Interviewer:	So again, thank you for agreeing to this interview today. I'm talking with a librarian. So, first of all, I'd like to chat with you about advice you may provide to families about using various electronic devices. And, some examples would be, television, smartphones, laptops, iPads, e-readers, desktop computers, game consoles, basically, anything that has a screen. In what ways do you help parents and caregivers with decisions about their child's screen media practices?
Interviewee:	Okay. There are two specific instances that come to mind. The first one is, when I talk to parents during our programs, and, they feel a lot of shame about connecting their children with technology. So, the parents in my service area are, tend to be very affluent, so they have all the iPhones and Ipads, and the Kindles. And, a lot of times, they say, "Oh. I was at the restaurant the other day, and my kid was whining, and I gave them the phone to look at something. And I know that's not good." And I jump in and say, "That's fine for your child to watch TV for 20 minutes. That probably won't have a significant outcome for the rest of their life." But, it seems like that is a dominant feeling that the parents at my library have regarding technology. They just feel bad about it, which reveals to me that, they don't know the educational benefit that it can have.
Interviewee:	So, there's that part. And then, the other part is, connecting parents to technology resources they have access to through the library. So, with Metropolitan Library, let's assume we have an app called Speakaboo's, which is an early literacy app. Are you familiar with that?
Interviewer:	No. I'm not.
Interviewee:	It's really neat. So, it's developed through researchers with early literacy experts. And, they're animated books that you can read on an app. And, it's almost like a cartoon with subtitles underneath, so the children can read along with the dialog. And, they feature popular characters from kids TV shows. So, they have Dora, and Elmo, and Clifford. So, that is something that connects the parents too. And, what's really neat with the app is, you can also integrate music into it.
Interviewer:	Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Interviewee:	So, it's not just a direct reading skills, it's just the general early literacy skills, of seeing, reading, writing, and they're are different games incorporated into the app. So, the parent are excited to learn about that.
Interviewee:	And then, there's another resource that we have called Hoopla, where you can stream different educational children's TV shows. Like, PBS, or Mister Rogers.

Interviewer:	Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Interviewee:	And, usually, when I tell them about those resources, and the fact that it's indoors by the library, it gives it more credibility in their eyes. So, they may feel bad at home letting their child watch PBS, but, if I say, "Oh know, the library has invested in this and we think it's valuable." It makes them feel better about letting their child watch something on the screen.
Interviewer:	Okay. So, do you intentionally address the topic, or, just discuss it with them when asked?
Interviewee:	Usually, when asked. So, I found that a lot of parents are very protective of their time at the library, and they don't want their child to be exposed to a screen during story time. So, I've had a manager say, "Hey. You should try using apps in story time." And I tried that once and the parents didn't really like it, because they said, "We come to the library to get away from the screens."
Interviewer:	Interesting.
Interviewee:	So, there's a certain amount of reticence from their part, and they feel like it threatens the value of the library program. Which again, is probably reflective of the fact that they don't realize the educational benefit that the technology can have.
Interviewer:	Mm-hmm (affirmative). Well, and they have an interesting view of what a library is, it sounds like as well.
Interviewee:	Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Interviewer:	Library's equal books?
Interviewee:	Right. It's a very traditional view of the library. Very old school. And, I try to make sure that all of my programs have educational benefits, even though they don't use technology. I'm playing into their desire for something nostalgic. In a way, I feel like I'm catering to their nostalgia from their childhood.
Interviewer:	Okay. So, the topic isn't really integrated into a program or a service that you are offering? It comes up in conversation during or after storytime or whenever they seek you out?
Interviewee:	Yes. And, I think, a lot of that has to do with the fact that, I work mostly with early childhood. And so, there aren't as many digital resources for that age group. But, I know other librarians at the Belle Isle Library, have used technology more often, even if it's just explaining a science experiment, and then, projecting a Youtube video on the screen that they can follow along. So, I haven't come across a lot of digital resources that I feel like cater really well to the demographic that I work with.

