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Mother of 3 children 13 girl, 7 girl and 4 boy

Interviewer: ... three children?

Interviewee: And three children.

Interviewer: Okay. Then can you give us their ages again?

Interviewee: They are 14 ... No, 13. I added in a year. 13, seven, and four.

Interviewer: We're going to primarily talk about your child that's seven, because it falls in the age range of five to 11, which is what we're focusing on with the study. We're going to talk about electronic devices such as TVs, smart phones, laptops, e-readers, desktop computers, game consoles. Basically, anything that has a screen children use. Out of those or any more that your family might have, can you tell us what your family uses or what you have in your home?

Interviewee:

Television, a Chromebook, and a tablet. I have a smart phone. She does not, because she's seven.

Interviewer: Okay. Does she use your smart phone?

Interviewee: Not really, no.

Interviewer:

Okay. Then any homes that your child goes to or like other daycare or school ... Do you know if they're exposed to any different devices there?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer:

No? Okay. We're going to take note of all those. Then can you walk us through each one of those devices? You said that you're the primary user of the smart phone. What about the other devices?

Interviewee: I have two Amazon Fire tablets bought explicitly for the use of my children.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee:

They watch Amazon Prime videos, like Pete the Cat, on there. They love Pete the Cat. They mostly watch PBS Kids. And they also watch television. They can watch PBS Kids on TV, because there's a PBS Kids channel.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee:

That's pretty much what they're allowed to watch. Then if they watch anything else outside of that, we watch it as a family together like Friday night.

Interviewer: That's so nice. They're not using your phone?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: No. Okay. Okay.

Interviewee: They're not allowed to go on the internet unless they can read.

Interviewer: Oh, that makes sense.

Interviewee: Yeah. If you can't read, you can't go on the internet.

Interviewer:

That makes sense. Okay. Let's think about your child's day yesterday or a recent day that you guys had together. Can you walk me through the day from the time that your child woke up until bedtime? Paying attention, specifically, to the uses of those devices and what do they use them for?

Interviewee:

Okay. Yesterday, we went to church. There were no devices used there. Then Sunday school. They had Sunday school. Then we went home, and my daughter practiced her violin. She has to read two books per half-hour of television. Before she's allowed to watch TV, she has to read two books. Or if it's a chapter book, she has to read like a chapter or two chapters, depending on the length of the chapter, before she can watch television. So she read some book. Critter Club, I think it's called. Then she was allowed to watch some videos that we borrowed from the library, but then I was gone. Actually, I left with my oldest daughter to go to her AMC 10 class, which is a math class.

Interviewer: On Sundays?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Wow.

Interviewee: When I came back, I read a bedtime story to the seven-year-old, and ... Yeah. She went to bed.

Interviewer: So she didn't really use devices yesterday.

Interviewee: No. She did watch television, but it was DVDs.

Speaker 3: Your kids are lucky, you spend so much time with them.

Interviewer:

Looking at that list again, is there anything else that you remember about ... So, looking at this again, how do these devices fit into your family's routine? Has this changed as your child has gotten older? Have your rules changed at all?

Interviewee:

For the oldest one, she has different rules. She doesn't have to read two books or anything, because she's 13, but she does have to have her violin practice before she can watch anything. She can't have the computer alone, which [inaudible

00: 04:

19] I guess, but she only can have the computer in front of us. If she does, for some reason, have it by herself, we usually come and check periodically to see what she's doing.

Interviewer: So you're always present.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Awesome. These are really lucky kids.

Interviewer:

Do you remember how these routines were established and when did you start these routines. Has this been for the [inaudible 00: 04: 42] of your children's lives?

Interviewee:

Yes. I started ... because we adopted my oldest daughter when she was five. When she was adopted, we were like, "What do we do about TV and all this other stuff?" We didn't actually ... We didn't have a TV that worked without a tape cassette, a VHS, so she couldn't really have a choice. We did have a DVD player, but it had a code on it, so she had to come to us and then we would say, "You have to read two books." Then she figured out the code.

