

# Generation Alpha

Initial insights into a new generation



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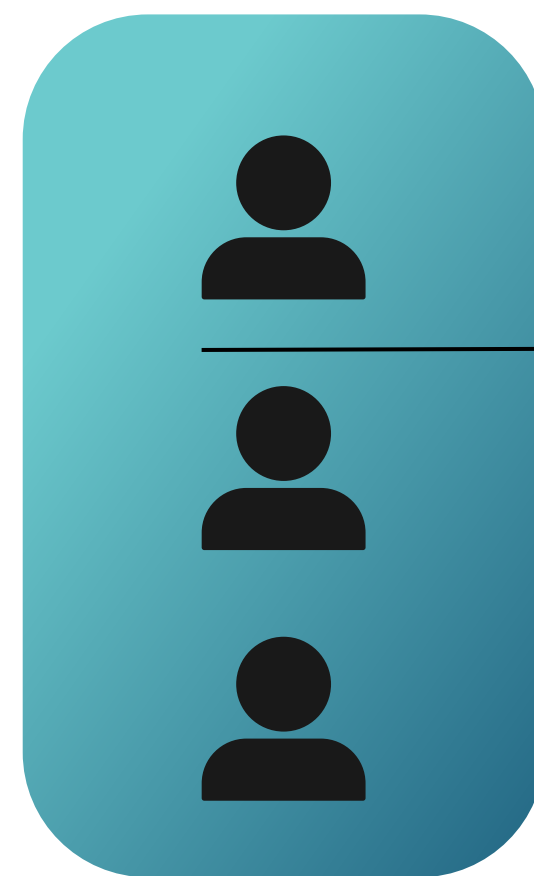
# About Gen Alpha

2010 ← → 2024  
👤 currently ages 0-13

Generation Alpha is the generation of young people born between 2010 and 2024. The term Gen Alpha was coined because this generation is seen as the start of something new.

**Generation Alpha is the start of something new**

Gen Alpha is unique because they are the first generation to grow up entirely in the 21st century, be raised by digital natives, and live in the age of Artificial Intelligence. They will experience things we cannot imagine today. The World Economic Forum estimates that two-thirds of children currently entering primary school will end up working in job types that don't yet exist.



**two-thirds**

of Gen Alpha will work in jobs that don't yet exist

📄 World Economic Forum

## distinctives



## research limitations

Generational research is typically slow to ramp up and Gen Alpha is no exception. This report presents what is currently available about today's kids, but note the following limitations:

