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Interviewer: Mother of 4 children ages 14, 12, 11, 8

Interviewer: First of all, just tell me about your family. So, how many children do you have?

Emily: Four children.

Interviewer: Okay. What are their ages?

Emily: Ages 14, 12, but she'll be 13 in two weeks, 11, and 8.

Interviewer: Okay. I'll ask you to think specifically about your 8 and 11 year old, but you can also think about your older children, kind of how your practices have changed, things like that, you know, what you've noticed over time.

Emily: Okay. That's one thing I was gonna mention to you actually is the change, so that's interesting.

Interviewer: Great. Great. First, tell me about the devices, the screen media devices in your household.

Emily: That are currently in the house at this time?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Emily: We have two larger iPads and then, what did they call it, an iPad Mini. The older two girls have phones. The 11 year old, my son, has an iPod Touch that was donated to him from his older sister. Then we have a laptop computer, which no one really uses but my husband for work. They have an Xbox. We have three TVs, if that's what we're counting. Then I have a phone. My husband has a phone. I'm just trying to think as we're talking. Now, we have what's called a Wii U. I don't know if that's a system. We have a Wii You. It's up on the third floor, so no one uses it really. They're scared of the third floor. I think that's it. We have they're called ... What were they called, iPods, that used to have music loaded on them?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Emily: We have a couple of those floating around, but no one has used them, but they're in the house.

Interviewer: Right. Right. Okay. Thinking about your 8 and 11 year old, what screens do they use mostly?

Emily: My son has the iPod Touch, which he will use if he's desperate. He primarily wants to use the iPad and the Xbox.

Interviewer: Okay. What does he use the iPod Touch for?

Emily: Well, he has probably two to four friends on there that he maybe will say, "Hi," and they say, "Hi," back. He will text me, "Why do I have to go watch my sister's game?" That was last night. He might have a couple of games loaded on there. Then he has music, but I would tell you at this point he probably doesn't gravitate to it for music.

Interviewer: Interesting. Yeah.

Emily: That's primarily it.

Interviewer: So, it's kind of like-

Emily: He doesn't have any like ... Snapchat, we wouldn't let him have that, or Instagram, Facebook, so he doesn't ... Twitter or whatever.

Interviewer: It's a little bit like a pre-mobile phone-

Emily: Correct

Interviewer: ... kind of moving into a cell phone. That's kind of how he's using it.

Emily: Yes. Exactly.

Interviewer: Xbox and you have a shared iPad.

Emily: There's two iPads that are shared but one's really my husband's, and it goes to work, but when it comes home and my husband let's them use it, so they can ... That's the bigger iPad. Then there's a iPad Mini that he uses also.

Interviewer: Oh. Okay. Do you know what he does on those?

Emily: He's not doing engineering. You know, it's probably games. I don't know what's popular, probably Minecraft. He does not, again ... I don't know if he'd know how to use a phone currently, to be honest with you, meaning make a call. He can't on an iPad, but what I'm saying is he doesn't use these in any way to really talk to people. It's probably more for games at this point.

Interviewer: And your 11 year old, how is that different?

Emily: That's the 11 year old. I'm sorry.

Interviewer: Oh. Okay.

Emily: Did you ask me about the eight?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay. So, that was all 11.

Emily: Let's clarify. Everything I just said was for the 11 year old.

Interviewer: Okay. Great.

Emily: The eight year old doesn't have any system of her own. She wants to use my iPad for watching YouTube, videos on people doing slime or different things. She will take the other iPad or the iPad Mini when she's more desperate, meaning they don't have good games, or she likes the cooking cook, or there used to be a game where you took a cat to the dentist or something like that. She'll also do, and I probably won't get the names right, Alphabet City, or there's some games through school they've learned to do. Then we do a reading thing on there, where she can log her little reading. But she really wants to do it for games and YouTube. She does not know how to make a call or type to a friend or doesn't have anything like that.

Interviewer: Okay. She, it's mainly the iPad and the iPad Mini.

Emily: Correct. Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. And the Xbox?

Emily: Occasionally a phone. If we're in a restaurant, she'll borrow my phone or my husbands if we allow it.

Interviewer: To play games?

Emily: To play games, or there's a colors thing now. I don't know. It's a color by number that you used to be able to-

Interviewer: Sure. Sure.

Emily: But now you can do it online or do it on a thing. Xbox, not really. The only one who uses it, not to gender-fy the situation, is my son primarily.

Interviewer: Yeah. They are quite different. Does your son watch YouTube videos? You didn't mention that.

Emily: You know, I would say he probably does, but if I take an iPad away, YouTube is not up for him. I'm sorry to talk to long, but I run a chess club at the school, and a couple of kids were very upset with me about styrofoam cups, which I get are bad for you or bad for the environment, but I was desperate for a drink. I needed a cup. Two kids said to me, "You know, you really shouldn't be using them." Then a mom said to me, "I think there's a YouTube on that." My son didn't say it to me,

but what I'm saying is he could be in that zone of watching some YouTube stuff or whatever, but not as much as my daughter.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. I guess that's another question is do they have access to devices in other places, like your son might be watching YouTube videos do you think with a friend, or do you know maybe?

