

Q Lydia Hall (researcher)

A Woman with daughter (aged 8)

B Daughter

Q So, I'm just going to ask you a series of questions relating to your daughter's play. I will start with question one: how does technology feature in your daughter's play?

A Quite a lot at the moment.

Q Okay, what sort of things...?

A She's got a Nintendo Switch that she plays with quite a lot. She wants a mobile phone, but I don't want her to have one of those just yet. But she has asked for an iPad for Christmas, and she does play online sometimes, when she's allowed.

Q And does she like to play stuff on her own, or is she normally playing with somebody else?

A On her Switch she likes to play a bit of a mixture, on her own and with friends. I limit what she plays with on the tablet, because I don't like her playing with other people on that. I'm quite wary.

Q Okay. And what sort of things does she like to play on the tablet?

A Minecraft, any free games really that she can get her hands on because I refuse to buy them for her on the iPad.

Q And you said that you don't really want her to have a mobile phone. Can you just explain why that might be?

A Well, she's only eight at the moment. She'll be nine next month. I think she's a bit too young for it, and I like to monitor what she's...

Q And how do you think she feels while she's playing on the iPad, for example?

A Yes [?]. And, one, they get too hooked on it, and my nieces, for example, they don't socialise. They just come round and sit on their phones. I find it very rude. I think they should be out there doing stuff really.

Q Okay, and when would she play with the iPad?

A She's allowed to play a bit at the weekend, because obviously on school nights she's very busy. She does gymnastics, so I do like for her to have a chance to just wind down.

Q And how long does she normally play on the iPad for?

A It depends really. If we're going out, she could play with it for a couple of hours, but if she had her way she'd play on it all day.

Q So, how do you think she's feeling while she's on the iPad?

A To be honest with you, she's actually got ADHD, so she tries to play on our iPad

and her Nintendo Switch, and she'd do it [?] at the same time. So for her it's kind of... I don't know. I think she just enjoys it. It helps her zone out a bit.

Q And is there any way that you can tell that you think that she's enjoying it.

A Oh, yes, she does. She does enjoy it, yes.

Q Does she give off any signs, then?

A I can hear her laughing, which is nice. And she's engrossed in it.

Q Okay, so does your daughter play with... Play while she's watching TV?

A Yes, she'll play with the iPad... She kind of does three things at once, which is a bit annoying, so she will be watching YouTube and playing on a game.

Q So, do you think that she's then taking what she is seeing on the television and then putting that into her play?

A Yes, sometimes she does, yes. She likes this thing called Hello Neighbor [?]. She watches people play that and then she plays that in [?] role play or with her friends [?].

Q And would she do that on her own or with somebody else?

A Both. She was an only child until about a year ago, so she's quite good at playing on her own and imagining [?].

Q And does your daughter ever play video games on her mobile or tablet, and, if so, what sort of games?

A She does, and it's just really Minecraft. I don't really know what other games. She doesn't... Like I said, I don't like her... She isn't downloading them, so she doesn't really have many on there.

Q And does your daughter have any physical toys that would relate to her online interests? So, with LEGO, they have LEGO figures, or the Minecraft blocks.

A She has lots of LEGO. She has lots of DC LEGO and LEGO Friends. And she's got LEGO Worlds, but that's on the Switch. That's her favourite thing to play at the moment actually.

Q And does she ever play with the actual physical toys as well as playing on the digital side of things?

A Yes, she gets LEGO for her birthday and Christmas, so she plays with that quite a lot.

Q And what does she do while she's doing that?

A That she kind of just plays with on her own. I can hear her making them talk to each other and stuff. So, just imaginative play.

Q And does your daughter ever play with toys that are digital? So, you know the robots, for example?

A Yes, she had... She's a bit old for that now, but she used to have a robot dog that

she used to play with, and you know the Fingerlings?

Q Yes.

A She's just a little bit past that now.

Q Right. Can you remember how she used to play with them?

A Yes. She used to... Imaginative play, really. She'd talk to them and then she'd play with friends as well. She'd have her friends round and they'd all play with...

Q Okay, so does your daughter ever play with internet-enabled toys like a Furby?

