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Interviewee: Mother of son 21 and daughter 5

Interviewer: You have two kids, your son and your daughter. We're interested in the younger age group. So what kinds of devices do you have at home that she uses?

Interviewee: Well, she watches TV. We stream her shows and gauge it by what we think is appropriate for her age and what messages we want her to seek out into the world. Sometimes she tries using my phone which I don't let her do because I don't feel, it's not something that's comfortable for me at her age. What else do we use?

I mean, we basically like stream all of her entertainment that's like on TV onto our TVs or onto the computer, but she doesn't walk around with anything like an iPad. She doesn't have that.[crosstalk 00: 00: 57]

I didn't give my son that kind of stuff either. I just took him outside a lot and to a lot of museums and things like that, you know? That's what I did. I was the only mom who didn't give him a computer until he was in high school.

Interviewer: And how did you decide what age you would?

Interviewee: I just felt like that there were things that I couldn't control if I allowed him to go in that direction. I felt like he would be exposed to things he wasn't meant to be exposed to. So, when the school was like, you have to have a computer, he was in high school, you know. And it kind of became a thing where it became daily working on the computer. That's when we got a computer.

Interviewer: For the house?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: And how do you decide what TV shows to pay for her to watch and which ones you don't?

Interviewee: I like to go to a lot of the tired but true old things that I used for my son. But also I like to watch like the first half an hour of something to see what I think is the message, even if it's a movie because sometimes there's lots of things that they say, that kids shouldn't, I really don't think they should hear. So I like to watch with her and if it's like Sesame Street or something, I don't really feel uncomfortable. I don't think there's going to be any little innuendos or anything like that, so it's cool.

We watched a Disney movie yesterday, *Wreck It Ralph*, and I was like, I've never saw this so I'm going to have to sit here with you and check it out. So that's the way I do it with her.

Interviewer: One parent was telling us she saw Paddington 2 with her daughter without screening it and she was horrified [inaudible 00: 02: 43]. She said it was violent.

Interviewee: There's another new one that came out, *The Dog Show*. Have you heard about that? In *The Dog Show*, they talk about what happens in [inaudible 00: 02: 54] and one of the things I'm going to try to keep it G-rated since we're sitting in a library, but one of the things that they checked was the male anatomy. Like to see if it's perfect. Particularly testicles. In this Disney film. When the character becomes uncomfortable with this, they tell him to go to his happy place when someone's going to touch him. To me, that says it's acceptable to be touched even though your body's telling you it's not okay.

So yeah, that's why we screen everything she watches and we try not to...

One of our little friends online, she posted about it and then I looked into it more. I don't even go to the movies anymore. Like I don't go to the movie theater. Geraldine, watch out. [inaudible 00: 03: 48]

Interviewer: [crosstalk 00: 04: 24]So how do you decide on what rules to set in the family or how do you decide? Do you negotiate or [inaudible 00: 04: 34]?

Interviewee: Like discipline involving like entertainment and things like that as far as the TV and things like that?

Interviewer: Not necessarily discipline but deciding what she can watch and what she can't watch. How do you make these decisions?

Interviewee: Based on what I think is important, overall, not just inside my home, but overall. So she likes Barbie and I'm not a huge fan of it. But I do allow her to watch it sometimes. But to me, it just is...oh, I don't like to be negative but there is really no way to describe this. So to me, what I say, is just this unending cycle of commercialism.

So when I see her watching that, I see her getting ideas that you have to have this big house, and this big... you know, all this fancy jewelry and all these things. That's not what I'm about. I try to influence her in ways that I think will help her positively make social change or be a better person to everybody. You know what I mean? I don't want her... she wants to watch these little shows where these little rich girls...no, nothing bad intended, but they have money and they have disposable time so they set up these big things of whatever. Like stores for Barbies and then like one's a kitchen, and one's this and one's that.

The whining and the sounds that they make, it just becomes to me like, I can't take it. When I look at it, I think, hmm. Do I want her to emulate that? Do I want her to do that? So that's where I come from.

It's hard because there's a fine line between what I accept and what she may like. And then what's acceptable in between.

Interviewer: And what she's getting from friends/

Interviewee: Yeah. I can't control everything but she watched Barney for like the longest time and everybody thought it was so hysterical. They don't like him and all, but her

and my son both watch that and I can tell you that was the only way at times that I could like pick up or clean up real quick or make dinner or something.

I did the same thing that I did with him and I just trust my gut instinct. She's five but she knows who our president is. I like to see political things, that's something I like. And she knows what things are wrong that he's doing and she knows what other people that are doing that's wrong and I'm just trying to teach her to guide herself with love, but no harm but take no mess at the same time. You know what I mean? That balance.

Interviewer: So you mentioned that you have a group of friends online. Our next question is where do you go for advice? Who do you talk to? Are there any books, magazines, websites, anything, when you're thinking about media and kids?

Interviewee: Hm. I try to avoid the general consensus, so to speak. I am very different. If I would go to the school yard, I would probably be one out of seven parents who possibly cooks dinner every night. That kind of thing.

It's hard for me because I don't have people who are similar in my bubble, so to speak. But I do have one really good friend but we don't agree religiously and things like that so we always keep that off the table, you know what I mean? But we do agree spiritually, so that's helpful, no matter what. Your beliefs are, you do... I think I'm getting away from the question, but you overall want to make it so that the choices that you make, not only affect her positively, but everyone around us.

Did I get too far away from the question?

Interviewer: No.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: One thing we're interested to know is how much media has changed since we were kids. Is there any... do you feel like your parenting style differed from your parents' style or did that influence you or not?