Emily: Maybe at school. They have computer time. I would be surprised if they had unfettered access to YouTube at school, personally. I know that my daughter has ... They have Chromebooks at school, in the little school. She's in second grade. We recently had a Girl Scout meeting, and they were able to pull up the Chromebooks. We wanted them to do research on National Geographic or PBS. We kind of talked about how you find out information. All these girls, but my daughter specifically was able to name three or four websites that seemed to be more learning websites. Again, I'm sorry. One's like Alphabet City I think or Math Multiplier. I think there's that. Now, at another friends house, I would think for my son it would be Xbox.

Interviewer: Okay. Right. So, they're kind of sharing the same games and-

Emily: Right. Not-

Interviewer: Do they play online together?

Emily: Well, yes, but in different houses. Is that what you're saying?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Emily: Correct. Yes.

Interviewer: Then when they're together, they can play in the same space.

Emily: We want them to play outside. Okay? You know?

Interviewer: Yeah. But when it's ten below zero-

Emily: Yes. Right. He'll say, "I want to go to the basement. I want to play with [Zane 00:07:30]." That's his friend, our neighbor. They play a game called Fortnite, which is big right now.

Interviewer: I don't know that one. Excellent.

Emily: Yeah. I don't know what it is, but that's big. You might hear it from other people. They play this Fortnite, and I think you team up, and then you can win a battle and get a point or something.

Interviewer: Kind of, yeah, sounds like a logical kind of move in video games there. Okay. Relatives, do they play with cousins or anyone?

Emily: No. Our family's out East, so we don't have anyone local. He, my son, at 11, wouldn't think to text my sister or his cousins, so that would be no right now at least. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, think about, we'll take your daughter and son separately, so think about their day, like a typical day, maybe yesterday. Walk me through from kind of, you know, the time they get up until they go to bed and kind of what screens they'll be interacting with.

Emily: Okay. Do you want me to say them both together or separate?

Interviewer: No. Separately. Yeah.

Emily: I can't believe we're talking about yesterday. Tuesday or Wednesday you told my daughter-

Interviewer: You can say a different day.

Emily: Okay, because they got to watch TV yesterday morning, which is extremely rare.

Interviewer: Okay. Let's choose a different day.

Emily: Let's of Tuesday or ... A normal day would be they get up, there's no screens. We're getting ready for school. The radio or something might be on. Then we go to school. What they do at school, I know they have some computer time, but it's nothing unmonitored. When they get home, they can self-choose from 3:00 to ... School ends at 3:00. There's no electronics in our house currently from 5:00 to 7:00. When they get home, they can play game systems if they want. We sort of did that, because now it's getting nicer out, and they'll come out with me, and we'll do the dogs, or we'll throw the ball. It's kind of my way to sort of ... but also my son wants to get home and run downstairs to the basement. Okay? So, let's say 3:00 to 5:00, if my son can play the Xbox, if that's what he wants. My daughter can do the TV, watch a show, or she can have the iPad and play.

Then 5:00 to 7:00 there's no electronics at all. Then at 7:00 ... My kids haven't gotten smart enough, even though I've told them, "You really need to do all your homework between 5:00 and 7:00, because you won't have time. You need to shower later." So, then after that, we were trying to decrease any sort of tug-o-war, but now there's a tug-o-war, because they can get back on electronics, but we're saying, "You need to take a shower. You have to come in and do your math homework. You haven't done your spelling." You know what I'm trying to say?

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Emily: Okay. Anyways, let's just say 3:00 to 5:00, maybe they're outside/inside playing, but they can play with the screens. 5:00 to 7:00, nothing. Then I would say by 8:30 there's no screens at all, so maybe from 7:-- to 8:30 you're gonna have a period of time where someone could be on a screen, you know? Like my son was texting me last night, but now that was actually a different ... That was at 6:00, because he had to get in the car and didn't want to go, but anyway. They really don't have access. Then they can have it again, but I think it's not straight one hour and a half. It's kind of like, "Go take your shower. You got to run upstairs and get your thing. You have to do your spelling. You should do your reading," but by 8:30, then it's over.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. And dinner's in there somewhere as well.

Emily: Dinner's in between 5:00 and 7:00. Right.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yup. You're not alone. Everyone is exhausted who have three teens. Is that different in the winter do you think?

Emily: Well, I got very upset, because I don't like to have to always say to them, "You get off the iPad. There's none of this, none of that." The 5:00 to 7:00 rule has probably been in place three months. Before that, there's something that happened. January 4th is my son's birthday. He got what is called an Xbox One card, so then you get a membership. I don't know all the ... I think you get a membership. Then you can play these games with your friends. Prior to that, the Xbox was very minimally used in our house. If I could take it back or do something different, maybe I would. At that point, again, "Can I play the iPad?" "Sure." "I want to watch a show." "Okay. Sure." Then we got him this card, and it seemed to open the floodgates of, "I want to use the Xbox 24/7." So, then I was like, "Well, we have to do something."

