A Brand’s Guide to Gen Alpha

What the youngest generation’s influence — now and as they grow up — means for brands

MARCH 2023
Gen Alpha’s influence starts now

Gen Alpha (ages 0-9) is being reared during the confluence of many once-in-a-lifetime events: historic inflation, a still unresolved pandemic and ongoing tech breakthroughs. All of these elements heavily influence how their parents raise them — and how this youngest generation views the world.

This report aims to introduce Gen Alpha to our readers and establishes a foundation for understanding how their behaviors and upbringing differ from that of previous generations. We did this by surveying 2,000 of their parents, asking them questions about their children’s screen time, brand preferences and purchasing influence, financial future, healthy habits, and travel plans.

We also surveyed 1,000 parents with children ages 18 and under for a point of comparison. Read our full methodology here.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Parents believe Alphas will be better off than they were
But not in terms of mental health — call it the COVID effect.

The lives of Alphas are deeply digital
Most Alphas (54%) own a tablet, and their future points to virtual reality.

Alphas are already influencing purchasing
That’s especially true for food and beverages.

Gen Alpha parents are financially preoccupied
The Great Recession is impacting millennials’ parenting style.

Parents emphasize healthy eating. But: McDonald’s
More so than in the past, it’s a balance of vegetables and Happy Meals.

Travel-happy parents are bringing Alphas along
And Alphas are already influencing where their families go.
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Meet the Parents

Say hello to the parents raising Gen Alpha
Parents of Gen Alpha are more likely to be younger: 52% of all parents with kids under age 18 are millennials, compared with 70% of Gen Alpha parents.

Parents of Gen Alpha are slightly wealthier than all parents with children under age 18.

Notably, there are no large differences between parents of Gen Alpha and all parents of children under 18 by party affiliation, education, race or ethnicity, or community.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence. Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
What parents of Gen Alpha value

Respondents were asked how important each of the following factors are when thinking about raising their children. Below are the average utility scores, which indicate the relative importance of each factor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Utility Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stay out of trouble</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make their own choices</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have successful careers</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make the world a better place</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free to take risks, choose who they want to be</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grow up more well-off than I did</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share my religious beliefs</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are inclusive to others</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are not exposed to bad influences</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have strong family ties</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritize taking care of others</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have academic success</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop strong friendships</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have more varied experiences than I did</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are physically safe</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grow up in a stable family</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are honest, have integrity</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a sense of self-worth</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are physically healthy</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are emotionally mature</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can think critically, independently</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are kind and respectful</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are financially successful</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A score of 100 indicates that factor has an average likelihood of being considered the most important to a given respondent. A score of 200 indicates the factor is twice as likely as average, while a score of 50 indicates it is half as likely to be considered the most important.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Parents of Gen Alpha are more financially fraught — and will become even more so

Using a cluster analysis, we identified three unique groups of Gen Alpha parents based on what they said were the most important factors when thinking about raising their children. Key differences in average utility scores between these groups and all parents of Gen Alpha in a MaxDiff analysis are charted below.

### The Financially Fraught
The largest group (47% of Gen Alpha parents) and the youngest, with the most millennial parents, and also the most racially diverse

- “It’s important my children... are financially successful”
  - Utility Score: +77

- “Grow up in a stable family”
  - Utility Score: -108

- “Are physically safe”
  - Utility Score: -111

### The Idealists
The wealthiest group, with the highest share of Independents (44%) and Democrats (39%), and most likely to be white

- “Have a sense of self-worth”
  - Utility Score: +211

- “Are financially successful”
  - Utility Score: -100

- “Are physically healthy”
  - Utility Score: +93

- “Think critically, independently”
  - Utility Score: +144

### The Pragmatists
The oldest group, with the largest share of Gen X parents (50%) and more likely to be Republican (46%)

- “Are physically safe”
  - Utility Score: +145

- “Are financially successful”
  - Utility Score: -47

- “Are inclusive to others”
  - Utility Score: -48

- “Are free to take risks, choose who they want to be”
  - Utility Score: +100

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Parents say children are better off than previous generations in every aspect — except mental health

