TAMPEREEN YLIOPISTO

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THE MEDIA USAGE OF CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF ONE
The role of parents as media educators

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Abstract

Children today grow up surrounded by media and already small babies have a relationship with the media (mediasuhde). Also the media environment of small babies is expanding, very fast. There are drool-proof iPhone and iPad covers, iPad holders for cribs and infant car seats, as well as baby bouncers with MP3 and smartphone plug-in systems available for babies today. Media provides not only entertainment but also communication and socializing channels for parents as well as children.

This study investigates the media use of babies under the age of one and the role of their parents as media educators. I plan to answer the following research questions: How does a baby under one year of age consume media? What kind of role do parents play in the media usage of babies and what kind of responsibility do the parents have?

This research is a qualitative multi-method audience study. The data was collected in January 2015 using interview and observation methods. Four families were used as case examples in this study.

The findings in this research show that babies under the age of one indeed do use media already at such a young age. This research shows that *babies observe from the side their parents' media content, babies like to touch tablets and their favorite media are: books, TV and smartphones.* This research shows that babies already have their own taste in media content. Parents in this research perceive their role as media educators as something very important. Parents regard their main role, as a media educator is to protect guide but to also encourage their children try new media technology and explore their media environment.

Based on the results I conclude, that already small babies have their preferences in terms of media content and that their media environment is rather broad. My second conclusion is that it is very important for parents and other adults in a child's life to recognize their role as media educators and support, regulate and guide the child in the media environment.

Keywords: media education, media literacy, media use, media environment, babies, parents

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1. Introduction

Media is a significant part of children's everyday lives. The media practices of babies are rapidly increasing as the technology improves and new ways of consuming media are created. Also the media environment of small babies is expanding, very fast. There are drool-proof iPhone and iPad covers, iPad holders for cribs and infant car seats, as well as baby bouncers with MP3 and smartphone plug-in systems available for babies today. Baby clothes no longer just come with bear and dog prints, baby clothes are strongly influenced by media characters such as the Moomins, various characters from the Disney movies and so forth. There are multiple other media by-products on offer in stores that are meant for babies such as pacifiers, baby bottles, diapers, toys and so on. Media characters are strongly present in babies' everyday lives, not only in media but also in the countless by-products.

As I observed the babies of my friends, I realized the magnitude of media presence in babies' lives. For example, parents in Finland, nowadays, mostly in upper middleclass families and higher, are buying iPads for their children before they turn one, and by the time they are two they can use them without problems. The media use of babies made me think about the role of parents as media educators for their children and how interesting it would be study babies and their parents, as a family unit. I wanted to see how the family as a whole is carrying the responsibility as media educators.

The family as a unit has been studied fairly little in relations with media, and thus I feel that more research on the subject is necessary. Nancy Jennings and Ellen Wartella state,

"(…) we need to expand our knowledge as the nature of children's lives change. As we enter into a time of TV-constant households, we need to know more about the impact of advertising and consumerism on the very young and the implications of advertising on family development and communication. (…) very few studies explore the family as a unit". (Jennings & Wartella, 2007, 176.)

As Jennings and Wartella explain, new research is necessary as the children's media environment is constantly changing.

In this research I firstly study the media presence in babies' lives and secondly, the role of parents as media educators. The aim of this research is to describe, develop and understand the relationship babies have with media and their use of different media, as well as the role of their parents as media educators. This research holds a Nordic perspective, studying and analyzing the previous research on the topic, focusing on both: Finnish and International research.

This research is a qualitative, multi-method audience study. The data was collected in January 2015 using the interview and observation methods. The interviews were individual interviews with babies' parents and the interviews and observations were conducted in their home environment. These families are used as case examples in this research to portray the media use of babies.

Content analysis research approach was used in this research to analyze the findings. I plan to answer the following research questions: How does a baby under one year of age consume media? What kind of role do parents play in the media usage of babies and what kind of responsibility do the parents have?

As I initiated this research, my first expectations were that the parents regard their role as media educators more as protectors and that they view media as something possibly harmful for their baby. I had this thought based on the media coverage of the subject from recent years, focusing especially on babies and media, and how babies should not be using media. This has somewhat changed in the past year or so and there has been a clear change of perspective. The society has seemed to realize that babies indeed do use media already at a very young age.

This research is structured as follows: in the first chapter I will briefly introduce the research and in the second chapter, I will explain the media use of children as a whole from a broader perspective. I will study previous researches on this subject and try to build an understanding of the media presence in babies' lives. Moreover, I look at the concepts of media literacy and media education from the perspective of parents.

In the third chapter, I will introduce the family case examples and the observations made in this research. In the fourth chapter I explain the methodology used in the research, as well as how I analyzed the research findings.

In the fifth chapter I go over the research findings using the themed interview structure. I explain how I see the parent's roles as media educators and reflect those findings on previous researches.

In the sixth and final chapter I make conclusions of the whole research and reflect the thoughts that came up during the research. The final chapter concludes the research with a discussion of opportunities for further research on this subject.

2. Babies - their relationship with media

Media today is much more than many assume. Media no longer consists of merely the TV, cinema, magazines and the radio. Media is everywhere and we are constantly surrounded by it. Media today can be divided into the traditional media and the new media. New media signifies the Internet, smartphones, tablets, computers and so on as technologies.

Sirkku Kotilainen states that media, from a cultural perspective, is regarded as structure that conveys signals with performances, interpretations and usage. Media thus, transmits and attaches us into various relationships with media, such as consumers, users or creators of media. (Kotilainen, 2009, 7.) In this research the term media is used in its plural form, using the term media to portray all media tools, media contents and media as an activator. Media is referred to, as defined by David Buckingham:

"(…) the term media includes the whole range of modern communications media: television, the cinema, video, radio, photography, advertising, newspapers and magazines, recorded music, computer games and the internet. Media use in this research is used to define the consumption of media. Media texts are the programmes, films, images, web sites (and so on) that are carried by these different forms of communication. (…) And there is no reason who more traditional forms such as books cannot also be seen as 'media', since they too provide us with a mediated versions or representations of the world". (Buckingham, 2003, 3.)

Media provides not only entertainment but also communication and socializing channels for parents, as well as for children. Internet, for example, is a broad, multipurpose medium where parents can share information and connect with peer groups, offer and find support. Children, on the other hand, can communicate and play with friends. Internet is not used only for entertaining, but also for learning. It is a great way to search information and it can be used for various other educational purposes. Based on my own observations, Internet offers babies various educational opportunities, exciting, interactive ways to learn for example shapes, objects and sounds. How about parents of babies? How do they find media in the family?

Already small babies have a relationship with the media (mediasuhde). Kotilainen explains user's relationship with media as follows:

"When we speak of the relationship with media, media is naturally defined as transmitting implications as in a mutual, cultural relationship. The sociocultural relationships of the individuals and societies are structured by the production convention of the societies and the media through the interaction of different kinds of representations". (Translated by the researcher, Kotilainen, 2009, 7.)

Despite of the fact that children today are surrounded by media, it does not automatically lead to high use of media. Stephane Chaudron states:

"Children grow up in media-rich homes. They are daily in contact with a wide range of digital tools however this rich-media context does not lead automatically to high use from the children". (Chaudron, 2015, 7.) Chaudron studied the digital technology skills of European children from various different countries between the ages 0-8 years old. She collaborated with multiple different universities across Europe to conduct the research, for example University of Oulu.

Another way to look at babies' relationship with media is to analyze their audiencehood (yleisöys). Seija Ridell states that just like the technology and the world around us has evolved and changed, audiencehood has also changed. Audiencehood is no longer considered as being just non-participatory observation, but also as active participation. People think and engage in the performance and with the opinions of the audience. The performance thus exists because the audience exists. (Ridell, 2006, 235-239.) Babies and children are also a media audience; they consume media and engage in a thought process. The audiencehood of babies is difficult to study, as they cannot fully express their emotions or opinions. Nonetheless, researching audiencehood of babies and children is significantly important as then we can understand the babies' and children's role in the society as well as their media participation.

According to the Children's Media Barometer Research in 2013, babies (children under the age of one year) begin their relationship with media by listening to their parents reading books to them. (Suoninen, 2013, 57.) Furthermore, babies watch TV with the

family and sit on their parents' lap while they are browsing the Internet. Annikka Suoninen argues that almost half of the children over the age of six months read or they are read to. She additionally states that more than half of the children under the age of one listen to the radio or music of some sort on a daily basis. According to Suoninen, one out of six children under the age of one use the Internet on a weekly basis: babies watch videos on YouTube, online TV channels, and they browse other websites with their parents. Suoninen states that even though some babies watch videos daily on the Internet, some parents do not consider this Internet use. (Suoninen, 2013, 57.) Additionally, according to the previous Finnish Children's Media Barometer research in 2010, most of the babies in the research use media in the form of books and music but some babies under the age of one also use mobile phones, digital games and the Internet already. (Kotilainen, 2011, 68.)

According to Chaudron (Chaudron, 2015, 7.);

"Children are digital natives, but only to some extent. Most children acquire easily and quickly basic operational skills. Some have acquired also more advanced online competencies. Few use digital technologies not only as passive consumers but also in a creative way. Yet, they also encounter situations that they do not manage, for which they have to ask for help. Their capabilities are limited by their state of cognitive development. The reading and writing skills influence the quality of children's digital interactions".

Buckingham states that children form and analyze their social relationships and build their identities with the help of media. (Buckingham, 2003, 5; see also Kupiainen et al. 2007, 130.) Thus we can interpret that media plays a significant role in child's development.

Buckingham states that children's understanding of the media develops with age. (2003, 139.) He also states that children learn to use media primarily through trial and error: "(…) through exploration, experimentation and play; and collaboration with others – both in face-to-face and virtual forms – is an essential element of the process". (2003, 175.)