A She did with her Furby, yes.

Q And do you know how she played with that?

A Yes, she used to quite enjoy that actually because I used to have an app on my phone and the tablet, so she'd do that quite a lot.

Q So, do you remember what she used to do with the app?

A Yes, she used the app quite a bit and got lots of Furbies, but then, after a couple of months, she just got bored of it.

Q And why do you think that might be?

A It was a bit repetitive. So she'd get the same Furby and it'd do the same thing. It never really changed.

Q And did she ever used to play that on her own?

A Yes.

Q Never with anybody else?

A She did play with her cousins, because they can connect, can't they? So, they would just sit them together when they'd have sleepovers and stuff. So sometimes she'd play with others.

Q And does your daughter ever play with augmented reality?

A Sorry, what's that?

Q So, that's like Pokémon Go.

A She watches it, but she hasn't really played it, because, again, you'd need a phone really for that.

Q Okay, and how about virtual reality?

A Yes, she's got a little cheap virtual reality headset that she uses on my phone. But, other than that, not really.

Q Do you know what sort of games she plays on the virtual reality?

A It was just more looking around, a rollercoaster one and a jungle one.

Q And how often would she do that?

- A I think she was interested in it for about a week and then got bored.
- Q Oh, right, okay.
- A Yes.
- Q And does your daughter ever play with artificial intelligence assistants, so Siri, Google, Alexa?
- A Yes, she loves Alexa. She'll play with Alexa every day.
- Q And can you tell me the sort of things she likes to do with her?
- Alexa I didn't catch that. [Overtalking].
- A Music. She loves music. And it's got a game function that she likes. She likes to ask it the weather. At the moment Father Christmas. That's quite good fun too.
- Q And how often does she do that?
- A Every day.
- Q Right. And when your daughter is playing outside, does any technology feature in any way?
- A No.
- Q Right. And it's...
- A No, they just use their imaginations.
- Q What sort of things does she like to do outside?
- A She likes to go for walks in the woods. I walk her to her gymnastics class, which is about half an hour away. And her and her friend like to play spies and stuff like that. [Unclear] stuff, too. And going to the park, walking my brother's dogs. She does that. Parks are her main thing.
- Q Right. So, I'm going to go on to the next set of questions. So, who decides what sort of devices or digital toys that your daughter can use?
- A Me. She'll request them, but I'll tell her if she can have it or not. Or, me and my partner, or her dad.
- Q And what do you think guides that choice?
- A Security mainly, what I can and can't do. Although this year she's asked for an iPad, but she has Irlens [Irlen Syndrome], which means that the words move around. So the iPad has got the overlay, the coloured screen's built in, so that obviously helps decide if she can have one or not.
- Q So, in your...
- A The learning function, if she could learn from it [unclear].
- Q Okay, so that's important to you, is it?
- A Yes, so she can use it for school, because they do everything on computers now.

Q Okay, so then, in your view, what types of devices or digital toys would promote play?

A iPads, any tablet. Because most schools have apps now, so most of those. Cameras I think are quite good as well, because it gets them out and about and they [unclear]. Anything that makes them interact with other people really. The Switch is quite good because she can play it with other people.

Q And how about limiting play?

A Sorry, what do you mean by that?

Q What sorts of devices, or toys, or games, or apps would limit play?

A I'm not sure, really. But I don't mind her going off on her own doing certain things. Certain games she used to play on her own. But I just don't want her glued to it all the time. So a certain amount of unlimited [?] play is fine, but just not all the time.

Q Okay, and how about the sorts of devices or toys that you think promote creativity?

A I suppose they all do now apart from... Well, I suppose even mobile phones can. The majority really, because you can download lots of apps on all of them, can't you? They make games for phones [?] now.

Q And how about with limiting creativity?

A I think all of the social media apps, really.

Q Right. Why do you think social media in particular?

A Because it makes them a bit self-obsessed. Not a [unclear] view [?].

Q So, what kinds of toys or products do you think that LEGO should be developing for children in the digital age?

A I don't know. I think they're doing pretty well with all of their films, and the games and all of that on Switch and stuff. And PlayStation. I'd say they're quite up with it at the moment. Especially the LEGO ones, they're... The LEGO ones, they're all LEGO ones, but the LEGO Batman and stuff. Those games are good.

