THE NEW DYNAMICS OF FAMILY

Prosumer Report | **HAVAS WORLDWIDE**

In today's world, everything is changing at breakneck speed. Trends last barely longer than the beat of a butterfly wing. The news of the day is outdated by the time you get to it. And that new iPhone you're eyeing is already obsolete.

Within this fast-changing environment, family serves as an anchor. The family we're born into may no longer prescribe precisely where we live, whom we love, and how we spend our days—people have a lot more freedom to move around and adopt new lifestyles than they used to—but it is still a centering force and a constant (sometimes nagging) reminder of who and what we are. In other areas of our lives, we may upgrade to a new model at the earliest hint of trouble. We may leave a job without notice or break a lease with our landlord to pursue an opportunity thousands of miles away. But with family, we're in it for the long term. We build and nurture these relationships over a lifetime, not weeks. And even the most self-centered among us at least sometimes put family first, whether out of love, duty, or plain old-fashioned guilt.

The question we explored in our study is this: The world is undergoing seismic shifts, with significant implications for our family structures. The traditional nuclear family is giving way to a hodgepodge of variations. Marriage is increasingly optional—and now open to a larger crowd. And age-old gender norms are being pushed aside as women and men increasingly take on the same functions. So how is all this change affecting how we think about family—and what we expect of it? Has the value we place on our blood relatives diminished as we've become less reliant on them for our survival and sense of self?

What we discovered is that regardless of all the structural and attitudinal changes we're seeing, the basic building blocks of the family continue to underpin our lives and give us our most compelling reasons to be. In this report, we'll focus on seven key findings before zeroing in on implications for brands.

About the Study: In late 2014, Havas Worldwide partnered with Market Probe International to survey 6,767 men and women aged 18+ in 20 markets: Australia, Brazil, China, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Ecuador, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa, Taiwan, Thailand, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The survey sample was made up of 20 percent leading-edge Prosumers and 80 percent mainstream consumers. For the purposes of this report, we have characterized respondents aged 18–34 as millennials and those aged 55+ as baby boomers.

BLOOD FIRST... BUT THERE'S ROOM FOR MORE

What comes to mind when you think of the "traditional family"? For older people in much of the world, that means a husband who financially supports the family, a stay-at-home mom, and their children. In the US, that configuration accounted for 60 percent of households in 1972. And today? It's down to just <u>4 percent.</u>

So many aspects of the family structure are changing—and these shifts are taking place all around the world. Consider just a few stats:

→ In Japan, married couples with children constituted just 21 percent of households in 2005, down from 43 percent in 1980. One-third of Japanese now <u>live alone</u>.

→ In France, people are more likely to live alone (33 percent of households) than to live in a household made up of a married couple and child(ren) (27 percent).

→ In the US, the number of <u>cohabiting couples</u> has increased more than 1,000 percent since 1960. Forty percent of children are now born to single moms. And more than a quarter of Americans live alone.

→ In China, the <u>average household size</u> has declined from 5.3 people during the 1950s to 3.02 in 2012. In urban areas, 45 percent of unmarried residents live alone—a sharp break from the traditional practice of residing with one's parents until marriage.

→ In Germany, 39 percent of households are single-person, and the mean age at first marriage increased from 23 for women and 26 for men in 1980 to 30 for women and 33 for men in 2010. The percentage of children under three years old who are enrolled in childcare more than doubled (from 14 to 29 percent) between 2000 and 2012, according to the UNECE.

And so it goes around the globe.