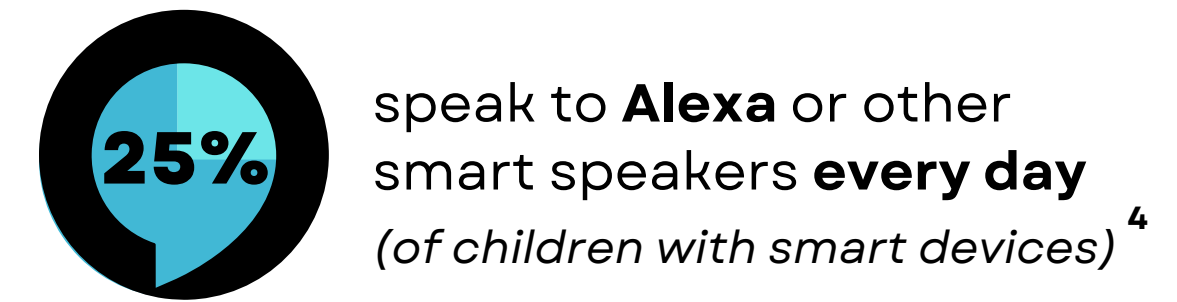
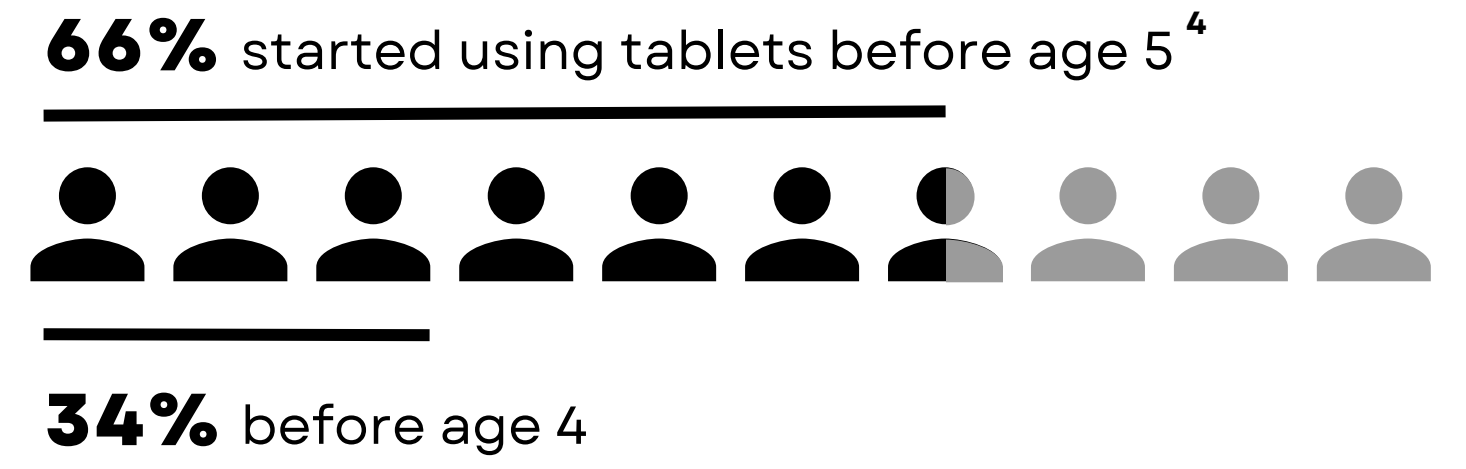
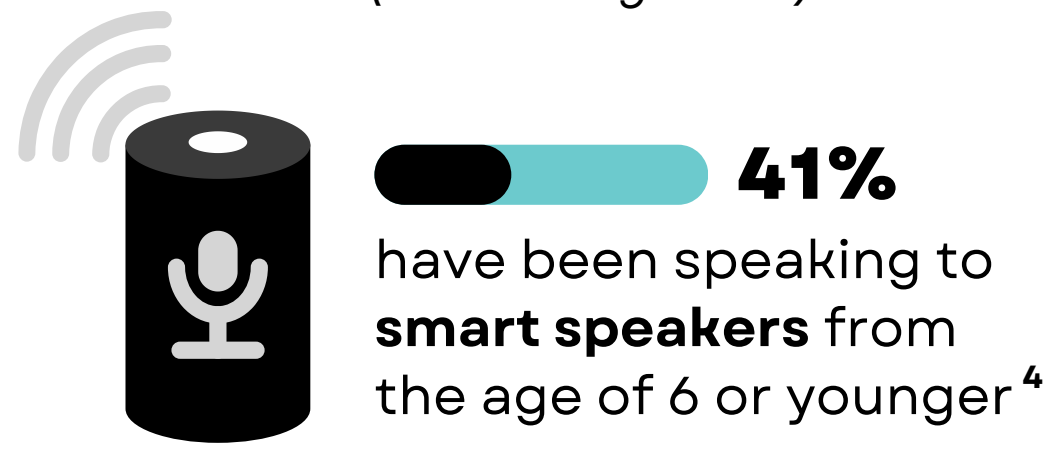
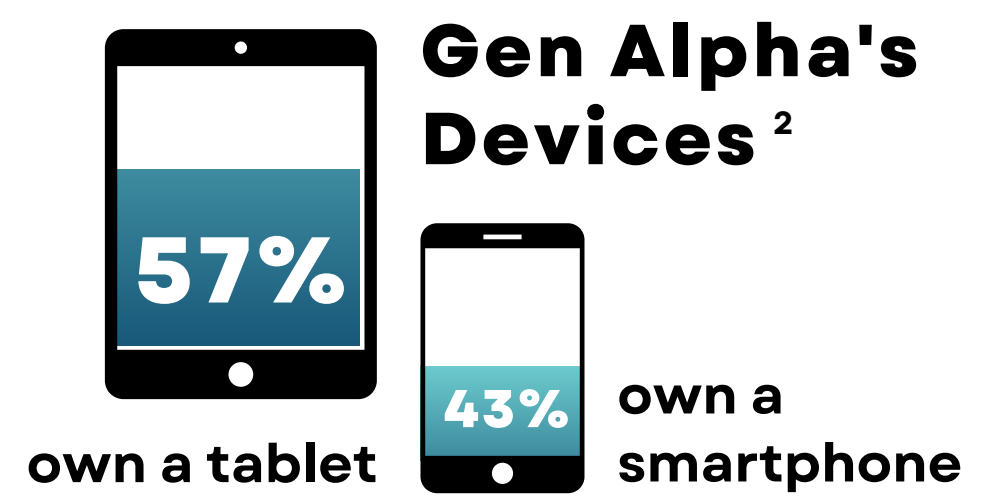
- Research on Gen Alpha is currently limited
- Very little faith-based research
- Sources are primarily Western, specifically originating in the US
- Current research angles focus on marketing and education

# Growing up with tech

Not surprisingly, technology is a huge part of Gen Alpha's world. A significant number of Gen Alpha kids can confidently handle and interact with **technology and AI** from a young age, which is shaping their development. One MIT study says that children find AI to be "friendly and trustworthy... smarter than themselves." <sup>1</sup>

Kids are growing up in a less filtered world according to Gen Alpha expert Dr. Shelly Melia. **"Everything is coming at them all the time,"** she shares. "They need critical thinking skills to navigate the world, but are not developing them as quickly."

Emerging AI tools such as **ChatGPT** only underscore this point. Rather than needing to search and synthesize information, AI will do it for them at lightning speed. There are also some studying this generation who wonder if children will be more demanding in their tone and actions as a result of interacting with smart devices which do not require polite language.



**Children find AI to be friendly and trustworthy... smarter than themselves.**

<sup>1</sup> McCrindle, Mark   <sup>2</sup> Common Sense Census 2021   <sup>3</sup> Common Sense Census 2020   <sup>4</sup> Infobip

Despite most social media platforms requiring a minimum age of 13 for account holders, **almost half of Gen Alpha kids between 7 and 12 years old have an active social media account.** But we can already see they are using those platforms differently from their parents' generation.

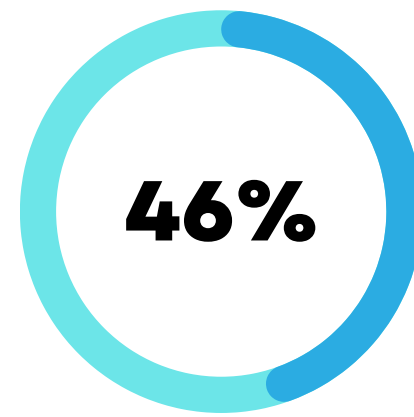
### Generation Alpha are more tech creators than tech consumers

Rather than primarily showcasing their lives and activities through their posts, they love to co-create entertainment content. **TikTok trends** come and go daily, which is part of the fun as young people put their unique spin on popular dance videos, glow-ups, and family challenges.

Even gaming is most often pursued in community, with more than half of this generation talking to their friends online while playing video games. During pandemic lockdowns, entertainment media, video hangouts, and virtual worlds such as **Roblox** were a lifeline to keep kids connected.

