

Expanding the Potential for Connected Learning Through Attending to Latino Parents' Discourses of Family Well-being, (April, 2015) AERA Conference, Chicago, IL.

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Families today are bombarded by doctors, teachers and media discourses emphasizing parents roles in safekeeping the health and well-being of their young children, which often includes making sure they do not have too much “screen time” or play games that are too violent. Yet, educators and researchers also seek to leverage the new media practices of children today for academic and consequential learning. We argue that to connect and expand children’s new media repertoires across multiple academic, informal and home-based contexts, we need to attend to parents’ practices with digital media and the discourses of family well-being that circulate in households. In documenting the everyday practices of predominately Latino and low-income families we see that parents’ beliefs and practices intersect with how they organize technology use for children. We conceptualize families’ activity around new media and family well-being as important funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005) for developing reciprocal relationships between educators, researchers and families towards the appropriation of new media tools for learning in multiple contexts.

We looked at families’ discourses and practices of health and well being, and their intersection with new media. We started broadly through analysis of interviews and videotaped participant observation with 14 families (of note, more mothers than fathers participated). We found that parents and young children’s practices with new media diverged, in particular around the area of digital game play (Table 1). Mothers did not identify as gamers, some fathers had a game play practice, and all children engaged in some form of digital game play. Unsurprisingly, parents were concerned about their children’s health and well-being. Many mothers were concerned that their children played too much with digital media, and they voiced a preference for their children to engage in physical play. Many mothers used digital media for health related activity (e.g. searches for recipes and health information) (See also Schwartz & Gutierrez, 2015).

	Child	Mom	Dad
Family 12 (Chavez)	Jovan 4 th grade: Build, be creative, “smart”. “Cuz you can mine and you could build a house and could like be creative and smart...” (referring to Minecraft)	Doesn’t really like it. Kids are constantly on it, instead of doing something productive.	Described Minecraft as “Today’s legos”

Table 1 Children and parents’ view of digital game play

We selected a subset of families to look at the shared, negotiated and hybrid practices that developed in households around family digital media use and discourses of health and well being. The excerpts in Table 2 below show examples of how we analyzed this data.

	Mom's Practice (roles)	Interest driving interaction	Need or competing interest	Expertise	Tool Control	Device/ platform
Family 12 Shared practice (Mom and 4 th grade boy)	Mom making dinner (health and family time)	Son's interest in mom's practice; mom's interest in cooking	Son needs assistance from mom to learn the digital practice	Mom shows son how to find recipes on Pinterest	Mom shows son how to use Pinterest on phone, gives phone to son	Mobile phone, Pinterest
Family 13 Negotiated practice and shared practice (Mom and 4 th grade boy)	Responsibility for child's health and well being	Son's interest in digital game play; mom's interest in son's health and wellbeing; daughter's understanding of digital media use	Son is pre-diabetic and has asthma; Son prefers to play violent games over Wii exercise games	Son takes up mom's discourse of games as violent; daughter uses computer to look up asthma	Mom decides when son can play digital games, tries to get him to play active Wii games	Xbox or Wii "shoot em up" games Internet for searching for health information

Table 2 Families' perceptions and practices related to digital media and well-being

To gain further insight into how beliefs and practices were embodied, shaped, negotiated and shared among family members, we further analyzed moment-to-moment interaction in two households. To do so, we charted timelines for activity that we video-recorded in evenings in the homes of the two families (see following page). We chose these families because the interaction shows how mothers' emphases on well-being intersects with their own and their children's technology use. In these close-up views of activity we highlighted what we defined as various roles that mothers played in interaction with their children. For example, in family 10 we show how, as "technology" and "health and well being manager" Mom worked to orchestrate her son's digital game play participation before and after dinner in the home. Our timeline starts with mom listening to ambient music on her iPad to "relax" while making dinner. The interaction with her son indicates she viewed his video game play as a form of TV watching that detracted from family time, although she also engaged in some shared interaction around his practice. Importantly, Mom did not view her son's game play as a legitimate literacy activity although he used a notebook to record his game play. In family 11, Mom and Dad discussed health practices and orchestrated their children's comportment around the dinner table. Mom as "technology" and "health and well being manager" limited her daughter's viewing of youtube videos and used her mobile phone to read a passage that drew her families' attention to the parents' values. We view these examples as helpful for understanding how interaction in the home around digital media and well-being has consequences for the ways in which children's learning may or may not become "connected" across multiple contexts. Our findings have implications for policy and curriculum design we are exploring further in current studies (Schwartz, 2014-15 children's video documentaries on community health practices) and we will discuss further in a publication in preparation (Schwartz, DiGiacomo & Gutierrez).

