



advancing
children's learning
in a digital age

Cooney Center Fellows Program 2014-2015

The Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop investigates the potential of digital media to help children learn, and collaborates with educators, media producers, policymakers and investors to put this research into action. An independent, nonprofit organization, the Center addresses issues of digital equity and aims to strengthen connections between formal and informal learning environments. Learn more at www.joanganzcooneycenter.org.

Fellows Program Overview

Cooney Center Fellows participate in a wide range of projects and, in doing so, develop broad exposure to scholarship, policy, and practice in the field of digital media and learning. This professional development program offers opportunities to:

- Conduct research on digital media use among elementary school-age children and families;
- Publish research that responds to practical industry and practitioner needs;
- Expand the influence research has in government, education, philanthropy, and industry decision making; and
- Develop new skills and perspectives that are critical to becoming a leader in the field of digital media and learning.

The Cooney Center Fellows Program attracts a wide range of applicants with expertise in digital media and/or in the fields of communication, child development, education, learning sciences, psychology, computer science, design, and public policy. Current and former fellows have led research investigations and published reports and articles on digital media innovations, industry trends, and policy solutions. They have also developed public presentation and media outreach skills, organized major cross-sector convenings, and contributed to the overall growth of the Cooney Center.

The Fellowship

For a period of one year beginning in Fall 2014, the fellow will work in residence at the Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop, which is located in New York City. The fellow will play a substantive role in ongoing Cooney Center projects and initiatives, and participate in the day-to-day operations of the Center, including publication production, forum/event planning, and contributing to our websites and newsletter. The fellow will also have opportunities to travel to present research for dissemination and professional development purposes. **For the 2014-2015 year, the fellow will play a major role on one of the Center's primary initiatives, either the Games and Learning Publishing Council, or the Families and Media Project.**

- **Games and Learning Publishing Council (GLPC)**
Growing evidence demonstrates that digital games can be used to advance standards-based content mastery in literacy and math, develop a deep understanding of STEM concepts and build critical 21st century skills that are essential for preparing youth for success in a global and digital marketplace. With generous support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Joan Ganz Cooney Center

launched the [Games and Learning Publishing Council](#), a multi-sector alliance convened with field leaders and key investors in game-based learning. The GLPC aims to understand the market dynamics and areas of innovation within the game-based education field by: promoting innovations that are ready for scaling within the GBL field; developing and disseminating analytical tools, briefs and reports; and engaging policymakers, developers and investors to wisely deploy digital games to advance common core knowledge, and 21C skills.

The GLPC has also published a number of reports on the GBL sector, including a scan of the Education Category of the Apple App Store and a K-12 Market Map and Investment Analysis. The GLPC recently launched a new information source—[gamesandlearning.org](#)—which aims to present the latest research, market analysis, and opinions on the games-based learning sector. The Council's regular activities also include conducting an annual national survey of teachers on game-based learning and instruction, and producing a series of video case studies on how teachers come to learn to integrate games into their teaching practices.

The 2014-2015 fellow will support the GLPC's activities and contribute to other Cooney Center games-based initiatives, including the [Number Sense Action Video Game Project](#) and the [National STEM Video Game Challenge](#). We seek a candidate with a strong understanding of the games and learning space, including which barriers and opportunities various audiences (developers, investors, policy makers, educational leaders) face as they explore the potential of research-based games. The fellow will contribute to various types of products including written publications, interactive features, and project proposals; therefore, strong hands-on creative skills and experience identifying/defining innovative partnerships will be required.

- **The Families and Media Project (FAM)**

[The Families and Media Project](#) aims to unearth the potential that media may have for enriching family learning and routines. To accomplish these aims, members of the multi-institution Families and Media Research Consortium are conducting a series of studies that link large-scale data with in-depth illustrations. Findings will be translated for educators and media designers interested in designing content, products, and educational programs that:

- Positively impact the learning, communication, and lifestyle needs of families with children.
- Support family engagement with media by taking advantage of technological affordances that may overcome the various challenges of using media together.
- Better address the needs of modern families, including single-parent households, non-native speakers, and parents with demanding work schedules.
- Help families be smarter media consumers, and wiser in their content selections.

FAM's goals are to stimulate the national conversation around the ways families use digital media; inform policy on digital equity, family engagement, healthy development, and education reform; inform design of media and media-based interventions and curricula; and to create resources for parents and educators to increase the quality of interactions around media.

FAM currently comprises a set of ethnographic field studies as well as a series of large-scale surveys, which together will document the media ecologies of young children and their families. The 2014-2015 fellow will participate in this research; therefore, strong qualitative and quantitative research skills are desired in interested applicants. The fellow will also contribute to the related [Aprendiendo Juntos Council](#) (AJC) initiative, which focuses on the use of media in Latino families in particular.

Eligibility

We are seeking early career investigators, including recent graduates of masters and doctoral programs. Applicants must be able to complete the one-year fellowship in residence at the Cooney Center's headquarters in New York City. Applicants from ethnic minority and underrepresented populations are encouraged to apply.

Stipend

The fellow will receive a stipend of up to \$50,000 for the period of one year. He/She may also pursue financial support through outside contracts as long as they do not conflict with the fellowship residency requirements. Unfortunately, the Cooney Center cannot provide relocation expenses or health care benefits.

Application Process

Interested candidates should submit the following to the Cooney Center:

- Curriculum vitae or resume
- A concise personal statement (about 800 words), which should include an explanation of which of the two core initiatives (GLPC or FAM) you are most interested in, and how your background and skills will help the Cooney Center make progress on the chosen initiative.
- Writing sample (about 1,000 words)
- The name and contact details of a faculty member who may serve as a reference and who is committed to providing intellectual guidance during the fellowship period

The application deadline is **Wednesday, April 30, 2014 at 11:59pm** Pacific Time. Direct any inquiries and email application materials to cooney.fellows@sesame.org.

The Cooney Center will contact selected candidates for initial telephone/Skype interviews in May 2014. Finalists will be invited to participate in telephone/Skype or in-person interviews in May/June. The 2014-2015 Cooney Center Fellow will be announced in July 2015.