



2024 CASE STUDY

The 2024 Well-Being by Design Fellows participated in a four-month professional development program for designers and producers of interactive kids' technology and media. They met online to workshop their current projects, network with other fellows, and gain insights from research and industry leaders as they worked to incorporate principles of well-being into their designs. We are delighted to share highlights from each fellow's experience.

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Keeana S. Saxon, Esq., Founder and CEO of Kidogo Productions, lives in Boston with her family. She holds a B.A. from Spelman College and a J.D. from Western New England University School of Law. She practiced law for over 10 years and now serves as a Commissioner on the Boston Licensing Board. Keeana also teaches classical piano. Her TEDx Talk is entitled "A Mother's Mission Against Anti-Black Bias in Children's Media."

Kidogo Productions aims to disrupt the children's media with Black Excellence and Black Joy. We understand how color bias in mainstream media leads to low self-esteem in Black children and a false sense of superiority in non-Black children. I saw the negative impact on my own daughter as she yearned to look like mainstream characters.

We believe that children's media would be stronger, higher quality, and have more integrity without bias. Studies show that children who learn from culturally responsive content show more empathy towards others.

In addition to representation, the 80+ parents we surveyed are looking for premier digital educational content, which encourages interactive reinforcement of the curriculum. Moreover, parents want an educational tool, which integrates both on- and off-screen learning. They also understand that their children want to have fun even if they're learning in the process.

We are taking this insight and building a colorful and interactive urban landscape named "Kidogoville," which hosts content, gamifies learning, and connects a Kidogo Kid to real world experiences.



PRODUCT: Kidogoville **TARGET AGE:** 3-6

Kidogoville is an interactive edutainment app for preschoolers built by Kidogo Productions.

→ KIDOGOPRODUCTIONS.COM



WHAT COMPONENTS OF WELL-BEING DOES MY PRODUCT ADDRESS?

As we build our app, we are building our content pipeline and community. Our strengths are:

Social Connection: we engineer social connection through live events. Whether they are in-person or online, our events help to foster a sense of togetherness.

Competency: Our curated and created videos and games, which span a wide number of subjects (STEM, Social Studies, Movement/Wellness, Arts, Literary Arts, Life Skills), improve academic and social/emotional competence.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Our content is filtered through the lens of Black Joy and Black Excellence. We highlight and celebrate the many faces, voices, cultures, talents, and skills of the vast and heterogeneous African Diaspora.

HOW CAN MY PRODUCT BETTER ADDRESS CHILDREN’S WELL-BEING?

During this fellowship, we chose to focus on the following:

Empowerment: The app we are building will allow our Kidogo Kids to explore Kidogoville on their own. We would like to give our Kidogo Kids the chance to roam without a lot of prompts, directions, algorithms, or social pressures. We believe that empowering our Kidogo Kids to be led by their own curiosity will begin their journey of self discovery.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: The app will not be just for a Black audience because our avatars will be fully customizable.

Creativity: Our activities will allow Kidogo Kids to imagine and produce something we didn’t anticipate.



This fellowship provided Kidogo Productions a researched-backed framework from which to organize our product roadmap. It affirmed our overall purpose and helped to clarify where to focus our attention.



WHAT HAVE I LEARNED ABOUT INCORPORATING WELL-BEING INTO MY PRODUCT DESIGN?

This fellowship gave us creative permission to lean into other design details, which will make the *Kidogoville* app a powerful tool for preschoolers. We asked the Youth Design Team how we could ensure that non-Black children feel comfortable in Kidogoville. Black Kidogo Kids deserve to see themselves reflected positively and non-Black Kidogo Kids *should* see Black people reflected authentically, but we wanted to go beyond mere “windows” and “mirrors”. We wanted all Kidogo Kids to feel immersed and safely inoculated from the poisons of prejudice. The YDT immediately recognized that incorporating fully customizable avatars would help. Through the power of avatars, Kidogo Kids of *any* race, ethnicity, gender, sex, color, or physical characteristic will be able to see themselves in Kidogoville.



Sample of Kidogoville avatars



LOOKING AHEAD

One of the best pieces of advice we received from the fellowship was to invite kids to offer their feedback early on in the design process. We knew that children are brilliant and insightful, but during a focus group we hosted with seven 7-10 year olds, they blew us away! Their worldview, fresh imagination, and relevant experience playing with kid apps helped us shape the UX/UI of the app. Accordingly, we are planning more focus groups. We would like them to use their wildest imaginations to help us build Kidogoville. The product roadmap involves a series of sprints, which center around designing certain areas of the landscape. Each area/building involves culturally resonant graphic designs, backend development, interdisciplinary curriculum design, and high quality passive and interactive content. With each major design decision, we now create a survey question to get feedback. We are designing a blissful experience during which learning is a byproduct of the fun, rather than the other way around.

We are beyond thrilled to see the impact Kidogo Productions has already had on Kidogo Kids. We see the twinkle in their eyes when we speak life, love, excellence and joy into them. We can't wait to share Kidogoville with the world. Here are the key lessons we will take with us from the fellowship:

- + Centering certain cultures in children's content does not sacrifice such content's ability to be relatable to and appreciated by other cultures.
- + Do not build without children providing feedback even in (especially in!) the early stages.



Some of the locations kids can explore in Kidogoville



Joan Ganz Cooney Center

For more information about the Well-Being by Design Fellowship program, please visit joanganzcooneycenter.org/fellowship2024