And yet the fact that fewer of us are living in traditional households hasn't tempered the allure of doing so: Six in 10 of our global respondents (65 percent of men and 56 percent of women) said that people who are single all their lives (no long-term romantic relationship, no children) are missing out on an important part of life. And a majority of the sample (51 percent) agreed that children who are raised by their biological mother and father have an advantage over children who are not, while just 21 percent disagreed (the remainder were neutral).
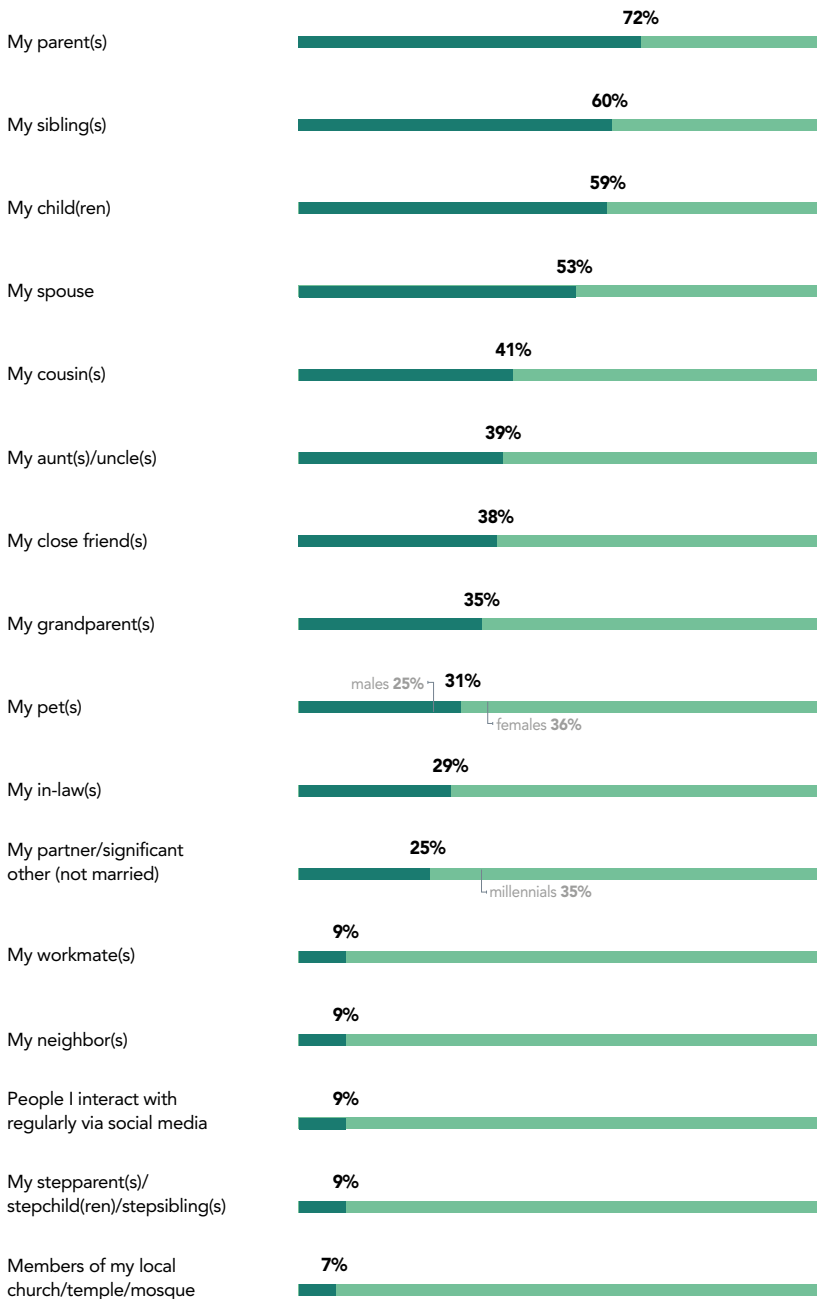
SO, HOW EXACTLY DO WE DEFINE FAMILY?

You might think our definition of family would be as flexible as its new permutations, but it's not. When we asked people whom they consider members of their family, only parents, siblings, children, and spouses made the list for a majority of respondents. On the other hand, nearly 4 in 10 included "close friends" in the mix. Among married respondents, "close friends" received almost as many votes as "in-laws" (selected by 33 and 38 percent, respectively). The notion of friends as family was further bolstered elsewhere in the survey: 62 percent of men and nearly three-quarters of women (73 percent) agreed: "Friends can be as much 'family' as blood relatives."

