

Q Emilie Scholey (researcher)  
A Woman with son (aged 3)

Q I'll just give you a bit of background. Obviously you've had the information so it's a research project led by LEGO and obviously University of Sheffield regarding play, technology and learning. When I'm asking you the questions there's a lot of reference to technologies. And when we talk about technologies we're kind of referring to digital devices such as mobile phones, tablets, cameras, game consoles, computers, etc. Then kind of media, such as apps and websites and digital games as well.

Also, within all those kinds of areas, we're thinking about robotics and creative coding which I know is kind of big in schools now. And designing digital artefacts in 3D printing and virtual reality and augmented reality. So those kinds of things are what we're referencing to. Is that okay? Just so you know.

A Yes, no. Fine, yes, definitely.

Q And also we're thinking about play in terms of three different areas. The first one is adult-led, child-led and peer and sibling-led play. Play using the devices I mentioned and media I mentioned. And then a different type of play which shows the influence of those digital devices and media when they're not actually present with the child. So before or after using those things. And also, obviously there's a lot of talk about technologies but we're also interested in families and children that don't use as much technology as well. So don't feel that you have to use a lot of technology in your family. I'll just get straight on with it if that's alright.

A Yes, no, yes.

Q It's approximately going to take about an hour so hopefully we'll get done before then but we'll see how we get on. The first question is, how does technology feature in your child's play? So, for example, does your child like to play with any particular types of devices? Apps?

A Yes, he does. I've got two children, my eldest son is three and a half. So he kind of likes the iPad a lot.

Q Right.

A He likes the iPad as well as watching the kids' shows. He also plays some games on it...

Q I was just going to stop you there. I was going to just mention, it does say actually that, as you've got two children, if we just refer to one of them throughout the whole interview, is that all right?

A Yes, that's fine. Yes, my son because he's the one that uses it really.

Q Yes. Is that all right? Brilliant, okay so that's great. Carry on if you can. If you want to add any more. So any other apps or toys?

A Yes, so he plays his Disney games. There's also like a playdough game that he likes. He's really into playdoughs and watching how to do it. Yes, and then other than that, it's like numbers. He's learning his numbers and the alphabet. But yes, sometimes he uses my phone, but the majority of the time I just put him on the iPad because he's got his own iPad.

Q Okay, that's great. And does your child, does he watch television? As part of...

A He does. He watches Netflix, but obviously cartoons like Peppa Pig, Paw Patrol, Thomas the Tank Engine. We're quite careful, though, with what he watches because obviously you have to be careful with the parental, you know, that they don't watch or play with anything that's not suitable.

Q Yes, that's good. And does he engage with the apps then that relate to, like you've mentioned, a few of those programmes? Does that impact on his play? The way he plays, using the apps.

A Not really. I mean, I think it's... You mean like behaviour-wise, or?

Q Just general play really. So, watching those TV programmes then perhaps playing with some of the apps that are based on those, like the CBeebies, you mentioned. Does he then go away afterwards and maybe... You mentioned numbers and things like that. What kind of play does he do?

A He would watch kind of like that, a number app or something similar and then he would get, for example, his trains and kind of like similar to what he's watching. If that makes sense?

Q Yes, totally, yes. I've got two little boys.

A By watching it, he does it, basically. So that's why I think that in some ways the iPad is good. Yes. In other ways, obviously, you have to be careful with what they watch.

Q Yes, totally. Does he have any other toys, like the trains, that maybe he interacts with differently from watching programmes or...? I'm just thinking like imaginative play and pretend play and things like that. Anything that he plays with physically that might relate back to something he's watched on Netflix or CBeebies. Other than the trains.

A Like maybe his bears, his teddies that he has. For example, a while ago he was into the Teletubbies and he kept speaking like Laa-Laa. He would do that, kind of, to pretend. And then he would say, oh yes I saw that on TV, you know?

Q Oh, that's good.

A The other day.

Q Yes.

A But yes there's no time to relate to it.

Q And does he play any video games on your mobile or his iPad?