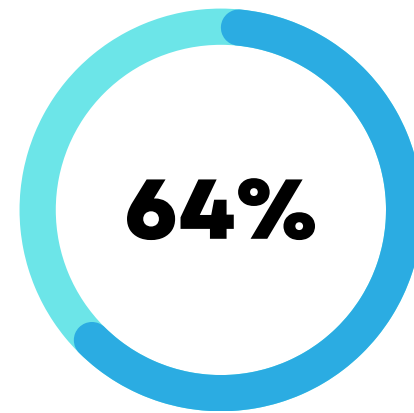
### The bottom line:

While technology is shaping this generation, they are also shaping it back in the way they use it to connect. Their use of social media is very social. Encouragingly, technology is even bringing families together—with parents ranking among kids' gaming partners.

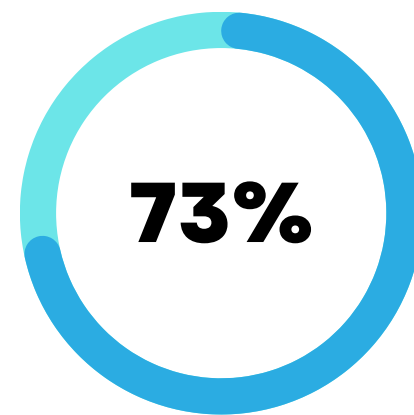


of **7-12-year-olds** have an **active social media account**<sup>1</sup>

 (typical minimum age requirement is 13)

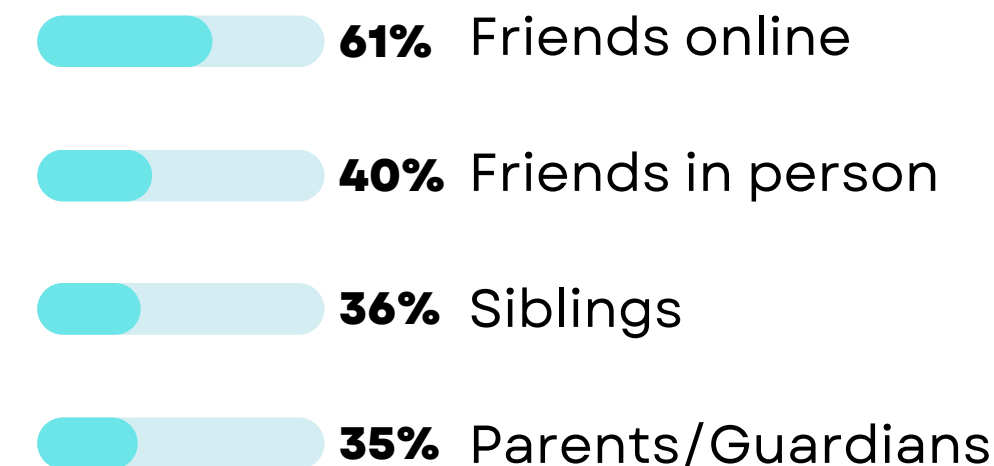


“ **I would rather be a YouTube / social media influencer than the President** ”<sup>2</sup>



of 8-11-year-olds **play video games** most days or every day<sup>3</sup>

*Their gaming community:*



**3** of the **top 9** global **YouTube channels** are run by Gen Alpha kids

**@KidsDianaShow**  
**@LikeNastyaofficial**  
**@VladandNiki**

**57%** of 8-11-year-olds **talk to their friends** online while they **play video games**<sup>3</sup>



**One-third** of young people hang out with **friends online** at least once a month<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Infobip   <sup>2</sup> Big Village   <sup>3</sup> Global Web Index   <sup>4</sup> Common Sense. Role of Media During the Pandemic.