Family 11 Weeknight, Late Afternoon/Early Evening

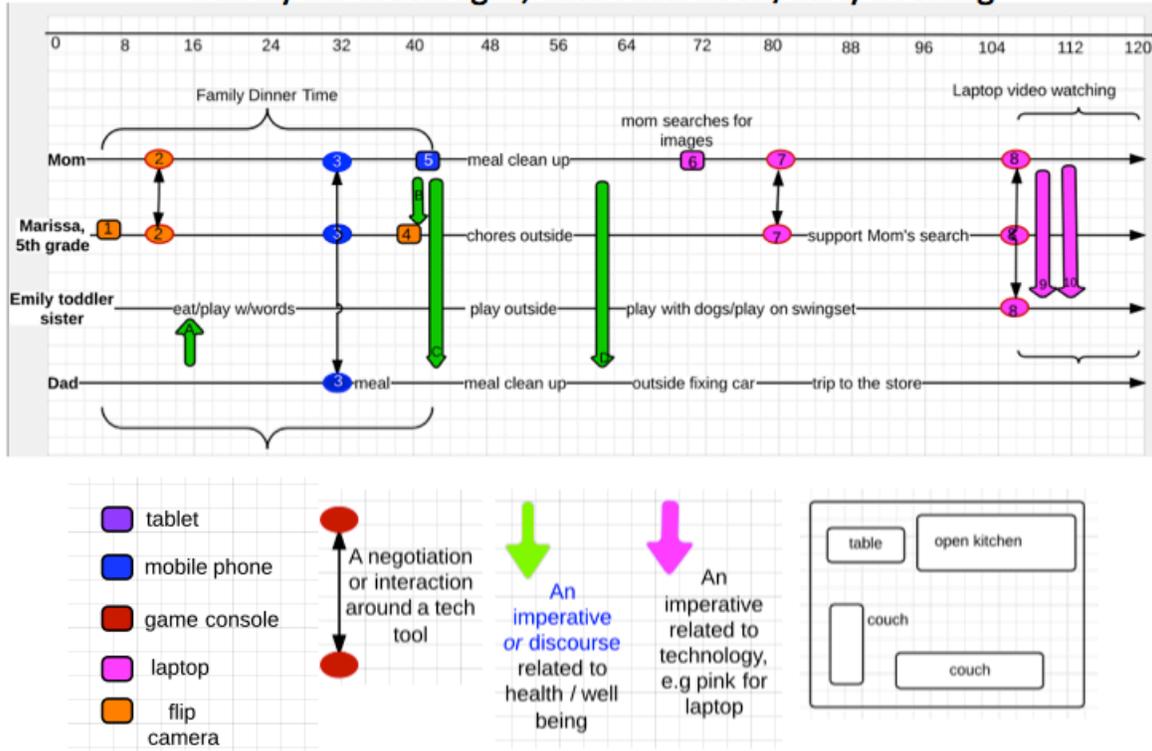


Figure 5 Family 11 Timeline

Discourse and Imperatives around Health and Technology

- Dad tells daughter to sit 'right' at the table to eat properly
- Mom tells 5th grader not to put salt on her food
- Mom reads idiom about well-being out loud to Dad and 5th grade daughter *
- Mom tells Dad she heard it's important to eat 5 meals a day, every 3 hours
- Mom tells daughters they have only 5 more minutes to watch laptop videos
- Mom says they only have 2 more minutes left to watch laptop videos

C* *"Muere lentamente quien se transforma en esclavo de los habitos, quien no se arriesga, quien evita una passion, que no arriesga lo cierto por lo incierto. Quien abandona antes de empezar. Quien se queja de su mala su suerte, quien no viaja, ni lee, que no suena, que no confia, quien no lo intento, quien no ama. Lo contrario es estar vivo."*

("those who transform themselves into slaves to habit die slowly, those who don't take a risk, who avoid their passion, who do not risk the truth for the uncertainty. They who before starting, quits. They who complains about their bad luck, who doesn't travel, or read. They who doesn't make a sound or trusts, who doesn't try or doesn't love. The opposite would be to be alive")

dad11: "It's cool, right?"