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Mother of 6 year old daughter

Interviewer: How old is she?

Interviewee: She's six.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewer: So we're gonna ask questions about her electronic devices usage. Just to give you an idea, this is TVs, smartphones, laptops, iPads, e-readers, desktop computers, game consoles, basically anything that has a screen that she's exposed to. Out of those or any more, can you tell us which ones your family owns?

Interviewee: Probably all of the above.

Interviewer: All of them? Okay.

Interviewee: But just because we own it doesn't mean she's used it.

Interviewer: She uses it, Okay. So let's talk about the ones that she has access to or you allow her to use.

Interviewee: So she does watch some TV. We try and limit it, and I'm sure she is perfectly happy doing things like this. She has a tablet, but we typically only let her use it for traveling. A lot with her, so if it's a long flight and we're worried they don't have a TV on the flight like that, or a special occasion or say we're doing a long road trip, but not typical.

Interviewer: Okay, and it still belongs to you. It's not hers?

Interviewee: We just know where it is, or how to turn it on. So, technically, it's paid and it's hers but she's never used it without us.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: She does not on the phone. We're keeping it that way as long as we possibly can, and she doesn't have an iPad or anything. Yeah once a while we show her a picture on our phone or a video or something like that on the iPad, but, again we don't like just put her in her room with tablets saying, go hang out for a couple of hours.

Interviewer: Okay. Does she have access to your cell phone or use your cell phone?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Okay. Good.

Interviewee: I mean it's password locked and everything. I'm sure in a couple years she'll probably figure out how to do it, but no not yet.

Interviewer: Pull your thumb for the touch ID?

Interviewee: It's amazing what they know.

Interviewer: So, could you walk us through a day that you've spent with her. Walk us through the day and her usage of any sort of media. Maybe yesterday or an average day, and what that looked like.

Interviewee: Well I think weekends and weekdays are different. Weekday, I mean in the morning she typically is rushing to get out the door. Every once in a great while, if I'm single parenting, and I've got to get us both out the door by 7:15 for the buss. I'll put on Sesame Street for ten minutes, but I try not to put anything on at all and just try and eat breakfast with her. After school, she doesn't get home until close to five, and sometimes we have a part time nanny. Picks her up sometimes, she'll put it on for a half hour, while she's making dinner, but other than that, typically when I get home, or my husband gets home. We try and actually spend time with her, read to her, now she's reading to us.

Interviewer: Awesome.

Interviewee: Unfortunately we both work more than full time. So, it's just like, trying to get her showered, and in bed. So, we really try and limit it, and the weekends frankly anymore, I'm not going to lie. She's got ballet, and she's got soccer, and this, and that, and birthday parties, and, I mean yeah, sometimes at the very end of the day she's completely exhausted I'll put on for a half our, but, unless she's really sick, or it's a snow storm or something more out of the ordinary. I really try not to just park her in front of the TV.

Interviewer: Awesome.

Interviewee: I don't think it's good, and luckily we've been in an environment in their schools where they set [perables 00:04:02] and she's been in private school so long. So, we get the message emailed to us, please don't have your child watch TV in the morning. Try and limit it, like, they're pushing the agenda for sure.

Interviewer: So, what are those emails look like? Can you talk a little bit more about that?

Interviewee: Yeah, so, I remember she went to a monitory preschool two years ago, where they actually had a sort of get ready for preschool orientation. Where they were like, here's empirical evidence where we found that kids that watch TV in the morning come and they're more distracted and they're more this and that. I don't remember the articles exactly, it's been a couple years, but they were like, showing articles from the New York times, the Post, but some credible source, and they try to actually say. Do not have your child watch TV in the mornings, or limit it significantly. So-

Interviewer: That's awesome.

Interviewee: We're definitely at her school to, trying to push it, which is great, and I think also it is what it is. She goes to a private school where it's very expensive. It's hard to

get in, parents are very involved. So, you tend to have an environment where, she goes to someones home for a play date. The TV's not on. They're in the backyard on the swing set, or, I mean, because all the parents kind of feel the same way. Like, once in a while is fine, but not routinely.