Interviewer: Oh. Interesting.

Emily: They go to practice at night, so I was trying to give them some down time, if it's winter and we can't go outside all the time, but also put some limits, so the 5:00 to 7:00, that's how that came in.

Interviewer: Do they have after school activities you're squeezing in there as well?

Emily: Well, my daughter comes here once a month for a book club. She goes to Girl Scouts after school once or twice a month. She goes to the neighbors and plays. She might play until 4:00. My son will have baseball at 4:00 twice a week, and he'll have soccer one day a week right after school.

Interviewer: So, there's not really a typical day.

Emily: No. Right. Yes you can have it from 3:00 to 5:00, but I know, as the parent, you're not gonna be home. You're gonna be busy, or you're going to your friends. So, I just was really trying to eliminate ... like lower some of this.

Interviewer: Okay. So, you intentionally chose 3:00 to 5:00, because you knew that that was also a kind of busy time, so it wouldn't be like every single day they're gonna be on-

Emily: Right. Because my daughter will say, "Can I run to the neighbors?" I say, "Yes." I know she's playing outside, or if she's inside ... because the little boy's four. There's a daughter that's a year older than her. They're playing around. Then she'll come home. Okay. You can have downtime before dinner, but 5:00, it's over anyway. You know?

Interviewer: Yeah. Then it's their choice as well, right?

Emily: Correct.

Interviewer: And so that's giving them their autonomy. Yeah. Yeah.

Emily: I feel like we're not always saying no.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. My next question's about kind of how everything fits into your routine, which you've kind of answered, because you're using screens as ... the purpose of screens is kind of down time, and choice time, and communication, and kind of friendship practices with your son it sounds like.

Emily: In a sense, that's true, because he'll get on with some other friends too. I think sometimes if the littlest one is upset ... She's the littlest. The older ones, of course, never acted like she did, never did anything she does. You know, the little one never is first, or never wins, or doesn't know anything. So, sometimes I will give it to her. She's upset, and I'll say to her, [inaudible 00:14:16] "Why don't you take this screen, and you can ... or take my iPad and go relax." I will say that to her. Probably not a good habit.

Interviewer: So, kind of chill out time. Tell me how, now thinking about your older children, how things have changed.

Emily: We never allowed any TV or anything during the week. I hate to even say how ... I don't even know how we got here. You know what I'm saying?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Emily: I think the change ... When they were little, there was no TV during the week at all, Friday after school, but Monday, Tuesday there was no ... and there was no screens. The girls do not really play ... They maybe would play the Wii, but not

really. You know, I don't know, Mario Kart or something. They do not play Xbox, so that's out. The one daughter had an iPod Touch when she was ... I'm trying to think, because it's hers that got handed down. Let's say fifth grade, for Christmas maybe. She loves music, so she had it primarily for music. I don't know the timing of some things, but I would say in fifth grade, and she's in seventh now, was there ...? She wouldn't have had any social media anyway, so primarily it was music. She'd have her iPod Touch. When you start sixth grade, you get a phone, because they walk to school. They start doing activities, although when I grew up, of course there were no phones, and it was fine. But you know what I'm saying?

Interviewer: Yeah. Absolutely.

Emily: Today's world. That is what sort of opened the flood gates I would say is the phone, because you can do everything on your phone. You know? The older daughter, the oldest one, who's 14, she got a phone at sixth grade, so that means her sister's fifth grade and had the iPod touch. The girl with the phone, the oldest, barely used it, wasn't as into it. Then seventh grade hits. She would maybe use it. She had like five friends on there. I text her. She's not texting me back. She doesn't know what's she's ... You know, slow to the phone use. [crosstalk 00:16:23]

Interviewer: Was it a smart phone?

Emily: It was a smart phone, but just not as social as her sister. Her sister gets in sixth grader. Her sister has 200 friends on there, you know, streaks, texting, whatever it is. I told them both, "No Instagram or Snapchat for at least a year, or let's see how this phone goes." You know what I'm saying. The second one had Instagram without us knowing after about six months. We took it away. We solved that problem, but then ... okay. There's a sixth grader and a seventh grader. Seventh grader catches on, and so she uses her phone.

Now, you have the two littles, "Why are they on their phones? I can't be on my thing. I don't have anything. I need something." That's why finally I got ... The iPod Touch was locked out. We didn't know the password. I finally went to Apple at the start of this year, got the iPod Touch working for my son in fifth grade. We went from really nothing, kind of a little slow into it. My husband got an iPad Mini through work. I don't know if he won it or something. I had an iPad, so it slowly started to build. You know?

Interviewer: Yeah. Totally.

Emily: Then the Xbox One card comes into play. It doesn't mean we have to change our beliefs, but sort of we ended up absorbing the societal phone, and I got streaks. I got to use them.

Interviewer: Yeah. It's also about presents, right? What do you get when kids turn certain ages, right? So, the Xbox card, you know-

Emily: He really wanted it.

Interviewer: Yeah. At that age you kind of want to get something significant, and that I find a really common theme.