And then there are the pets. Nearly a third of our global respondents consider their pets to be part of the family—a sure sign of cultural change since the time when domesticated animals were almost purely utilitarian. It's a figure that no doubt would have been even higher had we excluded people who don't own pets. The most pet-loving countries (with agreement levels ranging between 40 and 50 percent) are, in order from highest, Colombia, the US, Ecuador, the Czech Republic, Australia, and Mexico.

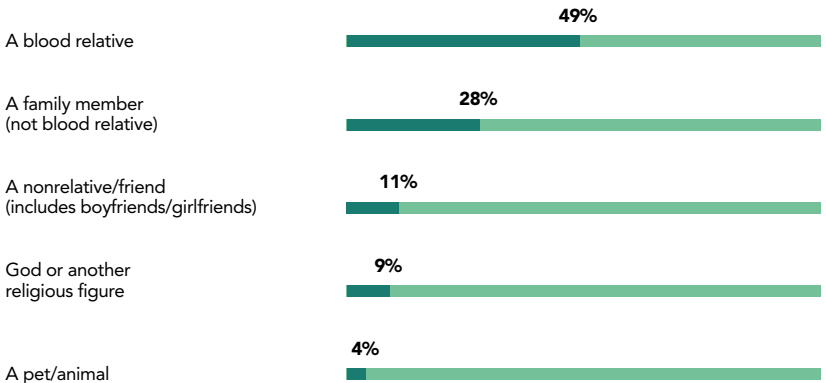## BESIDES MYSELF, THOSE I CONSIDER TO BE PART OF "MY FAMILY" INCLUDE:

My parent(s) — **72%**

My sibling(s) — **60%**

My child(ren) — **59%**

My spouse — **53%**

My cousin(s) — **41%**

My aunt(s)/uncle(s) — **39%**

My close friend(s) — **38%**

My grandparent(s) — **35%**

My pet(s) — males **25%** · **31%** · females **36%**

My in-law(s) — **29%**

My partner/significant other (not married) — **25%** · millennials **35%**

My workmate(s) — **9%**

My neighbor(s) — **9%**

People I interact with regularly via social media — **9%**

My stepparent(s)/stepchild(ren)/stepsibling(s) — **9%**

Members of my local church/temple/mosque — **7%**

51% AGREE:

"MY SIBLING IS MY

BEST FRIEND."

—

—

1 IN 2 RESPONDENTS

HAS KNOWN

HIS/HER BEST FRIEND

SINCE CHILDHOOD.

—

THE BEING I FEEL CLOSEST TO IN THE WORLD IS:

A blood relative — **49%**

A family member
(not blood relative) — **28%**

A nonrelative/friend
(includes boyfriends/girlfriends) — **11%**

God or another
religious figure — **9%**

A pet/animal — **4%**

FAMILY ROCKS

With all the media depictions of dysfunctional families, it would be easy to assume that discord is the norm. Happily, that's not the case.

We gave people 11 terms and asked them which applied to their family relationships. Every single one of the five positive terms enjoyed majority agreement, whereas the negative terms were rejected by most. Which emotion are our families most likely to elicit in us? Joy topped the list, selected by 74 percent.

Despite the general lovefest, around a quarter of respondents (26 percent) admit there's too much drama in their families. And **1 in 5 millennials would actually go back in time and be born into a different family if given the option.**

74%
Joy

64%
Comfort

53%
Fun

61%
Pride

61%
Security/Stability

22%
Anxiety/Worry

15%
Stress/Aggravation

7%
Disappointment

2%
Shame

5%
Embarrassment

6%
Anger

IN GENERAL, WHICH WORD BEST DESCRIBES GATHERINGS WITH YOUR EXTENDED FAMILY?