Share of parents who said that, compared with earlier generations, their children ages 9 and under are better or worse off when it comes to each of the following aspects because of modern-day internet access and technology:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>WORSE OFF</th>
<th>BETTER OFF</th>
<th>NET*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>-3 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication/socialization</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>+12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing skills for the workforce</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>+18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>+22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to be financially successful</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>+25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/schooling</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>+35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity/innovation</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>+39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Mental health is the only aspect in which parents think they were better off than their Gen Alpha kids are.
- Wealthier parents (earning $100k+) are, on average, more likely than their low-income counterparts to say their children are worse off than they were.
- Parents who send their children to public school are more optimistic than private-school parents about their children being better off.
- Gen Alpha parents are slightly more optimistic about these factors than all parents with kids under 18.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence. *Net figure represents the share who said their children are better off minus the share who said their children are worse off. “No difference” and “Don’t know” responses are not shown.
Many parents have already started the tricky conversations with their kids

Share of parents who said they “sometimes” or “often” talk to their children about each of the following topics:

- **Their own personal physical health**: 56% of Gen Alpha parents, 66% of all parents
- **Their own personal mental health**: 46% of Gen Alpha parents, 56% of all parents
- **Their own personal body image**: 45% of Gen Alpha parents, 52% of all parents
- **Race/racism**: 34% of Gen Alpha parents, 44% of all parents
- **The environment/climate change**: 34% of Gen Alpha parents, 42% of all parents
- **Gender norms**: 27% of Gen Alpha parents, 36% of all parents
- **LGBTQ+ issues/gender diversity**: 17% of Gen Alpha parents, 32% of all parents
- **Household finances**: 22% of Gen Alpha parents, 31% of all parents
- **Politics**: 19% of Gen Alpha parents, 30% of all parents

Democratic Gen Alpha parents are, on average, more likely than their Republican counterparts to discuss all of these topics with their children, with the most notable gaps in race and the environment.

Intuitively, these parent-child conversations increase with a child’s age: 27% of Gen Alpha parents of children ages 8 and 9 at least sometimes talk to their offspring about politics, compared with 15% of parents of 0- to 4-year-olds.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Parents feel conflicted about the future, and it’s impacting how they raise their children

Roughly half of Gen Alpha parents are preoccupied with financial success, and the group overall is likely to become more so.

Despite being wealthier than parents of children under 18 as a whole, the largest group of parents raising Gen Alpha, dubbed the “financially fraught,” is the most concerned about their finances. They’re also the youngest, an indication of where the group will move as Alphas continue to be born.

Parents believe their Gen Alpha children will be better off than they were.

That comes with two important caveats: their mental health and, to some degree, physical health. COVID-19 upended any “normal” childhood many Alphas could have, impacting important social development. Familial stability is important for Gen Alpha parents, who are largely millennials and children of divorce.

The world is changing around them, and Gen Alpha parents are proactively prepping their children for it.

No more shying away from the “birds and the bees” conversation. Many parents of Gen Alpha are already having tough conversations with their young children, tackling race, gender norms and politics.
SECTION 2

Screen Time

More than digital natives, Alphas are and will continue to be immersed in advanced technology their entire lives.
Most Alphas spend less than two hours online, but age 10 marks a turning point

Shares of parents who said their children spend the following amounts of time online each day, on average:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Spent Online Each Day</th>
<th>All parents</th>
<th>All Gen Alpha parents</th>
<th>Children ages 0-4</th>
<th>Children ages 5-7</th>
<th>Children ages 8-9</th>
<th>Children ages 10-12</th>
<th>Children ages 13-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 hour</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 hours</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 hours</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-13 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-16 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 16 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/No opinion</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence. Respondents with multiple children selected all that apply.

There aren’t many demographic differences in time spent online. One small one is by party affiliation: Republicans allow less screen time than Democrats.
Alphas have high rates of device ownership, spend more time on-screen

Shares who said their children own the following:

- Tablet
- Handheld game console
- Game console
- Smartphone
- Laptop computer
- E-reader
- VR headset
- Desktop computer

Gen Alpha is the first completely digital generation. Their digital fluency comes with high rates of device ownership and screen time.

**More than half of Alphas (54%) own tablets,** the same rate as older children, suggesting that larger handheld device screens and responsive apps will hold a more important place than they already do.

**Around 1 in 10 Alphas (11%) own a VR headset,** and 26% live in a household that has one. Many Gen Alpha children are growing up with VR — a potentially good sign for companies’ long-term metaverse plays.

Alphas spend the most time with smartphones, desktop computers and VR. While tablet ownership is the highest, VR headsets and desktop computers earn the most screen time. Nearly one-fifth (17%) of Gen Alpha parents whose children own VR headsets said their children use them more than seven hours a day, and 18% said the same for desktop computers.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Gen Alpha’s early education was marked by nearly two years of lockdowns, and while the early data suggests challenges of learning loss, the real impact of this sudden shift in education won’t truly be appreciated for years to come.