# Growing up with tech

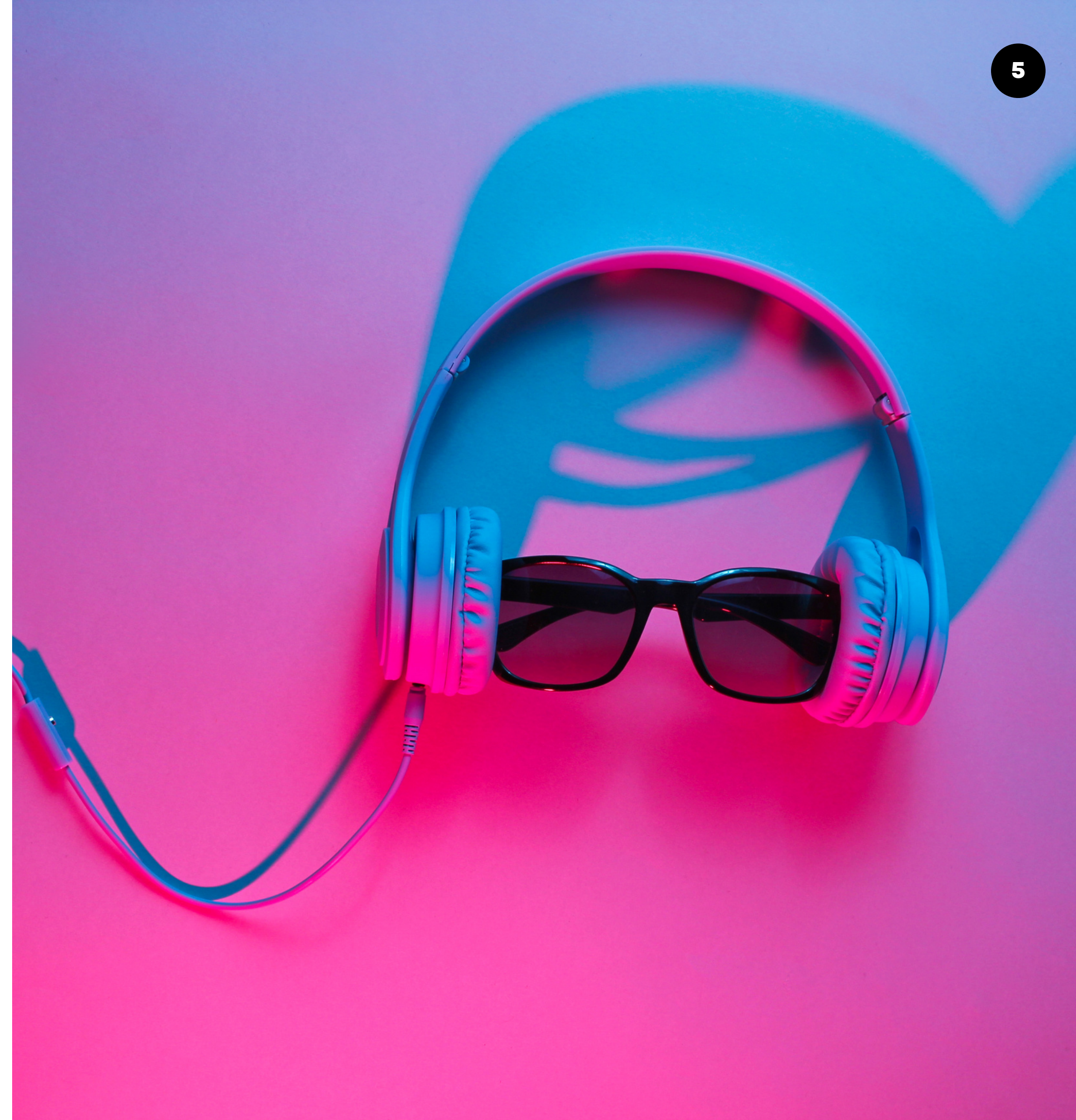
## IMPLICATIONS

It is encouraging to see the level of savvy this generation brings to the digital world. Gen Alpha will lead us into the future, showing how new technologies integrate into daily life in ways we cannot yet imagine. With so much access to the world, Gen Alpha is noted by some experts to be “**up-aging**”<sup>1</sup> faster than their years would suggest. Today’s children will be able to mentor adults in using innovative tools and platforms that come naturally to them.

**But children still need adults to wisely guide them.** For example, Gen Alpha will need help developing the soft skills of communication, relationship building, teamwork, and critical thinking that technology cannot teach them. As they grow up alongside AI, they will also need to understand what it means to be fully human in a world of blurring lines and growing confusion.

Parents and mentors of today’s children can help them recognize both the benefits and needed boundaries in the digital space that will **help them flourish** in a world that is changing faster than we can keep up with.

<sup>1</sup> McCrindle, Mark





# the digital family

Generation Alpha is unique in that they are the first generation to be parented by digital natives. **Millennials** bring their Internet savvy to parenting, decreasing the digital age gap between generations. Overall, Gen Alpha's parents have a **positive attitude towards technology**, saying it boosts learning and creativity. However, they are concerned that time spent on screens is limiting their children's physical activity. Research shows a link between physical activity and positive mental health indicators,<sup>1</sup> which is something parents may be increasingly aware of for their kids as they consider the effects of technology on their lives. Interesting early research on Gen Alpha indicates kids themselves are aware of the amount of time they spend on screens and even acknowledge when it is too much.

Technological fluency can help bring parents and children together, with Gen Alpha reporting parents are one of their top **gaming** companions. However, there is a potential shadow for parents who themselves are immersed in devices. It can open the door to distraction and an overreliance on technology in parenting.

## My child's screen media use helps with: <sup>2</sup>

**Learning**  **72%**

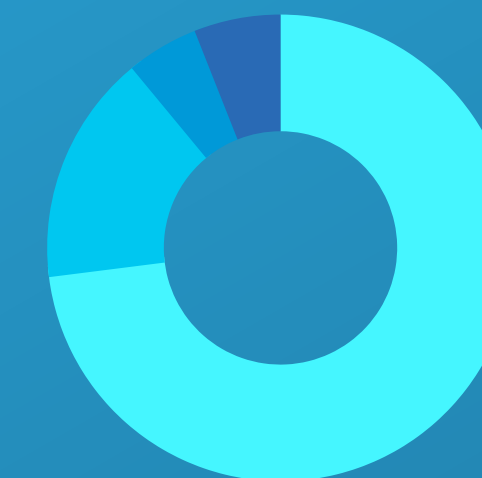
**Creativity**  **60%**





**Social skills**  **34%**

## Media use hurts:

**Physical activity**  **43%**

## Daily screen time <sup>2</sup> (children ages 0-8)



- 73%**  TV / videos
- 16%**  Gaming
- 5%**  Reading, homework, video chatting
- 6%**  Other

<sup>1</sup> JAMA Pediatrics

<sup>2</sup> Common Sense Census 2020

Early research is showing the more **distracted a parent** is by digital devices, the more likely their children are to act out to gain their attention (researchers observed parents who used mobile devices while out to dinner).<sup>1</sup> Another study showed that the **stress** caused by their child's behavior can cause parents to **withdraw** further into technology. In other words, devices can be a distraction from parenting itself and an escape from its difficulties. But devices can also be used differently with more positive results. Children whose **parents engage** with them while they watch digital content show greater levels of **empathy**, self-efficacy, and emotion recognition.

## The bottom line:

Families have gone digital, but it is less about the presence of devices themselves and more about how they are leveraged in parent-child relationships. Though technology has certainly changed the landscape for families, it hasn't changed children's need for their parents' time, attention, and care.

“

**Kids are being parented by distracted parents.**

- Dr Shelly Melia

”

## IMPLICATIONS

This is the first generation where screen time is a universal concern for the entire household—for adults as well as for kids. As digital natives themselves, today's parents and leaders are uniquely suited to guide Gen Alpha in navigating the complex world of technology. But to be healthy guides, we need to first be healthy consumers.