Interviewer: That was going to be one of my follow up questions. Is there any other homes that you go to or any other environments where there might be a different technology in front of her?

Interviewee: Other than that no, I mean I'm married. So, she doesn't have another person at home.

Interviewer: Parent, grandparents.

Interviewee: Regularly. I don't think grandparents in town. The struggle I actually have is, my husband is a journalist. So, he watches because of work, like-

Interviewer: Oh, interesting.

Interviewee: He'll put one station on the TV, one on his iPad because he's constantly trying to cover the stories, and it's not that she's necessarily sitting down in front of it, but he always tries to have it on, and I'm like, this can not always be on, this isn't healthy. Especially if we're going to sit down for a meal, I'm like, please turn it off. So, no it's not like a show that she's watching also, it concerns me because, we know there's topics in the news these days that are not exactly kid friendly. So, we're hearing about Brett Kavanaugh social scandals, and she's six.

Interviewer: Not yet, yeah.

Interviewee: She has questions, and, I mean, all you have to do is turn the news on, and there's something awful. Someones getting killed, or there's some natural disaster. It's not exactly appropriate. So, I think that, that's my biggest struggle. When he's away I find it easy. Just don't put it on, but it's more like, my husband will put it on for him.

Interviewer 3: For work, yeah.

Interviewee: And I try have him censor it. Like if he's getting ready in the morning and he's in the bathroom, and he wants to have Algeria on, with his iPad and only he's in there, fine, but I try and, if she's eating breakfast, not to show her, but it's a struggle, so.

Interviewer: What kind of journalist is he?

Interviewee: So, he was in TV and almost political legal stories for a long time, and then, we met in DC. So, he was a lobbyist after that, and now he works for a communications company.

Interviewer: Cool.

Interviewee: So he was all over the world, he's in Argentina right now.

I sent him a video yesterday, and I'm at Sesame blade at the parade, and I, you know, don't get me wrong, it's amazing spending time with her, but like really? You're eating empanada's, and [crosstalk 00:07:42], and don't get me wrong, he's working, but I'm just like, no fair, and when, I mean, I had to take a vacation day. I'm still, you know, I think if anything I try to censor myself over the phone, but it's hard also because my work is nine to five, and only when I'm supposed to be there. So, sometimes also I should be paying attention to her, but I'm reading a work log now, and-

Interviewee: I think that's really rowdy if you have two careers. It's hard, so.

Interviewer: Awesome. You answered a lot of these questions early.

Interviewee: Yeah, I probably digress.

Interviewer: No, that's awesome.

Interviewee: Yeah, I struggle with that, I mean I'm sure a lot of parents, especially I know the more of reading and other things she does, the better off she'll be, but it's also hard and I don't have any help. I've got to get out the door, and I've already sent her to her room four times to color and play, and I'm trying to unload the dishes and sometimes after three hours in her play room. I'm like, okay, as a last resort.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: But, it's definitely not my first go to. [crosstalk] I mean, you know, I get notes from her teachers saying, she's focusing and working hard but-

Interviewer: It's not a skill that everyone has.

Interviewee: No, they don't.

Interviewer: So, these routines that you have in place with her, have they always been in place or when did you implement them?

Interviewee: For a while, I mean, we've both always worked. We've moved a lot, we've moved way out of the country. We're in different settings. So, we've always had another care giver come, but it used to be more when she was only in say, school for an hour and a half a couple times a week. Now obviously she's in full day school, and with the buss and it being in DC. I drop her off at 7:30 and she's not home until close to five. My nanny picks her up at the buss stop and then gets to her house. So, the good part about that is for all of those hours, there is no screen time. There's just no access to it, but yeah, I mean, it's been like that for most of her life.

Interviewer: So, you said that when she uses them she does use the devices independently?

Interviewee: I mean if it's TV, we tend to pick it out together. She doesn't just go searching on demand and putting on who knows what. We'll pick Doctor McStuffins or whatever it is, and when the episode ends, she'll call me and be like, mommy, it's over, can I watch another one? So, she doesn't have free reign of the guides and

the channels. I mean, I think at some point I will probably have to start thinking about stuff like that. I know they have all those controls but, she's just now on the cusp of really reading. So, I guess soon when she's able to read that you can scroll and see everything. She's not there yet, she doesn't know what to do necessarily when a show ends. So, it's definitely supervised to the extent that choose to watch.