Gen Alpha parents tend to agree that their children benefit from digital learning, but differences in opinion are most stark when looking at parents’ cultural backgrounds.

Black and Hispanic parents were much more likely to agree children benefit from digital learning than their white counterparts.

Research shows that during the pandemic, Black and Hispanic students were more likely to be in “remote-only” districts, which could lead to a more favorable view of digital learning among these parents. That being said, these benefits were not felt by all. Black and Hispanic families were also the most likely to lack proper internet access during the pandemic, negatively impacting digital learning opportunities.

Digital learning is a boon for Gen Alpha parents

Shares of parents who agree or disagree that their children benefit from digital learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Don't know/No opinion</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Gen Alpha</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Morning Consult Research Intelligence. Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
Growing up digital means establishing early online friendships

Shares of parents who said that...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Group</th>
<th>Regularly Plays Online Games</th>
<th>Regularly Talks Online</th>
<th>Met Online Friends</th>
<th>Positive Impact on Socialization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen Alpha</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 10-12</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ages 13-18</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apps like Discord, online games such as Fortnite and Roblox, and platforms like YouTube — the latter of which is used by 68% of Gen Alpha — have made it easy for a new generation to discover online communities and make friends.

Roughly 3 in 5 children ages 18 and under regularly socialize with their friends online through games or messaging apps, according to their parents.

Thanks to the prevalence of these communities, nearly one-quarter (24%) of Gen Alpha parents said their kids have friends they’ve met online whom they have never met in person, and around 2 in 5 (41%) also said that online games have had a positive impact on their children’s socialization.

But Gen Alpha parents still take certain precautions. Almost three-quarters (73%) said they implement parental controls like site filtering or activity monitoring.
Video streaming keeps kids busy, but video games seem poised to take over as Alphas age

Shares of parents who said their children did the following activities at least once a day:

- Stream video
- Play video games
- Read
- Use social media
- Watch live TV
- Stream music
- Listen to AM/FM radio
- Play board games
- Listen to podcasts
- Listen to audiobooks

Video streaming is the only entertainment activity that more than half of Gen Alpha parents said their kids did daily — likely because it’s the most entertaining media activity that many parents feel comfortable letting their young children do.

As kids get older, their use of social and audio platforms notably increases, which likely has to do with many getting their first smartphones as they enter their teens.

Just over 6 in 10 (63%) parents with kids under 18 said their kids started owning smartphones between ages 10 and 15.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Alphas’ day-to-day lives are dominated by video entertainment platforms

Shares of parents who said their children use each of the following platforms:

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Gen Alpha parents see promise in the metaverse, but concerns persist

Shares of parents who support their children’s participation in the metaverse

- **At their current age**
  - All Gen Alpha parents: 28%
  - Gen Alpha parents who control their children's online content usage: 26%
  - Gen Alpha parents who let their children control their own online content usage: 45%
  - Gen Alpha parents whose children spend 2 hours or less online each day: 22%
  - Gen Alpha parents whose children spend 7-13 hours online each day: 61%

- **When they are older**
  - All Gen Alpha parents: 58%
  - Gen Alpha parents who control their children's online content usage: 59%
  - Gen Alpha parents who let their children control their own online content usage: 63%
  - Gen Alpha parents whose children spend 2 hours or less online each day: 55%
  - Gen Alpha parents whose children spend 7-13 hours online each day: 66%

Virtual reality is top of mind for Gen Alpha parents, given the high rate of VR headset ownership among their children. Millennial parents of Gen Alpha kids are more likely than other parents to hold favorable views of VR and the metaverse than parents of older generations, but they’re not completely sold on it quite yet.

Just over a quarter (28%) of Gen Alpha parents support their children's engagement in the metaverse at their current age, while 58% oppose it. Gen Alpha parents are also more likely than not to say the metaverse is not trustworthy or safe — 36% **consider the metaverse to be safe, while 44% don’t**.

Looking ahead, nearly 3 in 5 (58%) Gen Alpha parents support their children engaging in the metaverse when they’re older, potentially rooted in the promise they see. Most (67%) say the metaverse is innovative, encourages socialization (52%) and is the future of the internet (58%).

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
The lives of Alphas are deeply digital

Devices and online communication are the norm.

More than half of Alphas have their own tablets, and 84% live in households with a video game console. With so many screens in their lives, much of Gen Alpha’s socialization is also happening virtually: 43% regularly play online games with friends, and nearly a quarter of these children have online friends they haven’t met in person.