A I think they're just like the game apps that he plays with. We do have a PlayStation 4. And he's got one of those old-fashioned Game Boys.

Q Okay.

A But I don't think he's really sussed how to use it yet. It might just be because he's too young.

Q Yes. So he doesn't show as much interest in that as he does the other things you've mentioned already?

A Yes.

Q Okay, and does he have any... You just mentioned the Teletubbies. Does he have any physical toys that relate to his online, digital interests? They've put an example here, like the Minecraft [unclear] blocks. Obviously that's a bit too old. But does he have anything else, like any other figures or characters or anything that relates...?

A He has like Marvel characters. He's really into the Hulk and DC, Captain America and stuff like that.

Q Yes.

A There are quite a few games which he's actually learnt the characters. Before he didn't know that but, by playing the game, he learnt who the characters were.

Q Oh okay, that's interesting.

A So when he got his action figures he was like, oh yes, this is Captain America and this is Thor and this is Hulk.

Q Right, okay. That's good. I'm reading through the questions because there's quite a lot of questions. Does your child, does he play with toys that are digital such as LeapPad toys or robots or anything that kind of...?

A Yes, he has a robot actually that replies to you. So it's kind of like musical. When you switch it on and you say something, it repeats what you say.

Q Right. And how does he interact? Does he like that kind of...?

A I got it for him because I thought it was quite interactive. It kind of helps them to... Also to hear their voice but also, you know, to speak to them and then hear a response kind of thing.

Q Yes, I think a lot of the children that age are like that.

A And he also, when he was younger, he had the LeapFrog computer which had like songs on it and a few games and like making noises and sounds, which he likes.

Q And do you think that's helped with his language skills and, like you said, his development?

A Yes. It's really good.

Q Okay. I've got another question. Does your child play with internet-enabled toys such as Furby or... You've mentioned the robot.

A He's got... I recently bought him a T-Rex. Like a dinosaur.

Q Oh, okay.

A And you connect it to the WiFi.

Q Right, and what does that do?

A So basically... I can't remember the brand but it's a T-Rex actual dinosaur toy. You attach it and it's got a bone [inaudible] almost like a USB that you put in the mouth. And then you can connect it to the WiFi. You can actually tell it, oh, sit, oh, food time [?], stuff like that.

Q That's amazing. And does he like that then?

A Yes, they've got really good toys. I didn't really know about this before but the internet, social media and stuff.

Q Have you seen any other ones that you're thinking, well maybe that could be a future toy for him to, because obviously he likes that one. Is there anything else you think that you've seen that you might purchase in the future then, that he would like?

A I think these like story... LeapFrog, I think they're from LeapFrog, like a computer sort of, computerised reading.

Q Yes, I've seen that.

A It helps with their reading and learning. You purchase the books, they're like electronic books. But you put it onto the toy, if that makes sense. And then they can actually read, you can read from it.

Q That's amazing.

A Instead of like hardback. It might make it more fun if they start seeing different kinds of light-ups, etc.

Q That leads on nicely to the next question which is about augmented reality or virtual reality equipment. I guess that's similar in some way, the augmented reality, isn't it? With the reading book. Is there anything you can think of, anything else that maybe you've

got or you're thinking about that's augmented or virtual?

A Maybe thinking in the future when he's a bit older, that... It's for the PlayStation. You know those, can't remember...

Q The headgear?

A The virtual headphones or something. Not headphones, the virtual goggles or whatever they're called.

Q Where you can kind of move and the character moves with you.

A Yes. I think when he's a bit older I'll probably get one of those for him.

Q And do you have any, in your house, any artificial intelligence, such as Alexa or Siri or Google that you use?

A Yes I do. I've got both, so Alexa and Google.

Q Right. And how do you use those and how does he use those within your house?

A When I first purchased it, I plug it in, download the app, and then connect it, obviously, to the WiFi and then you can connect it to your TV, for example. And then you just speak to it like, okay Google, or Alexa, what's the time now? Or, Alexa, what's the weather? etc. So it's good to kind of like, they [?] can hear that you speak to it and it answers to you. If that makes sense.