Interviewee:

Then also, she wanted to go on the internet, but I didn't just want her willy nilly go on the internet, so I was like, "When you learn to read, we can go on the internet." Then she learned to read and then I was like, "Well, now that you're reading, I should still go over your shoulder and see what you're doing, because you could find anything and things that are on the internet, you know, could be anything.

Interviewee:

So I guess I established those rules when she was five and we've just stuck with them.

Interviewer: Awesome.

Speaker 3: And then you plan to implement the same rules with your ...

Interviewee:

With this one, yes. Actually, we kind of do. He can't read, but I read with him, like Level A books, and then I have him repeat it.

Interviewer:

So, I think you already answered this question, which devices your child uses independently. We covered that. And then, do you ever feel like you have to guide your children through the uses of the devices?

Interviewee:

Teach them how to use it? I don't want them to know how to use it. Yeah. I try n

ot to let them. So, like, the second that ... She just started picking up the remote control for the television, but she doesn't know how to change the channel. [cross talk 00: 06: 29]

Interviewee:

We don't have a lot of complicated stuff. We have very basic everything, so she kind of figured out how to turn on ... She knows the PBS channel's 473. She knows that, but she also knows that she can't watch anything unless we tell her she can, so she knows not, like, just go downstairs and turn on the television or anything

Interviewer: And what about the tablets?

Interviewee: They have codes on them, so they can't use it without me putting the code in.

Interviewer:

And then when you first gave them the tablets to use, did you have to give them ... Did they figure out how to use it on their own?

Interviewee: No. I put on [inaudible 00: 07:

06] what to watch. So we talk about what you want to watch and then, they never watch anything alone.

Interviewer: So you set it up for them?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer:

So they're not actually ... They're just like using the device to watch, but their not pressing any buttons. It's all you.

Interviewee: No. It's all me.

Interviewer: Cool.

Interviewee:

They try to be sneaky, though. She tried to watch Captain Underpants. And I was like ...

Speaker 3: That's a TV show?

Interviewee: It's a TV show and it was a movie.

I told them they can't watch ... My rule is you can't watch a movie, if it's based on a book, unless you've read the book first. So we're reading Captain Underpants right now.

Interviewer:

You mentioned a little bit about this, but is there anything you want to add about the decisions about guiding your ... how you made the decisions about guiding your children through device usage?

Interviewee:

I just know when I was a kid my parents let us watch anything. In fact, we were w

atching a lot of stuff I shouldn't have seen and so I didn't want the same thing to happen with them. I just ... I don't know ... There was no internet when I was a kid, but there's internet, so I was like, it's going to be far worse than whatever I could have watched on our three channels I had when I was a kid. I wanted to make sure that they just were not watching inappropriate stuff.

Interviewee:

They know that word. They're always like, "It's not inappropriate." So we talk about what's appropriate for their ages and what's just appropriate that should be on television. In our opinion, what should be on TV and what should people be watching and that kind of thing.

Interviewer: How do you determine if something is educational or not, in terms of devices?

Interviewee:

Well, I think about what they're actually learning, because it seems like a lot of shows where it's supposed to be educational, but it's not really educational. I'm not going to name any shows, but, there are some other shows where they're like, "It's educational programming." Then I watch it first ... A lot of times I watch things first before I let them watch it and then I see what would they actually be learning on this? Does it make sense?

Interviewee:

So like, there'll be a show where they'll mention math really quickly and I'm like, "They're not going to learn anything from this." Or ... Things that move slower ... I have them watch not like quickly paced things, things that don't have a lot of ... I don't know how to explain it, but they just move ... like a slower paced show. Like a lot of PBS kids shows seem to move slower. Daniel Tiger is very ... They can go along with the story and they understand what's happening.

Interviewee:

Sometimes I look up what the ages of a show is for. Sometimes it'll be cartoons and you'll think it's for kids and then it's not for kids at all. So I look up, a lot of times, what it's supposed to be about and what is supposed to be the educational aspect of the show. There's a couple of times where I was like, "This isn't for kids."

Interviewer:

And when you look it up on line, are you finding the information about those questions?