Subscription-based streamers, particularly Disney+, are a major part of Alphas’ lives.

Right now, entertainment for Gen Alpha has more to do with streaming than video games or social media. Disney+, with its unmatched library of family-friendly franchises, is the most popular subscription-based streamer. This is an opportunity for other streaming platforms — particularly struggling ones — to develop more of their own kid-focused originals to cater to this market.

VR’s popularity with Gen Alpha will inch the metaverse closer to a mainstream success.

Around a quarter (26%) of Gen Alpha children live in households with a VR headset, and among this group, 17% reportedly spend more than seven hours a day in virtual reality. While the idea of the metaverse isn’t for everyone right now, this will likely change as Alphas mature alongside VR technology.
Purchasing Power & Brand Preferences

Even the youngest Alphas are already developing strong preferences for specific brands across key industries.
Young Alphas are already influencing household purchase decisions

Shares of parents who often involve their children in household purchasing decisions in the following categories:

They might not yet have their own money, but Alphas do flex their purchasing power.

The cohort currently exerts influence on household purchases of games, toys and children’s apparel, as well as family grocery and restaurant choices.

Children’s influence on household purchases is consistent across income groups and takes hold around age 5, when kids have reached two critical milestones: 1) becoming more skilled communicators, and 2) going to school, where peers start to inform their opinions.

Digital peer influence starts young.

56% of Gen Alpha parents report that their kids watch shopping content like haul and unboxing videos (48% for parents of kids ages 0-4), where they get ideas about new products and brands.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Brand preferences emerge at different ages, but food and TV shows come first

Gen Alpha already has strong brand affinity, especially when it comes to what they eat and what they watch. Just under half of the generation’s parents report that their kids ask for their favorite brands in these categories, often by age 7. Preferences for electronics, video games and restaurants emerge a bit later, closer to the 8-9 age range. Apparel brands take off around age 10 as kids approach the treacherous preteen years.

The drop in specific brand requests after age 13 doesn’t necessarily mean kids don’t have brand preferences at that age. Rather, teens start to have some of their own independent purchasing power and don’t need to ask their parents for specific brands — plus, their parents already know their established brand preferences.

Shares of parents who said their children ask for a specific brand in each of the following categories:

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Gen Alpha has a clear favorite restaurant: McDonald’s

The fast-food restaurant garnered mentions in an impressive 37% of open-ended, unaided responses from Gen Alpha parents when asked if their kids had a favorite restaurant. The golden arches win over parents and kids alike with Happy Meals, a place to play and more locations than most other restaurants in the United States.

Pizza restaurants were also frequently cited: Altogether, 7% of Gen Alpha parents mentioned pizza places, divided among brands like Domino’s, Pizza Hut and Papa John’s.

Snack brand mentions were more diverse, but Goldfish came out on top with 7% of open-ended answers.

The high share of parents who said “none” is partly because many said their kids love all snacks, not one specific brand.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Alphas drive key entertainment experience purchases

Gen Alpha is a driving force of influence for entertainment-related purchases, and theme parks and movie theaters are the entertainment experiences their parents are most frequently purchasing tickets for.

When Alphas enter their late teens, their influence will likely extend to concerts: The share of parents of children ages 13-18 who have purchased concert tickets for their kids is 23 points higher than the share of Gen Alpha parents who have done so.

This mirrors Alphas’ influence on their parents’ subscription purchases: 33% of Gen Alpha parents said they’ve subscribed to a music streaming service for their children, and a much higher share (56%) said the same about video streaming services.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Disney+, YouTube have won over Gen Alpha the most

There’s a clear video streaming pecking order for Gen Alpha: Disney+, YouTube, Netflix and everybody else.

Why isn’t Netflix on top? It likely speaks to content. Usage significantly drops for Disney+ and increases for Netflix when looking at the most-used streamers among preteens and teens. This suggests Disney+ needs to broaden beyond family-focused fare even further, while Netflix could step up its kid-targeted content offerings.

Meanwhile, the low popularity of many major social media platforms among Gen Alpha speaks in part to the fact that these networks require account holders to be at least 13 to join — YouTube is likely the only social platform most Gen Alpha parents are comfortable with letting their children use frequently.