Fun **45%**

Loving **29%**

Stressful **7%**

Boring **5%**

Nightmare **1%**

We don't have family gatherings **12%**

WHICH COMES CLOSER TO YOUR POINT OF VIEW?

87%
My family **pushes me forward/helps** me succeed

13%
My family **holds me back/prevents** me from succeeding

My parents are proud of me

Prosumers **84%**

mainstream **67%**

I have a deep respect for my parents

Prosumers **89%**

mainstream **80%**

I have a loving relationship with my family

Prosumers **85%**

mainstream **76%**

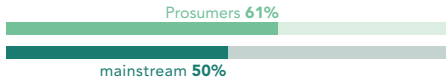I am happiest when I'm with my family
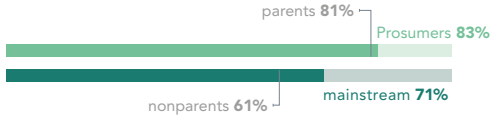
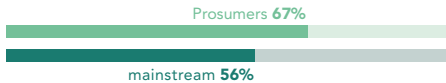parents **81%**

Prosumers **83%**

nonparents **61%**

mainstream **71%**

People who are single all their lives (no long-term romantic relationship, no children) are missing out on an important part of life

Prosumers **69%**

mainstream **58%**
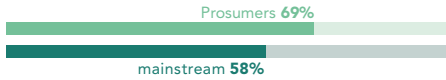
My sibling is/siblings are my best friend(s)

Prosumers **61%**

mainstream **50%**

My ancestry is an important part of my self-identity

Prosumers **67%**

mainstream **56%**

SHATTERING TRADITION

With the traditional structure of the family under threat, one might assume that most of our respondents would want to turn back time and erase many of the changes we've experienced. We actually found a strongly mixed response, with majority agreement on only one issue: women's expanded rights.

The bad: Most worrisome to our respondents is the erosion of the traditional household unit, as evidenced by their widespread concern over the rise in single-parent and single-person households and the concurrent loss of extended families. This latter worry ties in with an overall concern about the diminished role of seniors: 8 in 10 global respondents say they worry about the modern world's loss of respect for elders.

The good: Despite what some see as the younger generation's move away from feminism, "feminism/women's rights" is the only factor that a majority of global respondents (55 percent) believe is actually helping society. Also seen as an overall positive: the rise in interracial marriage, international adoptions, IVF and other "artificial" means of conception, and homeschooling.

The divided: The most contentious issue is the legalization of same-sex marriage, with 32 percent believing it's bad for society and 27 percent thinking it's a good thing. Another 28 percent believe it's having no effect. As would be expected, there is a huge variation in support among the 20 countries surveyed. Most opposed to same-sex marriage: Indonesia (87 percent say it's harmful), Ukraine (67 percent),

Ecuador (51 percent), and Singapore (50 percent). In no country did a majority say same-sex marriage is helping society, but at least 4 in 10 did in Australia, Brazil, Italy, Portugal, and Taiwan.
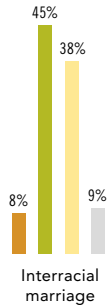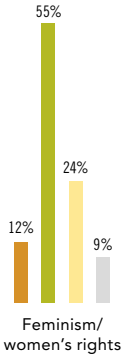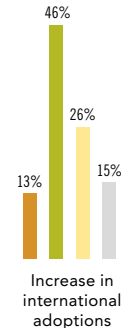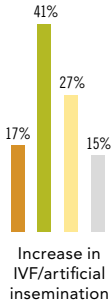
There's also a clear generation gap on this question, with 34 percent of millennials believing same-sex unions are helping society and 29 percent believing they're hurting it. This contrasts with 19 percent of baby boomers who say it's helping versus 40 percent who believe it's harmful.