➤ ***How can we lean into the wisdom we have and model healthy digital habits in our own lives as we establish guardrails for children and their usage?***

**60%** of parents say their child spends the right amount of time with screens<sup>2</sup>

**37%** of Gen Alpha say they spend too much time with screens outside of schoolwork<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Common Sense. *Children, Executive Functioning, and Digital Media.*

<sup>2</sup> Common Sense *Census 2020*

<sup>3</sup> Common Sense. *Role of Media During the Pandemic.*

# Diverse world / changing Family



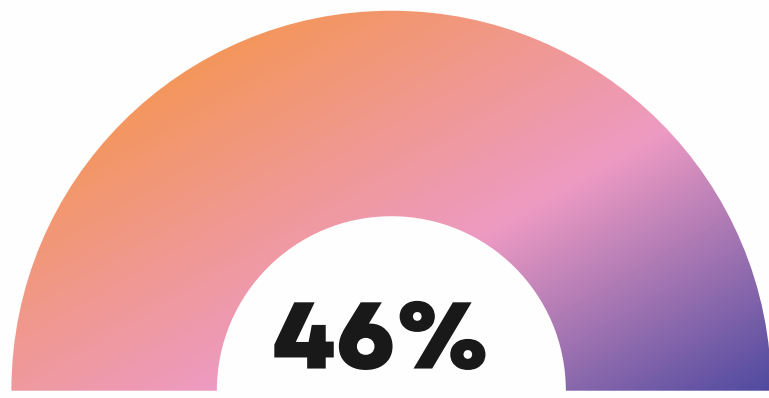
Generation Alpha is a new kind of kid being raised in a new kind of family. Many Millennials waited until they were older to start their families and chose to have fewer children overall. Gen Alpha families are also generally well resourced, digitally savvy, and increasingly **non-traditional**.

Generation Alpha is one of the first generations to experience a major shift in **family structure**. Families consisting of two parents in their first marriage have made up less than half of families in the US for nearly a decade now. The new reality is blended families, cohabiting parents, single parents, and even same-sex parents.

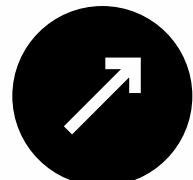
This generation is surrounded by a growing **diversity**, which appears to be shaping their values from a young age.

Gen Alpha is already expressing a desire for fairness and representation. Children show an appetite for minorities to be well represented in the media they watch (researchers measured this by children's responses to **Disney** characters of different ethnicities).<sup>1</sup> Children also say it is very important for all people to be treated fairly no matter what they look like. Gen Alpha is poised to champion diversity as a natural, logical choice—one they have seen starting in their own homes.

- 1** Global Web Index
- 2** Pew Research Center
- 3** McCrindle, Mark
- 4** Hotwire
- 5** Big Village



**46%** of US children live with two parents in their first marriage<sup>2</sup>



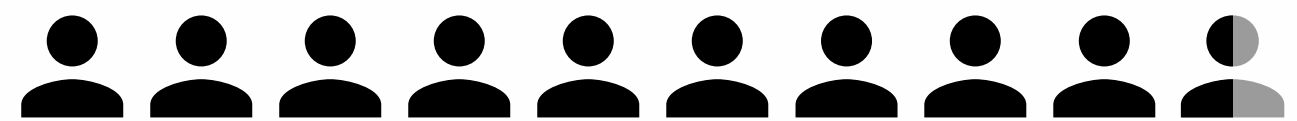
**One-child families** grew by **45%** in the US between 2021-2022<sup>1</sup>



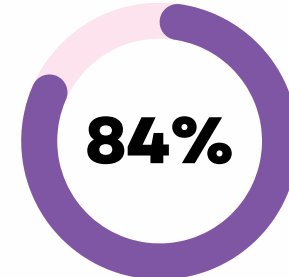
Average age of parents at first child<sup>3</sup> **Moms - 32**  
**Dads - 34**



**47%** of under 18's living in the US don't identify as white<sup>4</sup>



**96%** of Gen Alpha say it is important for all people to be treated fairly no matter what they look like<sup>4</sup>



**84%** of Gen Alpha believe a **person's pronouns** should be respected<sup>5</sup>



Gen Alpha also demonstrates a **social awareness** that seems mature for their age. Experts point to the pandemic as a significant shaping event. Living through **COVID** times may have helped Gen Alpha realize they can make a practical difference through their actions (such as isolating themselves in order to protect their grandparents or other vulnerable populations). Social media is another broadening and globalizing factor in their world. As Gen Alpha sees their role models speak out and raise the visibility of social issues, this may encourage them to do the same and use their voice to make a difference.

## The bottom line:

For Gen Alpha, diversity is a value they are growing up with—starting in their own homes and rippling outwards into the way they believe the world should be. Family norms and structure are being redefined, and Gen Alpha is being raised knowing they have a voice and can use it to right wrongs.

## Gen Alpha's emerging values

  
*morality and fairness*

  
*diversity and representation*

  
*treating others well*

## Gen Alpha cares about:

Protecting people from bullying



Everyone being treated the same



Helping others



 *Global Web Index*

## IMPLICATIONS

Gen Alpha’s emerging values for diversity and inclusiveness are encouraging. Justice and love for all types of people reflect the heart of God. But this generation also needs to be guided into a biblical worldview that provides a foundation for these social values.