Parents of preteens and teens were much less likely than Gen Alpha parents to say that YouTube is their kids’ preferred social platform; roughly a quarter of parents of each age group named TikTok.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Despite Alphas’ high digital engagement, physical retail reigns in influence — for now

Even though they’re digitally savvy, Gen Alpha’s current primary influence on shopping preferences comes from stores; parents know that one of the best ways to avoid impulse buys is to leave the kids at home, not keep them off digital devices.

More digital influence will creep into Alphas’ lives as they age, but physical stores still have a real role to play. For many of us as teens and young adults, shopping malls were social spaces as much as retail spaces: 74% of current teenagers socialize by shopping in person, compared with 53% who socialize by shopping online, and Gen Alpha parents expect their own kids to do the same.

Just over half of Gen Alpha parents believe their kids will be shopping by voice and on social platforms — rates that far exceed current usage. It could happen, but as Meta rolls back Instagram shopping as a priority and Amazon reduces investment in Alexa, it’s hard to envision that future today.

Shares of Gen Alpha parents who said their children requested products based on each source of influence:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Influence</th>
<th>AGES 0-4</th>
<th>AGES 5-7</th>
<th>AGES 8-9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saw it in a store</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV show tie-in</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kid’s hobby</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV ads</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw it online</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend or peer</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence

At all ages, stores are kids’ primary source of influence. TV and online ads are also powerful sources of influence for kids 5 and older.

Wealthier adults (making $100k+) are more likely, on average, to report their kids have asked for products based on these sources of influence.
Alphas already influence purchasing and are developing strong preferences for many brands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alphas are shaping household purchases, especially in food and entertainment.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than simply letting them pick their favorite products, Gen Alpha parents involve their kids in household purchasing decisions to let them exercise critical thinking and decision-making skills that will set them up for future success. Alphas’ input on these decisions, especially in categories that play a big role in their daily lives, paves the way for strong brand preferences from a young age.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Big brands garner name recognition from Alphas.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 4 in 5 Gen Alpha parents said their kids ask for specific TV shows or food and snack brands by name. When seeking to connect with Gen Alpha, brands can look to established leaders like McDonald’s and Disney. Not only does each brand have decades of experience catering to families’ needs, but they’ve also managed to maintain relevance and make a connection with Gen Alpha already.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gen Alpha’s shopping inspiration centers around traditional, not digital.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Despite Alphas’ digital savvy, their parents reported in-store shopping as the biggest source of purchase requests, just ahead of TV tie-ins. More sources of digital influence, many yet to be invented, will inevitably find their ways into Alphas’ lives, but for now, brands can’t lose sight of the in-store experience and touch points when trying to earn awareness and purchases.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Securing a Financial Future

Parents are translating their financial preoccupation to action, doing their best to prepare their children for the future, now.
Gen Alpha parents are seeking guidance to set their children up for future financial success

Given that a significant portion (47%) of Gen Alpha parents are “financially fraught,” many are turning their worries into action. A majority said they have already sought financial advice on how to set their children up for financial success.

They’re seeking advice from a variety of sources, but trusted connections like family and friends are most popular. When it comes to professional advice, parents with more education are more likely to turn to banks for advice. Roughly 3 in 10 (31%) of those with postgraduate degrees said they sought advice from their banks, compared with 28% of those with a bachelor’s degree and 24% with less than a college degree.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Many parents have already opened savings accounts for Alphas, and more plan to do so

Shares of Gen Alpha parents who said they have opened or plan to open the following accounts for their children:

HAVE OPENED

- General savings account: 37%
- College savings account: 35%
- Checking account: 18%
- Investment account: 12%
- Certificate of deposit: 9%
- Money market account: 8%
- IRA or Roth IRA: 7%

Most Gen Alpha parents who have opened a savings account for their children did so when their kids were under age 4.

PLAN TO OPEN

- General savings account: 37%
- College savings account: 33%
- Checking account: 46%
- Investment account: 25%
- Certificate of deposit: 21%
- Money market account: 21%
- IRA or Roth IRA: 22%

Gen Alpha parents who plan to open either a college or general savings account for their children plan to do so when their kids are 10 or older.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Alphas’ financial education starts early; investing and digital payments aren’t off the table

Shares of Gen Alpha parents who said they have discussed the following financial topics with their children:

- Spending money and how to consider costs
- Savings and budgeting
- Different types of money (cash, credit, checks)
- How to make their own payment transactions in stores
- Household finances
- Making investments
- Different types of digital currency
- How to make their own payment transactions online
- Cryptocurrency

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence

Gen Alpha parents want their children to have a solid foundation of financial concepts at a young age, and they are putting in the work to make this a reality.