Q Okay. So, when your daughter is playing with her digital toys, how far do you think she is actually fully engaged?

A With the ones where she can use her imagination, like the LEGO Worlds, she engages really well with that actually, because she can create whatever she wants. So, personally, I think she engages with them more than the ones, like, she just got Incredibles, but sometimes she'll lose interest just flying around.

Q Why do you think she would lose interest in The Incredibles, then, for example?

A Because once she's... So, when you have the levels, she likes that, but then, at the end, when you have to collect everyone, she gets a bit bored. Whereas on the LEGO Worlds she can create whatever she wants constantly. She doesn't have to earn anything.

Q So, do you think that playing with digital toys, then, is meaningful to her?

A Probably, yes. To her it would be, yes.

Q And what about in her everyday interests?

A Sorry, I didn't get that one.

Q In her everyday interests.

A I wouldn't say it's in her everyday interests to play it. I prefer her to play with LEGO itself than play on a console.

Q And what sorts of things does she like to do with the LEGO?

A She likes to build things. She likes the DC one. She just likes to build it and then just plays. But I think it's Wonder Woman and Batgirl. She does a little imaginative play that they're fighting and stuff.

Q So, while she's playing with the LEGO, then, do you think she likes to try new things out and then make improvements as to what she's done already?

A Yes. She does, yes. Although she does...

Q And how can you tell that?

A Because she'll change bits and I can hear her talking to them [?].

Q Okay. Were you going to say something else and I interrupted you?

So, we're also looking at the link between technology and children's emotions and their wellbeing. Have you got any thoughts on that topic?

A I'm very aware of it, just because I work in safeguarding, so I try and just make sure that her mental health is quite good. And, like I said, I make sure she's not on any chat forums or anything, because you hear not nice stories about those.

I think it's important. But then I also think it's important for kids to wind down, because school's very tough [?] and they have to do a lot now. So I like that she can just go and play and zone out for a couple of hours.

Q So, while she's playing with digital toys, do you think your daughter is happy?

A Yes.

Q Okay, and what sorts of other emotions do you see while she's playing with her digital toys?

A She can get frustrated if it's not doing what she wants or it's glitching. That infuriates her. She gets annoyed with that. Yes, just frustration and happiness really. She doesn't really get angry. She'd just go and do something else if it was annoying her. Although she does get annoyed that her little sister tries to play and take the controls away.

Q Okay. Siblings.

A Yes.

Q So, what types of technology, then, do you think your daughter would be most likely to get bored with quickly?

A Get bored with quickly? Probably a phone, you know. I think she'd like the novelty of it, but, whereas she's so young, she wouldn't be able to use the full functions of it. So I think she'd like it for a few weeks but then would get bored because there's nothing that she couldn't do on the tablet, if that makes sense.

Q And do you feel like, then, she gets bored... Would she get bored in the same way if she was not playing with a toy that was digital?

A Yes, probably, because if she can't see it, she kind of forgets about it as well. For example, she's got her little Nintendo DS. Is it DS? I think it is. And that, when she finds it, she wants to play it, but then she'll forget where she's put it and then not play with it for weeks, so... The same with a lot of things. But then that's her attention span, so...

Q Okay. So, while she's playing with her toys, then, do you think that she engages well with other people?

A Yes, very well, yes.

Q And is that while she's actually on the game and maybe socially interacting with another person on the other end of the game? Or is that more with the people surrounding her?

A With the people surrounding her. I don't let her play against other people.

Q Right, okay. And what sorts of technological toys support social play?

A Probably the Switch. The Nintendo Switch.

Q Why do you think that?

A She likes the Mario game where you can play four-player. It's a ball game one. She can do that. And LEGO Worlds, actually. She plays with her cousin when she's round.

Q So, is that an interactive sort of game?

A Yes, you can play two-player on it and just go round. And then also, yes, Incredibles. Me and her play that actually together.

Q I was going to ask you another question there about the... So, is the Switch, is that interactive in a similar way that Nightmare [?] is, or is it more just like when you're stood next to the person?