Q And do you use it a lot? How do you... Does he use it as well?

A Yes, it's constantly plugged in. Especially the Alexa. So when I'm watching TV, say I wanted the volume up, I'd say, Alexa please can you put volume number five or volume number six.

Q And how does your son use it? Does he use it at all?

A My son?

Q Yes.

A Sometimes, I know on the Google Home, I've downloaded the app and you can actually link the child to it. So if I put like a child's game or something on the app, it'll link it to the skill [?].

Q And he knows how to use that?

A Well with my help. I kind of told him a couple of times, [Son's name], say this into it, [Son's name], say that into it. Yes, he picks it up quite well.

Q That's good. Does his play in outdoor spaces feature technology in any way? So not just in the home but outside the home. Such as, they give examples here...

A I take my phone with me everywhere I go. Even if I'm outside the house. So I guess, if we're in the coffee shop or something he will just sometimes use my phone because it's always tacked [?] to 4G.

Q And if he's outside playing, does he do any pretend or imaginative play that links back to any kind of influence of technology at all? Any of the things you've mentioned.

A I would say mainly indoors. But sometimes outdoors he will... If he watches something he'll start maybe jumping up and down and saying, look, this is what this person did or, you know.

Q Have you got any examples at all? I've put you on the spot, but is there anything you can think of, any programmes he's watched or anything he's played that he's kind of mimicked or...?

A So, for example, one of the things he watches on YouTube is... It has like Hopscotch on it. So then he would watch how they do it and then he would try and do it himself.

Q Interesting. Question two now, I'm moving onto LEGO. Very interested to know if he plays with LEGO or any similar...

A Yes, he does. He really does. Since [?] he was a young age. Duplo, LEGO... He uses a lot of Duplo LEGO. We've now moved but [?] when he was younger we got like a whole box full of Duplo and he's also moved on now to like the bigger stages of LEGO. You know like the smaller pieces.

Q And does he use...? Do you get the bags or do you have the boxes?

A Yes he does. I've got them so much for him in the past. The Duplo LEGO, you know like the big bags with the amount of pieces in it. They usually have 48 or 56 pieces of the LEGO. So he would use that. And also some of the boxes. We recently got, for the Chinese New Year, it was like a pig, it was the year of the pig. He managed to put them...

Q And is he able to put that together with help?

A Yes, he needed help. Me and my partner, we both helped him to put it together. But he always watches it...

Q Is that quite nice? Sorry.

A It's kind of like a nice interaction and also you get his head like not only in the iPad. So he sees and he tries and does it for himself.

Q Right okay, and going back to the...

A My partner's really good with the LEGO. It's me that's not really good. [Inaudible] to be honest.

Q When he was working with the Duplex LEGO, the bigger pieces, what kind of things did he do? Did he model things or did he like base things on things, and again, things he's seen or was it out of his imagination?

A Yes he would associate the colours. For example, this red piece goes with this blue piece and this red piece goes with this red piece.

Q Right, interesting.

A But he would kind of like match it together or he knows that this is bigger than that so that doesn't fit that.

Q Right, so it's that spatial awareness.

A He's quite good with like, even his train tracks, he'll try and put his tracks together. And then he'll know if one piece doesn't fit. So then he'll be like, this doesn't fit, let me take another piece.

Q That's interesting. Has he seen any of the LEGO films?

A Yes. I've got it on, so I've got Sky Movies. So we've got like the LEGO one, the LEGO 2 movie. So he will watch that.

Q And does he like them? Does he talk about them or...?

A Yes, he does. [Unclear] LEGO.

Q And has he... Have you been to LEGOLand? Or anything else related to LEGO?

A Yes, we went the other month to LEGOLand actually.

Q Okay and what did you think?

A He likes it, yes. He was a bit too short to go on some of the rides. You have to be a certain height. But he enjoyed the park there, they've got like slides and climbing frames and stuff. And we did a train that goes around. So he liked it.

