A Qualitative Inquiry into the Contextualized Parental Mediation Practices of Young Children’s Digital Media Use at Home

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## Sample

A total of 24 Flemish families on variability in residency, income, and family composition living in Belgium and with children between 3 and 9 years old, based. A total of 22 mothers and 2 fathers agreed to participate allowing us to include data on 49 children of which 36 were between 3 and 9 years old.

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

Technologies are increasingly adopted and used by young children at home.
Parents play an important role in shaping their media use, keeping certain
possibilities open for children to play, learn, and socialize while limiting others.
Nevertheless, the literature on parental mediation of young children’s media
use is scant. In this article, we describe a qualitative, mixed-method study
involving 24 parents and 36 children aged 3 to 9, and focus on the contextual
factors that shape (transitions between) parental mediation practices. The
results point to the emergence of new manifestations of parental mediation
and provide evidence of their dynamic, often paradoxical nature. In particular,
the insights on distant mediation, various buddy styles, and participatory
learning, as well as the value of a wholeness approach for understanding
children’s conditions for media engagement, suggest new prospects for parental mediation literature.

# Outcome

"Parents believe that they cannot counter the advent of digital media even when holding negative attitudes towards it and should, instead, keep up with the changing technology landscape to acknowledge beneficial uses. Parents do exert content and time restrictions in order to avoid negative effects, just like device, location, and purchase restrictions revealing the need to find ways to punish the child. Parents also discussed time and budget decisions to justify or negotiate the rules, hereby often pointing to transitions between active and restrictive mediation.
However, positive motivations like seeking shared media enjoyment can induce co-use. This study also pointed to new practices, making a distinction between the parent as helper and buddy. Buddy practices could result from intentional actions as well as routine and family practices. Co-use and active mediation were strongly interwoven. Parents learned from or together with their children, using the term particpatory learning. Taking into account children’s agency both in relation to and beyond media use. We hereby reopen the debate on the appropriateness of the term “mediation” as parents do more than simply mediating negative media effects. We strongly encourage future researchers to pay more attention to this mediation practice." (Zaman et al., 2016, pp. 14-16)