A You're stood next to the person, yes. So we all sit on the sofa and play it.

Q And do you ever play with your daughter at the same time while she's playing with her digital toys?

A Yes, we'll play some of the games together, yes.

Q Can you tell me what sort of games?

A Mario, all the LEGO games, like Incredibles. Her dad plays with her the... Oh,

Steve, what's that called? The one you play on the Switch with Florence. Oh, Hello Neighbor, that's it. Yes, they take that in turns. They find that one funny. I'm trying to think what other games she's got. She hasn't got many other games on it, to be honest. But, yes, they're the ones that she plays with mostly.

Q And how often do you do that?

A She goes in spurts with it. So, she played it a lot this month, whereas last month she didn't play with it really. So...

Q Why do you...?

A At the moment, we just play on it every week.

Q Why do you feel like she might be going on to something different?

A I don't know actually. Maybe because it's coming up towards Christmas or she's just remembered she's got it. Or maybe, sometimes her cousins, she plays with it at her cousins', so that might remind her that she's got it and can use [?] it.

Q So, there's nothing specific, then, that she might have seen that might have then triggered it.?

A Maybe. I know there's lots of adverts at the moment. And I know her friends are talking about it a bit more at school, because some of her friends haven't got it. So that might have triggered it off actually. I showed one of her friends' mum the Switch, so that might be why she started playing with it a bit more.

Q Okay, and do you think that there are any digital toys, or games, or apps that are better than other apps or games for playing together with your daughter?

A The multi-player ones I prefer, and the ones... I prefer the ones where you can have more than two because then her dad can join in as well and her cousins. Whereas with two-player, she's got two cousins, so when it's two-player, it leaves one of them out and then it leads to arguments. So the more the better.

Q And, again, I'm going to ask you what sort of games are you referring to?

A Again, I think the only ones that do more is Mario anyway.

Q So, if you're ever using your own phone, does your daughter ever ask to play with it?

A Yes, she'll...

Q And would you allow her to?

A She'll want to watch... She'll want to play Snapchat on my phone.

Q So, what sort of things does she like to do on that?

A Look at herself. She's very vain. So, she'll just want to take pictures of herself, really.

Q So, she likes to use the filters?

A Yes, anything that just shows her face. She's very vain.

Q Do you like to do that together, then?

A Sometimes. She likes to do it with her little sister. I've got some funny pictures of those two. But I don't really let her with my phone, because, one, I don't want her to break it, and, again, I don't really like her being on it. I'd rather her [?] be out playing.

Q And are there any sorts of devices or apps that you would only allow your daughter to access when you are with her, or if she's with another family member?

A Yes, anything that she can do a chat on. So, Snapchat I make sure that she's with us. Say, if she's got my iPad, I make sure she doesn't FaceTime anyone or message anyone unless I'm there.

Q And do you ever initiate any sort of technological play with your daughter?

A Yes, we'll play the Switch together. I like doing that with her. And sometimes when... I take a lot of photos with her on my phone as well. I always make her pose.

Q And does she like to look at them?

A Yes.

Q Do you find that when she's got your phone, does she like to take photographs in general?

A Yes.

Q And what sort of things does she like to take pictures of?

A Unfortunately, anything.

Q Right, okay.

A So, sometimes if we go out, we went to the Natural History Museum a few weeks ago, so she loved taking pictures of all the stuffed animals and the dinosaurs. There was hundreds.

Q And when she's seen the pictures then, have you shown them to her since?

A I showed them to her the day after, but she hasn't really got any interest in them now.

Q Do you think that then she might have then recreated something that she's seen while you were at the Natural History Museum with the animals or anything?

A Not really. She talks about it, but she doesn't [unclear] recreate it, no.

Q Okay, so do you think that there are certain types of digital toy or any sorts of technology that are more positive in terms of providing an experience for your daughter?

A Yes, some apps are good and clever. I'm just trying to think of ones that I like. I can't even think of what apps she plays with. I quite like it when she does go on Snapchat when I'm there and she does take pictures with her sister. They can be

quite funny. Like when she turns her into a boy and stuff.

Q And do you think...

A But none that I'm...

