

CLAIRE CHRISTENSEN, Ph.D.

User Researcher | EdTech & Children's Media

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SUMMARY

User researcher with 10+ years of experience leading mixed-methods studies for digital products, edtech tools, and children's media. Skilled in user interviews, surveys, usability testing, and RCTs, with expertise in early childhood, caregiver engagement, and learning outcomes. Communicates findings clearly—through writing, presentations, and multimedia—to product teams, researchers, and the public. Has led 18 studies totaling over \$6.5M.

CORE SKILLS

- **Research Methods:** User interviews, surveys, usability testing, diary studies, RCTs, focus groups, think-alouds
 - **Analysis Tools:** R, Qualtrics, Dedoose, SPSS, Excel
 - **Communication:** Reports, presentations, videos, blog posts, podcasts, press
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SELECTED EXPERIENCE

Senior Education Researcher

SRI International | 2015–present

Lead UX-style formative and summative research for digital learning tools, edtech apps, and children's media.

Generative & Evaluative User Research

- **Led mixed-methods user research for Sesame Workshop's Healthy Habits initiative**, surveying 108 early childhood providers and running 12 focus groups across five communities; insights shaped product content and funding proposals.
- **Led formative research for an NSF-funded AI tool** to help parents find educational YouTube videos; coded ~1,000 videos, conducted 13 interviews and 3 focus groups, and partnered with engineers to develop a machine learning model with 95% accuracy.
- **Led evaluation of an ML-powered edtech discovery tool for EdSurge**, combining an RCT (n=318), think-alouds, interviews, and cost analysis; findings informed product updates and Department of Education grant reporting.

Impact Evaluation & Learning Outcomes

- **Co-led RCT of PBS KIDS *Molly of Denali*** with 263 first graders; found a $g = .25$ impact on informational text skills. Results were published in *AERJ*, shared with CPB, PBS, and GBH, and cited in U.S. Congressional testimony.
- **Co-led RCT of PBS KIDS *Work it Out Wombats!*** with 458 preschoolers across seven cities; demonstrated 0.22 SD gains in sequencing. Findings informed PBS KIDS' content strategy and CPB's federal compliance reporting.

- **Led two-year RCT of Amira for Families** across four districts and 35 classrooms; evaluated literacy outcomes using surveys, WRMT assessments, and in-app data. Teacher interviews informed product refinement and classroom integration.

Content Feedback & Cross-Functional Collaboration

- **Reviewed scripts, curriculum guides, and strategic materials** for PBS KIDS and other media partners; provided feedback grounded in child development and learning science to support content design and educational goals.
- **Collaborated cross-functionally with producers, educators, and researchers** to align product vision with developmental best practices and classroom needs.

Insight Communication & Stakeholder Engagement

- **Created reports, briefs, blog posts, videos, and podcasts** to share research with funders, product teams, educators, and the public; known for making complex findings clear and actionable.
- **Delivered 25+ presentations** at conferences and stakeholder meetings, turning data into compelling stories that shaped content strategy and funding decisions.

Lab Manager, Social Emotional Teaching & Learning Lab

University of Illinois at Chicago | 2013–2015

- Conducted usability testing of an online teacher training program using think-aloud protocols and educator interviews to identify design pain points and improve course flow.
- Managed data collection for 200+ classroom observations and child assessments supporting early childhood curriculum development and product validation.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Psychology (Community & Prevention Research)

University of Illinois at Chicago | 2015

Recipient: Chancellor's Graduate Research Fellowship, Provost's Award

B.A., Mass Communication

Illinois State University | 2008

CERTIFICATIONS & HONORS

- Certified What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) Reviewer, v4.0
- SRI Shark Tank Winner (\$100K)