Emily: Oh. Okay. Well, because they don't want to play toys as much anymore.

Interviewer: Yeah. You can't just buy them a \$5, \$10 toy, right?

Emily: Right, which we used to do.

Interviewer: That's part of it too I imagine, it sounds like, in your case.

Emily: I mean, if I did not have to get my son a phone in sixth grade, I would not. I know I don't have to. I'm the parent, my husband and I. He will feel hurt, because his sister's got it, but he will not be using the phone to text or call I don't think. He doesn't know how to really do it now. He's learning. I think it's going to be quick. He'll start in on me about probably Snapchat or Instagram. You know, I can see how this is gonna roll, so I don't want to ... We'll see.

Interviewer: Okay. You said no TV for the older kids, so do the younger kids have access? Do they watch television, or is it really just kind of the gaming and YouTube [crosstalk 00:18:55]

Emily: They'll have the TV on from let's say it's 3:00 to 5:00. Let's say they don't go outside and do anything else, so 3:00 to 5:00 the TV will be on, Bunked or Phineas and Ferb I think is on Netflix now, so we'll play that, but they'll both be sitting there like, "Woo."

Interviewer: So, multitasking.

Emily: Right. I shouldn't say nobody. My daughter, which you're not really talking about, but just quick, the older one has started to watch some shows that her friends watch. There's this show called Riverdale. You may have heard of it from people. I don't exactly know what it is. So, she wants to watch that. It's on at 7:00, whatever night, but no one else really watches a particular show like I would have done as a kid, right?

Interviewer: Yes. I totally get it.

Emily: Thursday, everyone, come on. It's on. I don't watch ... I mean, I'll have the TV on occasionally, but at night I don't watch TV. I don't have the time. My husband wouldn't watch TV probably until the kids are in bed. So, TV for them is probably

on in the background, or if I say, "You're not using my iPad," then she might turn on the TV.

Interviewer: Right. That's interesting.

Emily: I mean, they like TV. They want that TV on, but it's not, you know ... We might do a movie night.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. Well, just one more thing connected with that. When the kids were really young, kind of preschool, they weren't into TV, even your younger ones didn't use TV, didn't watch TV, wasn't part of their practice?

Emily: No. I would say the 11 year old, a little bit more than the two sisters. IT would be special, "Okay. It's 2:00. Let's turn on a show." I can't remember saying that statement all the time. So, the eight year old, it was just she and I at home-

Interviewer: Oh. Different.

Emily: ... for a little bit of time, because my other ones were close together. So, she probably watched more TV than anybody. I would say preschool she went to 4K, and then we would run errands or do whatever, but she would like sometimes ... She would use her words. These would be her words, "I want to go in and relax and watch TV."

Interviewer: Those are her words?

Emily: Yeah. The older two, it wouldn't have been something perhaps they thought of, because we didn't do it.

Interviewer: Right. Yeah. Yeah.

Emily: But also then the baby, she gets exposed, because if we're doing a movie night or whatever it is, she's involved. I don't know. The youngest seems to get more sugary cereal earlier, snacks, or ... I don't know.

Interviewer: Thinking about kind of how the kids learned to use the devices and how they know what games to download or whatever, can you trace any of that? Is it friends or relatives who've made suggestions about what to do on the devices, or do you know where they get their ideas from?

Emily: It would primarily be friends. Then I would say maybe YouTube. Let me say this. What my daughter will watch, the older ... I know you're not talking about her, but the 13, 12 year old and my son, which drives me insane, they'll watch a video of someone playing Minecraft.

Interviewer: Yup. Let's play videos. Yup.

Emily: Is that what it is? Is that YouTube thing?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Emily: Okay. That to me is maybe YouTube is the way that they hear about whatever, but I remember a Christmas, I asked my sister, "What's a game? We might get Butter a game." My son's name, his nickname is Butter, so we call him Butter. I was like, "What should we get Butter?" She said, "There's a game called Forza or something like that," so I looked for that. Then my cousin was like, "Oh. I'm looking for the Star Wars game?" I'm like, "Me too." So, there's a little bit of that, but my son probably hears it at school or through friends, "I got to get Fortnite. I need this Xbox One card."

Interviewer: The eight year old, your daughter?

Emily: She learns, like I said, more the education stuff at school.

Interviewer: Oh. That's right. Yeah.

Emily: She's probably picking up things from YouTube or her siblings, but she doesn't know ... She doesn't play Fortnite, or she doesn't know-

Interviewer: The social media kinds of things?

Emily: Yeah. And Minecraft, I know that she got yelled at one time at the house by the kids, because she might have destroyed a house, so I think she knows how to use it. Where did she learn to do the color thing, the color by number? It's on my phone and my husband's phone. I didn't load it. Maybe my husband did. That maybe was through a sibling, through [inaudible 00:23:29] to Parker.

Interviewer: Yeah. What about when they need help with something, getting started on something or fixing something, do they go first to their siblings do you think, the younger ones?