Q Great, and did that have any effect on the way he played after he'd been?

00:16:49

A He kind of said, I want to go, I want to spend more time. I said like, I like it there, let me go and play more, you know?

Q Ok yes. Moving on to questions now that relate to your views on your child's play and technology. Question one. Who decides which devices, so just toys, games, apps, that he will use? And what guides those choices that you make with regard to what you let him use? Who decides it? Is it yourself? Or your partner? Did you mention your partner? Or your son chooses what he uses?

[Recording paused while interviewer calls back due to bad connection]

A Yes, both of us have the responsibility. When I'm at work my partner will decide what to give him and how long to give him for. So kind of like take it turns.

Q And does he sometimes want to make his own choices and do you go along with that or do you stick to what...?

A Well he will always say to us like oh, I want the iPad, I want the iPad. So we kind of limit the time we have on it, really.

Q Okay, and in your view, what types of devices, digital toys, games, apps, promote play? So which ones does you think promote play the most and why?

A I think the YouTube ones really because they kind of like explain what the game is or what the characters are and you can really learn from it as well as watch.

Q And how about limit play? Which of those devices, toys, games, apps, do you feel maybe limit play sometimes and why?

A Limit play?

Q Limit, so restrict play.

A Not so much.

Q Any of those in particular do you feel that maybe when he uses them he's not playing, in your mind, he's not playing, you know?

A Not really. I mean, maybe when he's focused on a film.

Q Yes. Okay.

A When you focus on a film, you won't play. You'll sit and watch it.

Q And how about promote creativity, and why?

A Creativity? Crayola, like Crayola drawing and stuff like that.

Q Which of the devices though?

A Oh, like either an iPad or... Anything, an iPad or a phone or TV.

Q You think they all promote creativity? Do you feel that that's what promotes?

A Yes, definitely.

Q Okay, and which out of the devices, toys, digital toys, games, apps, do you feel maybe limits creativity and why?

A Maybe again like the movies. I think because it's not so much like doing things. Or watching how they do it, it's just watching the movie.

Q What kind of toys or products do you think LEGO should be developing for

children in this digital age? Do you feel like there's anything...?

A I think there's a wide range of things that LEGO... LEGO have got the Duplo for under threes and three and over. I think that the amount that they've got and the range is fine.

Q Okay. We're interested in your child's active engagement with technology and play. When playing with technology, how far do you feel your child is actively engaged? e.g. interested, focused on the activity in general.

A Yes, pretty engaged, yes.

Q Okay. We are interested in the ways that your child finds play with technology meaningful and relates the experience to their everyday lives. When playing with technology, how far does your child find the play to be meaningful to them and their everyday interests in general. I know you've already mentioned some of those things anyway, such as speech development and numbers and trains.

A Yes, really good. Really well. He gets really involved in it.

Q Is there anything else? I know it's really difficult, I'm putting you on the spot. Is there anything else, maybe you think that you want to add to that or... You have mentioned quite a lot already. But is there anything else you can think of that maybe relates meaningfully to his day, his life.

A Like colouring, like using paints, stuff like that. So it engages their... And then obviously relates back to creativity.

Q Does he watch that on TV then or does he see that on YouTube or...?

A Yes. What, the colouring?

Q Yes.

A Yes, like he watches it on YouTube. I guess playdough also is another one. Really good. Again, [unclear] YouTube etc.

Q We're interested in the ways that your child might try things out and then try to make improvements, set themselves challenges when playing with technology. When playing with technology, how far does your child enjoy trying things out and making improvements in general?

A Yes, really interested.

Q Can you think of any examples where he might have done that? Where he's done something and then reflect on what he's done and thought...?

A Like for example when he's drawn a picture in his nursery. So he's done it and he's come home and he's like, mummy look what I've done. Like really really happy about it.

Q And has he ever gone away and thought, I'm going to add a bit more to it or change it or alter it or...?

A Yes. He would take it and be like, I want to add more colour. I want to colour this in. He likes to fill in...