They’re starting with the basics: Nearly half of parents of children ages 4 and under have already discussed money and how to consider costs.

Topics increase in complexity with age: Parents of the oldest Alphas are most likely to say they’ve discussed each topic with their children.

By teaching Alphas how to make purchases and about different payment methods early on, parents are encouraging their children to be more financially independent, sooner.
Higher education has elevated importance among Gen Alpha parents, and many plan to help their kids cover the cost

Shares of parents who want their children to pursue higher education at the following institutions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>All parents with children under age 18</th>
<th>Gen Alpha parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-state public university</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community college</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational training program or trade school</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-state public university</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not-for-profit private university</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For-profit private university</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One way to achieve financial success is through education, and if their parents have any say, Alphas will be very educated. **Gen Alpha parents are as or more likely than all parents with children under age 18 to want their children to pursue higher education at various institutions.**

They’re also more willing to help cover the costs: 39% of Gen Alpha parents said they or other family members plan to fund their children’s higher education, compared with 35% of all parents.

Loans are still part of the plan for a quarter of Gen Alpha parents, consistent with the share of all parents who said they planned to take out loans.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Despite economic worries, most see their kids achieving financial security

Gen Alpha parents’ confidence in their children’s future financial security

When it comes to the future financial health of their offspring, Gen Alpha parents are more confident than not that their children will be secure.

Yet opinions are soft: A plurality are only “somewhat confident” their children will achieve financial security.

Men are more likely to be confident about their children’s future financial status than women, who are typically more worried about their finances and have a lower financial well-being score.

Income also plays a role: Wealthier parents are more likely to hold this belief. Those with an annual household income of at least $100,000 are 8 points more likely than middle-income parents and 14 points more likely than low-income parents to say they are confident their children will achieve financial security.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Financially preoccupied parents are preparing for Gen Alpha’s financial future now

**Alphas will have a solid financial foundation.**

Coming of age during the Great Recession had an impact on millennial parents, and they’re parenting their children differently because of it. Not only are they teaching their kids about money from a young age, but they are also starting to open bank accounts for them to help save for their futures.

**More higher education is in Alphas’ future.**

College is important to parents of the youngest generation, even more so than to parents of kids who are much closer to graduating high school. Gen Alpha parents are also more likely to say they’ll pay for their kids’ schooling. That combination will lead Alphas to rival their millennial parents as the most educated generation ever.

**Parents’ efforts today are making them more confident in their children’s future.**

While Gen Alpha parents may be more anxious about their own finances, the same can’t be said about their children’s. These parents are doing their best to future-proof their kids’ wallets, and this planning and prepping is translating to more confidence in their offspring’s financial futures.
Parents are establishing a foundation of healthy eating for their children that will last a lifetime.
Providing the building blocks of a healthy diet is key for Gen Alpha parents

Share of Gen Alpha parents who said each of the following was very important when thinking about foods and drinks they purchase and serve their children:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Habit</th>
<th>Share of Gen Alpha Parents (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eat fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat fresh foods</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat a variety of foods</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit sugary drinks</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit sugar consumption</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit fast food</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit processed foods</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit restaurants</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit GMOs</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit sodium</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit snacks</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat controlled portions</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit fats</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat organic foods</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat local foods</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat sustainably</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit calorie intake</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gen Alpha parents are focused on broad healthy eating habits. Eating fruits and vegetables, “fresh” and “variety” are key concepts. The share of Gen Alpha parents who selected each of these is 6 to 7 points higher than the share of parents of teens.

Sugar is an important issue. The share of Gen Alpha parents looking to limit their children’s consumption of sugar or sugary drinks is roughly 10 points higher than the share of parents of teens. Even if parents become less concerned about sugar as their children age, it’s a large gap to close, suggesting this is part of the foundation of healthy eating parents are looking to instill in Alphas.

Organic foods are no more important to Gen Alpha parents than to all parents of children under 18. Parents who said eating organic is important are more defined attitudinally than demographically.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Gen Alpha is growing up with a lot of restaurant food, often off-premises

Families tend to be the most frequent purchasers of fast food. Gen Alpha parents are no different, although they have conflicted feelings about it: 36% said it is very important to limit fast food intake, but 43% said their kids eat fast food at least weekly, more than the average adult. It’s no wonder McDonald’s topped Alphas’ list of favorite restaurants. Gen Alpha parents are also much more likely to say they order takeout weekly than all U.S. adults. One thing they aren’t doing more: dining in at restaurants. Alphas and their families are just as likely to dine at a restaurant weekly as the general public.