Emily: They probably would not go to me, because I kind of try ... I'm not on social media. I never have been. I'm not technologically astute, so I would say they would probably go to my husband or their sister, [Jenna]. They probably wouldn't go to the older one. I mean, they might, but [Jenna's] more laid back.

Interviewer: She's the social-

Emily: The older one's kind of the boss. You know what I mean?

Interviewer: Yeah. Part of what you're saying is like personalities, there's a combination of where they are in the family, their personalities. You know, there's a lot of factors at play. Yeah. Who makes decisions about purchases? How has that worked out?

Emily: Well, they can't purchase any ... They have to come through me. I'm the only one that has the code, so they have to come to me. Then my son was so angry because ... I don't know. Well, not angry, but upset with me. When we had that iPod Touch redone and they had to do the whole password, somehow ... I don't really understand it. So, now, if he wants to download any game, even if it's free, I have to give permission, which I'm happy about, but it drives him insane. Then I didn't remember how to give permission.

This was a big deal one time recently for a game. He didn't want to use the iPod Touch. "I don't have any good games on there." I said, "Well, why don't you download a couple?" "I can't. I have to get permission, and you don't know how to do it." It was this whole thing, and he was right. I didn't not know how to remember how to do it, but then we figured it out. They can't purchase anything. The only thing they can purchase essentially, even when they asked me is probably a song. I don't want to buy those games.

Interviewer: Yeah. But you're happy for them to download most of the free stuff?

Emily: Well, within ... Like I always have to know what it is, but I still don't even really know what it is. I don't even really know what Fortnite is, to be honest with you, which is unfortunate.

Interviewer: So, does their father ...? Do they ask their father at all?

Emily: Well, they ask him too, but then he might say, "Go ask mom," because it is my ... It's not a secret. I'm sure he knows the code, or I could tell my husband the code, but he'll come to me. Somehow we have a couple of issues. One of the phones, the oldest daughter's phone, is kind of connected to my phone and my husbands, so if I text my husband, "I'll see you at 2:00," she gets a text sometimes. I don't know how that all happened, but probably parental guidelines. Then my second daughter's phone is really through me too. I don't want them buying things or even getting free things without me knowing. I'm not the best at monitoring it, but that's one thing I try and do.

Interviewer: Then in terms of hardware or the Xbox card, was that kind of it came first from the kids, your son, the Xbox card-

Emily: He wanted it.

Interviewer: He really wanted it. Then you made the decision or you and your husband made the decision?

Emily: We made the decision without probably looking at consequences.

Interviewer: How would you know?

Emily: My friend said to me, "Oh, yeah. You can get online, and you can talk to friends." Her son's name is [PJ]. "I'll get you PJ and [Chris]. We'll get you their online things and whatever." Well, then they were over, let's say New Years Eve. My son's birthday's the 4th. I said, "Well, go down and play Xbox." Well, they came up kind of frustrated, because we didn't have the card, and so you couldn't play ... I guess you can play a game, but you can't play against others online, whatever it is. I don't know. These boys are older, so then my son was disappointed and depressed, you know, sad. That's when a few days later he gets the Xbox card.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. It sounds like they're using the devices independently. What guidance have you given them on how to use the ...? Let's start with the iPads and the iPad Mini.

Emily: You know, the littlest, knows that she can watch a family making Play-Doh, or slime is big, or again, she likes to watch other people having a picnic lunch or whatever it might be.

Interviewer: Right. These are YouTube videos.

Emily: Yeah. YouTube videos. Because they can't download anything else without us knowing, they have to come ... They don't know the code. That helps a little. The YouTube thing is a problem. She knows the type that we're telling her, and then I'll come in and, "What are you watching?" Then it's like a mom feeding SpaghettiOs to the kids or whatever. You know what I'm saying?

Interviewer: Yes.

Emily: She's okay with it, but I think as time goes on, I'll probably have to get more vigilante, because she'll have more exposure I believe, and could get exposure now, but does not know how to use the internet. She does at school. I guess she could get on National Geographic, but she's not doing that at home. She doesn't know what's a Safari. We have [crosstalk 00:28:54] She wouldn't know how to do that. So, she's just a YouTuber and the games that are loaded, Dr. Dentist or whatever I said. Then do you want to know about my son?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Emily: My son is a rule follower, like his older sister. He, of course, in fifth grade knows how to get on the internet. I might say to him, "Can you look up the weather for mom? Can you get on mom's iPad and look up the weather?" It doesn't go well. He's not astute at it, but he can do it. I'm not in this zone right now where I think he's looking things up, like ... I don't know what to say, but you know what I mean? Things he might want to at that age. The games, again, it's just because we know it's on there, but like I said before, I don't know how they got the Color Me thing I think it's called. I think my husband loaded that. So, they could probably sneak something by us.

Interviewer: That's part of being a kid.

Emily: Right. I just feel it's worse now though, because there's so much out there.

Interviewer: And Xbox.