There was also a relatively equal split in terms of support for adult children returning to the nest: While 30 percent think it's bad for society overall, 28 percent think it's a good thing. This divide can be explained in part by cultural differences: In countries such as India and China, it's the norm for grown children to return to their parents' homes, oftentimes as caretakers. In much of the Western world, in contrast, these so-called "boomerang kids" are a sign of an economic downturn, meaning that young adults are unable to afford to live on their own. Around a third of the global sample (including 35 percent of millennials) say that young people who live with their parents past age 25 aren't true adults.

Legend: ■ Harming ■ Helping ■ No effect ■ Not sure

Increase in single-parent households
- Harming: 48%
- Helping: 11%
- No effect: 29%
- Not sure: 12%

Loss of extended families
- Harming: 44%
- Helping: 14%
- No effect: 30%
- Not sure: 12%

Move away from the traditional nuclear family
- Harming: 42%
- Helping: 17%
- No effect: 29%
- Not sure: 12%

More people living alone
- Harming: 41%
- Helping: 13%
- No effect: 35%
- Not sure: 11%

Move away from religion
- Harming: 36%
- Helping: 20%
- No effect: 31%
- Not sure: 14%

More children being reared by same-sex parents
- Harming: 33%
- Helping: 19%
- No effect: 31%
- Not sure: 17%

Legalization of same-sex marriage
- Harming: 32%
- Helping: 27%
- No effect: 28%
- Not sure: 13%

Increase in "older" mothers (40+ at child's birth)
- Harming: 31%
- Helping: 18%
- No effect: 37%
- Not sure: 14%

Young adults returning home to live with parents
- Harming: 30%
- Helping: 28%
- No effect: 31%
- Not sure: 11%

Increase in "older" fathers (50+ at child's birth)
- Harming: 29%
- Helping: 16%
- No effect: 40%
- Not sure: 15%

Increase in homeschooling
- Harming: 22%
- Helping: 39%
- No effect: 24%
- Not sure: 16%

Increase in IVF/artificial insemination
- Harming: 17%
- Helping: 41%
- No effect: 27%
- Not sure: 15%

Increase in international adoptions
- Harming: 13%
- Helping: 46%
- No effect: 26%
- Not sure: 15%

Feminism/women's rights
- Harming: 12%
- Helping: 55%
- No effect: 24%
- Not sure: 9%
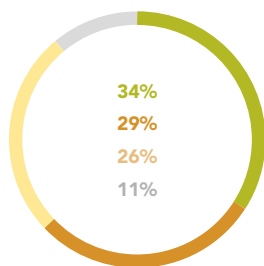
Interracial marriage
- Harming: 8%
- Helping: 45%
- No effect: 38%
- Not sure: 9%

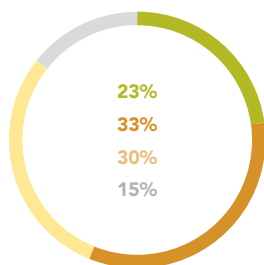## IN GENERAL, THE LEGALIZATION
OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IS...

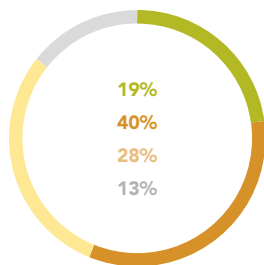■ Helping society ■ Harming society ■ No effect ■ Not sure

age 18–34

34%
29%
26%
11%

age 35–54

23%
33%
30%
15%

age 55+

19%
40%
28%
13%

STICK TO YOUR OWN KIND? NOT SO MUCH...

In earlier eras, there were rigid rules about who would be considered a suitable candidate for marriage, whether on the basis of class or caste, religion or ethnicity. In some places, marrying outside one's race was illegal. *Miscegenation* was a dirty word. That's changed to some extent—with the rules relaxing in this area as in so many others. Only around a third of our global sample believe it's essential for couples to consider race, politics, or socioeconomic background before tying the knot.