Children learn early on how to communicate in different mediums, for example how to communicate in the Internet and how it differs from face-to-face communication. This effortless use of the new media is also raising concern among the adults: a fear that there is a gap between the generations in terms of electronics and new media skills.

Buckingham explains:

"Children are often seen here as 'cyber-kids' who somehow possess a natural affinity with technology, and are automatically confident and autonomous in their dealings with digital media. Yet other are becoming alarmed at the prospect of an 'electronic generation gap', in which children are losing contact with the values of their parents". (Buckingham, 2003, 174.)

Media today is a very normal phenomenon in a small child's life in Finland. Media is actively present in children's everyday lives. This can be seen in the children's clothing and toys, of which many are representations of various media characters. Media is an active part of the child's play, reality and fears. This can be referred to as mediated childhood or media childhood. (Niinistö & Ruhala, 2007, 123.)

In the Kaiser Family Foundations research, it was found that children under the age of one, use TV, DVD's, computers and videogames approximately 49 minutes a day. (Rideout & Hamel, 2006.) In the Finnish Children's Media Barometer research, in 2013, it was found that children's media use begins at a very young age, as babies. Babies under the age of one year, begin media use by listening to books read by their parents, as well as listening to the radio and music. Children begin using the Internet at the age of 1-2 years. (Suoninen, 2013, 57.)

Jackie Marsh et al. (2005, 25) found in their research that children begin their television use at the age of 6-11 months and by the age of two, majority of the children in the research could turn the television on by themselves.
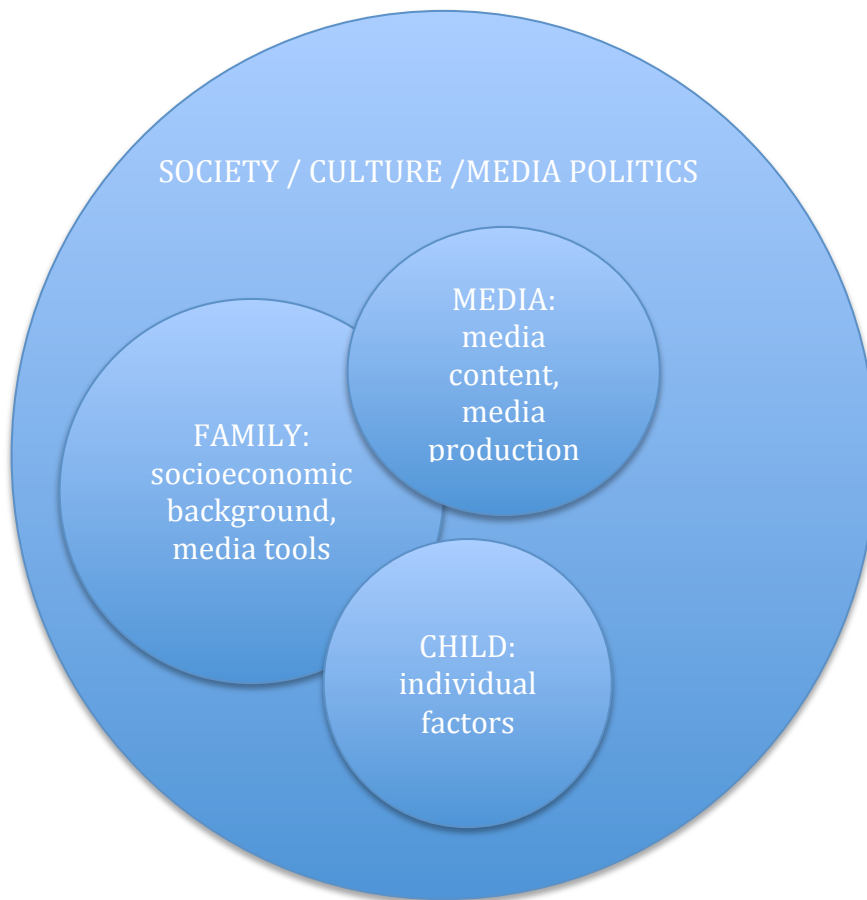
Buckingham (2003) states that:

"For babies, television must appear as simply a random selection of shapes, colors and sounds. However, as they develop the ability to identify three-dimensional shapes, and come to understand the functions of language, children begin to develop hypotheses about the relationship between television and the real world. To begin with, television may be perceived as a kind of 'magic window', or alternatively as a magic box in which tiny people are living, Yet by the time they are about two, children seem to have understood that television is a medium that represents events that are taking place (or have taken place) elsewhere". (e.g., 42-43.)

According to observations conducted in the Finnish Children's Media Barometer research in 2010, babies enjoy media and they react to media by moving their bodies: they dance, clap their hands, sing or make noises similar to the ones they are hearing from the media, they also laugh and giggle. (Kotilainen, 2011.) Kotilainen also suggests that instead of just reading books to their children before they enter the school age, parents should also listen with their young children. Listening exercises help the child to calm down and focus on what they are hearing. (Kotilainen, 2002, 35.)

According to Chaudron's European research, children learn how to use media from observation. They learn by observing their parents, other adults or other children. (Chaudron, 2015, 7.)

Raisa Koivusalo-Kuusivaara studied the media use and the relationship with media of Finnish, British and German children between the ages 4-6 years old. She studied the media use of children by observation and by analyzing children's drawings. She additionally interviewed the parents and also discussed about them about topics related to their children's media use. Koivusalo-Kuusivaara explains that when observing children's media use, you regard it not only as a media environment but you also see the broad variety of factors that influence children such as media content and cultural perspectives. (Koivusalo-Kuusivaara, 2007, 28.), see Picture 1:

SOCIETY / CULTURE /MEDIA POLITICS

MEDIA:
media content, media production

FAMILY:
socioeconomic background, media tools

CHILD:
individual factors

Picture 1. The main factors in a child's relationship with media as observed from the interpretation environment (Translation by researcher. Koivusalo-Kuusivaara 2007, 28).

Picture 1 portrays the many factors that influence a child's relationship with media. A child's media skills and media literacy depend on, for example the family's socioeconomic background. The family's socioeconomic background plays a role in the child's media environment. For example, if the family comes from a lower income family, they might not be able to afford all kinds of media technology such as the iPad. A child's personal factors and media choices also influence the child's relationship with media. These factors of the family and child's personal preferences are micro level factors that are influenced by macro level factors. Macro level factors, such as society, national and international media politics as well as the actions regarding the media corporations' production and distribution, are in the background. (Koivusalo-

Kuusivaara, 2007, 29.) Media corporations' production and distribution means how they are marketing media products and contents to families.

According to Koivusalo-Kuusivaara, childhood is usually divided into three linear stages: the first stage is from 0-3 years, this is the baby and toddler stage, the second stage is from 3-6 years and it is the infancy stage and third, and final stage, is from 7-9 years, the first school years, and it is the later childhood stage. Koivusalo-Kuusivaara states that this kind of division cannot take into consideration the differences between individuals, developmental factors or a child's personal subjective conception. (Koivusalo-Kuusivaara, 2007, 17.)

Babies in this research fall into the first stage presented above: the baby and toddler stage. To build a better understanding of the babies' developing media practices and their relationship with media, it is important to look at the babies' developmental phases. During their first year of life, babies develop at a rapid speed digesting all the information they discover and learn each and everyday so it is important to look at the babies development during their first year with a little more detail. Every month babies developments can be witnessed by their parents, for example, how the baby reacts and interacts. Babies also respond to media differently at different developmental phases. The Finnish Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (MLL) has explained clearly and in monthly groups the developmental stages of babies from 0-1 year old (for further detail see also for example Aaltonen et al., 2003.)

According to the Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (http://www.mll.fi/vanhempainnetti/tietokulma/kasvu_ja_kehitys/0_1-vuotias/) these are the babies' developmental stages during first 12 months:

0-2 months old

The baby attentively observes their parents and mimics their facial expressions. At this stage the baby also smiles for the first time and lifts its head when placed on its stomach. In this stage a baby can sleep up to 20 hours a day. When awake, the baby is forming a sense of this world and creating contact to the new world around them.

2-4 months old

At this stage the baby can hold its head up as their neck muscles strengthen. The baby can also place weight on its arms while it lies on its stomach. The baby is already babbling and is interested in other children. A baby at this age can squeal when joyful and is reaching for toys and objects. The baby's hearing is precise, and the baby reacts to sounds with their eyes, mouth and ears.

4-6 months old

A baby in this stage is interested in placing all objects within reach into its mouth. A 4-6 month old baby can already turn to its side and onto its back and stomach. The baby can smile and laugh to familiar people and it is bonding more with people. At this stage the baby is beginning to move on the floor.

6-8 months old

The baby at this stage is holding their hands up to show that they want to be held, and also to communicate if they want something. At this stage the baby is often shy among strangers and is very attached to their parents. The baby can sit up against support.

8-10 months old

At this stage the baby begins to understand some words. The baby is quickly learning to move and starts to crawl. Later in this stage, the baby can also stand up when supported.

10-12 months old

A 10-12 months old baby is learning to walk and possibly already says a few words. At this stage the baby is beginning to be more independent and can for example eat with her/his own spoon.

Societies use child's age to reflect developmental stages to monitor their development but according to Kirsi Pohjola, also to control it. Pohjala (2009) states:

"The expertise emphasizing on child's development defines the character of our era, where childhood is viewed as, mostly being an age and development phase and even more so as age being specifically and directly linked to development. Age is viewed as a natural dimension and it is used as a tool in social and cultural aspect to control to define an individual and more so, a child's skills and differences". (Translation by researcher, Pohjola, 2009, 158.)