Shares of all U.S. adults and Gen Alpha parents who said they or their kids eat each of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FAST FOOD</th>
<th>TAKEOUT</th>
<th>DINE IN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Once</td>
<td>A few</td>
<td>Once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a day</td>
<td>times</td>
<td>a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen alpha parents</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All U.S. adults</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Age of child isn’t a big factor: Shares are similar across all ages of kids in the household for fast food, takeout and dining in at restaurants.

Income plays a large role, especially for dining out: 44% of Gen Alpha parents who make at least $100,000 annually said they dine out weekly, compared with 23% of Gen Alpha parents who make less than $50,000.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence. Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
For many Gen Alpha families, family dinner doesn’t mean eating the same food

Shares of parents who said their children usually eat the same or different foods for dinner than they do

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DIFFERENT FOODS</th>
<th>SAME FOODS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Gen Alpha parents</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents of kids ages 0-4</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents of kids 5-7</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents of kids 8-9</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Gen Alpha parents</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic Gen Alpha parents</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Gen Alpha parents</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households where kids follow specific diet</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When it comes to dinnertime, a sizable share of Alphas are not eating family-style. Given today’s demanding schedules and the types of foods available, it’s a safe assumption that this is a shift from when baby boomers, or even Gen Xers or millennials, were young.

It’s not simply parents’ desire to avoid baby or toddler foods that’s driving this behavior. Parents of 8- and 9-year-olds are only slightly more likely to say their kids eat the same foods they do.

One factor may be the specificity in diets today — in households where kids are following some sort of precise diet, like lactose-free, nearly 2 in 5 parents said their kids eat different foods.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Gen Alpha’s different food norms will have implications for decades to come

Parents are helping Alphas build healthy habits to last a lifetime. But also: French fries.

From a young age, Alphas are talking about health — and healthy eating — with their parents. That will have major ramifications on the choices they make as adults. That said, Alphas are fervent fans of fast food. It’s all a balance for Gen Alpha parents.

Gen Alpha eats a lot of restaurant food.

From third-party delivery apps to drive-thrus, Gen Alpha parents have no shortage of ways to source restaurant foods to alleviate the pressure of their busy schedules. The frequency of Alphas’ dining-out occasions creates plenty of opportunities for them to weigh in on decisions, so brands with a winning strategy will appeal to all parties.

Dinner dynamics are changing.

Understanding the reasons parents and Alphas eat different foods, and what that means for how they prepare and serve dinner, can help brands create relevant, targeted new products, messages, and recipes that cater to families’ wants and needs. Families have more choices than ever before, but are they satisfied with the solutions?
Seeing the World

Alphas are already pushing their parents on where and how they want to travel
Gen Alpha kids are experiencing all types of travel early in life

Frequency with which Gen Alpha parents engage in the following activities with their kids in a typical year, versus the frequency with which all U.S. adults traveled for leisure in a typical year prior to the COVID-19 pandemic:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Gen Alpha parents</th>
<th>All U.S. adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Take a road trip</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a year</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times a year</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 times a year</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7+ times a year</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay in a hotel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a year</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times a year</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 times a year</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7+ times a year</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a domestic flight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a year</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times a year</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 times a year</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay at a vacation rental</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a year</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times a year</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 times a year</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take an international flight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than once a year</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 times a year</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 times a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7+ times a year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While conventional wisdom suggests that having kids hinders the desire or ability to travel, Gen Alpha parents don’t subscribe to that approach. As a result, Gen Alpha kids are participating in the travel industry early and often.

Compared with the general population, Alphas are traveling by car and staying at accommodations at nearly the same rate, although they’re slightly more likely to stay in a vacation rental than a hotel.

Gen Alpha kids are more likely to travel with their parents as they get older, and even more likely at all ages if they come from a high-income family or have parents who are frequent travelers.

While flying internationally is the least common behavior, many Gen Alpha kids have done so. Nearly a quarter of parents with children under 4 have taken their kids on a plane trip abroad.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Families regularly fold children into their destination decisions

When it comes to travel decision-making, parents unsurprisingly take the lead. However, Gen Alpha children still have an influential voice in planning.

At least one-third of Gen Alpha parents said they’ve booked a trip because their kids specifically asked about a destination they’d learned about from a particular source, from media to social relationships. Older Gen Alpha kids and those who live in high-income households are more likely to influence their parents’ chosen trip destination.