The one exception: religion. Just more than half the sample believe married couples are better off when they share the same religious background. This attitude likely stems from the notion that it's better for children to grow up in a particular faith. In general, the more religious the country, the likelier respondents were to believe that religion should be a factor in choosing a mate. So we see, for example, agreement from 89 percent of respondents in Indonesia—a country where blasphemy is illegal and 87 percent of the population identifies as Muslim—versus agreement from just 30 percent of respondents in Portugal, where the majority of the population identifies as Roman Catholic but where only 1 in 5 attends church regularly.

IN GENERAL, IT'S BETTER FOR A PERSON TO MARRY SOMEONE WHO...
(% AGREEING STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)

Holds the same religious beliefs

51%

Is of the same race/ethnicity

34%

Comes from the same socioeconomic background

38%
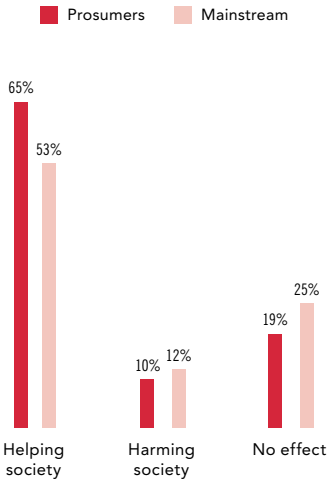
Holds the same political views

32%

MAN,
MARGINALIZED

Men still rule the world—but do they rule the roost? Less and less, it seems. And they're not entirely happy about that development.

In general, the men we surveyed are accepting of women's rights, with 49 percent saying the push for equal rights for women is helping society versus just 15 percent who say it's hurting. (This compares with 61 and 9 percent of women, respectively.) Only in Ukraine did more respondents in total choose "harming" over "helping." That said, the overall findings of the survey paint a picture of men feeling threatened by the social and structural changes taking place within households. And that makes sense given that more and more women seem to be considering men an optional accessory in the family equation.

IN GENERAL, FEMINISM/WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE...

Legend: ■ Prosumers ■ Mainstream

|	Helping society	Harming society	No effect
Prosumers	65%	10%	19%
Mainstream	53%	12%	25%

IS MARRIAGE BECOMING OBSOLETE?

There are two big factors at play in the question of whether marriage will die out as an institution: The first is that women in most parts of the world are able to support themselves financially rather than be beholden to a man for food and shelter. The other is that many of the benefits of marriage—sex, progeny, and shared household tasks and expenses—are now a viable option outside the bonds of matrimony. More than half the sample believe it's fine for a couple to live together and have children without the benefit of marriage. And 6 in 10 millennials say it's actually better for a couple to live together prior to marriage.

A significant proportion of respondents (34 percent of men and 40 percent of women) believe marriage has become less important now that women can earn their own incomes. Nonetheless, only 29 percent believe marriage will eventually be obsolete, while 39 percent disagree (32 percent aren't sure).
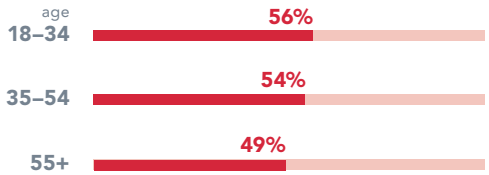
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IT IS BETTER FOR A COUPLE TO LIVE TOGETHER BEFORE THEY GET MARRIED

age
18–34   **60%**

35–54   **50%**

55+   **44%**
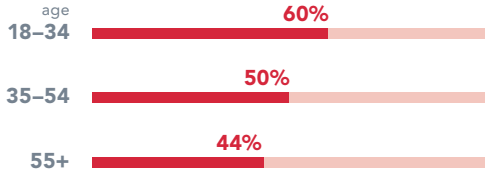
IT IS FINE FOR A COUPLE TO LIVE TOGETHER AND HAVE CHILDREN WITHOUT BEING MARRIED