Emily: That's a problem, because you can play against anybody, so my son knows to not talk about anything personal, in a sense. We've always said to him, "You don't know ..." But he only plays people he knows, but that's gonna change too I'm sure. I say to him, "Who are playing with?" "I'm playing with my friends." Okay. But is it a friend that, you know, you just became friends with, because you're on the system? We talk to him about it, but I'm not always 100% sure. But I've said to him, "Don't answer questions, like do you live here or you do this? I'm home alone. Don't ever answer questions."

Interviewer: Okay. So, you've given some basic stranger danger type of tips.

Emily: That kind of stuff. Right. Do you know that they wear these, right?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Emily: Yeah. That was a desperate gift that came along after with birthday money, because I didn't know about that.

Interviewer: I totally get it. Okay. At the moment, everything [inaudible]. How have you made these decisions? They've changed over time, so at the moment, talk to me about the decision, how you kind of came to the decisions about everything we've just talked about. Actually, let's go back to when your first two were young, and you said no television. How did you make that decision?

Emily: Well, I just thought it would be better for them. My husband and I are big readers. We just thought it would be better, plus more creativity, more involvement. To be honest, I think my oldest daughter has really good work skills, study habits because of it. It's also her personality. You know how environment and all that. But we just felt this is just the right way to be. We were living in Minneapolis, which is very liberal, and we're very don't have red food dye. Goldfish used to have something in it. They don't now. You know, that whole scene?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Emily: So, my husband and I are older parents, so a lot of the parents we knew were a little bit younger, maybe more invested in that lifestyle [inaudible 00:32:16]. We also were invested in it, but also maybe that environment was with us too.

Interviewer: Interesting. Yeah.

Emily: Then you maybe get more tired or older, I don't know, and we started down that road that we talked about before. Then all of a sudden, if you said to me, "Well, how did you decide that they could watch TV all the time?", I don't know if I can answer that directly. It kind of rolled-

Interviewer: It creeps.

Emily: It crept in. I recently said to my son, I said, "Do you realize, the girls, your sisters never ...? There was no TV during the week at all." He remembers it, because he's only two and a half years younger than ... or 20 months or something younger. He probably since let's say fourth grade we were less restrictive, because in fourth grade two girls had phones. So, third grade, does he remember a ton? It was sort of a slippery slope. I can't even honestly say to you, "I made an active decision to let them have more time and spend more time." You don't have an iPad. Then all of a sudden, you have an iPad. What does an iPad do? Then you start to get into it. Then the kids are like, "Can I download," whatever some of the first games were. "Sure you can."

Then it just becomes you can go to restaurants and they'll have tablets. Not now so much, but let's say two years ago, we would pick a restaurant that had tablets, because then we're out. My husband and I can talk, and they're on machines, which isn't right, because we don't allow any electronics at the dinner table, but it's mixed messages to the kids really. You know, if we go out, you can use it, but you can't ... If I were to be honest-

Interviewer: That's so interesting.

Emily: ... I'm not thrilled, but then on the other answer to your question is you don't have to do everything society does. Just because everybody has a membership to this gym, you don't have to get one, but your kids want to be in the peer group. They want to be liked, and so you make certain decisions for their sense of wellbeing. Middle school's a dog fight a lot of times, trying to figure out who you are, who everybody else is, right? So, you don't give them a phone so that they fit in, but they have a phone primarily, again, for safety I suppose. But we live in a small town that's safe, so it's kind of a convoluted way of coming around to society. Everybody has phones, so they have phones. Does that makes sense?

Interviewer: Absolutely.

Emily: Everybody has the Xbox One card, so I guess you can have one. That's part of it, I have to be honest. There's a sliver in there that's ..., "Everybody, mom, has an Instagram. Why can't I have it? Everybody has it."

Interviewer: Yeah. So, you have said no to Instagram and Snapchat, right?

Emily: Right.

Interviewer: Tell me about that decision.

Emily: Well, I felt like your first year, you're in sixth grade ... What are you, 11 at that point, 12? You do not need Instagram. I can't even tell you ... Is Snapchat the one where you take the picture and it disappears?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Emily: Instagram is more like a hi and a [crosstalk 00:35:30]

Interviewer: They stay there.

Emily: You say hi back kind of deal?

Interviewer: It's images as well, but you can put text on. Yeah.

Emily: To me, I'm like, "You don't need that, in my opinion." You know? It's probably baseless, because now they both have it now. It's been a year, but for the first year I don't feel like you need it. Show responsibility with the phone. The phone is so if mom texts you and says, "Where are you?", or mom has to run to the store, you answer me back, or if I call you, you answer the phone kind of thing. It's not about having 200 streaks that you have to ... because I think there's a lot of pressure with these phones and things. "If I can't find my phone, I have 10 streaks. I'm gonna lose my streak. You don't get it." You don't need that kind of pressure, in my opinion. Get into sixth grade, understand there's more homework. It's more rigorous. You can do school sports now, well, one or two in sixth grade, so why don't you do that? That's kind of how I made the decision.

Interviewer: Okay. You're kind of trying to simplify things.

Emily: Ease in.