2.1. The role of parents as media educators

A parent in this research means an adult who has a child and holds the responsibility of raising that child. Additionally, all adults that are involved in the child's life are regarded as media educators in this research. All adults can be viewed as media educators for the small children since they are the ones who provide media to the children and make media available for them. In this research child under the age of twelve months is referred to as a baby and cannot make decisions by itself so the parent is the one who makes all the decisions for it.

From the beginning to the end, throughout our lives we are greatly impacted by the media and the consumerism evolving around it. The media and consumer society today target even unborn babies. We are inevitably part of a media cycle and this carries out through our existence. Thus, it is greatly important to understand media and its influence to us. To be able to do so, one must understand what media is, how it functions and what all it implies. This can be a challenging dilemma, as we cannot always see where the media starts in our lives and where it ends.

Media education can be defined, as many ways as there are researches studying it. Opinions about the definition of media education may vary but the core element of media education is similar: media education is learning about media and learning to understand what media is and how to understand it. Buckingham defines media education as "(…) the process of teaching and learning about media. (…) Media education (therefore) aims to develop both critical understanding and active participation". (Buckingham, 2003, 4.) According to Reijo Kupiainen, media education

is target-oriented and educational impact is aimed in the one who is being educated. In media education, the target-oriented action is often aimed at the relationship between the media users' relationship with media. (Kupiainen, 2009, 175).

Juha Suoranta (2003) states: "Parenting is not primarily a mental or even a practical task, but more of ethics and morals (values, norms, good manners and behavioral rules), sometimes also moralism". He adds that when thinking about the impacts of media, the importance of media education is highlighted and media education should be taught in schools and education centers. (Suoranta, 2003, 69).

Kotilainen states that in order to grasp the media culture as a whole, children's diverse everyday life with various media tools should be recognized even more profoundly at home, in clubs and at day care. Kotilainen adds that media education is much like other forms of parenting and raising a child: setting boundaries and limitations but also offering support. (Kotilainen, 2002, 34). In order to do this, offer support and set boundaries and limitations, parents and other adults in children's lives, should understand what kinds of media environments children are exposed to and what kinds of media tools are present in their lives. The media environments are constantly changing and already small children are frequently introduced to new kinds of media, hence parents and other adults should try to keep up with these changes surrounding the children.

Chaudron states that parents use for example regulation as a form of media education:

"In most cases of this pilot, parents use restrictive strategies. They set rules to limit children's access to digital technology mainly through time limits and restrictive condition of use (a short selection of games or videos, strictly off-line, passwords). Most children integrate and respect the rules quite easily although in some cases rules seem unclear and arbitrary especially for younger children that do not have the cognitive maturity to grasp the concept and duration of time". (Chaudron, 2015, 8-9.)

The primary media educators for babies (children under the age of one) are their parents. Hanna Niinistö and Anu Ruhala state that media education is a joint matter of the home, school, clubs and early childhood educational services. (Niinistö & Ruhala,

2007, 131.) The Finnish health care center (neuvola) is an active information source for parents in Finland and also offers information to parents about children and media. In 2014 THL, the National Institute for Health and Welfare published a media education manual for the Finnish health care center (neuvola) and parents. (THL, Lastenneuvola käsikirja, Mediakasvatuksen työkirja, 2006.) The manual encourages parents to monitor their child's media use and also monitor the media content. According to the manual, parents should engage small children to alternative free time activities and also encourage older children to do other things than just media use.

According to Marsh, Brooks, Hughes, Ritchie, Roberts and Wright (2005, 75) parents in their research had a very positive attitude towards media in their children's life and development. Parents in that research felt that media offers developmental skills to their children. Marsh et al. additionally state that already small children live in digital world and the childhood professionals, for example, childcare providers, need to take this into consideration (2005, 75).

Marsh et al. (2005) studied the use of popular culture, media and new technologies of children from ages 0-6 years of age in England during approximately a one-year period. They studied children by working closely with professionals working with children, such as childcare providers.

Some daycare centers in Finland (päiväkodit) have included media education as part of their educational routine. Small children are taught about media environments and the use of media. (for example Suoninen, 2008.)

Parents as well as educators should adjust to the mediated world and try to build an understanding of the children's media environment. Kotilainen states that even though parents and media educators might feel that they do not know enough about media, they should embrace it. (Kotilainen, 2002, 34.) They need to know about media and how it works, and also understand medias impact. Only then can the parents and educators fully be media educators to the children.

According to Chaudron (2015), parents find the modern media technology fascinating but also challenging to control, monitor and regulate:

"On one hand, digital technologies help parents themselves in facing both household tasks and parenting at the same time. On the other hand children's digital media use is perceived as something problematic that needs to be carefully regulated and controlled by parents". (Chaudron, 2015, 7.)

In this research, media education is referred to as Buckingham defines it. Despite being re-defined by multiple researchers since, Buckingham's definition of media education is an inclusive and dependable definition. Buckingham defines media literacy as the outcome of media education:

"(…) the knowledge and skills learners acquire. (…) media literacy necessarily involves 'reading' and 'writing' media". (Buckingham, 2003, 4.)

Media literacy is often described as a personal readiness or ability to achieve, understand and create information in different contexts. (e.g. for example, Kupiainen, 2009, 176, Livingstone et al., 2005, 3, Varis, 2005, 9.) Kotilainen explains that media literacy is an evolving readiness, which implies the production, expression, as well as the receiving strategies. (Kotilainen 1999, 37.)

Buckingham (2003) states that:

"Children inevitably become aware of critical perspectives on the media as part of their everyday experience. Judgments about whether television is or is not 'realistic', for example, are part of the stock in trade of most viewers' discussions of their favorite programmes. To some extent, this can be seen as a function of children's general cognitive development". (Buckingham, 2003, 109.)

According to Kupiainen, literacy is a cultural resource and the core requirement of development, but also something dangerous if used 'incorrectly'. The problem lies in who defines where literacy is acceptable and where not. This becomes especially evident with children. Children are taught to read and use media and obtain information as well as express themselves, but at the same time, we create boundaries to their literacy. (Kupiainen, 2009, 178.)

Parents play a significantly important role in their child's life as media educators. A child using media needs support, listening, guidance and presence from its parents. Children also need their parents to actively participate with them in media use. (Niinistö & Ruhala. 2007, 131.) It is important that the whole family enjoys media together and share the joy and benefits media brings. But parents should also discuss with their children the challenges of understanding media and create rules, boundaries and limitations. (Niinistö & Ruhala, 2007,130.)

According to Koivusalo-Kuusivaara, parents sometimes, consciously or unconsciously, use TV's resources to create conversation about the program content to educate their children. (2007, 138) These conversations are important in a social aspect, as parents should be able to be comfortable having conversations with their children about media content. With babies this could be a simple thing like telling the baby that people cannot really fly or animals cannot talk. Parent's role is to teach the child to distinguish fiction from non-fiction.

Buckingham (2003) states that:

"It is possible to identify two contrasting views of the relationship between children and media, both of which have been influential in popular and academic debate. On the one hand, there is the idea that childhood, as we know it, is dying or disappearing, and that the media are primarily to blame for this. On the other, there is the idea that the media are now a force of liberation for children – they are creating a new 'electronic generation' that is more open, more democratic, more socially aware than their parents' generation". (2003,19.)

According to Kotilainen, parents' relationship with media is echoed to their children. For example, babies use media mostly with their parents. Babies sit in their parents lap while they browse the Internet. (2011, 70.) Kotilainen states that families with small children should be supported and encouraged to teach their children about media. Parents should be encouraged to see themselves as media educators for their children. (2011, 70.)

Anu Mustonen (2002) states:

"Even though parents should recognize the risks involved with media and they should set boundaries to their child's media use, media should not be regarded as an enemy nor should it be viewed solely as a vaccine, which protects the child from these threats". (translation by researcher, Mustonen, 2002, 65.)

Mustonen adds that for young children, the most important duty parents have as media educators is to set boundaries and limitations. Parents should recognize that children need different types of guidance and limits depending on their developmental phase. (Mustonen, 65.)

Having grown up around modern technology, children today have adapted the skills to use new media tools and learn to use them without having greater challenges. The challenges lie in the fact that parents and grandparents do not adapt as quickly and the communication between these different generations might be more challenging than ever before. (Varis, 2002, 24.)

"(…) Parents and peers are (also) informally teaching children as they watch television together. By confirming or questioning the accuracy of television representations, explaining and supplementing what is shown, and offering advice about whether television should be taken as a model of real-life behavior, they are helping children to develop a more complex and nuanced understanding of the relationships between the medium and the real world". (Messaris and Sarrett, 1981, 226–244.)

The important role parents have as media educators cannot be emphasized enough. Small children rely completely on adults and are helpless in the world of media. Small children should not be left to fend for themselves when it comes to media but parents and other adults involved in the children's lives should engage in the child's relationship with media. Babies learn from their parents and other adults. The babies adopt habits from them and imitate them, making the role of these adults in these babies' lives extremely important. This applies in terms of media as well. Babies learn media skills by observing and imitating as well as by trial and error.

Parents and other adults should recognize their role as media educators in children's lives and try to create the best possible beginning for the child's relationship with media.

2.2. Summary and questions

According to earlier research, (for example the Children's Media Barometer research in 2010 and 2013), already small babies use media. The Children's Media Barometer research states that babies use media with their parents, while parents are using the Internet and the child is on their lap. Earlier research also shows that babies' media use usually begins with books and by sitting on the parents lap while they are using the Internet or television. (For example: Suoninen, 2013 & Kotilainen, 2011.) The Children's Media Barometer researches also emphasize the role of parents as media educators and additionally mention other media educators in the child's life, such as caretakers and other adults that are present in the child's life. (For example; Suoninen, 2013; Kotilainen, 2011.)