Q Cool. On the theme of drawings, you mentioned he does a lot of creativity with his drawing and the painting. Does he do anything on his iPad or anything with regard to creating images or pictures?

A Yes, there is on the iPad, there is an app that has like a colouring thing. So sometimes he uses that on his [unclear] and like draws it and stuff, draws circles or draws triangles or...

Q And does he ever use that... Do you ever see any similarities with what he does on the iPad to what he then does on paper?

A Yes, I mean it all relates. So, if he draws a circle on the iPad, he'll draw it on the paper.

Q Oh interesting, okay. Moving on, and we've got questions now relating to play with technology and children's emotions and well-being. So we are exploring the link between play with technology and children's emotions and well-being. Do you have any thoughts on this topic that you would like to share?

A On... Sorry, if you could repeat it for me?

Q Yes. So, basically, how do you feel your child's play with technology affects his emotions and well-being? Do you have any thoughts on how...?

A I think it's good in some ways but I think you need to have a limit to how much you let them watch and what you let them watch, really. I think most of it nowadays has got a parental control and you can link your iPad to their iPad to keep track on it.

Q And we're interested in how far your child enjoys their play with technology. When playing with technology, is your child joyful? In brackets they've put happy or cheerful. In general, how do you feel when you watch him playing with the games on the iPad or making pictures or watching...?

A He's good, yes. It makes him happy, content.

Q Okay. What range of other emotions when your child is involved in play technologies? Why do you think this is? Do you see any other emotions at all when he's playing?

A Yes, like good emotions because maybe he's seeing something that's positive on the iPad which makes him in a positive mood.

Q Does he ever comment to you then? I know it's difficult to think of the occasions

but do you have any moments where you've thought he's said something that's been quite interesting and then you can gauge how he's feeling from what he's said? When he's done something or watched...

A Sometimes he will say like, oh I'm so happy now. Or, by watching what he's watching, he'll say, oh mummy I'm so happy. That's kind of like how I know that he's happy with what he's watching.

Q And which types of technology is your child most likely to get bored with when playing with, if any? So the ones we've talked about, the iPad, the kind of apps on the iPad.

A None really. I don't think any.

Q No? Okay.

A No.

Q We're interested in children's social interactions in relation to their play with technology. When playing with technology that allows for social interaction, would you say your child engages well with others in general? I'm assuming...

A Yes, there've been a couple of times where his friends come over, for example, and they want to watch the iPad together. He does share but sometimes I think he likes to watch it by himself.

Q Yes. What about TV? Does he have friends come over and they watch TV together? Do they interact during the programme or do they talk?

A Yes, he does. He'll talk to his friends, he'll be like, oh that's this person or that's that person.

Q Okay. Which types of technology do you feel support social play in your view? So out the ones we...

A I think all of them, so I think TV, iPad... Yes, I think all of them, in their own way.

Q And, oh just thinking about what you mentioned earlier about the dinosaur which is connected to the internet. Does he interact with others with that? Or, how does he play with that?

A Yes, he does. He'll say to his friends, oh, come and look at my dinosaur. And he will show his friends how to use it and stuff.

Q Okay, and how does that go? Are they quite into it? Do they get involved with the play?

A Yes they do, definitely.

Q Okay. Moving onto the next section which is questions about parents' role in

technology and mediated play. When your child's play involves technology, do you ever play with him and if so, how? So when you might do that, morning, afternoon, evening. Where it might be.

A Probably in the evening once my daughter's gone to bed. Then I have some more time with my son. And then on the weekends usually during the afternoons.

Q And what kind of things might you do that involves technology?

A We might watch films together, a programme, or the iPad.

Q You don't have like a routine that you do? It depends on how you feel and what you might fancy doing that day?

A Yes, it depends really. It depends on what we've got time for, on the mood, how well he's behaved, etc.

Q Okay. And are there some devices, digital devices, toys, games, apps that are better than others for playing together with your child? Have you trialled things and thought, that doesn't really work or that really works really well. It's interesting you mentioned you've got another child and it's nice to have that time alone with your son.