**➤ How can we help today’s children root their sense of justice and fairness in the unchanging truth of the Gospel as they use their voice and actions to shape the world around them?**

All data represents US parents only

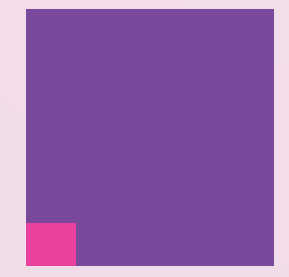
# the faith foundation



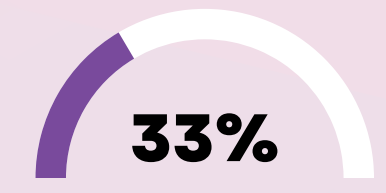
Home is the shaping ground for identity and values. But many in Gen Alpha are growing up in families with a **nominal Christian faith**. According to the most recent American Worldview Inventory, 67% of US parents of pre-teens claim to be Christian, but only 2% actually possess a **biblical worldview** (measured by their beliefs and behaviors across eight categories of worldview application). The vast majority of parents (94%) do not align with any traditional worldview, but instead come up with their own by picking and choosing what they will believe.<sup>1</sup>

— “  
**Parents will not pass on to their children what they do not value themselves.**  
” —

This has obvious implications for Gen Alpha’s faith formation. The same study looked at US parents who identified themselves as “born again” and found that just 33% say that Christianity is the one true faith and the only faith of true and lasting value. Parents will not pass on to their children what they do not believe or value themselves.



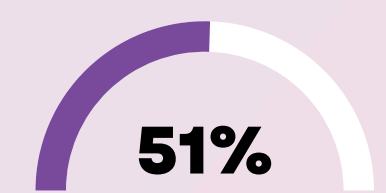
■ **67%** of US parents of pre-teens identify as **Christian**<sup>1</sup>  
■ **2%** possess a **biblical worldview**



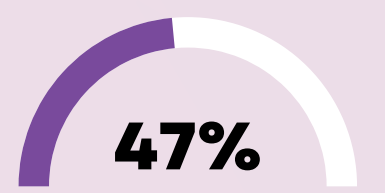
of “born again” parents say **Christianity** is the one true faith<sup>1</sup>



of Christian parents say their most important **parenting goal** is to pass down faith to their children<sup>2</sup>



of Christian parents read the **Bible** with their children<sup>3</sup>



of Christian parents **prayed** out loud with their child in the last week<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cultural Research Center, Arizona Christian University

<sup>2</sup> OneHope. Family Matters.

<sup>3</sup> OneHope. Family Matters.

OneHope’s research on parents revealed that just 15% of US Christian parents said their most important **parenting goal** is to pass down to their children the values and faith to guide their lives.<sup>1</sup> This is incredibly low. Focusing in on parents of Gen Alpha specifically, OneHope identified significant gaps in family faith formation. Only half of Christian parents read the **Bible** with their child and fewer than half regularly **pray** out loud with their child. Parents have immense value as guides for their children—but this influence is lost if they do not exercise it.

### The bottom line:

While there is currently little research regarding children’s own faith, it seems apparent that there are great **spiritual opportunities** for this generation. In an age of abundant information (and AI tools to help them generate and synthesize it) Gen Alpha won’t be looking for people to give them all the answers. But they will need people to help them discover who Jesus is—the ultimate answer to the challenges they face. They will not need more knowledge, but they will need spiritual wisdom to guide them towards truth and how to apply it to their lives.

1. Note that this was a study of parents of all ages, not just parents of Gen Alpha.

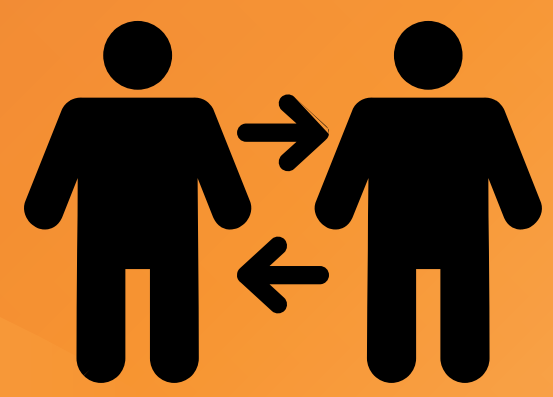
## IMPLICATIONS

Family plays a critical role in pointing children towards a life of faith or away from it. But to disciple the next generation, we must be following Jesus ourselves. The nominal faith and decreasing Christian values of this generation’s parents are cause for concern.

➤ *How can we support parents in walking out a vibrant faith that will naturally spill over into the lives of their children?*

**Generation Alpha does not need more knowledge, they need good guides.**

# Calling to community



No man is an island, as the popular saying goes, but that doesn't stop people from trying to be. One concerning research study showed that **isolation** is trending. The Census Bureau reported that Americans spent 38% less time with family and friends during the 2022 holiday season—not choosing to do other activities, but choosing to be alone.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the US Surgeon General has declared loneliness a public health crisis in America.<sup>2</sup>

## Isolation is trending

As Gen Alpha grows up in this climate of increasing isolation, experts continue to be concerned about their **mental health**. Research from the National Survey of Children's Health indicates that the number of US kids struggling with anxiety and depression increased by 1.5 million in the first year of the pandemic. More than one-third of parents said they noticed behavioral changes in their children, including being sad, depressed, and lonely.<sup>3</sup> While the pandemic drew global attention to issues of mental health, these experiences were present prior to COVID and will not resolve overnight.



Americans spent **38% less time** with friends and family during the **holiday seasons** in the past two years than they had a decade prior <sup>1</sup>



of tweens and teens reported they used **entertainment media** during the pandemic to **boost their moods** <sup>4</sup>



More than **one-third** of parents said children's behavior changed since the pandemic including: <sup>3</sup>

- sadness
- depression
- loneliness



increase in children dealing with **anxiety** or **depression** during the first year of the pandemic (US children ages 3-17) <sup>5</sup>

- <sup>1</sup> Washington Post
- <sup>2</sup> Murthy, Vivek
- <sup>3</sup> Children and Youth Services Review
- <sup>4</sup> Common Sense. Role of Media During the Pandemic.
- <sup>5</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Family is the front line for children’s emotional health and well being, and their surrounding community a critical secondary support. But Gen Alpha is poised to be the generation least connected to the Christian church because in many cases **their parents left the church and did not return**. In the US, at least, Millennials were part of the great exodus from organized religion that gave rise to the “religious nones.”