Interviewer:	Okay. So, do you disseminate information about this topic to parents? Or, is there anything on a website or anything like that?
Interviewee:	I don't think we have anything on the library website. I do have a resource table out during all of my programs, with our calendar, and flyers, and I have put out handouts before on screen use. And, I can't think exactly what the source of those documents are. It might be ALSC, like little PDFs or something. So that's available for them. But, I would say, that's kind of a limited, all of the dissemination that I do on that topic.
Interviewer:	Okay. All right. So what devices are most frequently mentioned by parents?
Interviewee:	iPads, and just general smartphones.
Interviewer:	I'm making a list, so we can refer back to this throughout our interview.
Interviewee:	Okay.
Interviewer:	So, what activities do parents ask about in relation to iPads, for example?
Interviewee:	They honestly don't ask a lot of questions about it. And there are multiple reasons for that, that I've identified. One, them being that they already have access to the answers to their questions, because they have a lot of money. I don't know how else to put it. But, they have the time to go to the Apple store, and if they have a question about their device, they can do that. So, they don't refer a lot of technology management questions to me. Like, how does my iPad work?
Interviewer:	Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Interviewee:	And, to be honest, I don't think I've ever gotten any direct questions related to technology, except, "Oh. I heard you have this Speakaboo service, can you show me how to install it?"
Interviewer:	Okay.
Interviewee:	And, that's really it.
Interviewer:	So. You would give the same answer for a smartphone even. Because they would both be qualified.
Interviewee:	Mm-mm-hmm (affirmative).
Interviewer:	Okay. All right. So, what are some of the common questions, if you get any, from parents about the technology devices?
Interviewee:	I really don't get that many questions.

Interviewer:	Okay.
Interviewee:	They're mostly just comments. And like I said before, comments like, "I shouldn't let my child watch that." Or, "I really need to find other things for my child to do, so that he's not stuck to the iPhone."
Interviewer:	Okay. Do they ever give you suggestions for programs their children are using? You say that, "My child likes to use X." Is that something that they give you as a suggestion?
Interviewee:	No.
Interviewer:	Okay.
Interviewee:	And, I'm trying to imagine what it would even be like if a parent did say that. There is a core group of parents that comes every week to my programs. And, I feel like coming to the library is sort of a status symbol for them, in the same way that, "Oh god. If parents likes to be the parents that takes their kid to the museum."
Interviewer:	Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Interviewee:	It applies a certain social status. And, I feel like the use of technology with these parents, threatens that social status that they're trying to project. Like, "Oh. It's incompetent parents who don't know how to teach their children, and, who give their children iPhones."
Interviewer:	Interesting.
Interviewee:	So, in a way, using technology is a reflection of the quality of their parenting. And again, this is my perception of it, if I were to ever say any of this out loud.
Interviewer:	Sure.
Interviewee:	But, I wonder if the reason no one ever talks about it is, because they feel like it's a taboo topic. Because they don't want to admit to being the parent who uses technology.
Interviewer:	Okay. This next question, I think you've answered. What are your responses to those questions? So, you mentioned earlier, you'll tell them, "No. It's okay for them to that." Are there other responses that you can think of.
Interviewee:	Promoting library services, like I said before. So, if they say, "Oh. I shouldn't let my child play Fruit and Jeff on my phone." I can say, "Well, we have this other service that's directly tied to early literacy skills that you might check out."
Interviewer:	Okay.

Interviewee:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Great. Okay. So, what do you think are the needs of parents in making decisions about their child's use of electronic devices?
Interviewee:	I think there needs to be a shift in their perception of technology. Because, they do view technology as something that threatens the integrity of their child's experience.
Interviewer:	Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay.
Interviewee:	And then, being connected to early literacy resources that support learning skills. Because, I wonder if their stigma towards technology goes back to the fact that they just perceive all of it as mindless games. And so, if we're able to present them with tools that actually contributed to learning, I think they would find that appealing.
Interviewer:	That's really interesting. So, what do you think parents most struggle with then, when making decisions? Just that perception?
Interviewee:	How they're going to be perceived by other people. So, for example, I mentioned the mom who said, "Oh. I was at the restaurant and my child was just screaming, and out of control. So, I let them watch something on my phone. And, I knew that was bad, and I knew the other parents were watching me, and were probably thinking, I'm a bad parent, or, 'She can't get her child under control.'" So, her whole perception of the use of technology was based on how other people were going to think of her as a mom.
Interviewer:	That's really interesting. Are there any resources that you refer parents to? You mentioned the ones you disseminate. Are there others?
Interviewee:	I'm really only familiar with the ones put out by the library system. I mean, we will touch on this later, but I don't feel like there are a lot of great resources to education librarians about what exists. And, I know there's a website called Little E, where it's a librarian who reviews apps. And, that's helpful, but, I feel like it's almost like an encyclopedia, with lots of different entries about apps, and doesn't really teach me how I can integrate it into a program.
Interviewer:	Okay. Or, why you would even recommend it for parents.
Interviewee:	Right.
Interviewer:	Okay. All right. Are there resources that parents tell you they've consulted? I know I asked that in a different manner before.
Interviewee:	Related to technology use?