Marsh et al. (2005, 20-24) found in their research that babies of 0-24 months age mainly have books but some babies also have CD's and videos. They also discovered that children begin their TV watching at the age 6-11 months.

Earlier research shows that some parents do not understand or perceive some media tools as being media. Suoninen found in the Children's Media Barometer 2013 (Suoninen, 2013) that: some parents of babies watched videos with their babies online but did not consider it being Internet use. To be able to be media educators, parents must study media to understand what it implies. Parents also need to realize the magnitude of media and understand that media influences babies in many different ways.

Based on earlier studies it seems that in terms of media education, for babies, the parents' main role is to guide and protect the child. Protecting the child means, for example, selecting appropriate media for the child, limiting time spent with the media and participating with the child in the media experience. Additionally, parents possess a

role of explaining the media content to the child and supporting the child with his or her media relationship and media environment for learning as well as for enjoyment. As much of the media content is beyond a small child's understanding, small children should not be left alone to explore media. Parents should also help the child distinguish what is fiction and what is not.

According to earlier research, there seems to be an actual niche for research focusing on babies' relationship with media. There is also a void in research focusing on families. It is very important to research the family unit, as the babies' home environment's and adult's influence, in terms of the babies media use, is evident.

In this study I will look for some additions to earlier research and hopefully some more openings to earlier discussions.

In this research I ask: How does a baby under one year of age consume media? What kind of role do parents play in the media usage of babies? And what actually happens in families in relations with media? I am interested in babies' media environment as well as parents' responsibility as media educators to their children.

3. Introducing the family case examples

This research is a qualitative multi-method audience study in four families. The data was collected in January 2015 using the interview and observation methods. The interviews were individual interviews with babies' parents and the interviews and observations were conducted in their home environment. These families are used as mere examples to portray the media use of babies. Content analysis approach was used in this research to analyze the findings. These research methods were chosen to portray the realistic media use of babies and the media relationship these babies have, as well as possible.

For this research four families were interviewed and observed in their home environment. Themed, individual interviews were conducted. Themed interviews in qualitative research are used to cut up the findings and to simplify the analyzing process. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 93.) Additionally, observations were made in the families' home environment. In all of these families the mothers were the ones who spent most of the time with their babies so they were the ones participating in the interview. As this number of research subjects cannot be used to generalize, these families are used as case examples in the study to portray the media use of babies.

The families for this research were selected according to the following criteria: all the families in this research reside in Pirkanmaa region in Finland. This criterion was chosen due to the matter of convenience, that I could visit these families and conduct the interviews and observation processes in their home. The babies' age was also a significant criterion as this research studies babies under the age of one. The families were selected as follows: I approached one family in my neighborhood that I had seen outing with a small baby, and three of these families are my acquaintances. To request the participation for this research, I approached the families by placing a letter in their mailbox, since I didn't know their phone number and the three other families I approached by calling them. In the letter and in the phone calls I already specified the topic of the research and explained the themed interview themes.

According to Tarja Tolonen, differences based on social class can be found even in the 'contemporary (post-) welfare society of Finland'. (Tolonen, 2013, 56.) Therefore, it is relevant to state that this sample of four families is rather similar, with three out of four parents being both highly educated, and only one family being an exception, with the father being in a vocational occupation. This critique is essential to point out since the social class of the baby influences greatly in the child's relationship with media, for example the media environment in terms of technology and so forth. (for example Koivusalo-Kuusivaara, 2007.)

Two mothers from these four families have a higher education degree in educational sciences. I assume that this might influence the mothers' and parents' knowledge of media education and their skills as media educators to their children. These mothers know the field and they might maintain a certain orientation to parenthood due to their education and expertise.

Family1:

Unwed parents, a mother and a father. The mother is in her late twenties and the father in his mid-thirties. The family lives in a semi-detached home in a family oriented residential district in Tampere. The district is approximately 17 km away from the Tampere city center. The population is approximately 2000. The population of Tampere is 220,446. The mother is a stay-at-home mother for three children: a 2-year-old daughter, a 1-year son and a 2-month-old baby boy and she has a master's degree in educational sciences. The father has a degree in engineering and he works for a large company.

Family2:

A married couple, a woman and a man, parents to an 8-month-old daughter. Both of them are in their early thirties. The family lives in a row house apartment in the neighboring municipality of Tampere. The town has a population of 32,182 and it's located approximately 10 km from Tampere city center. The mother has a bachelor's degree in business and the father is a plumber. The mother is currently on maternity leave from her work from the insurance sector.

Family3:

A married couple, mother and father, parents to a 9-month-old daughter. Both are in their mid-thirties. They live in a loft house near the city center, some 4 km away, in a new, prestigious, family oriented residential district in Tampere. The residential district's population is approximately 1500. The mother has a master's degree in educational sciences and works as a kindergarten teacher but is currently on maternity leave. The father has a master's degree in computer sciences and he works for an international company.

Family4:

A married couple, a mother and a father, with two sons, a 4-year-old and a 3-month-old. Both the mother and father are in their mid-thirties. The family lives in a detached house in a family oriented residential district approximately 15 km away from the Tampere city center. The population of the residential district is approximately 1850. The mother is on a maternity leave from her job as an elderly care department supervisor and she has a bachelor's degree in hospitality management. The father has a master's degree in engineering and he works for an international company. Their 4-year-old-son is in kindergarten 3 days a week.

3.1. Contextualizing the families and media

These notes are used to contextualize the families as units with media, as explained by Jennings and Wartella (2007).

When I arrived at the family's home I explained that I will be observing the family and the baby and making notes but that they should try to be as normal as possible and carry out their routines and habits as they normally would.

Family1, home visit and interview 5.1.2015

Time spent in the family's home: approximately 2 hours and 20 minutes and the interview lasted 16:42 minutes.

Only the mother and the baby were home during my visit.

Observations:

- I notice the TV is on in the living room when I enter the home
- The baby is sleeping in the parents bedroom when I arrive and sleeps through the interview
- The baby wakes up after the interview and is nursing while the mother and I sit in the living room in front of the TV
- Mother answers two phone calls while she is nursing her baby
- There is an iPad and a mobile phone on the sofa
- There are books and magazines in the children's room

Family2, home visit and interview 7.1.2015

Time spent in the family's home: approximately 2 hours and 40 minutes and the interview lasted 13:58 minutes.

Only the mother and the baby are home during my visit.

Observations:

- No media devices are on when I arrive
- The baby is sleeping in the parents bedroom when I arrive but wakes up shortly after and is awake during the interview
- The baby is left alone in the living room with her toys but no media devices are on
- There are books in the babies play area in the living room
- There is a radio next to the babies crib
- There is an iPad on the low living room table

Family3, home visit and interview 11.1.2015

Time spent in the family's home: approximately 2 hours and the interview lasted 19:44 minutes.

The whole family is home during my visit.

- The TV is on when I arrive and the baby is being fed in the living room but she is not facing the TV
- The TV is shut for the duration of the interview
- After the interview the baby goes with her father to the home office and sits in his lap while he is on the computer for approximately 30 minutes
- The baby is on the floor while TV is on in the living room
- There are multiple media in the babies reach: the parents' mobile phones, iPad, computer, PlayStation and X-box, books and magazines

Family4, home visit and interview 12.1.2015

Time spent in the family's home: approximately 2 hours and the interview lasted 23:22 minutes.

Only the mother and the baby are home during my visit.

- No media devices are on when I arrive
- The baby is sleeping when I arrive and sleeps through the interview
- Mother answers a phone call and makes one phone call while she is holding the baby
- The baby sleeps in the parents' bedroom and there are no media tools in the bedroom, there are some books in the living room as well as the TV. The computer, laptop and stereo are in a separate office room

These families have similar media in their homes, such as the television, computers, tablets, radio, smartphones and so forth. The media use, especially the passive media use, of these families differs. Families 2 and 4 seem to pay attention to not having the media devices on if someone is not actively using them, whereas families 1 and 3 seem

to have the television on even though no one is watching it. Family 2 is the only family where the baby has some media devices in their own room. Baby2 has a radio in her room next to her crib. Baby2 also has an iPad that she shares with her mother.

4. Methodology of the research

According to Jouni Tuomi and Anneli Sarajärvi "in qualitative research, statistical generalizations are not the underlying goal. The aim is to define a specific phenomenon or event and understand certain actions and provide a theoretically pleasing interpretation to a phenomenon". (Translated by the researcher, Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 85.) David Silverman, states that various, different approaches are involved with qualitative research. (Silverman, 2010, 15.) This is also the case in this research, where multiple different approaches and methods are used.

According to Silverman, there is no such thing as a 'right' or a 'wrong' research method. He states, "There are only methods that are appropriate to your research topic and the model with which you are working". (2010, 124.)

A basic research data analyzing method that can be used in all qualitative research is the content analysis (sisällönanalyysi). Content analysis can be used as a research method but also as a loose theoretical framework. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 91.) Tuomi and Sarajärvi explain "Content analysis can be used as a single research method but also as a loose theoretical framework that can be joined together with various analytical ensembles. Many different kinds of research can be conducted using the content analysis research method". (Translated by the researcher, Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 91.) Content analysis is based on the researchers' interpretation and inference. The researcher builds an understanding of the phenomenon based on all the empirical data and is comparing theory and conclusion during the research process. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 112.) Tuomi and Sarajärvi identify four steps in research data analysis: 1. Decide what is interesting in this data: make a strong decision, 2a. Go through the data, distinguish and mark the details, which are included in your decision of interest, 2b. Everything else is excluded from this research, 2c. Collect the marked information and separate them from the rest of the data, 3. Categorize, theme and differentiate the data 4. Write a summary. (Translated by the researcher, Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 92.) I aimed to follow this pattern in this research.

