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Father of 3 children, ages 6 (son), 3 and 1

Interviewer: How many children do you have, and what are their ages?

Interviewee: I have three children, ages six, three, and one.

Interviewer: Oh, good. That's three years apart and two years apart.

Interviewee: Yep.

Interviewer: That's pretty good. So we're mostly interested in the six-year-old because we're  
looking at kids in the ages five to eleven group.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: So what kind of devices does your family own, and to what extent does your son  
use them?

Interviewee: Well, we own iPads. Laptops. My son has Nintendo Switch. PS4.

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee: XBOX One.

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee: That's not good. Firestick, Apple TV, televisions. We have a lot of...

Interviewer: That's like everything from the list.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Does your son use the gaming? Does he know how to use the games?

Interviewee: Yes, he does.

Interviewer: That's pretty good. Yeah.

Interviewee: He does. Very well.

Interviewer: So, do you guys tend to use them together? Does he use them on his own?

Interviewee: Both. We use them together, and I would say he uses them on his own more. But we do play together when I can.

Interviewer: What about TV?

Interviewee: TV, he definitely uses the TV.

Interviewer: He knows how to do it alone?

Interviewee: Yep. Very proficiently. Television.

Interviewer: How about the iPad?

Interviewee: iPad as well.

Interviewer: He's doing pretty well. Is he in first grade?

Interviewee: No, he's in kindergarten.

Interviewer: Kindergarten. He's First Grade next year.

Interviewee: He missed the cut-off. It was in October.

Interviewer: Let's see. Okay, think about a typical day your son has, that you've spent some time with him, and walk me through the day, the kinds of things he does using digital devices during the day.

Interviewee: Well, what he does primarily, he wakes up. Nine times out of ten, he wakes up before me, and the Switch is portable, the Nintendo Switch is portable. So most likely it's next to his bed, and he's playing the Switch from the moment he wakes up. Especially now, being in the summertime, since he's out of school, we don't have any camps or anything, so we're pretty much together.

First thing he does is play Nintendo Switch. When I wake up, I tell him to.... Once I wake up, I tell him that the screen is enough, he needs to take a break from the screen.

Interviewee: And then we'll have breakfast. I figure something out to do, like come here to the library, go to the playground. But I try, and it's like a battle. I try to limit the screens as much as I can, although I realize we have pretty much every type of device that he could use or want to use.

So I just automatically assume when I wake up that he's used the Switch enough to get off of it. And we just talk a lot. And he reads books. He is reading chapter books now.

Interviewer: That's impressive.

Interviewee: He's Second Grade reading level.

Interviewee: Yeah. And then, throughout the day, after we come home from the playground, we probably get on XBOX, or PlayStation. And he knows how to start it up and play it. So I'll let him do that for maybe 30 minutes, an hour.

And then we'll have lunch at home, no screens. Probably go back outside, play catch. I'll take him back to the playground and he'll run around some.

Then we come home, as I'm making dinner, my wife's cooking, he'll probably watch something on Netflix, which he knows how to use, he knows how to start the Firestick, pick through the programming he wants to watch. He'll watch that while we're cooking.

When dinner's ready, he turns screens back off. Eat dinner, talk for a while. And then, at the end of the night, I'll let him watch a little, or I'll let him get back on his Switch if he wants, for another hour. And then after that, we read books, and he gets to sleep.

Interviewer: That's wonderful. So, let's see. How do you decide which tools to let him use, or do you set any rules, and not that you need to, but how do you make decisions about device use as a parent?

Interviewee: Well, what we did, is we bought an extra TV, and extra devices, so that if his siblings wanted to use one thing, like the TV, if his sister wants to watch Netflix, he can play his Switch while she watches Netflix.

Right now at this point, he can decide what he wants to use when he wants to. So we don't really have any rules on him. The only rule I would say that is applicable is

if he's on the TV, and his sister wants to watch something else, he'd have to go to a different TV or use his portable device. That would be the only rules, otherwise he's just free to use them as he pleases.

It is a struggle to try to limit the screens, so we understand it's not the best [inaudible 00: 06: 17]. It's not the worst, either.... So, we find a good [inaudible 00: 06: 38] balance.

Interviewer: Yeah. Are there any magazines, websites, parents groups, anything you get advice from on kids and media?

Interviewee: Kids and media? My wife does. She follows some bloggers that she gets some tips from as far as that goes. I'm not really privy to that information, because we talk about it, but I don't really retain any of that. Well, I am privy to it, but I don't retain it.