A Yes.

Q Do you have things in your own mind, you think, well actually that works really well so I might just sit and we can do that and we can bond, spend a bit of time together and do that? Do you have anything...?

A Maybe putting something on on the TV.

Q Yes. Do you have any favourite programmes or anything you might watch together?

A Like Cars or... For example, like the LEGO movie. Like family movies really.

Q Okay, that's interesting. And if you're using your own devices does your child ever ask to play on them with you? I know my... I've got two boys and they're, if I've got my phone they might say, mummy can we play on your phone?

A Yes, he will ask. Yes, if he sees me using it.

Q And do you play anything together on them? Like on your own devices, like your phone?

A No, not as such. Mainly watching movies.

Q Are there some devices or apps that your child can only access with you or another family member? I know you mentioned, you both take it in turns.

A Yes, I've done my sharing. Family sharing.

Q How does that...?

A Yes, I've enabled that just for me to keep track on what he's watching.

Q That's really interesting. Okay. And does that work well for you then? Do you kind of look at that and it's...?

A Yes, definitely.

Q And do you ever initiate play using technology with your child? And if you can think of anything, any examples. Don't worry if not but... So any kind of play you might do using technology within your home that you initiate yourself, you start.

A Again, like watching maybe something on the iPad, electronic games. Yes, so basically like learning things, seeing, games and various technology and then doing it, like acting it out or pretend play.

Q And do you have any examples of the pretend play?

A Like, for example, he might see on YouTube or something someone feeding a baby so he might pretend that he's got a baby and he's feeding the baby.

Q Okay, that's good. We're going to move on to questions about parents' general perceptions of technologies. Do you think certain technologies offer more positive or negative experiences for your child? So, I guess, which ones do you think are more positive experiences for them and which ones, maybe, lean towards more negative experiences for your child?

A I think they're all okay, it just depends on how much.

Q Right, yes.

A How much usage you give them, how much time they spend on them, like what they watch.

Q And do you have any...

A I don't think any of them are particularly bad.

Q No. And do you have any concerns about your child's experience with technologies? So anything you've maybe thought, ooh, during or whilst it's happening, or afterwards.

You've mentioned you're aware of what's going on in the house and how much is being watched and what's being watched. But do you have any concerns in particular?

A No, not really.

Q No? Okay. Nearing the end actually. Not got many more questions left. On the same subject, are you concerned about the safety aspects of internet-enabled toys and, if so, what kind of concerns do you have about internet-enabled toys?

A It just depends on what they watch. So nothing too violent for them. Again, I think it's about just monitoring really.

Q And how about data privacy in relation to your child? Do you have any concerns about data and...?

A No.

Q Okay. And do you think that your child's use of technology influences family life in a positive way?

A Yes.

Q Can you...?

A Like it makes him positive, smiley.

Q And do you think that your child's use of technology influences family life negatively in any way?

A No.

Q Okay. Do you have any concerns about your child's use of technologies or about the technologies in the home? If you do, what do you do about it?

A I just take the iPad off him. [Inaudible] not watching it and he can go and play with his toys.

Q Yes. And do you have any advice or guidance you would offer new parents on issues relating to data privacy and safety in relation to your child?

A Yes, definitely monitor what they watch and how long they watch it for. Like programmes. And just make sure that the programme that they're doing or the games that they're playing is suitable for their age.

Q Okay, and just on that note, you were talking about time restrictions. In your own mind, do you have a time limit per day or week or do you have anything you...?

A Yes I think it should be maybe limited to an hour a day.

Q And does he use... I'm trying to think about his routine during the day. Does he use it more in the morning, afternoon, evening? Is there any time of day when...?

A No because he's at nursery during the day so usually in the evening.

Q            Okay, brilliant. Thank you very much. We've come to the end of the questions. Is there anything else you want to add before we finish? Anything else you want to mention about play and technology?

A            No, everything was good, thank you.