One research method used in qualitative research is the interview. Four individual interviews were conducted for this research. The participants were interviewed during the home visits. The participants were interviewed only once for this research. Research interviews are often recorded and in this research all the four interviews were recorded. Recording the interview gives the researcher the opportunity to return to the interview situation when the recording works also as a memory help and a tool to re-check information. Recording the interview also enables studying and analyzing the interaction between the researcher and the interviewee. When the interview is recorded, the interview can be analyzed further thus the readers of the research and those who are evaluating it, can build an understanding of the interaction in which the conclusions of the research were made (Tiittula & Ruusuvuori, 2009, 14-15). After recording the interviews are written into a transcript. The researcher makes the important decision of how precisely the interview is written into the transcript. The preciseness of the transcript depends on how precise the analysis of the research needs to be but also what the researcher is researching. (Ronkanen et al., 2011, 119.) I tried to write the transcript as precisely as possible and tried to indicate all words and sounds.

The researcher always influences the interview, through categorizing the interview but also by possibly suggesting or assuming. This comes more evident when the interview is recorded and it can be taken into consideration when evaluating the truthfulness of the research results. In order to obtain reliable information in a research, forming a confidential relationship with the interviewees is necessary. The researcher must inform the interviewee about the purpose of the interview and also assure them that the information shared is confidential and that their anonymity is respected. (Ruusuvuori & Tiittula, 2009, 41.) For this research, the participants were asked to sign a participation agreement form (see Appendix 1) where it was stated that all information obtained in the interviews and observations will be used solely for this research. Before the interview the interviewees were informed that the recorded interview will only be used for this research and never handed over to other parties. The researcher will hold on to the recordings in a safe place, out of reach of third parties to protect the participants' anonymity and privacy.

Classifying, analyzing and interpreting data are three similar tasks but then again, very different. The researcher chooses which of these three tasks they emphasize in the

research, depending on the research subject, methods and tools. (Ruusuvuori, Nikander & Hyvärinen, 2010, 11.)

No matter how in detail the interview data is analyzed, the data is never completely and entirely analyzed. Thus it is important to communicate with the data. Involving the reader in the research and having them participate in the analysis process on their own term is one goal of this process. Communicating with the data also means that the researcher aims to portray the data as precisely as possible and separating opinions from findings when necessary. With the precise detail of the interview expressed in the research, the reader is also given the opportunity to observe the reliability of the research. (Ruusuvuori, Nikander & Hyvärinen, 2010, 29.)

Anna Rastas states that it is important to differentiate the research objects. This helps not only to set the research objects apart, but helps also in the analysis process when categorizing the research data. (Rastas, 2010, 75.) For example, according to location, gender and so forth.

Before interviewing the mothers in the babies' homes, we had some coffee and talked about something other than the research to create a relaxed environment. We talked about the neighborhood, the babies' siblings or about holidays and so forth. When I felt that the mothers were comfortable and relaxed, I begun the interview. I explained that there are no right or wrong answers and that they should try to answer, as they feel best.

Observation as a research method can be challenging and time consuming but very fruitful when combined with other research methods. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 81.) Since babies are challenging to research, observation is a tool often used to research them. The main idea of observation is to collect information about the subject of the research in its natural environment. (Ronkanen et al., 2011, 115.) The observation method was used in this research to observe the active and passive media use of babies in the example families. Especially the passive media presence in the families' home and the babies' passive media use was observed.

Observation, as a research method is always laborious and time-consuming. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 81.) Observation can be divided into *hidden observation, observing*

without interaction, interacting observation and *active observation*. (Translation by researcher, Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009, 81.)

To protect the privacy of the research subjects, the anonymity of these respondents and participants is respected by creating aliases. Aliases can be created already during the transcription process. (Kuula & Tiitinen in Ruusuvuori et al. 2010, 452.)

5. Research findings

In this chapter I aim to answer the following research questions: How does a baby under one year of age consume media? What kind of role do parents play in the media usage of babies and what kind of responsibility do the parents have?

I go over the research findings based on the themed interview structure and themes, which came up during the research process. The themes of the interview are: babies' media use and their media environment, babies' relationship with media, and the role of parents as media educators for their babies.

The observations show that these families have a broad media device environment in their homes. All of these families have at least laptops, stereos, smart phones and televisions. All families additionally have a radio or stereo system in their car. The observations also indicate that some of these families have a habit of leaving some media devices on even though no one is actively using them. Especially the television and radio is left on during the day and it plays in the background.

5.1. Babies media use and their media environment

All the interviews were conducted in Finnish and I have translated all the interviews. I tried to translate the interviews as precisely as possibly and portray the interviewees' responses as correctly as possible. The abbreviations are as follows:

> I: Interviewer
> M1: Mother1
> B1: Baby1 …

In the beginning of the interview, I explained to the parents what the term 'media environment' means in the research: books, magazines and newspapers, radio and other music devices, television, DVD's and videos, computers, tablets, the internet, mobile phones, and videogames. I also encouraged them to list any other media technology that came to their mind. All of the babies in this research have used media, actively or

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passively. For these babies, the most common actively used media were books. TV, Internet and the radio were the most passively used media. I use the terms active and passive to define the kind of media use babies are experiencing. I believe babies are active media users in the sense that they have a mind, which reacts to media, and they are able to think and process media sounds, colors and pictures. Passive media use is used to define media use that is done passively, for example when the music or television is playing in the background.

I: What kinds of media do you use with your child?

M1: Well, books, gradually, not too much yet 'cause he's so young. And well, we have the TV on at home so that of course. And then I notice that he turns his head to the TV. And the radio is also sometimes on.

I: Like in the car or at home?

M1: Yeah, in the car. And at home too.

5.1.1. Baby observes from the side media chosen by their parents

This answer from Mother1, reflects previous research findings by Suoninen in the Children's Media Barometer 2013 research, where she states that babies (children under the age of one year) begin their relationship with media by listening to their parents read books to them. (Suoninen, 2013, 57.) The mothers explained that they read books to their small babies during daytime when the baby is energetic or to build a routine, for example, for bedtime. Mother1 and Mother4 also read books to their older children and the babies were in the parents' lap while they were reading.

I: When talking about the child's relationship with media, when and in what kind of situation does your child use media? Do you have a bedtime story routine?

M1: No, not yet. With the older siblings but not with the baby yet. I think it's more, like, well, passive at this point still. It's not like intentional.

I: And the next question actually is how often do you read books to your child? Um, do you read books to your baby, at all yet?

M1: Well not really actually, some picture books we have been browsing and looking at but for example if I'm reading a story to the older siblings then the baby is naturally there as well.

Mother1 regards her 2 -month old baby's with books as passive, books are read to the babies siblings and the baby is present, sitting on mothers lap or nursing while the mother is reading the books, for example, during the bedtime to the older children. Mother4 reads books to the 3 –month old baby when he is energetic and active, but the baby is also present when books are read to the older child during the bedtime.

I: Yeah. Okay yeah. When talking about the child's relationship with media, when and in what kind of situation does your child use media? Do you have a bedtime story routine?

M4: Well actually, I read those books when he is like energetic during the day so that's when we read. Um, there is a little bit of listening to story reading like when the older sibling is at home. The baby is like there too then. But with the baby it's like different with like looking at pictures and picture books. So bedtime stories is more through the older sibling. We don't read bedtime stories with the baby yet.

Mother1 also stated that she uses Internet on her smartphone and tablet while she is holding the baby.

I: What kind of media do you use with your child?

M1: (…) And yes of course like the smartphone and tablets because that's where I browse the internet and the baby is in my arms and he is peeking and seeing that.

According to Kotilainen, parent's relationship with media is echoed to their children. For example, babies use media mostly with their parents. Babies sit in their parents' lap while they browse the Internet. (2011, 70.)

5.1.2. Parental media use together with the baby

According to Lloyd Morrisett, many children begin watching TV at a very young age, often before they turn 12 months. (Morrisett, 2007, 6). This is also visible in this research, as all of the babies in this research have actively or passively watched television. For example, Mother3 states that the TV is often on in their home but the baby's use is more passive. Meaning, that the TV, radio or so forth, is playing in the

background. If the baby hears a certain commercial jingle she starts dancing and focuses more on the TV.

I: So like what kind of media do you use with your child?

M3: Well TV is like that yeah, she is not like that interested in it but there are like some thing's like commercials that catches her attention and she like starts jamming to the rhythm or something like that.

Mother2 states that in their family the father uses TV with the baby and the father and the baby watch TV together but the TV use is also passive sometimes. Mother2 never watches TV with the baby.

I: What media do you use with your child?

M2: Well, we use a lot of books. The television is on sometimes when my husband is watching the child.

I: Is some of the media use passive? You mentioned that the radio is on sometimes and the TV …?

M2: TV is on only when my husband is watching the baby. I don't use the TV. I never have the TV on.

Change the interview format more formal!

5.1.3. Babies like to touch tablets

According to Chaudron, children's favorite form of media is the tablet. (Chaudron, 2015, 8.) Three of the four babies use tablets. Baby1 uses tablets only passively, Baby2 and Baby3 actively but passively as well. Active use meaning the parent selects some program or game for the baby to interact and the baby perhaps touches the tablet. Passively means in Baby1's case that the baby is in his mother's lap when the mother is using the tablet while nursing her baby. Baby4 does not have a tablet. Mother2 states that in their family, the tablet is used during feeding times to distract the baby.

I: So, what kind of media do you use with your child?

M2: (…) We use the internet quite a bit, I have some children's games on my iPad that I show her and she looks but she cannot play yet. DVD's I have also purchased but we haven't used those yet. Probably one day we'll sit in front of the TV and watch those. Sometimes when my husband is feeding her he plays some Gummie Bear videos on YouTube o she focuses on those so he can feed her.