age
18–34   **56%**

35–54   **54%**

55+   **49%**

MARRIAGE IS LESS IMPORTANT NOW THAT WOMEN CAN EARN THEIR OWN INCOMES

age
18–34   **39%**

35–54   **39%**

55+   **30%**

MARRIAGE WILL EVENTUALLY BE OBSOLETE

age
18–34   **33%**

35–54   **27%**

55+   **24%**
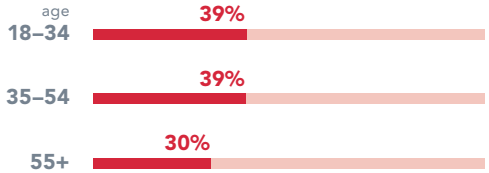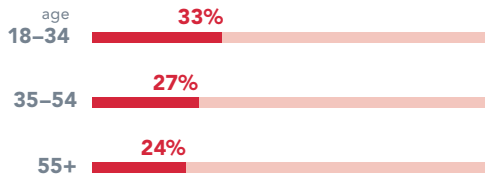
MEN ARE LESS KEEN ON THE LOSS OF TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES

As noted earlier, there's a general acceptance of the move toward equality for women, but not everyone is happy about the impact of this shift within the home. In fact, a sizable segment thinks life was better when men were the undisputed heads of household. Nearly half the males surveyed think children are better off when their mothers don't work outside the home. And 4 in 10 men, along with nearly a third of women, believe families are better off when the man is the provider/authority figure and the woman is the nurturer/homemaker. Once again, there were big differences between countries: Around two-thirds of respondents in the traditional cultures of Indonesia and India would like to see the man retain his traditional role within the home, compared with just 17 percent of respondents in France and Portugal. The US and the UK were in the middle, at 33 and 30 percent, respectively.

Portugal also showed its gender-equality stripes on the question of whether it's OK for a man to take his wife's surname. Seven in 10 said yes (tied for highest with Brazil), compared with just 6 percent who said yes in the Czech Republic.

**THE GENDER DIVIDE:
WHO GETS TO BE A PARENT?**
(% AGREEING STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)

**SINGLE PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE
AS MUCH RIGHT AS MARRIED
COUPLES TO ADOPT CHILDREN**

65% females
52% males

**GAY COUPLES SHOULD BE
PERMITTED TO ADOPT CHILDREN**

50% females
36% males

(% AGREEING STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)

CHILDREN WOULD BE BETTER OFF IF THEIR MOTHERS DIDN'T WORK OUTSIDE THE HOME

46% males
37% females

MARRIAGES TEND TO WORK BETTER WHEN THE MAN EARNS MORE INCOME THAN THE WOMAN
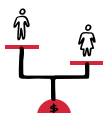
35% males
30% females

IT'S FINE FOR A MAN TO TAKE HIS WIFE'S SURNAME RATHER THAN HER TAKING HIS

42% females
33% males

FAMILIES WORK BEST WHEN THE FATHER IS THE PROVIDER/AUTHORITY FIGURE AND THE MOTHER IS THE NUTURER/HOMEMAKER

■ Agree   ■ Neither agree nor disagree   ■ Disagree

females: 31%   28%   41%

males: 42%   32%   26%

OPPOSITION TO GENDER BLENDING

There's some evidence that men are OK with the notion of people breaking out of their historical gender roles. For instance, around two-thirds of 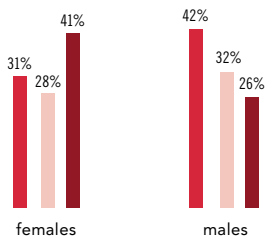both men and women say that, in general, stay-at-home dads are as good at childrearing as stay-at-home moms. Nevertheless, men are uneasy about what they perceive as a loss of masculinity in boys and femininity in girls. And a majority of men, compared with just more than a third of women, believe boys and girls should be raised according to their gender, with separate toys, clothing, and so on. The countries most supportive of rigid gender roles for children were Ukraine, Indonesia, and China, while Taiwan, Portugal, Italy, and India were most apt to support gender-neutral upbringings. Respondents in the US and the UK were the most divided, with each option being selected by around half of respondents.
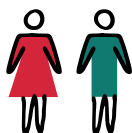
KEY

♂
males

♀
females

WHICH COMES CLOSER TO YOUR POINT OF VIEW?