Interviewer: And ease in. Yeah. Yeah. I forgot. Oh. Did you think about your own childhood experiences when you were kind of making decisions? I mean, you said you're a reader, so it's partly about that.

Emily: Okay. The 80s in high school, the 70s, my childhood, we each had a TV in our room. I would never allow that now. I have a masters degree. My sisters, every went to college, is doing fine. But I would not have a TV in the kids' rooms. They beg. One of them begs for it. We didn't have a ton of limits. You know what I'm saying? We had Atari. I don't know if that ... I can remember probably playing Ms Pac-Man. I didn't do Tetris or some of those. I know my brother was into it. I don't know. My husband had probably more limits. I just didn't think it was a great idea to always be on TV. Why don't you play outside? We did a lot of arts and crafts at home. Why don't you do that instead? You know, let's play games or

toys. So, that was kind of what drove it, but growing up, we didn't have a ton of limits.

Interviewer: Yeah. What about kind of how you're making choices about content? Do you think about whether something's educational or not, and has that changed?

Emily: I want it all to be educational, but it's not. I would say I am, if you had a scale 1 to 10, 10 being vigilante, 1 being not involved at all, I'm probably like a 5/6. I'm trying to be more involved. Part of the issue is, of course, I have no interest in it as an adult. If you and I were friends, love to hear about your life or tell me how your party went. I'm not into Facebook, for me personally. So, I don't get it. Why do you care about Instagram? Why do you want to know what's going on? If that answers your question at all.

I will say this quickly. I have had long conversations with the kids. One of the problems is people will, girls especially right now, will take pictures. I don't know if someone else in this study has said this. You know, you'll be by a mirror I think. Say you're the mirror, and then I'm my image. I take the picture, and the flash kind of obscures me. Maybe I have a bra and underwear on. Then that'll get sent out. So, I said to my girls, "You take a picture like that, and you put it on the thing, you will not have a phone anymore. I just want you to understand that. You will have no phone. Number two, if someone sends you one of those and you forward it to anybody, you will no longer have a phone."

Now, is that a baseless threat, in the sense that I'm not like a 10, I'm not checking their phone every day? It could be, right? So, I have to follow up on that and be checking the phones, which I do at times. I try to give them some autonomy. Do not be forwarding those photos, and don't you ever send a photo, but it's rampant. I just had a conversation with my son. I said, "Butter, when you have your phone and one of your friends says something, and they're joking, and they say, 'Oh. I'm gonna go to that school, and I'm gonna cause heck or whatever,' you do not respond, and even if you think he's joking, if you think it's appropriate, you're not being a snitch here, but you need to tell someone. But do not forward it, and do not respond to it, because this is not a good idea. Don't be on there and somebody's joking. It doesn't matter if they're joking. With our society today ... 'I'm gonna do something at this school.'"

He's like, "Why would anyone do that?" I said, "It's just the way life is. Do not respond." It's kind of hard. I don't know if that's the content question, but we try and stay on top of it, but they could have a game on there right now that I don't even know the name of, so it's a tough battle.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. Yeah. That's answered a lot of content questions as well, things that you worry about. Anything else that you worry about?

Emily: Well, I don't like when these girls post on these stories. I don't know where the story is, if the story's on Instagram. I don't know if you know.

Interviewer: Instagram has stories. Yeah.

Emily: You know, my life is sad. I thought about killing myself. I'm a therapist. I'm just like, "Don't put it on there," I want to say to these girls, because it's not the best way to get help. If you're really uncomfortable, I want you to talk to your parent. Some of them don't have that. Anyway, it's too much I think. So, then my daughter will come home and say, "Oh. This one said, 'Blah. Blah. Blah.'" It's hard for me to say, "I can't go into a whole thing. Is she really sad? Is she depressed? What do you think's going on or what's not?" I said, "Well, maybe she's just whatever," I said, "Honey, just ..." It's just too much sometimes. That's what I don't like about social media and a lot of other things.

Interviewer: Absolutely. That drama.

Emily: The drama. Right. Living it with other people.

Interviewer: And it's 24/7. Yeah. Okay. Have there been any resources that have been helpful for you for making decisions about screen media practices?

Emily: I have not read a book. What I will do is read anything that pops up. I'm not seeking it out. I have to be honest. But if the New York Times, because I tend to read that when I have time every day, like little articles, if something will come up about screen time, or if I'm home alone watching ABC Morning News or something and they say something about it, or like NPR is on. I don't tend to read books. I'll talk to friends and find out what they do. A neighbor will say, "We're electronics free for two weeks, just so you know." Sometimes, I don't know if that helps, but that would maybe be a resource.

Interviewer: Definitely, yeah.

Emily: I try and follow guidelines that some expert has said in an article or something.

Interviewer: Yeah. I know you have your screen free time. Do you have also limits, like per session, per day of anything, screen time?

Emily: Well, I mean, if they used it every minute we allowed it, they could probably have three and a half hours, which I think is way too much. No. I hope for self-imposed, myself, kind of stuff that comes up, or-

Interviewer: Do you feel like that two hour, the 5:00 to 7:00, is helping that?