I: Is some of the media use passive? You mentioned that the radio is on sometimes and the TV …?
M2: (…) But I have the iPad on sometimes like a program that I'm watching while I'm feeding her. So like she hears the noise all the time and then we've had the radio on in her nursery.

Mother2 states that her iPad is shared with her daughter and that they have purchased the drool-proof Fisher Price baby covers for the iPad.

H: Does your child have some media technology? She has the smartphone but it's not like a real phone?
M2: It's like a toy phone. So like no. Only like the iPad I share with her like she uses it with the Fisher Price covers.

Three out of four babies do not use Internet actively yet. However, all babies use the Internet passively when sitting on the parents' lap when parents are browsing the Internet. Only Baby2 uses the Internet actively, the baby is watching videos on the Internet. Mother2 states that the baby watches music videos on YouTube.

I: Do you watch TV or videos on the internet? What kind of videos or programs do you watch?
M2: I don't with the child. But from YouTube we have watched some music videos so it's like the music. One day my husband also showed her some Beauty and the Beast and the baby did not focus on that like when they talk, not the same way she focuses on music or singing.

When asked what kinds of media the babies have, majority of the mothers responded that books are the only form of media at the moment that the babies have. The only

exception was Baby2 who shares an iPad with her mother and has a radio in her nursery next to her crib.

I: Does your baby have some media technology?
M1: Hmmm.. no, not really, just like, books like his own or then he shares with his siblings.

5.1.4. Favorites for babies: Books, TV and smartphones

The babies' favorite media are books, TV and the parents' smartphones. Only Baby1 does not have a favorite media according to the mother. Mother3 states that books are her baby's most favorite media but the parent's smartphones are also her favorite. Baby3 can entertain with books for a long time but the smartphone catches her attention when it is on display.

H: Yeah, okay. If you think about like all of these media, what do you consider being her favorite media?
Ä3: Books absolutely at this point. Those she can like browse all day and for a long time. And if you think like for the short term then it's the smartphone. Because at that time when the smartphone is taken out you can see like her, like staring to move towards the phone like 'hey now that!'. And after holding it for a while in her hands she goes like 'oh this was that'. But the books she really can focus on for a longer time and she can turn pages herself from those books with like, the thick pages. She turns the page and is like 'wow I can go back to the previous page!'.

Mother2 states that her smartphone is her baby's favorite media.

I: What is your child's favorite media?
M2: I think it's my smartphone. She always wants to rip it from my hands. The phone always wins!

Mother4 states that her baby's favorite media is the TV.

I: What is your child's favorite media?

M4: Well, I think it's the television above everything.

5.1.5. Signs of happiness and satisfaction

Observations conducted for the Finnish Children's Media Barometer research in 2010, showed that babies enjoy media and they react to media by moving their bodies: they dance, clap their hands, sing or make noises similar to the ones they are hearing from the media, they also laugh and giggle. (Kotilainen, 2011.) The babies in this research react to their favorite media by showing signs of happiness and satisfaction, as Mother2 describes her daughter's reaction to smartphones:

I: Yeah. How does it show like, how do you feel like the child reacts to these media that you mentioned?

M2: Well when she gets the phone in her hands she is very happy and seems satisfied when she manages to rip it from our hands when she sees it. Well, and she is really focusing on the phone when she is holding it. Also my husband's phone, like I noticed that it's peeking from my husband's pocket and the child immediately went for it! So it's the phone for sure!

Baby4's favorite media, the TV, makes the baby boy to turn his head towards the sounds and images flashing on the TV screen.

H: How does the baby react, for example, to the television?

M4: Well, he turns his head so that his neck is like all over the place so I have to like, turn him to face the TV so that he can see. And sometimes I feel like, I'm not sure if it's because there is nothing interesting on TV or why he does that but he turns his head away from the TV sometimes as well. But when there is something nice he really tries to look at it. Like, something, like some children's programs that are simple with like bold colors, those are like really interesting for him.

Mother3 states that Baby3 reacts to media by touching them and wanting to taste them.

I: Yeah, yeah. And how do you feel that your child reacts to media tolls? Does she giggle or laugh or does she turn her head towards the sound or …?

M3: Yeah, and it's probably this phase that everything should touched and be put into the mouth and taste everything. Like if the TV would be low enough she would probably lick it just in case to see if it's something edible. Like all the videogames, phones and tablets and so on like have been at least once in her mouth. Like she needs to taste everything to see what it is. They (media) are like a natural part like they are not put away or stored elsewhere. Everything like phones and tablets and videogames are here like within the baby's reach so they are like normal. So it's not like 'hey let's take the phone out' because they are on the sofa most of the time anyway or on the table. So like if the baby comes closer then she's like hey should I touch that or taste that but if they are here like all the time then she does not react at all.

5.1.6. Babies love music

All the babies listen to music, at home or in the car. Family4 does not have a radio in the car but they listen to CD's, mostly chosen by the parents. They also listen to the big brother's preferred music at home. Family1 listens to children's music in the car and they also have DVD players in the car for the older siblings. The baby cannot watch them yet but it hears the sounds. Family2 has a radio in the car and they listen to the Radio NRJ radio station and have a radio at home in the nursery.

I: And does your child listen to music, what kind of music and in what kinds of situations? Do you have children's music playing on the radio?
M4: My husbands music plays in the car. We have CD's there 'cause the radio is broken. So adult music in the car. Like at home, the baby's older brother listens to his music, Robin, but there is no adult music at home really.

Baby3 listens to music at home and in the car when the drive is longer. The mother chooses the music.

I: Yeah. Umm, does your baby listen to that music? And what kind of music and in what kind of situations?
M3: Well, I get to decide what music we listen to, so we listen to the radio and then we listen to, like, some CD's and we have this stereo and the iPad. But we have noticed that this baby is not really that musical like she does not jam when she hears music or

anything like that. It's more like she prefers when I sing but she does not really like music.

I: Yeah, yeah. Do you have the radio on in the car as well?

M3: Yeah, sometimes but not always. Mainly when we do short drives we don't but if we have a longer drive then yes.

Mother2 states that her baby listens to music at home and in the car, but also in the baby activity classes. She has also been thinking about purchasing some CD's for the baby, as she seems to enjoy music. Baby2 additionally watches music videos on the Internet during feeding times.

I: Does your baby listen to music? What kind of music and in what kinds of situations?

M2: She likes music a lot. And if someone is singing, she loves that too but that's not really music. We go to baby activity classes weekly, and there she loves to listen to the music and she listens to it. And then, like, one day I noticed that like, when I came home I noticed the music TV was on so the baby had listened to that with my husband. But other than that not yet really. But like, I have been meaning to purchase some CD's for her 'cause I see that she loves music and songs. But she plays with her toys now still.

5.1.7. Parents like to offer written stories

Books were preferred media for babies from their mother's perspective. Books were thought as being the 'better' media. Mother4 stated that she doesn't see books as creating addictions like games and TV do.

I: Yeah, like that. Do you have a fear or some thoughts like that, like could the media be harmful to your child's eyes or could it limit your child's imagination or something like that …?

M4: Well maybe not like that but like, the media use takes up a lot of time ways from traditional games and playing with things, and it comes so easily that situation like where he would just stare at the TV screen. Kind of like, dividing the screen time and like the playtime and doing something together and going outside.

I: Yeah.

M4: And I don't think that books, like I'm not scared that they will cause some kind of addiction like the screens do. Books are not as addictive in that way.

I: You prefer books for your children over other media?

M4: Yes.

Mother4 has fears that her children wont have time to play and explore the outside world and expresses the need for family time. This is a realistic concern for many parents today; as Koivusalo-Kuusivaara states: the way children are spending their time is changing and they spend more time inside, alone using the TV and the computer. (2007, 16.) Koivusalo-Kuusivaara states that this is partly due to the fact that even small children today have an increasing number of media in their use. (2007, 14.)

As the earlier researches, such as the Media Barometer research in 2013 show, already small babies use a variety of different media technologies. This is also evident in this research. The babies in this research are all under the age of one but yet they all have quite a broad media environment. These babies use for example; books, television, radio, smart phones and tablets. The babies in this research begin their media use by listening their parents read books and also by listening the television and the radio at home and in the car. One baby began his media use by using the Internet: his mother used the tablet and laptop for browsing the Internet while nursing her newborn son. This mother pointed out that only three years ago when she had her first born, the situation was very different. At that time she did not have a tablet or a laptop and never used any media devices when she was breastfeeding.

5.1.8. Summary of findings

Baby observes from the side media chosen by their parents

The babies observe media a lot from the side, for example, when the parents are surfing the Internet while they are holding the baby on their lap or watching the TV and the baby is on the floor or on their lap. Parents also read books to their older children and the baby is observing while sitting on the parents lap. For example Mother1 and Mother4 state that they read bedtime stories to their older children every night and the baby is always there on their lap.

Parental media use together with the baby

Babies mostly use media with their parents. Parents read books to their babies but they also watch TV together. Baby3 prefers commercials on TV and she watches TV during the day with her parents, especially in the evenings. Baby2 watches TV with her father and they watch music programmes as well as other programmes selected by the father. Mother2 states that they read a lot of books to their baby and that books are something they do together everyday.

Babies like to touch tablets

Tablets are used by Baby2 and Baby3. They have games on the tablets intended for babies. The babies can touch the tablet and the images change or move. These babies are also learning colors and other things on the tablet. Baby1 uses the tablet passively, when his mother is using the tablet while she is nursing her baby.

Favorites for babies: Books, TV and smartphones

The older babies, Baby2 and Baby3, who are eight and nine months old, like to hold their parents' smartphones, clicking on the touchscreens and seeing the images change. Baby2 and Baby3 also like to use tablets and focus on the TV. Their parents also like to read books to them and Mother3 states that she reads multiple books everyday.

