

Message from Me Step by Step Guide

message from me

POWERED BY



Grow Up Great



CREATE Lab

Community Robotics, Education and Technology Empowerment

Message from Me is made possible by funding from PNC Grow Up Great.

Message from Me Step by Step Guide

Welcome to Message from Me! Please use this guide to assist you in managing the technology side of Message from Me, from setting up your account to maintaining Message from Me in the coming years at your school. If you need support at any point along the way, please reach out to us at messagefromme@tryingtogether.org. We are more than happy to assist you.

Message from Me technology consists of three parts:

1. **Message from Me App** is used in the classroom for children and educators to record and send messages to family members. The app is compatible with iPads, Amazon Kindle tablets, and Android tablets.
2. **Message from Me Caregivers App** is used by both educators and families. Educators can use the Caregivers app to configure and manage all program information including users, contact information, and message archives. Families use the Caregivers app to receive messages and set reminders to talk with their child.
3. **Message from Me Website** <https://messagefromme.org/> Educators can manage program information and messages through the website. Use your same login information across all Message from Me technology.

Both the Message from Me app and the Caregivers app can be downloaded for free from the App Store, Google Play, or Amazon App Store.

Family members who do not have access to the Caregivers app can set up messages through email. Contact us for more information.

For assistance, please visit the Message from Me website to access [Help & Resources](#). For further questions, please email us at messagefromme@tryingtogether.org.

Getting Started

Many classrooms are eligible to receive funding for Message from Me through the PNC Grow Up Great grant. Participating schools must be within a PNC market area and are required to serve a majority of low- and moderate-income families.

Please contact messagefromme@tryingtogether.org to determine eligibility. If you are eligible for the PNC Grow Up Great grant, our team will register your school and get you started. If you are not eligible, please follow instructions below for teacher & administrator registration through the Message from Me website.

Teacher & Administrator Registration

- Go to <https://messagefromme.org/>
- Click “Register”.
 - Enter contact information, program and classroom information, and select a professional development option.
 - Enter payment information. If your program is eligible for the PNC Grow Up Great grant, use the coupon code given to you by the Message from Me team to register at no cost. Contact us at messagefromme@tryingtogether.org for eligibility questions.
- After registering, enter your username and password to login to the Message from Me website.
- On the “My School/Center” page, under “Manage Enrollment”, you will see a link for teachers. Share this link with participating teachers in your program to invite them to register.

Forgot your password?

Visit <https://messagefromme.org/> and click “Log in” button on the top right corner of the screen. Then, click “Forgot Password?” This will generate an email with a temporary password to access your Message from Me account.

WEBSITE: Set Up a New Classroom

The instructions in this section are meant for use on the Message from Me website. See the section below for instructions on setting up a new classroom in the Caregivers app. Both the Message from Me website and the Caregivers app can be used to set up a new classroom.

Add Students - Website

- You will need a class roster and digital photos of students uploaded to your device.
- Begin on your center’s homepage. This is the page you see when you first log in. You can also access it by clicking “My School/Center” at the top of the page.
- Click on “Add Students” and type in the student’s name. Under “Groups”, select “Add/Remove” to see the classrooms. Select the “Not Connected” toggle to connect the student to their classroom. Click “Save Changes” in the bottom right hand corner.
- Continue adding students by selecting “+Add another student”, entering the student’s name, and connecting them to the classroom.
- The “Family and Friends” category is only needed when connecting users who do not have access to the Caregivers app. Please contact messagefromme@tryingtogether.org for more information.
- See the section below entitled “Invite Families to the Caregivers App” for more information on setting up families to receive messages.

Add Student Photos - Website

- Navigate to the “Students” page found under “School/Center Accounts” on the home page.
- Click the “Edit” button for the student whose photo you wish to add.
- Click the “Choose File” button on the left side of the page under the child’s name. Navigate to the “Saved Image” file or choose “Take a Photo” if you are on a device with a camera.
- Click “Save Changes” at the bottom right of the page.
- The page will refresh and you will see the student’s image.

Connect Teachers to Classrooms - Website

- Begin on your center’s homepage. This is the page you see when you first log in. You can also access it by clicking “My School/Center” at the top of the page.
- Click on the “Groups” link under “School/Center Accounts”.
- Click on the name of the classroom you wish to set up.
- Click the “Add/Remove” button to add teachers to the classroom. (Any teachers added here will belong to the classroom and will be a part of the group created for the classroom. If your teachers haven't registered yet, you can follow these steps to add teachers later.)
- In the popup window, click the “Not Connected” toggle next to each teacher you wish to add to this group. The toggle should now show as “Connected”. Click the “X” in the upper right corner of the popup window to exit when you are done selecting teachers.
- Select the “Save Changes” button in the bottom right hand corner.

CAREGIVERS APP: Set Up a New Classroom

These instructions are meant for use with the Caregivers app. See the section above for instructions on setting up a new classroom through the Message from Me website. Both the Message from Me website and the Caregivers app can be used to set up a new classroom.