Interviewee:

Yeah. I usually just look up the general information. What is the show's age [inaudible 00: 10: 12]? There's like Y, seven or something like that. Ages four and below. You know that is for preschoolers. What the main plot of the show is about. Things like that. I haven't had any problems, really, finding anything about any shows, especially since they're trying to advertise the shows anyway, so they're ...

Interviewer:

Interesting. Do you ever consider if any of the uses of devices to view a case in time, are harmful?

Interviewee: Oh yeah.

Speaker 3: You sound like you're [inaudible 00: 10: 43].

Interviewee: Oh yeah. I have a teenager. The seven-year-old doesn't actually watch that much television, though. Mostly she wants to play outside and find bugs. Even on Saturday ... We went for a long walk on [inaudible 00: 10: 58] Drive. She didn't really watch anything. She never watched anything. She doesn't really care about television that much, so even if it's on, she usually gets bored and goes off and starts playing anyway.

Interviewer:

Let's see. You've already answered a lot of these questions through our conversation, but let's see if there's any other websites, magazines, TV shows or other resources that you've seen or heard about parenting children's use of devices or screens.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Talked a little bit about visiting websites, looking at ...

Interviewee:

Yeah. I don't know if I do anything explicitly about that. I just mostly read articles in the Atlantic, like anything of NPR, the Atlantic. I don't really look specifically for information about media. I try to make sure that they're playing more than watching things, or looking at things on the internet or media.

Interviewer:

Makes sense. Have you received any advice from anyone about guiding your children's uses of these devices?

Interviewee: Yeah. My parents keep saying, "Let them watch more TV."

Interviewer: Really?

Interviewee:

In fact, the only reason we have a television is because my dad said, "Your kids need to watch television," so he bought us a television. Before that we didn't have one.

Interviewer: Why would he think that?

Interviewee:

He's just like, "Kids are all going to be watching television and everybody at school is going to be watching TV and talking about TV shows and they're not going to know going to know about it and feel left out."

Interviewer: They'll feel left out.

Interviewee:

Though I was like, "Kids don't really watch TV anymore. They're on Netflix or whatever, if they are watching something. So no one's watching the same stuff."

Interviewer:

Have you been offered the chance to get advice from any professionals in the community, maybe like Ryan's teachers, police, doctors, anyone else?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee:

I mean the pediatrician says let them play outside, when I take them for their annual checkup. I mean, she's not telling me, like, "Let them play outside. You're not doing it." She means like, let them play outside.

Interviewer:

In what areas do you feel comfortable guiding your child and are there areas you have questions about or would like further guidance in?

Interviewee:

Oh gosh, I don't know. I want guidance in all areas. I don't know. I feel pretty comfortable guiding them. I mean, I might make a mistake, but I think I'm doing the best that I know to do.

Interviewer:

Before I ask you any more questions, just like some basic information, do you have any other thoughts ...

Can you think of any way that library programs could help you or are there any programs having to do with kids, any that you would show up for? Anything you can learn from the library? That's where we're struggling, is we're not sure what libraries can do for parents.

Interviewee:

I feel like ... more so for my oldest daughter, just talking about what fake news on the internet or just in the media, because I want to make sure she knows what's real.

Interviewee: Just making sure she knows what's real. I guess that would go for the seven-year-old, but she doesn't really consume that kind of stuff. She wouldn't say, "Oh, yeah, I heard on the news ..." because she's seven. But definitely for my teenager.

Interviewer:

Okay. So, just some basic questions and information. How would you describe your ethnic background?

Interviewee: African.

Interviewer: Really? Actually from Africa?

Interviewee: I'm not from Africa.

Generations back are. My mom's family is from Louisiana, but their family's from Cameroon.

Interviewer: And your child's other parent ...

Interviewee: They would probably say African American.

Interviewer: Can you tell me the highest level of education that you've completed?

Interviewee: I have a Master's degree.

Interviewer: What in?

Interviewee: Art Administration.

Interviewer: And also, the education of the child's other parent.

Interviewee: He has a Bachelor's degree.