**Gen Alpha is the least connected to the Christian church**

Even for Christian families still connected to church, the pandemic stretched the limits of their support structures and at times left them lacking. Nearly two-thirds of Christian parents felt negatively about how their church handled children’s ministry during the pandemic, saying they felt upset, disappointed, or frustrated. Parents reported feeling **withdrawn and disconnected** from church or faith and “being overwhelmed, struggling...and feeling isolated and unsupported.”<sup>1</sup> The top thing both parents and churches desired coming out of the pandemic was reintegration and reconnection.

**The bottom line:**

Moving forward, experts forecast that Gen Alpha may have a deep hunger for community and connectedness, but note the realities of social anxiety and the need for this generation to learn the soft skills of relationship building.

**Struggling with Community**


*Christian parents reflect on the pandemic*<sup>1</sup>

**66%** felt **negatively** about their **church's** children's ministry during the pandemic

**66%** felt **withdrawn** and **disconnected** from church or faith

**18%** said their local **church** was their main source of **support**

**Only 1% of parents say they want their church ministry to be the same as it was pre-pandemic**

 Multi-National Children's Ministry Report

**IMPLICATIONS**

The pandemic reshaped the landscape of human relationships and interactions, with negative effects on the mental health of many. COVID magnified the loneliness, depression, and anxiety that were present for many parents and their children even prior to this experience. And coming out of these times, not all have felt confident to return to their communities and friendships.

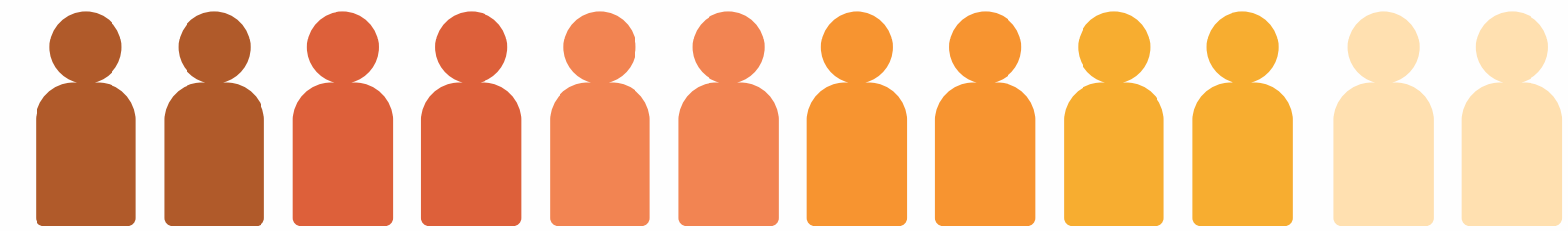
But connection is a universal longing of the human heart. Churches and ministries are uniquely positioned to fill the gap with authentic community. They can foster connections for Gen Alpha and not only provide relational support but a place to co-create and meaningfully contribute.

For a generation being raised by post-Christian, post-churched parents—it is up to us to introduce Gen Alpha to the church and invite them into Christian community and a life with Jesus.

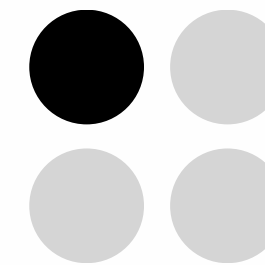
# COVID: loss and Resilience

The COVID-19 pandemic is sure to be a **defining moment** for Gen Alpha, who were as old as 10 or 11 when lockdowns began. While life rhythms changed for everyone at that time, it was deeply impacting for children and their family relationships.

One-third of Gen Alpha said spending time with family was the one bright spot of the pandemic. But the virus also brought loss for many. More than 120,000 US children lost a primary caregiver. For every four COVID-19 related deaths in the US, one child loses a parent. This is deeply sobering and represents **trauma and loss** on a scale Americans have not dealt with since the **Silent Generation** growing up at a time of world war.