The parents of the Baby1 and Baby4 (2- and 3-month-old), read them books and the mothers state that books are their favorite form of media at the moment. Mother4 states that she prefers books over everything else.

Signs of happiness and satisfaction

When Baby2 reaches her parent's smartphones she shows signs of satisfaction and happiness. She likes to touch the smartphones and see the colors and images. Baby3 likes music and singing and shows signs of happiness when listening to the singing and music. Baby3 also loves her parents' smartphones and is joyful when she gets to hold the phone in her hands. Smaller babies, Baby1 and Baby4 (two and three months old),

show happiness and satisfaction towards media by turning their heads towards the music or TV and they show signs of calming when music is played.

Babies love music

This research shows that already small babies show their personal preferences regarding media. Babies have their favorite media technology and they prefer specific media contents. For example Baby2 loves music according to her mother and shows her taste of what kind of music she prefers. Baby2 also likes cartoons but prefers cartoons where action happens and with less talk and conversations and more music. Mother4 states that her 3-month old baby shows his taste in TV programmes by turning his head away from the TV if there is something he doesn't like but then if he likes, for example children's programmes with bold colors and music, he tries to turn around completely towards the TV to see the screen better.

Parents like to offer written stories

The mothers regard books as the best and most preferred media tools for their babies. The mothers view books as positive and educational devices and encourage the use of books with their children. Mother4 stated that she prefers books because she feels that they offer a variety of different things for the child and she does not regard books as being as addictive as modern media technology seems to be.

5.2. Parents show responsibility as media educators

The mothers in this research see their role as media educators very important. The mothers realize that the relationship with media begins at home with the parents' initiative. Kotilainen states that parents' relationship with media is echoed to their children. (2011, 70.) The parents have thought about boundaries and limitations. THL, the National Institute for Health and Welfare's media education manual for the Finnish health care center (neuvola) and parents, states that it is important that parents monitor their children's media use and media content. (THL, Lastenneuvola käsikirja, Mediakasvatuksen työkirja, 2006.) According to Kupiainen (2009, 175), media education is about regulating but also about supporting. The parents in this research

appear to do exactly those. Mother3 states that her role in her baby's life as a media educator is very big. She states that she thinks it is very important that she knows what her baby sees and experiences with media:

I: Yeah, okay. And when you think about yourself as a media educator to your child, what kind of a role do you play as parent regarding your child's media use?

M3: That's actually a very big role. It's like, umm, what we parents should think about already when the kids are really small because it's like, really easily like, 'oh there's nothing like PG18 or anything like that' but if you think about it like all the programs that are on TV, and like news and stuff like that, the content can be as raw stuff as in some movies and stuff. And I feel that as a parents the role is to like, be on top of your child's media use and the content what they see and experiences and then you can go through that with the child. Like go over those things. And it's important to know what is appropriate for the child to see but mostly like, most importantly to know what they are looking at and experiencing.

Mother1 thinks it is important to know what her children see and hear on the media but also thinks it is important to limit the child's time on the media:

I: The next theme is 'parents as media educators'. What kind of a role do you play as parent regarding your child's media use?

M1: This is challenging. Well, umm, if I think like, about the older siblings, you like monitor the content or like know what they are watching and also like, how much they watch and what they are allowed to watch like on TV. Or like children's programs on Yle Areena, and like books, like what books they can read and look at what not. And that the baby can be involved in those. Like, I feel that reading is really important.

5.2.1. Encouraging babies with IT

Mother2 regards her role as a media educator to be a big role as well. She states that the IT-skills of babies today are astonishing. She adds that her baby is probably going to be a better IT-user than herself. Kotilainen states that even though parents and media educators might feel that they do not know enough about media, they should embrace it. (Kotilainen, 2002, 34.) It is important that the parents engage with their children and

try to keep up with the evolving technology. Mother2 hopes that her baby also plays traditional games and interacts with the parents and does not only stare at screens:

I: How about when you think about your role as a media educators to your child then what kind of a role do you play as parent regarding your child's media use?

M2: I think a quite of a big role in like what she will use like the TV has been like I prefer she focuses more on our faces then the TV screen, but my husband likes to take the easier road and puts the TV on for the baby and does his own things on the meantime. Like I like to be with the baby there and of course there are brief moments when like, I have to use the phone. And like I have purchased the covers for the iPad 'cause I want her to use the iPad and look at all the colors and stuff. And I feel like, she'll be a proficient IT user! Like she knows more about all this stuff at two years old than I will! Umm, like, yeah, I encourage her to use but I also like the old fashioned way of playing with toys and not just staring at screens all day long and that like she becomes passive. Like I feel like if she just sits in front of the TV all day then she cant grow as a child and like play the traditional games and stuff.

5.2.2. Monitoring media contents

Mother4 states that she sees her role as a media educator mainly to monitor the media content as some things just are not suitable for a child. She also believes in limiting the time spent using media. She prefers using books with her children and encourages her children to use books alone as well.

I: How about when you think about your role as a media educators to your child then what kind of a role do you play as parent regarding your child's media use?

M4: Well probably like, it's the same with the older child as it is with the baby that I make sure that it's suitable. Like sometimes I have to tell my husband if the TV is too laud when he's watching a war show on TV like the explosions are too scary and it like, sounds too scary and that's not suitable for children. So more like, limiting like the child does not spend all their time in front of the TV screen but like, we have lots of books and I think that those are great. And I have always hoped, and like we have some books that are my old and we have received lots of books as gifts 'cause I think they are really good and like that… And the baby's older brother has learned that like, he looks

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at books by himself and like looks and reads books in bed by himself. So like, I think I have emphasized the books a lot.

The mothers in this research all were in their late-twenties, early-thirties, and had knowledge about the current basic everyday technology. All mothers except for one, had iPads and everyone had a smartphone. They were all active media users and all had social media accounts. Suoranta states that open comprehension demands an *'omnivore'* state of mind from media educators. (2003, 85) Parents should also engage in media and try to comprehend the media environment their child is in. All mothers stated that it is important to encourage their children to use different media. Mother3 states that she encourages her baby to use smartphone and tablet.

I: And how do you feel that you are guiding your child in terms of media use?
M3: I think that like how we have done with like the phones and tablets like we allow her to touch them and stuff, like they are so present in her life all the time and we are like, probably showing her that those belong to everyday life. And I'm waiting for that day that the baby is better with all this IT stuff than I am!

Mother1 states that she encourages her children to use the iPad but also finds supporting and monitoring their media use important.

5.2.3. Guiding media use

I: Yeah. And how do you feel that you are guiding your child in terms of media use?
M1: Well, one for sure is the iPad use like there to find something and this and that. And maybe like, I try to avoid that the child is alone with the media content like with the children's programmes and books and like I try to be present and discuss those things with them and like talk about the content and stuff. And like answers their questions and offer advice. Like with books it's still a bit easier like, because we read those for them.

Mother4 states that for her it is important to encourage her children to read more books and to use games for not only entertainment but also for educational purposes.

I: how do you feel that you are guiding your child in terms of media use?

M4: Well, yeah, umm… I don't know like, well, like guide her. And well, like encouraging her to read books and like, I try to choose games that are educational and stuff like that. Like, sorta like beneficial things and not so much like entertaining but something like where doing together and benefiting is combined. Maybe like that. But I feel like these children now a days will be much better with these things than we are! But luckily my husband is really good with the IT side.

5.2.4. Summary: Guidance and support by parents

All mothers stated that setting boundaries and rules is the main factors as a media educator. According to Suoranta, setting rules is a primary task in parenting. (2003, 69.) Mother4 and Mother3 both state that their baby will soon be better with the IT-technology than themselves. Despite them having stated this as only a half-serious comment, it is not far fetched. Babies in this research are constantly surrounded by media and their media environment is very broad. The media device selection in these babies' homes is extensive; everything from tablets to smartphones. Since their birth, these babies have been passively using modern media technologies and are growing up along all this rapidly evolving technology. Media is a normal part of babies' everyday life.

According to Marsh et al. (2005, 75), parents regard the role of media in their children's life as something positive. Parents feel that media can offer a lot for their child, such as skills and new information, as well as help with heir cognitive development. Parents in the research also felt that media education should be part of the school curriculum to help support the parents with the media education of their children.

The parents in this research regard their role as media educators to their children as being something very significant. They place importance on it and aim to make the best decisions for their children. Babies can be regarded as being easily media educated but in today's world where even small babies are surrounded by all kinds of media, this can actually be a problematic task. Media is everywhere and it cannot be easily monitored or controlled. Furthermore, babies have a much broader media environment than ever before and use a long list of media devices that their parents did not use as babies. This

might prove to be a challenge, as parents might not recognize all the media their children are experiencing.

The mothers in this research stated that their main role as media educators for their children is to protect, guide and support their child. The mothers stated that there is so much various media content easily available today that it is important to know what media devices the child is using and what content is available in that device. The mothers stated that it is important to know what your child is experiencing in the media content and to make sure that the content is suitable, taking into consideration the child's age and development. The mothers also stated that it is important to not only guide and protect but also to encourage and support the child in their media environment. The importance of media literacy will increase in the future and the mothers in this research seemed to realize that and that for they regarded media skills as something important.

Two mothers in this research have a degree in educational sciences and they work with children. These two mothers have studied some courses about media education in a university during their studies and one of these mothers has also taught media education the children and her colleagues at her work. These two mothers are familiar with media education and I assume they keep the media education aspect in their minds at home as well, when raising their own children. They have knowledge of media education and they have acquired an understanding of the constant media presence in children's lives today. This can influence their opinions and the way they are raising their children, as well as their responses in this research.