Emily: I do. I do a little bit.

Interviewer: Interesting.

Emily: Because it does break it up, and of course, they're outside playing, they're doing the trampoline. We're playing tennis. We don't have a net, but we just hit it around, or volleyball, or whatever.

Interviewer: Okay. Has any advice been particularly helpful for you?

Emily: Well, I like talking to like if it's my good friends, who's my neighbor, I like to hear what other people do, because then sometimes I'll piggy back.

Interviewer: Yeah, because it's a friend thing, especially with your Xbox player, with your son.

Emily: Yes. But see, now I feel like sometimes friends kids, who are like fifth, sixth, seventh grade boys, can play it whenever they want. I had a friend recently, she took the Xbox away. The son was finding the controller. Well, she took the controller. Found the controllers. So, she was working on it. I mean, I will say one last quick thing. My sister, so her daughter's valedictorian this year of a class of 465. Her son last year was number four in the class, the son before that number 10, I mean, smarties. Not a single limit. TVs in their rooms. Electronics whenever they want. So, I don't know. You know what I'm saying?

Interviewer: Absolutely.

Emily: I do not know what really ... She kind of followed I guess my parents' example of ... We didn't do anything bad. You know what I'm saying? TV was different then too. You only saw the show when it was on. I supposed my kids could Netflix something if they really were looking for something, but they're just on cartoony or whatever. I don't know. If I listen to my sister, you know, it'd be different.

Interviewer: Yeah. Okay. Let's see. Anything that you feel like you'd like further guidance on?

Emily: I would like to see less dependence on the phones and the screens. I would. I don't know. You know.

Interviewer: Dependence on kind of-

Emily: I mean, I use that word-

Interviewer: For?

Emily: I just mean why are you so worried about these streaks? But I get it intellectually that their friends are doing it. They have to send a picture every day or whatever. I understand it, but it's so dumb to me. You know, or my son, "Mom, I had practice at 4:00 to 5:15, so I missed out on some time. Do you think I could have some time now?" "Well, why do you worry about that?" I'm thinking did I ... Have we

been too loose the last couple years, so that now they're like so into it? I guess guidance would be loving to hear what other people do and see if I can kind of copy them or piggyback on what I'm doing.

Interviewer: Okay. The last questions are really about you, trying to get a sense of our demographics. The first one is your use of technologies. What do you do, communication, entertainment, work?

Emily: I read the New York TIMES on my iPad. I check my emails, and I text. I shouldn't say I don't have any games. I maybe have a game on there, but I don't play any games. I've never played like Candy Crush. On my phone, I might look up CNN, or I did do OverDrive for a while, but then somehow it got knocked off my phone. I don't know. I have to reload, and then I don't know the passwords. Then I'm just like I don't know.

Interviewer: Any creative production type stuff?

Emily: You mean like graphic design or that?

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Or video making?

Emily: No.

Interviewer: Okay. Then would you describe yourself as an expert, or a beginner, or somewhere in between, in relation to kind of technologies generally?

Emily: Beginner.

Interviewer: Your husband. Does he have a similar experience, background?

Emily: He sees patients, so he does files or clients' charts at night sometimes. In terms of how he is with ... like beginner, intermediate, not what he does.

Interviewer: Right. Beginner, intermediate.

Emily: He's probably at least intermediate to more of an expert. He went through quote a bit of schooling, and I think they did a lot of it online, not online classes, but I think ... You know.

Interviewer: He had some training in that area?

Emily: Yeah. He files the taxes online. He knows how to ... I said to him, "We have to upload our son's thing, health form." "Oh. I can do it here from work, or I can do it at home. Why don't I just do it at home." I have no idea how to do it. I mean, I had to do it recently one time, and I tried to download an app. I had to text somebody to say, "How do I scan," which I know is probably very easy. I just

don't do it. I'm like my mother in that. I don't even know how to turn on the Xbox. I should probably learn.

Interviewer: Then just basic demographic information. Are you and your husband both white, non-Hispanic?

Emily: Correct.

Interviewer: You said you have a masters degree?

Emily: Correct.

Interviewer: And your husband?

Emily: MD.

Interviewer: He's a doctor, and you're a counselor. Right?

Emily: Correct.

Interviewer: That's it then. Anything else you think we should know about the topic?

Emily: We're older parents. That's the only thing. Maybe younger parents have different views or different ways of, you know ... because I have friends who are in their 30s-

Interviewer: Oh. That is different.

Emily: ... who know how to use technology a lot more and who have Instagram, and a Snapchat, and all that, and are friends with some of my daughter's age kids. I don't judge them. For myself, no. I don't know if that helps with the study.

Interviewer: No. It does. It does.

Emily: I'm 50. My husband's 51.

Interviewer: I could recognize everything you're saying. I'm 51, so I could recognize everything you were saying about the 70s and 80s.

Emily: You know what I'm saying? It's a little different. You know? I'll say to them "Well, what's that?" They'll be like, "Oh. Didn't you hear? It's on Facebook."

Interviewer: Oh. That's super helpful. Okay.