**120,000+** US children have lost a primary caregiver since the beginning of the pandemic



**1 US child loses a parent** for every 4 COVID-19 related deaths

CDC Research

**8 in 10 people believe the pandemic will play a significant role in shaping today's children**

McCrindle Research

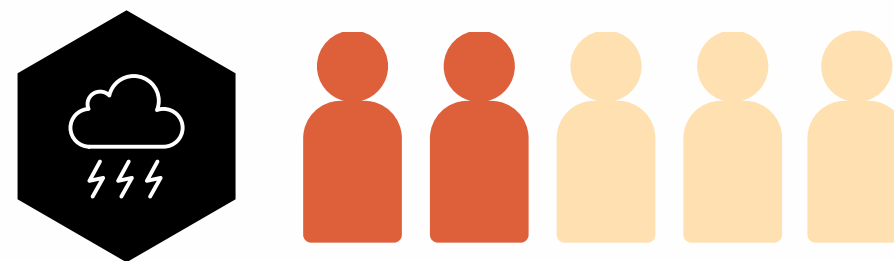
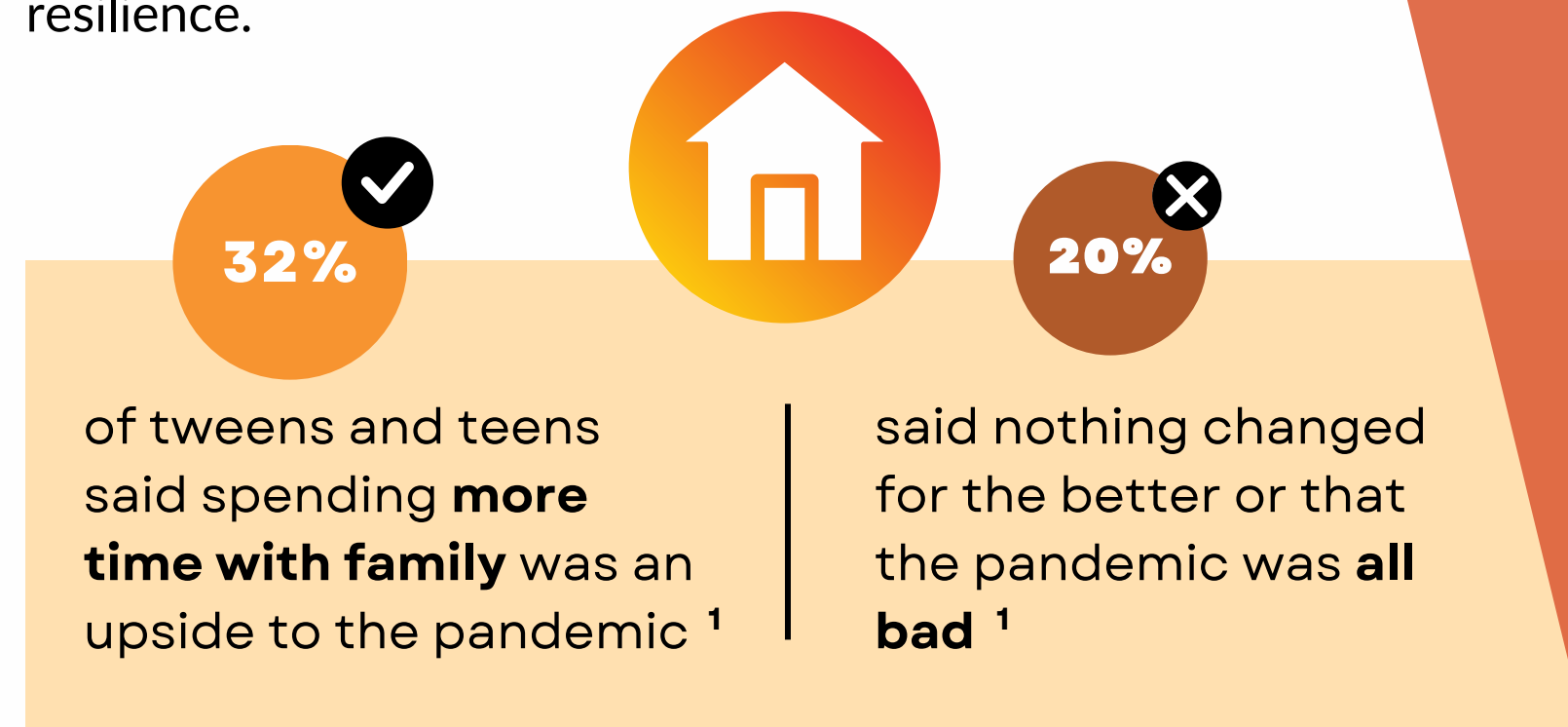
The full effects of COVID-19 on this generation are still to be determined and it is important to remember that some children were extremely young at the time. The experience of lockdown for an 8-year-old versus an infant were surely quite different. Some impacts are well-known and documented, such as educational delays that disproportionately affected low-income families. Other impacts are less visible, such as the sense of distrust and skepticism of information that continues today.

The pandemic affected people's **mental health** in ways that continue to unfold—both for adults and children alike. One study examining families one month into the pandemic found that two of every five parents were severely depressed and anxious. Parent anxiety and parenting stress were also positively associated with higher anxiety scores for their children.

COVID had real effects on the **spiritual climate** too, as families were unable to physically attend church. Not all churches were able to successfully transition their children's ministries online, resulting in a spiritual gap that many families noticed for their children. Some churches report families still haven't returned to church and instead watch online, or have come back but are fearful for their children's physical safety and unwilling to leave them in the kids' ministry area. While this is largely anecdotal and research is still lacking regarding the pandemic's impact on family spiritual formation, there will doubtless be long-range effects from this global event on Gen Alpha and their parents.

## The bottom line:

The instability of the pandemic years will likely cause Gen Alpha to be more uneasy and apprehensive about the future. But some experts are optimistic that living through the pandemic will also provide Gen Alpha with a foundation that helps them face future challenges with resilience.



**1 month** into the pandemic, two out of every five parents met the criteria for **major depression** and moderate to **severe anxiety** <sup>2</sup>

## IMPLICATIONS

Gen Alpha has lived through incredible challenges at a critical point in their development. Loss was experienced by all and for some death drew near to their family. Grief, trauma, and anxiety seem sure to follow from this. But only time will truly reveal the results of COVID in the lives of this generation.

This experience also opens the door to greater ministry opportunities. Children have been confronted with the human reality. Only God controls life or death. As they process this experience, Gen Alpha will surely be feeling uncertain and search for deeper meaning. How can we meet them with the hope only the Gospel provides—for this life and for eternity?

<sup>1</sup> Common Sense. Role of Media During the Pandemic

<sup>2</sup> Children and Youth Services Review

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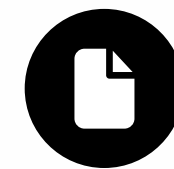
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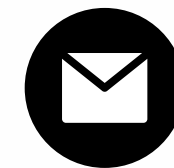
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### Questions?

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## ABOUT

OneHope's mission is to reach every child with God's Word, which means we stay up-to-date on children in every generation. This secondary research study was conducted to explore the distinctives of Gen Alpha and the influences shaping them. Between September 2022-February 2023, OneHope's Research Team examined the current research available, reviewing and synthesizing more than 44 sources.

The logo for OneHope features a stylized 'O' on the left, composed of a blue circle with an orange wedge-shaped cutout on its right side. To the right of this symbol, the word 'One' is written in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. The word 'Hope' is written in an orange, lowercase, sans-serif font. A registered trademark symbol (®) is positioned at the top right of the 'e' in 'Hope'.

OneHope®

*God's Word. Every Child.*