6. Conclusion

Researches like this are needed as the babies' media use is rapidly increasing and babies' media environment is expanding. As discovered in this research, babies need guidance, rules, boundaries and limitations but also support, in their relationship with media, and parents need to recognize their role and the significance of their roles on their babies' lives.

According to this study, babies show out as audience. This should be taken in account in the future research of children and media. This study also shows that already small babies show their own preferences and this indicates that they have their own taste.

Therefore, I suggest more research to be conducted, especially regarding the role of babies' relationship with media. Audiencehood of babies has not been regarded as a real existing phenomenon for a long time. Babies have been regarded merely as recipients and the babies' role in the society has not been recognized or valued. Babies' role in the society is increasing and their power in terms of media content and consumption is also growing fast. Many parents place great importance on their babies' preferences and choices and spend time and money on their babies' social and physical appearance. Babies have a great power in their parents. Babies' role in the society and the audiencehood of babies would also offer interesting research topics in the future.

Media skills of a baby are greatly appreciated among many parents. Parents seem to find the ability to use an iPhone a necessary skill in today's world. It may not be far fetched, as this research shows; all parents already had smartphones and two out of four babies in this research already use their parents' smartphones.

Having come across some literature about the possible harm of media, as I begun this research, I thought that the parents would express concern about the harm of media. However, to my surprise, it did not end up being greatly expressed by the parents. Three mothers stated that they have concern about the media content and two mothers stated that they have concern about the addictiveness of the screen medias such as tablets, smartphones, computers and television. But none of these mothers stated that these

concerns would lead them to avoid media for their babies. I think that all of these mothers in this research had a strong sense of their role and their importance in their baby's relationship with media. They all stated that for a child, it is important to experience different kinds of play and spend time with friends and family, not only spend time staring at the screens. These mothers valued social interactions and felt that social skills are very important in a child's life and development.

These mothers in this research use media in many different ways and for various purposes. They use media for educational and entertainment purposes and consider it also as a helpful tool in everyday life. For example, one mother uses the tablet to distract the baby in order to feed her better and she uses the radio to help the baby sleep better. One mother uses the tablet to teach her baby shapes and colors, and one mother uses the television to entertain her baby while she is doing some household chores.

All parents in this research showed responsibility of their children's media education and they appeared to have though thoroughly, for example regulating their child's media use and content. As Chaudron states in her research, parents mostly use regulation as a form of media education to their children. (Chaudron, 2015, 8.)

Koivusalo-Kuusivaara (2007, 249) states that a child's relationship with media should start with the child's interest in mind and with the child's perspective as mind set. She additionally states that a child uses many things in his or her everyday life to discover and learn something new and media can offer a variety of new skills and tools for the child. This can also be seen in this research as mothers stated that their babies learn something new every week and they seem to be hungry for new things.

Koivusalo-Kuusivaara's (2007, 28) Picture 1 (page 12 in this research) portraying a child's relationship environment and factors that contributes to it. She states that for example family's socio economical background, child's personal preferences and the current media politics influence in a child's relationship with media and their media environment as a whole. This is apparent also in this research as families with a better income can afford for example tablets, smartphones and so on. This should also be taken into consideration in future research as the socio economical factors greatly influence a child's life.

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Previous studies support the research findings discovered in this research; the parents' feelings about their role as media educators for their children and their feelings regarding the importance of setting guidelines and supporting the children with media. According to Suoranta, setting rules and boundaries is a key element in parenting. (2003, 69.) The media use of some of the babies in this research begun by listening to their parents reading books to them, as found previously in the Media Barometer Research in 2013. (Suoninen, 2013, 57.) But one baby began his media use through passive media usage, as the mother was using the Internet from her laptop or smart phone when she was nursing her baby. Kotilainen in the Media Barometer Research also found this in 2010. (Kotilainen, 2011, 68.)

This study suggests additions to the earlier research of babies showing their own taste. Babies reacted to media content that they liked or disliked. If the babies liked something they showed signs of happiness and satisfaction and paid attention to the media. On the other hand if the babies did not like something they ignored the media or tried avoiding it.

My goal in this research was to look for some replenishment to earlier research and open some more topics for further discussion. I believe I have succeeded in this by providing some new discoveries, for example that babies show their own taste. This study has offered new additions while supporting earlier research. I have also raised more openings for further discussion on this research, such as suggesting researching the family units further. I believe further research on this subject is necessary as the babies' today are living in a highly technological world and are surrounded by media everyday.

To better observe the media use of babies, a media use diary tool filled by the babies' parents for a certain period of time could have been used. This could have provided a more in-depth perspective of the babies' media use and their media relationship as a whole. Using various different research tools offers a broader view of the subject of the research. However with the time constraint of a Master Dissertation, a more profound and more analyzing research was not possible. The families used as examples in this research were mere examples and not to represent the overall population. However, as for the purpose of this Master's Dissertation, they were used as examples.

6.1.   Reliability and validity of the research

As a conclusion, I reflect my study from the perspective of reliability and validity. Conducting research is often a very fruitful process and it offers great insight into the topic. However, when conducting a research, there often occur some matters that influence the research and the results. It is important to recognize that many factors influence the research process and the research results. I tried to take this into consideration already in the beginning of the process of researching. I also thought about the ways I could influence the whole research as a researcher and mostly as an interviewer in the interview situations.

The interview structure was tested before conducting actual research interviews in the families' homes. To test the clarity of the interview questions and see if they were easily understood, I interviewed a person before conducting the actual research. I additionally wanted to see how much time each interview would approximately take so I timed the test interview. The test interview however, cannot be regarded as validated information as the person interviewed for test purposes did not have children and thus the questions in the research interview could not be related to actual information on their part.

The role of the researcher is significant in all parts of the research but it is especially emphasized in the data gathering process such as interviews and observations in this research. Silverman states "(…) typical of much qualitative research, leads to a certain preciousness about the validity and reliability of the researchers' own interpretation". (2010, 287.) The interviewer also influences the interview process by possibly accidentally suggesting or manipulating the questions or interviewees' answers. There is also a possibility that the interviewees misunderstand the interview questions or do not entirely understand them and hence give only a partial response.

Additionally, the presumptions of the researcher influence the way he or she assumes and processes the data. This also affected the analysis process of the research, as the interpretations, emotions and opinions of the researcher are naturally being reflected to the findings and analysis of the research.

Maintaining the role of a researcher can be challenging when conducting a research with people that you know. According to Ronkanen et al., the role and position of the researcher during the research process influences the research process and the results. The role and position of the researcher cannot always be chosen as it sometimes comes naturally, for example if there is an existing relationship between the researcher and the research objects. (Ronkanen et al., 2011, 72.) This is also the case in this research as three of the families were families I know. I was not only a researcher to these families since I know them. Therefore, my relationship with the families might make them feel more relaxed in the interview situation, but at the same time it might also influence their responses as there may be things they were not comfortable sharing with someone they know.

I did all the translation for this research, so the reliability of the translations is not completely accurate. Additionally as I, someone who is not a professional translator, have conducted the translations, the translations cannot be regarded as accurate phrasings of the authors who have been referred to in this research. The translations were conducted to my best linguistic knowledge with the original author in mind and with the goal of reflecting the most accurate interpretations of their text.

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SUOSTUMUS

Tämä suostumus koskee tutkimusta, jonka aiheena on Alle yksivuotiaiden lasten mediankäyttö ja vanhempien rooli mediakasvattajina.

Minulle on selvitetty tutkimuksen tavoitteet ja tekotapa. Haastattelussa antamiani tietoja saa käyttää tutkimusaineistona pro gradu -tutkielmaan, joka kuuluu osana Tampereen yliopiston mediakasvatuksen opintoja.

_____ _____/_____2015

_____

Allekirjoitus ja nimenselvennys

Tutkimushaastattelukysymykset

Haastattelun runko

Lapsen syntymäaika (kuukausi ja vuosi): _____
Lapsi on: tyttö/poika

Mediavälineet

Minkälaisia mediavälineitä käytät lapsesi kanssa?

1) kirjat
2) sanomalehdet/aikakausilehdet
3) radio/musiikkiäänitteet
4) televisio
5) dvdt
6) tietokone
7) tabletit (iPad jne)
8) internet
9) kännykkä
10) videopelit
11) muita, mitä?

Minkälaisia medialaitteita hän käyttää yksin?

Onko jonkin medialaitteen käyttö passiivista?

Minkälaisia medialaitteita lapsellasi on?

Mikä on lapsesi mieluisin mediaväline?

Miten koet että lapsesi reagoi medialaitteisiin?

Mediasuhde

Milloin ja minkälaisissa tilanteissa lapsesi käyttää mediaa?

Kuinka usein luet lapsellesi kirjoja?

Kuunteleeko lapsesi musiikkia? Minkälaista/mitä musiikkia? Missä yhteydessä?

Jos lapsesi käyttää kännykkää, minkälaisia pelejä, tai toimintoja hän käyttää?

Katsotko lapsesi kanssa TV:tä, videoita internetistä (YouTube, YLE Areena yms)? Minkälaisia videoita/ohjelmia katsotte?

Katsooko lapsesi TV:tä tai videoita yksin?

Vanhemmat mediakasvattajina

Minkälainen rooli sinulla on vanhempana lapsesi median käytön suhteen?

Miten koet vanhempana opastavasi lastasi median käytön suhteen?

Miten tärkeäksi koet roolisi lapsesi mediakasvattajana?

Lapsille suunnatun median sukupuolittuneisuus

Koetko että lapsille suunnattu media on sukupuolittunutta? Antaisitko esimerkkejä?

Koetko että sukupuoli stereotypiat ovat esillä lasten mediassa?

Kommentteja

Olisiko sinulla jotain lisättävää?