Q Yes. Sorry, go on.

A I was just saying none that I'm really [unclear].

Q And how about with the negative? Do you think there are certain digital toys or apps that you think are more negative?

A Just ones that are [?] age-appropriate, really. Like I said, it's more the chat function that I don't like, because I've heard some people at her own school that people were adding them to groups with really inappropriate names and saying inappropriate things.

Q Yes, okay. And have you got any concerns about your daughter's experiences with digital technology?

A No, she's quite a good girl, so I know she'd tell me.

Q Okay.

A And I closely monitor it. I must sound like a right horrible parent.

Q No, you're not. And are you concerned about any of the safety aspects of internet-enabled toys.

A Not really, because most of them you can change now yourself. You can change all of the functions. On her iPad, I can get her children's YouTube, for example, so...

Q And how about with data privacy? Do you have any concerns about that?

A Not really, no.

Q And why do you think that might be?

A Most things have to tell you now, don't they? So, I think that makes a big difference with what you accept and what you don't accept.

I always say to her, if something asks for access to the camera and stuff, let me know, because obviously some don't need access to your camera.

Q Okay, and do you think that your daughter's use of technology influences family life positively in any way?

A Yes, it can do, yes. When we're having a laugh playing on the Switch, that does. and when I need her... Say, if, for example, I'm busy doing something, it's nice that she can unwind for an hour or so while I cook the dinner and she doesn't need my constant attention.

Q Okay, and, same question, do you think that your daughter's use of technologies influences family life negatively in any way?

A Yes, it can do, because sometimes she'll just be engrossed in it and not want to go

out or do anything. Or it could be an argument because I won't let her take it out with her to her cousins' [unclear].

Q And do you have any concerns about your daughter's use of any digital toys or technologies while she's at home.

A No, not really.

Q And how about while she's in school or elsewhere?

A They're not allowed it in school. Apart... I think they use it to do schoolwork. But no, I'm not worried about there.

Q Okay, and what sort of advice or guidance would you offer new parents on issues relating to data privacy and safety in relation to their child?

A Just make sure that you know exactly what your child's looking at all the time. I know it's easier said than done, but, at the end of the day, you need to know who they're talking to, and it's quite easy to check, so...

Q How would you then... Not enforce it. Well, yes, probably, maybe enforce is the right word. How would you enforce that?

A Just check what they do, check the settings, and make sure that they're not on anything not age... And just make sure things are age-appropriate.

Q Right, okay. And...

A [Unclear].

Q Yes, go on. Sorry, were you going to say something?

A Just [?] say, they have the ages on there for a reason.

Q Okay. And finally, last question, or last couple of questions: does your daughter own any LEGO or similar products?

A Yes.

Q Can you tell me about what sort of products that she owns?

A She owns all of the DC LEGO, a lot of the Friends LEGO. Duplo's LEGO, isn't it?

Q Yes, I think so. Yes, it is, yes.

A She's got some of that and so has my other daughter, and she got it for Christmas. Her dad's got PlayStation LEGO games, and she's got LEGO Switch games.

Q Does she like to play alongside her dad, then, while he's on his games?

A She likes watching him, but she will play along as well. If it's one-player, she'll watch him, but if it's two, then, yes, she'll play along with him.

Q How about other aspects of the LEGO brand, like with bags, or the films, or just other branded stuff.

A She's got... She likes watching the LEGO films. She went and saw them at the

cinema. She used to have some LEGO annuals, but she's a bit older than that now. And she likes the LEGO keychains that you can get. She's got Wonder Woman, and I think she's even got a LEGO torch somewhere.

Q And has she ever been to Legoland?

A Yes, she has. Twice, I think.

Q And what was her favourite bit of Legoland?

A Oh, I don't know actually. Hold on one sec. [Daughter's name]

B Yes.

A What was your favourite bit of Legoland?

B [Unclear].

A Pick something, quick. I think she liked seeing, you know there's a bit where you can see the little towns and stuff.

B Yes.

A Yes, oh, she just shouted out, yes, that was my favourite. Yes, [unclear] them.

Q Okay, right. So, that's the end of the interview, so thank you very much for that.