Young children’s digital literacy practices in the sociocultural contexts of their homes

Engl. transl.: Young children’s digital literacy practices in the sociocultural contexts of their homes

# Keywords

* Young children
* home
* digital literacy practices
* sociocultural approach
* qualitative research

# Details

## Year

2020

## DOI

10.1177/1468798420925116

## Issued

2020

## Language

English

## Volume

20

## Issue

3

## Start Page

## End Page

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## Type

Journal article

## Journal

Journal of Early Childhood Literacy

## Publisher

SAGE Publications

## Topics

## Sample

Two Finnish families, middle-to-high socio-economic backgrounds. Two children, aged two years old, Emilia,
female (35 months) and Julia, female (33 months), and their families volunteered to take part in this study. The families represented a convenience sample.

## Implications For Parents About

Parenting guidance / support

# Abstract

This socioculturally framed case study investigates the digital literacy practices of two young children in their homes in Finland. The aim is to generate new knowledge about children’s digital literacy practices embedded in their family lives and to consider how these practices relate to their emergent literacy learning opportunities. The study asks two questions, ‘How do digital technologies and media inform the daily lives of children in their homes? Moreover, how do the sociocultural contexts of homes mediate children’s digital literacy practices across operational, cultural, critical and creative dimensions of literacy?’ The empirical data collection drew on the ‘day-in-the-life’ methodology, using a combination of video recordings, photographs, observational field notes and parent interviews. The data were subjected to thematic analysis following an ethnographic logic of enquiry. The findings make visible how children’s digital literacy practices are intertwined in families’ everyday activities, guided by parental rules and values. The study demonstrates children’s operational, cultural and creative digital literacy practices. The study also points out the need for more attention to children’s critical engagement in their digital literacy practices.

# Outcome

Children’s digital literacy practices in their homes turned out to be multimodal. Various digital tools and media contents ranging from videos to interactive games or apps on tablets or smartphones use intertwine with non-digital practices and activities according to the daily rhythm of the families.
The study echoes Marsh (2016) and points out that traditional language theories alone are no longer sufficient to describe or explain the many different modalities, and the interrelationships of children’s contemporary literacy practices and learning opportunities in the digital age.
Practices recorded were: communicating with important others at a distance in multimodal ways via a smartphone,
creative activities with a tablet and its applications, such as making music and using the tablet to search for information online and applying this information to creative activities offline. Critical dimension or evaluative practices were not present.