Interviewee: Yeah, it did. And even now I get a lot of slack about not sending her to public school or not to school at all, to do homeschool. What I feel really strongly about is we've been indoctrinated with these ideas and ideals of what things should be like. So the first thing people say is, oh, if she doesn't go to school, she's not going to be social.

Well, she was born social, so I'm not going to like lock her up in a cage or something. I have a counselor and sometimes my mom goes with me to the counselor and I look to her a lot, my counselor, because she's objective. She's not my mom, she's not my dad, she's not my friend. When they were both jumping on me one time, I got really upset and I just completely, I stood up and I said, listen, I'm raising my kids different than the way you guys raised yours. And so if you think I'm a good mom...if you think I'm a good mom, then just sit back and watch how it unfolds because I was a young mom. I was 18 when I had my son, so everybody said, oh, no. Everywhere I went, there was negativity. At a doctor's office, at a grocery

store.... People are just... they have in their head that things are supposed to be a particular way because that makes people feel comfortable. I was always the one who was like... I don't know if you're familiar with Emma Goldman, but I was always the Emma Goldman of the group.

Interviewer: Oh really?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. I love her.... [crosstalk]

Interviewee: But to go back to the way... We didn't have any of the things that my son had or she has now in technology. We had encyclopedias and we had to read. So I think we were used to being more patient and having this certain order of things unfold. Now, she's like so it has to be now. You know what I mean? And that's how we've made progress in technology and also I think we're going backwards in some ways.

I try to just expose her to a lot of different things. A lot of different things. I give her all the information and she can make the choices as she gets older.

Interviewer: Hm [affirmation].

Interviewee: If you tell them though, they're going to go for what you said no for.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah.

Interviewee: It's the truth, isn't it something?

Interviewer: And thinking about libraries, she was using the computer here, I noticed. Any ideas for how she could use technology in libraries or screen media?

Interviewee: I have an old phone that's not active at home. And I downloaded a Phonics app for her on there. I met this lady who was a teacher and she told me it's really important to teach them phonics first. And I never would have really thought of that, I probably would have started with sight words and things like that. But it made a lot of sense because of how confusing the English language is, because let's be honest--

So yeah. So that lady taught me that but she does use that screen, my phone, sometimes. But it's kind of like I use it when I'm somewhere where there are no other options. Say like if I'm in a doctor's office or something like that. But to be quite frank with you and I don't know if you will include this or you won't, I'm concerned about children's exposure to electronics. Like cell phones and things like that and tablets. There's been alarming rates of brain tumors and things like that in children.

Not that I can improve that, but that's also a health concern, you know what I mean? So, I don't know. I don't think they need it like we think they do. I know that there will be a time when she's going to have to learn so that she can be in the real world and do the things she needs to do, however, she likes music and she loves to see videos and stuff like that too. But there's other cool stuff too like that where it's for kids. Just strictly for kids.

If you just dig a little bit, you'll find what you're looking for.

Interviewer: Thinking about libraries, are there any questions that libraries could help you answer? Or any guidance or anything that you would like to be able to but you can't currently turn to libraries for?

Interviewee: My rebel side has all these things in my head. No, I don't think so. I think the librarians in this area that I can speak about where I live are great. I think they're helpful. I think they need more tools. I think they need more funding. And stuff like that. But other than that, they do arts and crafts. Today we did arts and crafts. We made Father's Day card.

Interviewer: Oh, how sweet [inaudible 00: 15: 22].

Interviewee: Yeah, there's all kinds of cool things. There's story time here and I brought my son here a long time ago for all the summer programs. They had a pot-bellied pig outside one day. We got to meet a pot-bellied pig. I mean, how do you get that chance when you live in the city? I just told the librarian about the Art Reach program.

Interviewer: I don't know that one.

Interviewee: You're kidding! So Art Reach is a group in Philadelphia, I guess it's similar to any non-profit organization and what they do is they help people--no running in the library, my sweet--what they do is they help people who have low income be able to go to museums and things like that.

So there's a list of like 32 participating places that if you have an access card, like a food stamp card, you can get admission for \$2.

Interviewer: That's fantastic. It's called Art Reach?

Interviewee: Yeah. Totally. Put Art Reach Philly and it will come up. It's really cool. I even considered going over there and just volunteering because I know they could just use people to shred papers.

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee: You know, like whatever they needed help with!

Interviewer: This is fantastic. I've never heard of it.

Interviewee: It is so cool and I found out... [inaudible 00: 16: 31][crosstalk 00: 16: 34]but I found out about it... Let's see, like almost 4 years ago. And she wasn't even one and a half maybe, maybe 1ish. Just under. 18 months. And we took her to the Franklin Institute and she loved it.

She wanted us to pick her up and show her the heart surgery thing.

Interviewer: Really?

Interviewee: So now she's asking me about anatomy. And today I came in because there's things... I know what it is, but I can't say to her, this is who joins your muscles. So

I got books and I'm like, look. You want to know what's... She said to me today, what's in my back? A spine, vertebrae, [inaudible 00: 17: 17].

Interviewer: Well, that's wonderful. So this has been hugely helpful. Thank you. Do you have any questions for me?

Interviewee: I don't, no.

Interviewer: Anything else you think we should know about this topic?

Interviewee: No, I was, to be honest, if I speak off the cuff, I was a little bit saddened and disappointed because I visited some Bucks County libraries and they have way more things than our kids have in the city. So I do believe there is more of a need here because people's incomes are lower here. And I'm not saying they should give us touch screen computers for kids. That's not what I'm saying. But more than one computer would be cool.

My son is 21, so when he was coming here years ago, there were four of these.

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee: Up until the time when he was about 10. And then that's when I moved and then came back to the area. Sometimes it's a little bit like, you feel like, well, how did they get the funding for this?