Interviewer: When you are making decisions about guiding your child, and what she's interacting with through electronic uses. How do you determine. Or do you determine if it's educational or not?

Interviewee: I find that challenging. There's definitely shows where, Sesame street or others where you sort of know entirely. Where it's just been around forever or I grew up watching them. Sort of have a good feeling. There's others where I feel like sometimes, and she'll tell me things from them, but then they cover a large variety of topics, and there are time where she ask questions where, oh, didn't know we were going to chat about that, and Caiou or some of these other shows.

Yeah, or like Pepa Pig. I can see how that looks like, because she goes to a school where there's kids up to eighth grade and they take the buss together, she's asked me a lot of questions about things. She asked me one time about, mommy, you know, can you be born a girl and have surgery to be a boy.

At like five years old, but people talk about that on the buss, or in her class, there's parents who are gay, or people who have two moms, or two dads. There's people who, it's really peaceful, but the child's from china. Why are they Chinese, why are they blah, she asks all these questions.

Yeah, so when it comes up on the show it's not super foreign, but there are times when the message comes up. There was a show, I don't remember which cartoon it was, but the parents got divorced, and they were fighting. She says, mommy, are you and daddy going to get a divorce, but yeah, some of these shows cover a lot of grounds.

Interviewer: Interesting, I don't know if that's educational, or does that matter to you?

Interviewee: It matters, I mean, she loves her Disney movies, and then. Yeah, it's one of her favorites. Jill, what's your favorite show sweet heart?

Interviewee: She likes Arthur, she likes Pepa, and I don't know. I mean I try and also see it sometimes to make sure that the messaging's not inappropriate, so.

Interviewer: What about non-TV, does she go online for anything else, or use other technologies?

Interviewee: No, I mean I have a laptop, which, if I bring it home. I mean she doesn't really know how to turn it on. Same with my husband. I mean he has a desktop, but we rarely use it because we both are always on our work laptops, and it's not per room, and again, she doesn't know how to use it. I mean, at this point, my

biggest concern, is she knows how to turn the TV on, and we have one of those remotes where you can talk to it. Where it's like, say the show and if it's something where it's on demand, it'll bring up the on demand window. You still have to search and some of them are free and some of them you have to buy. That's my other concern, she's going to scroll and buy something for \$15.

Interviewee: I mean, there's worse things, but, I don't want to come home to a \$300 cable bill where she's buying who knows what, but yeah, I can see in the next year or two having to make sure that. She has access to PBS kids, and Nick Junior and isn't going through HBO and stuff that's X rated crap. I mean-[crosstalk 00:15:15] So, yeah.

Interviewer: Do you ever feel like the content is wasting her time, or do you harm filter her? You spoke a little bit about that.

Interviewee: No, I think some of the Disney Princess stuff is a little bit painful.

Interviewer: Why is that?

Interviewee: I'm more thinking that, that's a profession. It's like, no, you have to find something to do. You're not actually going to walk around and bounce all day, and got to fancy balls.

Interviewer: So, you mentioned that you saw that the school that she went to sent out some information about guidance. Is there anything else that you've referred to, maybe magazines, or TV Shows for parents, websites?

Interviewee: I mean I get a ton of mommy blogs. I can't say there's ever been a specific article. I mean I guess the good news-[crosstalk 00:17:07] it's always, in my mind, other things to do on weekends. We're not trying to just stay home and do that. For her going to the movies is a big treat. She went last week for-[crosstalk 00:17:20] when school was close, and we're going to see Christopher Robin. It was a big deal, because she probably hadn't been to the movies in eight, nine months. It's like a once or twice a year kind of thing.

Interviewer: Cool.

Interviewee: And it's appropriate.

Interviewer: Have you received any other guidance from people in the community, maybe librarians, teachers, police, doctors, anyone else?

Interviewee: I don't think so. If anything the parents in her school very aware and will say, is she even allowed to have a great time. Not that, that's necessarily going to do, and they typically don't, but they want make sure that we're okay with it. We know families that don't even own TV's except for one in the bedroom so that the kids don't see it at all. Which is another extreme.