Even if a destination isn’t specifically requested by the child, they still influence parents’ decisions. A majority of Gen Alpha parents have chosen where to go on a trip because they believed their children would enjoy that destination.

Share of Gen Alpha parents who said they’ve booked a trip for the following reasons:

- **I thought my children would enjoy the destination**: 63%
- **Seeing it on a TV program**: 33%
- **Seeing it on a TV commercial**: 33%
- **Learning about it in school**: 31%
- **Seeing it online**: 30%
- **Hearing about someone else’s trip there**: 30%

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Alphas have significant sway over activities while traveling, and that increases with age

Share of Gen Alpha parents who said they at least sometimes involve their children when making the following decisions:

While they may not be purchasing travel themselves, Alphas are being brought into the planning process in many phases by parents who hope to raise confident, worldly kids.

Older Alphas’ influence is more potent than that of their younger counterparts, especially when it comes to what to do while traveling.

However, around 1 in 5 parents of kids ages 4 and under said they involve their children in brand-related decisions, suggesting that Alphas are forming early attachments to travel companies.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Future travel habits will be positively shaped by advanced technology, but global headwinds may have a negative impact

A plurality of Gen Alpha parents believe their kids will have more opportunities to travel, both domestically and internationally, than they themselves did growing up. That said, they also acknowledge the influence the changing world may have on Alphas’ travel habits.

On the positive side, parents cite increased access to tech and faster transportation as factors that will drive Alphas to travel more. As a general theme, these factors relate to making travel easier and more accessible.

On the negative side, parents cited top-of-mind-issues like the economy and health crises as potential travel deterrents.

Income plays a role: High-income parents are more likely than their lower-income counterparts to predict that their kids will have greater opportunity to travel.

Source: Morning Consult Research Intelligence
Thanks to travel-happy millennial parents, Gen Alpha is building a solid travel foundation

**Alphas are no strangers to travel.**
Gen Alpha is being raised by a generation of parents who value travel. As a result, Alphas themselves are being exposed to the travel industry early and often — in some cases, traveling as frequently as the average adult.

**Gen Alpha is influencing decision-making in the category now.**
Alphas have a seat at the table when it comes to discussions about where, how and when to travel. And their decisions carry weight: Parents of Gen Alpha kids are listening to and incorporating their input. Brands may not be ready to target Gen Alpha directly, but they can account for their role in the family dynamic in messaging and positioning.

**Alphas will become more frequent travelers than previous generations.**
Evolving technology will propel Alphas forward as travel becomes easier and more accessible. Creating seamless experiences that bridge digital and physical environments will keep Alphas engaged, as will addressing issues of sustainability.
Gen Alpha will change consumer behaviors.

Gen Alpha parents’ rearing style, along with uncontrollable external factors, has put Alphas on track to be a generation like no other.

Parents are involving Alphas in household purchasing considerations, setting the youngest generation up to be independent decision-makers early on in their lives. That will impact brands that are looking to speak to this cohort: Expect Alphas to already have strong brand preferences by the time they become financially independent.

These young consumers are also part of the innovation generation — for them, there will be no problem that tech can’t solve. To be sure, tech was already going to play a role in Alphas’ social lives. But COVID-19 has normalized activities such as education and socialization through online platforms, paving the road to success for the metaverse. Hardware and tech as we know it will likely evolve from screens into AR and VR as Gen Alpha enters the workforce.

Finally, Alphas are growing up amid financial anxiety. Their parents, many of whom have lived through two periods of economic uncertainty, are making sure they’re setting their children up for financial success, but that might not be enough. Brands should expect this generation to be careful and anxious spenders.
The Data Behind the Report

A Brand’s Guide to Gen Alpha introduces Gen Alpha to readers and unpacks how their behaviors and outlooks differ from those of previous generations. We explored Gen Alpha’s screen time, brand preferences and purchasing influence, financial future, healthy habits, and travel plans.

Methodology
The research fueling this report was fielded Dec. 10-20, 2022, among a representative sample of 2,001 parents with children under the age of 9, and Dec. 10-19, 2022, among a representative sample of 1,000 parents with children under the age of 18. An additional survey was fielded Dec. 21-24, 2022, among a representative sample of 1,000 parents with children under the age of 9. The first survey has an unweighted margin of error of +/-2 percentage points, while the second and third surveys have an unweighted margin of error of +/-3 percentage points.
The authors would like to thank Clare Alexander, Christopher Cyr, Sam Elbouez, Erin Morris, Kelly Rice, Jes Standefer and Sara Wickersham and for their contributions to this report.