Interviewer:	Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Interviewee:	Not that I'm aware of.
Interviewer:	Okay. Do you have an impression of how parents feel about those resources? For example, are they useful and relevant? So, they haven't really mentioned anything to you? So, they haven't used sites like Common Sense Media, or, anything like that? Our age group being five to eleven, it kinda fits to the American Pediatrics Association's guidelines as well.
Interviewee:	Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Interviewer:	They haven't mentioned those either.
Interviewee:	Yes. And I feel like that is a question that our other children's librarian might be able to answer a little bit better, 'cause she works with the older kids.
Interviewer:	Okay.
Interviewee:	So, I don't know if, with the age group that I'm working with, parents are necessarily sifting through what's appropriate for my child, or not appropriate for my child, in terms of graphic violence, or language or things like that. Because, they're really just watching really simple cartoons on Nickelodeon. They're not at the point where they're like, "Oh. Should I let my child watch a PG13 movie or not."
Interviewer:	Right. That's makes perfect sense. Okay. Let's see. What you like more information about in order to best advise parents?
Interviewee:	I would really like to have training dedicated specifically to this topic. Because, we hear of media mentorship all the time, but, I don't feel like there are a lot of good quality resources on how to integrate it into programs. Or, like I said before, it's just kinda encyclopedic. And so, if I know that an app is good, I have to take an hour of my time to download the app, figure out how to use it, and then, come up with ideas on how to integrate it into a program.
Interviewer:	Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Interviewee:	And, it seems like a lot of the resources are dedicated to using iPads. And, iPads just don't really work in my programs. Because, if you have 30 kids for story time, I'm holding up the tiny iPad, they can't see it. And so, I feel like there's a need to develop resources for other platforms of technology. So, it's usually the iPhone, or the iPad, and that doesn't really work with big groups. And, we have a screen projector, but it takes a lot of time to set that up, and do I really wanna the time, like 20 minutes to set up the projector, if I'm only gonna use it to show something for 20 seconds.

Interviewer:	Right.
Interviewee:	So, really how to optimize my time, so that it's worth it with the technology that I have access to.
Interviewer:	Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay. Have you looked at other libraries websites, so see what kind of advice they give, or, programming that they're doing on screen mentorship? Or media mentorship?
Interviewee:	I'm honestly not even aware ... There are a lot of areas offering that kind of program. That sounds really neat, but I'm not really familiar with other libraries having programs specifically dedicated to that, or even having that information on their website.
Interviewer:	Well, and it's kinda sporadic. So, it's not spreading, but I think everyone is kind of in the same boat you are. That, there's not a lot of guidance, there's not a lot of training related to media mentorship for librarians. So.
Interviewee:	Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Interviewer:	It will be interesting to see what we find out.
Interviewee:	Yes. I'm excited for what you develop.
Interviewer:	Let's see. We talked about that. So, again, you might have already answered this, but did you receive training about anything related to families and electronic devices?
Interviewee:	No. I would say, the only official documents that I've seen are the ALSC competencies for children's librarians, and I'm pretty sure, Media Mentorship is of them.
Interviewer:	Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Interviewee:	So, I know it's important, and that, I should probably do it, or incorporate it into my programs, but I haven't really received any training to do that, so I haven't.
Interviewer:	So, did your MLIS program cover any of this? Any of the children or youth services courses?
Interviewee:	I remember in the class I took with Doctor Koh, the services for young children, we talked about a few apps.
Interviewer:	Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewee: And that's kind of all I remember. One of them was the Mother Goose on the Loose app. Which I really enjoy, but again, I don't feel like the iPad format really works for the story times that I use.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewee: Because I would have to go around and show the screen to everyone, and the volume doesn't always go up loud enough to project for the whole room.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Interviewee: So, I think that's an app that parents could definitely benefit from in their personal use, but I don't really see it as something that's adaptable to my programs.

Interviewer: Okay. So, this next question probably doesn't apply. Is this training prompted by yourself, or your institution? It sounds like you've had really no training while you've been here as a librarian in the Metro system.

Interviewee: Correct.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: And then, in terms of what I have prompted for myself, I've scoured through a few websites before, but again, I don't feel like it's enough to incentivize me to do it. And, because I have that resistance from parents, and they don't want technology in it, I feel like it's an uphill battle. And so, I feel very conflicted about it, because, I know it's something I should probably do, but then, I don't wanna have to deal with the reaction from the parents.

Interviewer: Sure. I understand that. So, this is not one of my official questions, but I am wondering ... If you were providing programming for parents, do you think they would attend?

