



Studying very young children qualitatively

Kristiina Kruuse,
PhD student,
University of Tartu

+ The Study



- Children's TV viewing habits
- 18 children aged 4-7
- Semi-structured interviews
- Combined with projective technique (collages)



Advantages



- Children's own perspective, rich descriptions and unexpected outcomes
- *On the Showtime channel, I saw a movie where a guy had hooks in his arms, back, belly, mouth and everywhere. He tried to pull out those hooks, but he couldn't /.../And then there was a woman and a key inside something... The woman had to pick up this key, but her hand caught fire.*

She wanted to take the key?

Yes, she had to.

And her hand caught fire?

She was bleeding all over and she fell /.../(Girl, six years old).

+ Methodology



- Pre-visit, getting to know
- Semi-structured interviews
 - No need to be afraid of too difficult «why » questions
 - Closed questions are helpful for children as they introduce opened questions
- Collages (of all shows aired on previous month)
 - Reminds programmes
 - Catches limited attention
 - Fun

+ Shortcomings



- Exaggerations
- “Too” rich imagination
- Limited attention
- Wishing to give “right” answers
- Challenges of interpreting



Children's vs teachers' perspective



- Studying children's own perspective lead to different results compared to teachers' sayings.
- Teachers: children are distrubed by action movies, crime serials, news programmes.
- Children: enormous bananas, scary animals (e.g. a wolf), various fictional characters.



Questions



- How far can you go in trusting children's own perspective?
- Which perspective to use if children's and adult's perspectives are different?
- Collages worked well to complement the interviews. Which creative ways have you used to study young children?
 - iPad game to do "structured" research?