Interviewer: Let's see. How about, do you get advice from anybody, like family members, or do your parenting practices, are they influenced by how your parents were with you?

Interviewee: Yeah, I would say that. But that would be a tough one, because growing up, I didn't have much. I was pretty [inaudible 00: 08: 02]. I was poor. So, we didn't have much as far as devices.

It was a struggle between my brother and I, it was a constant battle. There was one TV, one system. And that TV, my Mom used as well, so whenever she was going to use the TV, we couldn't watch-

Interviewer: She was.

Interviewee: Yeah. So, I don't know. I don't really get a lot when I think about my childhood, how my Mom had to do it, because it was a whole different situation.

I'm not saying it was so old, I'm only 34, but when I was young, we didn't have much devices.

We were pretty much outside all the time. I grew up outside. It was different for me.

So, no, I can't say I got any advice from family members.

Interviewer: Okay. Let's see. How comfortable do you feel about guiding your children's technology?

Interviewee: Guiding it?

Interviewer: Uh-huh (affirmative). Guiding your kids.

Interviewee: Oh, as far as how to use the technology?

Interviewer: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Interviewee: I feel super comfortable. My son, he was using iPads when he was, it's not great to say, maybe two years old.... He was already- So, he's been using iPads from two years old. He grasps technology super-quickly. He got the Switch for Christmas, even-

Interviewee: Yeah. So, to guide him with technology, he gets it in no time. He pretty much knows how to use the Switch. He had it for six, seven months. He knows how to use an iPad. He's been using an iPad since two.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: He knows my password from my iPad.

Interviewee: He knows how to play the PS4, the XBOX One. And now he's learning how to use a computer, the laptop. He knows how to use that, too.

Interviewee: That is one guideline we have. He can't play violent games. That's the one thing. There's no shooting games, no killing games, nothing like that. He's not old enough for that.

Interviewee: So, I would say that would be my guideline. No violent games.

Interviewer: Let's see. Can you think of any information that would be helpful to get from the library? Any way libraries could help you? Any suggestions as we move forward in providing information or children's programs?

Interviewee: You know what would be a good idea? Children's books regarding technology. Picture books.

Interviewer: That's a good idea.

Interviewee: Showing [inaudible 00: 11: 40] of technology, how to use it, in the most simplest way, I would imagine. Interactive, having technology in here about it? Just having the actual-

Interviewer: Do you guys ever use the computers that are back there?

Interviewee: We try to get away from the computers when we get to the library. I want to read these books.

But for kids that don't have all of that stuff, that would be good for them to be able to access iPads, extra devices, if they don't have those at home.

But for us, he's always using that stuff. We'd rather have him use some books at the library.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you think I should know about this topic, or any ideas?

Interviewee: What I want to learn more about is, the effect that these screens have on your eyesight, whenever you use a device.

Interviewer: That's a good question.

Interviewee: He has glasses. He has Astigmatism, so I don't know if that had anything to do with it. Because he was born like that. But who knows what effect that has on his [inaudible 00: 12: 49]. So I'd like to know more about that. And what else? I think kids also need to learn not how to use an iPad all the time, but how to write code.

So, instead of just learning how to open an app and use an app, how about learning how to create an app? I think that would be helpful.

Interviewer: The library for about two years had programs where kids around your son's age were learning Scratch. And then a company was coming in and offering the programs, but now they're on a break for a while, so I don't know-

Interviewee: They're on a break for a while, you said?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Oh. I'm going to have to look into that.



Interviewer: There's a technology lab down the hall, but they're not doing it right now.

Interviewee: Yeah. I'll keep it in mind.

Interviewer: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself? You said you have a degree in  
Psychology.

Interviewee: Yeah, I have a degree in Psychology.

Interviewer: Do you work in Psychology?

Interviewee: I don't. I want to finish my Masters, then I'll probably go to be a [inaudible 00: 14:  
06]. That's what my wife does.

Interviewer: Your wife does [inaudible 00: 14: 08]?

Interviewee: Yeah. My wife teaches Sociology at Rowan University.

Interviewer: Oh, I like Rowan.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Does she drive, though? That's a far drive.

Interviewee: Yeah. It's 25 minutes.

Interviewer: Oh, that's not so bad.

Interviewee: We're right next to the [inaudible 00: 14: 21]. Hold on-