Interviewee: We have tried parenting programs in the past, and, we have a really hard time getting to parents to come. And, I think they want to come, but, they would have to hire a babysitter to be able to come. And, we've talked about having a parenting program, and then, maybe having toys in the back so that their kids could play with them. But then, we felt that there would be sound conflicts. I mean, you would almost need to hire a babysitter to watch the children while the parents come. So, I know other libraries, like the Northwest Library, I think had a parenting series last year that was well attended. And I don't know how they addressed that issue, but I feel like, with our parents, they would only come, if they could bring their child. But then, they don't want to bring their child who might scream and cry during the presentation.

Interviewer:	So, how about integrating tips about technology as you're using it in your programs?
Interviewee:	Yeah. I think that would be a much more effective solution than having a stand alone program, or even maybe having information on the website. Or having a handout that they can digest on their own time.
Interviewer:	Yeah. If they can find it after they leave.
Interviewee:	Yeah.
Interviewer:	Okay. So, is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your role or potential role as a media mentor or advisor to parents about children and electronic devices?
Interviewee:	I feel like media mentorship has been a buzzword for a long time. And, I don't feel like the governing bodies of our profession have necessarily put forth the resources to equip librarians to do it. And, I understand why that's difficult, because technology is always changing, so, by the time you develop a resource, it could be completely outdated. And, there are a lot of technology resources that cost money, and even the apps. I know there's an Eric Carle app that a friend showed me, that's really cool, but it costs six dollars and I don't think parents would invest that much for something that they might be interested in.
Interviewer:	Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Interviewee:	So, I think if I knew more about free resources on platforms that the parents had access to, I would be much more likely to tell them about it.
Interviewer:	Okay. All right. So, just out of curiosity, what is your demographic in this area?
Interviewee:	So, we serve Nichols Hills, which is the richest neighborhood in Oklahoma and the whole state. So that's usually where the parents come from.
Interviewer:	Interesting.
Interviewee:	And, we also have a lot of nannies that come with the children that they watch. So, it's very homogenous in terms of race, social status, just general access information.
Interviewer:	So, what is the racial makeup? Would you say mostly Caucasian?
Interviewee:	Very white. Yes. Very, very white.
Interviewer:	Okay. That's interesting, because this area of town is kind of in the middle of pockets. Right?

Interviewee:	Mm-hmm (affirmative).
Interviewee:	Yeah. So, I think a lot of the people outside of NH go to the Village Library, which is just down the road.
Interviewer:	Oh. Okay.
Interviewee:	Yeah. I would say that most of the parents that come to the story time are people in NH, which makes sense, because, you need to be able to be available at ten o'clock on a Tuesday to take your child to story time.
Interviewer:	Sure.
Interviewee:	And those are usually people that are stay at home moms, stay at home parents, or people that can hire a nanny to do it.
Interviewer:	That's true. Okay. Well, anything further that you'd like to mention before we close?
Interviewee:	I'm just speaking hypothetically here, but I wonder if the class makeup has to do or influences the desire to be perceived a certain way by other parents. Because, I think in every community, there's a sense of gate keeping, or watching, maybe something that's just natural of parents in general, that they compare themselves to other parents. But, I wonder if the fact that they are in such an exclusive, close knit community in OC that, that is amplified.
Interviewer:	It's very possible. And it would be definitely something interesting in exploring further.
Interviewee:	Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yep.
Interviewer:	Okay. Well, thank you very much for your time.
Interviewee:	Yeah. You're welcome.
Interviewee:	Here is an extra addendum to this interview. I shared Speak-a-boos with one of the parents. It was when we first launched the app and so I advertised it at the beginning of story time and said we have a new subscription to this service and there was one mom who heard that. She has a son with developmental delays. He is three but he has a really difficult time talking. And so she went home and downloaded the app and she said that it completely changed his attitude towards his quiet time. So, a few times during the day she sends him to his room to just kind of rest or take a nap or whatever and she says that she gives him the app and it entertains him for 30 or 40 minutes. And it's actually taught him how to speak certain words. It's complimenting the speech therapy that's he receives. She says it has actually shown physical benefits to the quality of his speech.

She was so thankful for that and she could see the direct effect of it on her child. So I thought that was really neat.

Interviewer: That's an exciting story, having two disabled children of my own that have speech and language issues, it's great to hear of something that helps them progress in some way either with speech or reading or ... And if you can make the connection between reading and speech that's a huge hurdle. That's exciting. Thank you for sharing that.

Interviewee: Yeah, and I feel like that's an example of a parent who may have had preconceived ideas about what she thought she could do for her child and she saw that it could actually be a tool of learning.

Interviewer: Exciting. Again, thank you for chatting with me today.