Facilitating Collaboration and Communication
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Original Research Question

• Posed by the CREATE Lab at CMU: Can we positively impact children’s feelings of individuality, self-confidence, and well-being by adapting existing technologies so that these young children can record their daily experiences and send them to their parents, thus enhancing parent-child conversations?

• Children may forget the details of their day by the time they arrive home. The goal is to empower them by giving them the ability to share photos and messages with their families. The technology is designed to be a one-way communication tool to foster face to face discussion among children and families after school hours.
What is Message From Me?
History of MFM Collaboration

• SPARK Grant from the Sprout Fund
  • In 2009, a local fund that supports innovative ideas that are catalyzing change in Pittsburgh, provided the initial start-up for the project, including technology design and pilot testing at the Children’s School in the Spring of 2010.

• CMU Children’s School
  • The Children’s School’s has been involved with the project since the beginning, providing the CREATE Lab with a site to test the concept, pilot the technology, and support the development of materials for educators and parents.

• Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children
  • PAEYC provided a connection with the Pittsburgh Area Early Childhood Community.

• PNC Grow Up Great
  • Funding second round of design and piloting, plus expanded testing in the broader Early Childhood Community.
Original Kiosk
vs.
Second Generation Model
Led to the Creation of an iPad App

- January 2013 - An iPad App for MFM was developed by Andreya Piplica of the CREATE Lab at CMU and is being piloted at the Children’s School.
iPad Use in 3 Year Old Classroom
iPad vs. Kiosk

- The iPad’s network allows for a consistent internet connection.
- The iPad is portable and can be taken outside of the classroom to the playground or on field trips.
- Children can photograph their environment or, with the tap of a button, the iPad camera reverses to allow the children to be photographed.
- The app makes it more likely for a child to send a message to another child’s recipients, which is not the intention.
- The kiosk is a novelty which attracts the children.
Outcomes for Children and Families

- Foster Self-Esteem & Independence
  - Completes process independently
  - Focuses on child’s view of their day
  - Helps with separation

- Promote Interaction and Cooperation
  - Taking turns
  - Introducing friends to family
  - Initiating family conversation

- Enhance Communication Skills
  - Learning forms of address and etiquette
  - Using vocabulary and describing of photo
  - Supporting ELL
Outcomes Continued

- Develop Discovery & Exploration
  - Causes children to be more aware of surroundings
  - Broadens use of technology

- Integrate Physical Capabilities
  - Talking while holding down buttons
  - Regulating your voice to be microphone friendly
  - Controlling impulses with buttons

- Expand Artistic Expression
  - Use of camera to document experiences
  - Influence children’s creative process and planning skills

- Assist Children with Special Needs
  - Selective Mutism
  - Pilot in an Auditory Oral School for Hearing Impaired
Ways MFM Enhances Educator and Family Communication

- **Classroom Use**
  - Teachers plan for MFM use in their daily activity centers
  - Classroom job
  - Documenting social interactions
  - Sharing classroom work not easily taken home - building, puzzle, class pet
  - Playground interactions and skills
  - Group messaging

- **Assessment**
  - Educators can use the child’s message to document skills and learning.
  - All messages are saved via the website and can be used for the purpose of documentation.

- **Family Feedback**
  - Enjoyment
  - Desire to receive more messages
  - Desire for MFM to continue being used
MFM Stats

Organizations actively involved with MFM Pilot

- Angels’ Place Inc. Brookline Center
- Angels’ Place Inc. North Side Center
- Angels’ Place Inc. Swissvale Center
- DePaul School for Hearing and Speech
- Doris V Keith-Clark Family Day Care Home
- Early Education STEM Center - Marshall University
- Hug Me Tight Childlife Centers
- Latrobe Kinder-Schull
- PAEYC - Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children
- Pittsburgh Public School Early Learning Centers
- Righteous Beginnings Learning Center
- The Children's School - Carnegie Mellon University

Number of People involved with MFM Pilot- 756 people

- 357 PreSchool Students
- 24 Elementary Students
- 375 Adults
Future Development

- Educator’s Guide is in the development stage.
- Plans to support parent child discussion include imbedding question prompts into the sent photo.
- Eventually, the MFM app will be available at the iTunes store as a free download.

For More Information

- Website [www.messagefromme.org](http://www.messagefromme.org)
- Join the Waitlist: [www.cmucreatelab.org](http://www.cmucreatelab.org)