Interviewer: Hm (affirmation).

Interviewee: Yeah, I don't really like to pry, but one of her friends, she's like, oh, what's this.

Interviewer: In what areas do you feel comfortable guiding your child? Are there any areas that you question, or you think that you would like more guidance about?

Interviewee: I mean I'm sure as she gets older, I could for see struggles with access to social media.

Interviewer: Okay, so three more questions for you. We already touched on this a little bit, but is there anything else that you would've liked to learn, and you would want to learn about the media consumption and how to be guided?

Interviewee: Oh yeah. So, what I was saying before, as she gets older, having to deal with getting her a phone, things like that. Social media use, use the TV, I mean, I think now in some ways we can completely control that, but I know that by the time she's 11 or 12. I'm just worried about what's out there. I have no idea if I will control her with things like Facebook, and I don't know at what age she should have a phone. I definitely, I should get to learn a little more about what's normal. She told me that there was a kid in second grade who has a phone. And she told me that, I didn't ask her that.

Interviewer: A lot of kids feel that way. A lot of kids take the subway by themselves, or are going home after school on their own.

Interviewee: Yeah, and I don't want her just scrolling around the internet in a year. That just seems- That's like an \$800 device. I mean, do I trust her to not lose it? Absolutely not at this age.

Interviewer: So, for that kind of advice that you would be looking for on social media uses? How do you know whose advice to follow? How would you make that decision?

Interviewee: I feel like that would some how get knocked into her school or her camp, or somewhere, were we have trust in people, like her pediatrician, but I'd be open to it. I of course look at the internet and read all these mommy blogs too. Probably would be open to reading one of those articles as well, and then, word of mouth. A lot of my friends have kids, and they'll be at a similar age. So, I'll get a consensus on who's doing what, and what's appropriate, and who do they talk to, and yeah. I mean, before I put a phone in there, I want to make sure I do my research.

Interviewer: Sure, are there any areas that you have questions about that, well we already answered that. So, we've got through everything. Is there any other questions that you have?

Interviewee: I will ask one question. So, on these trips, we've downloaded these games, where it's supposed to be educational fact games, or whatever. The kind of education yeah, defeating the purpose because it's screen, we're not discerning.

Interviewee: The games are like, you have to take the two numbers that add up to five or something, but if it's like, pushing the buttons- [crosstalk]

Interviewee: Yeah, I'm on Facebook too much.

Interviewer: There's one more, some basic background information. How would you describe your ethnic background?

Interviewee: I mean nationally Hungarian, I guess, if I had to check a box, it would be white probably, but, yeah. I did 23 me.

Interviewer: Cool. Where's your family from?

Interviewee: I'm like 99.6% Hungarian.

Interviewer: Do you know where?

Interviewee: I mean I know from grandparents from stories, Hungarian Russia, but I did have point four percent Scandinavia, which my mom's family from Lithuania, which is kind of close enough to Sweden, and-[crosstalk 00:24:40]

Interviewer: That's cool.

Interviewee: I told my husband to do it, because I think there's some Asian in him, but he doesn't want to do it because he's too freaked out. Him and his sister look at them close you can really tell. I'm sure there was from that part of Russia, like raping and pillaging, yeah. So, anyway, I digress. This was not planned, I come here for like 20 minutes, and we're on the road, but she's having fun.

Interviewer: My grandparents went through Romania, they were basically thrown out of Russia, and some people say that they stopped and came from here from Romania-[crosstalk 00:25:14]

Interviewee: It was a brutal place, a really brutal place. They put everyone in a camp, it was awful.

Interviewer: Luckily they got out before that.

Interviewee: They were lucky.

Interviewer: And so you said the child's other parent is, white, Caucasian as well?

Interviewee: [Foreign Language 00:25:59]

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah, same.

Interviewer: And then, I need the highest education completed of both of you.

Interviewee: I have a JD and a Master's. He has a Bachelor's and did a journalism program. It's not a masters, but it's like a postgraduate certificate.

Interviewer: Cool.