- Download the Caregivers app for free from the App Store, Google Play, or Amazon App Store. The Caregivers app is for adults only, so choose your device accordingly.
- Login to the Caregivers app.
- Select the “Classes” tab.
- Select the classroom you would like to set up.
- Select the circle icon from the top right hand corner.
- Click “New” from the top right corner and enter the student’s name. You can choose to take a new photo of the child or select a photo from your device. Select “Save” to see the student appear in your roster.
- Add all students to your classroom, then follow steps below to invite families to the Caregivers app.

Invite Families to the Caregivers App

Resources to share with families about Message from Me:

[MfM General Flyer](#) (PDF)

[MfM General Flyer_Spanish](#) (PDF)

[MfM Family Guide](#) (PDF)

[MfM Family Guide_Spanish](#) (PDF)

- Share the Family Guide with families. The guide includes information about Message from Me and instructions for accessing the Caregivers app.
 - On the Family Guide, there is a space where you can add the child’s name and individual access code to share with each family.

- Families need the access code that pertains to their child to set up an account in the Caregivers App.
- The Family Guide can be printed out; the student name and access code can be hand written into the guide. Alternatively, you can choose to type straight into the Family Guide PDF, save it, and attach it to an email.
- Find student access codes on either the Caregivers app or the Message from Me website.

Caregivers app: Click on “Classes”, select your class, and find the circle icon at the top right hand corner of your screen. Select a student from the list and find the student access code below the student photo. If a code does not appear, simply select “Generate New Code”.

Website: Login to the Message from Me website: <https://messagefromme.org/> Click on "Student Access Codes" from the home page. You will see a list of children and an access code for each child. If a code does not appear, simply select "Generate New Code".

- When families download the Caregivers app on their device, create an account, and enter the child's access code, they are ready to receive messages! Family information will automatically appear in the classroom Message from Me app (See section below entitled *Launching the Classroom App* for more information about the Message from Me app).

Account Management

You can manage accounts from both the Message from Me website and the Caregivers App! See the next sections for instructions on managing your account through the website, and further below, instructions for tasks that can be managed through the Caregivers app.

Manage Enrollment - Website

Navigate to your center's home page by clicking on the "My School/Center" link at the top of the page. Under the "Manage Enrollment" section you will see links for several common management tasks. Below, you will find "School/Center Accounts" where you can access account information.

- Manage **student access codes** by selecting "Student Access Codes". If you see "Access Code: (empty)", simply select "Generate New Code".
- You may choose to **add students** without creating a new classroom by selecting "Add New Students" and connecting them to an existing classroom.
- You may choose to **add staff** by selecting "Add Staff" and entering the staff member's information. You can also invite staff by sharing the invite link located directly below the "Manage Enrollment" title.
- Use "Add New Family & Friends" only for families who use email as their method of receiving messages. For families using the Caregivers app, you do not need to manually add contact information as it will automatically appear when they set up the app.
- At the end of the school year, you can use the "Delete Graduating Students" link to quickly **delete students** and family members leaving your center. (Note: While this selection deletes the child's information from the center/school's account, the family member still has access to the child's messages in the Caregivers app).

- Children can belong to more than one group. To **add a student to an additional group**, go to “Groups” under “School/Center Accounts”. Select the group you want to add the student to. Click “Add/Remove” in the “Students” section. Find the student’s name and click the “Not Connected” toggle. The student should now show as “Connected” and has been added to the group. Be sure to click “Save Changes” at the bottom right corner of your screen.
- **Archive students** or family members by navigating to “Students” under “School/Center Accounts” and selecting “Archive” under the student’s name. You may choose this option when you want to keep the student or family member’s information in the system, but they are not currently an active user. Find previously archived students, teachers/administrators, and families under “Archived” at the bottom of the main page.

Monitor Student Usage - Website

- Click on “My School/Center”.
- Click the “View detailed school/center statistics” link under “School/Center Accounts”. (Note: This page may be slow to load). You can view charts showing the number of messages sent by month, by each student, or by each group.

Keep Accounts Up-to-Date - Website

- To change a connection for a child
 - Navigate to your center’s home page by clicking on “My School/Center” at the top of the page.
 - Select “Students” under “School/Center Accounts”.
 - Select the student and click “Edit”.
 - Click the “Add/Remove” button to add or remove family, friends, or teachers. Beside the family member, friend or teacher, you may click the toggle to connect or disconnect the individual from the student.

- When you have finished making changes, click the “X” in the upper right hand corner to exit.
- Remember to click the “Save Changes” button at the bottom right hand corner.

