

# FILIORUM resource

## From research to practice

**FILIORUM** Centre for Research in Early  
Childhood Education and Care  
University of Stavanger

**U** University  
of Stavanger

### Children's digital books

To read books together with young children is a common activity – both in early childhood settings and at home. Many children are increasingly using digital books to access stories. You might wonder whether reading on paper and on screen is the same? Does it matter whether children turn pages in a book or swipe pages on an iPad?



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[www.uis.no/filiorum](http://www.uis.no/filiorum)

An illustration of a design in a digital picture book about the Little Red Riding Hood that supports children's story comprehension. Illustrated by Tilde Hoel Torkildsen

### Why is this important?

Given the increased use of technologies by young children worldwide, it is important to know how reading on screen compares to reading on paper. Hence, we have compared children's reading on paper and on screen in relation to effects on children's vocabulary learning and story comprehension.

The video presents examples of high- and low-quality design of children's digital books. The books' design has a significant impact on children's story comprehension.

### Professional development

**Aim:** By using this resource, teachers/practitioners will learn about the differences between high- and low-quality designs of digital picture books for children.

**Useful for:** Teachers and practitioners in early years, e.g. at a staff meeting.

**Recommended use of time:** 30 minutes.

**Tips for using this resource:**

1. Watch the video.
2. Discuss the reflection questions, for example in groups with other colleagues.
3. Evaluate and discuss the design of a digital picture book (see Activity).
4. Share your experiences with each other at the next staff meeting.



QR-code to the  
video and the  
resource

## Central elements in the video

Without the right enhancements, digital books are inferior to print versions and could in fact interfere with children's understanding of the narrative. The distracting nature of some digital books and enhancements that are not aligned with the storyline, impede children's story comprehension.

However, with the right enhancements, digital books can outperform print books. Enhancements such as prompting children's background knowledge to understand the story boost children's story comprehension.

It is therefore important to carefully consider the design of the digital book that you want to read with the children. Even a small addition can make a difference to how children enjoy the book and how much they learn from it.

## Questions for reflection

- What are your experiences of reading digital books with young children?
- What are your concerns about children's reading on screen?

## Activity

Evaluate and discuss the design of a digital picture book, for example by using the VEBB Tool, <http://vebb.uis.no>. This tool helps teachers reflect on the value of a digital book for classroom dialogue.

Check out the tips for teachers, guidance and research summaries available from [www.childrensdigitalbooks.com/practice](http://www.childrensdigitalbooks.com/practice).

## Early childhood research from FILIORUM

This FILIORUM resource draws on the results from the following research article:

Furenes, M.I., Kucirkova, N. & A. G. Bus, A.G. (2021). A comparison of children's reading on paper versus screen: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research* 91(4), 483–517.



QR-code to the article

**Aim:** To compare children's reading on paper and on screen in relation to effects on children's vocabulary learning and story comprehension

**Research question:**

- Do children learn more from reading on paper or on screen?

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