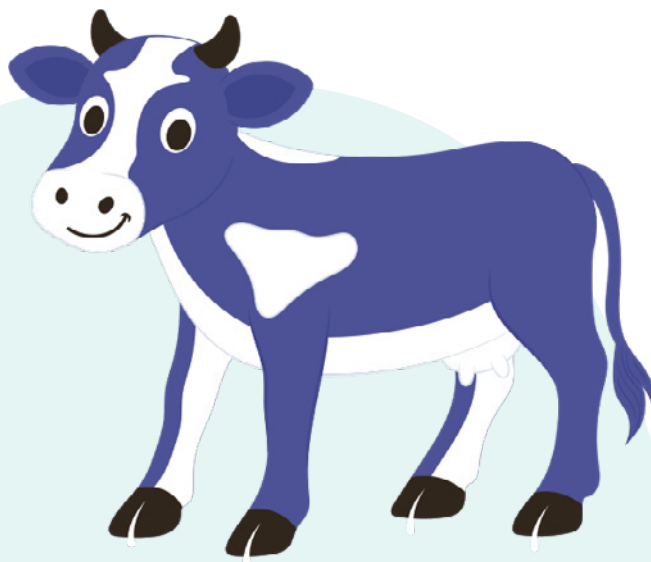
Why this matters

Sharing ideas and listening to different perspectives supports children to express themselves, recognise that others may have different views and participate in respectful conversations. Children's responses can also help educators understand what interests them and what media experiences they are bringing from home and community settings.

Examples in practice

A child talks about hearing a podcast on the way to their early childhood setting. Take time to listen and invite them to share their ideas.

You might also revisit a story, song or video you have experienced together and invite children to share what they thought about it. There does not need to be one “right” response.



Exploring media with children aged 3-5

Resources and References

Early Childhood Australia:

[Statement on young children and digital technologies](#)

[Supports educators to promote safe, meaningful and age-appropriate use of digital technologies, while helping children develop early media literacy skills.](#)

The Centre of Excellence for the Digital Child:

[The everyday use of media literacy in early childhood education](#)

Shows how media literacy can be embedded into everyday learning through play, discussion and exploration of digital media.

Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI):

[Media and digital literacy for teachers](#)

Provides practical resources to help educators teach children to understand, interpret and create media in age-appropriate ways.

Young Children in Digital Society:

[Resources](#) and [Publications](#)

Provides research and resources to help educators understand young children's digital experiences and support critical and responsible media use.

Office of eSafety:

[Early Years program for educators](#)

Helps educators teach young children about online safety, respectful digital behaviour and responsible use of digital technologies.



For opportunities to explore the ideas shared in this resource, watch Play School on ABC Kids iView.

Find options to [stream](#) or [view on demand](#).

Developed in collaboration with Dr Amanda Levido - media literacy education researcher and Senior Lecturer at Southern Cross University.

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Exploring media with children aged 3-5