Manage Enrollment- Caregivers App

- Login to the Caregivers app using your Message from Me username and password.
- To **add new students** to your roster, select “Classes”, then click on your classroom. Select the circle icon in the top right corner. You will see the list of students. Click on “New” in the top right hand corner. Add the new student’s name and profile photo and click “Save”. The new student will then appear on your student list.
- To **edit student information**, select “Classes” from the toolbar, select the classroom, then click on the circle icon in the top right hand corner. Select the student you wish to edit from the student list. You may choose to take or upload a new photo, generate a new access code, or view/remove a child’s connections. Any changes you make will automatically save. You can **delete a student** by selecting “Delete Student” at the bottom of the page.
- To **view messages** sent to you, select the “Messages” tab. To view messages of a select student or students, tap any one of the student photos at the top of the page. You may choose to “Select All” students, “Select None”, or select any number of students by highlighting the students’ photos. Once students have been selected, hit “Save”. Messages from only selected students will be displayed.
- Setting a reminder is a great way to follow up with children to expand conversation, connection, and learning. To **set reminders**, select the “Messages” tab, then click on the message you would like to set a reminder for. Click on the bell icon in the top right corner, enter the date and time of the reminder, then write a custom reminder or select from the conversation starters. Your saved reminders will appear in the “Reminders” tab.
- You can **download messages** to your device by selecting the “Messages” tab, clicking on the message you want to download, then selecting the download icon from the top right corner.

- To **edit your account information**, select “Account” from the toolbar at the bottom of the screen. From there, you may take/choose a new photo, add or delete students, and edit, delete, or log out of your account.

Launching the Message from Me Classroom App

Set up the App for Classroom Use

- Begin by downloading the Message from Me app from the App Store on your classroom iPad if it is not already downloaded. You and the children in your care will use this app to take photos and send audio messages to families.
- Sign in to the Message from Me app with your username and password.
- If you have added your classroom and student information through the Caregivers app or the website and have invited families to download the Caregivers app, you will see your students and families appear in the Message from Me app. Please see the sections above for more information about adding students and families.

Use Message from Me App

- Check the network connection
 - When the iPad has a network connection you will see a small icon in the upper left corner. *Note: Wireless internet is required.*
 - The app cannot send messages or sync with the website without a network connection. Check your iPad’s settings if you do not see a network icon.
- Send a message from a student
 - Tap the student’s image to begin. Follow the prompts to choose a recipient, take a picture, record a message, and send.
 - Note: The first time you use the app, you may receive a prompt asking if you want to allow the app to access the iPad photos and use the microphone. Please select “yes”.
- Switch between the whole center and a group
 - Tap the word “Groups” in the upper left corner. Select your desired group from the drop down menu.

- Send a group message
 - Scroll down below the images of the students to the “Groups” subheading. Tap the group image and follow the prompts to send a message to all members of that group.
- Sync the app with the website and/or Caregivers app
 - Tap the circular arrow in the upper right corner. This will refresh the data in the app with the current data from the website and/or Caregivers app (student names, user images, recipients, etc.).
 - Note: The app will automatically sync the first time it is run after the iPad is powered on. You need to manually sync if you update information on the website and/or Caregivers app such as student names, images, or connected adults and the iPad has not been turned off recently.

Classroom Integration

Message from Me can be incorporated into the classroom in a variety of ways depending on the characteristics of your individual classroom environment. Listed below are some suggestions. See the Message from Me [Educator’s Guide](#) for supportive ideas, activities, and approaches.

Send Individual Messages

- Try to have each child send at least 1 – 2 messages per week. See the [Educator’s Guide](#) for information on encouraging storytelling, engaging communication skills, and supporting children’s autonomy with Message from Me.
- Keep in mind that it is ok for the teacher to send messages or to assist children in sending messages. Capture a photo of a child transitioning into the classroom or when a milestone is achieved to share the positive message with a family member.
- Use the [Educator’s Guide](#) when creating lesson plans for ideas on how to incorporate Message from Me into your daily learning experiences.
 - The Educator’s Guide contains over 125 activity ideas created and designed by educators.

- Share your own activity ideas and we will incorporate them into future versions of the guide! Email us at messagefromme@tryingtogether.org to share your ideas.
- Message from Me can be incorporated into structured activities such as a classroom job. Some suggestions include a classroom Message from Me monitor, mentor, or as a turn in center play or another part of the day.
- Use the app to remind families of forms or paperwork due back to the center/school; for example, you can send a message reminding families to fill out a field trip permission form.
- Use Message from Me to support children and families during challenging transitions from home to school.

Send Group Messages

The group message feature will send the same message to the contacts of all students in the group. Sometimes it is not feasible to have each child send an individual message; however, you can use the group message feature to help keep all families informed.

- Share a class activity.
- Introduce families to daily routines, share fun activities, or communicate about current learning themes.
- Share tips with families on how to engage children in conversations around classroom activities or extend learning at home.
- Improve average daily attendance (ADA) through the promotion of an upcoming activity; for example, a special visitor in the classroom or activity happening tomorrow which children will not want to miss.
- Use as a family engagement tool. Encourage families to attend upcoming school events.

Support

We are excited that you will be integrating Message from Me into your classroom environment! Please contact us with technical support needs, issues with the iPad app, or questions regarding the Caregivers app or website. We also can provide support in the development of strategies, overcoming challenges when integrating Message from Me into your classroom, assessment and documentation, or supporting family engagement.

Contact Message from Me at messagefromme@tryingtogether.org for any questions or requests. Our online [Help & Resources](#) section includes frequently asked questions and other tips as well.

Welcome to Message from Me!