GIRLS SHOULD BE RAISED AS GIRLS AND BOYS AS BOYS (DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES, PLAYTHINGS, CLOTHING, ETC.)

53.5% males

37% females

AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, PARENTS SHOULD RAISE THEIR CHILDREN IN A GENDER-NEUTRAL WAY SO AS NOT TO IMPOSE RIGID GENDER RESTRICTIONS

63% females

46.5% males

MEN ARE LESS ACCEPTING OF SAME-SEX UNIONS

THE LEGALIZATION OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IS HARMING SOCIETY

39% males

27% females

THE LEGALIZATION OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IS HELPING SOCIETY

32% females

22% males

GAY COUPLES SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO ADOPT CHILDREN
(% AGREEING STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)
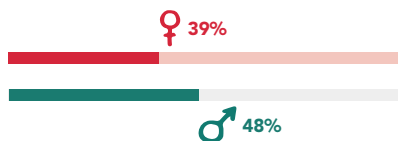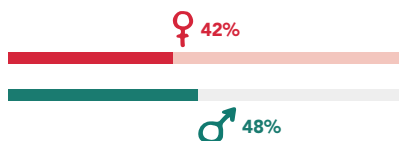
50% females

36% males

(% AGREEING STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)

I WORRY THAT BOYS ARE BECOMING LESS MASCULINE

♀ 42%

♂ 48%

I WORRY THAT GIRLS ARE BECOMING LESS FEMININE

♀ 39%

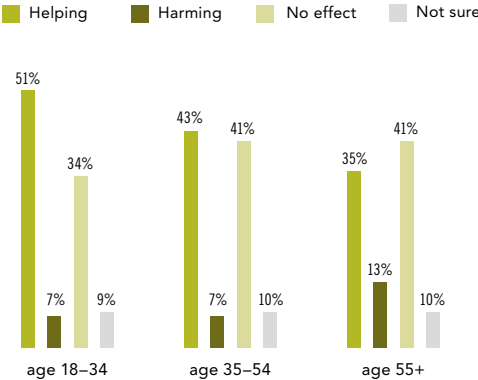♂ 48%

MEET THE <u>BE</u> GENERATION

In the US, the baby boomers are known as the Me Generation— a nod to their reputation for being self-involved. The world's current generation of young adults, the millennials, might more aptly be called the BE Generation.

BE with WHOM You wish

Throughout the study, our youngest respondents proved most open to the notion that people should be free to love—and marry—whomever they wish. Millennials were the only generation more apt to say that same-sex marriage is helping rather than harming society. In certain markets, this divide was especially stark: For instance, in Taiwan a majority of millennials (53 percent) think same-sex marriage is a good thing, compared with just 6 percent who disagree.

Globally, millennials were the only age group with a majority saying that interracial marriage is benefiting society. Most millennials also indicated that the increase in international adoption is good for society, compared with just around a third of baby boomers who said the same.

IN GENERAL, IS INTERRACIAL MARRIAGE HELPING OR HARMING SOCIETY?

■ Helping   ■ Harming   ■ No effect   ■ Not sure

age 18–34				age 35–54				age 55+			
51%	7%	34%	9%	43%	7%	41%	10%	35%	13%	41%	10%

BE WHO YOU ARE

Despite millennials being slightly more concerned than older generations about the loss of masculinity and femininity among children, they are far more likely than boomers to support the notion of gender-neutral childrearing. They also are supportive of the right of same-sex couples to raise children: 51 percent said gay couples should be allowed to adopt, compared with 34 percent of boomers.

WHICH COMES CLOSER TO YOUR POINT OF VIEW?

■ millennials   ■ baby boomers

42% 52%

58% 48%

Girls should be raised as girls and boys as boys (different activities, playthings, clothing, etc.)

As much as possible, parents should raise their children in a gender-neutral way so as not to impose rigid gender restrictions
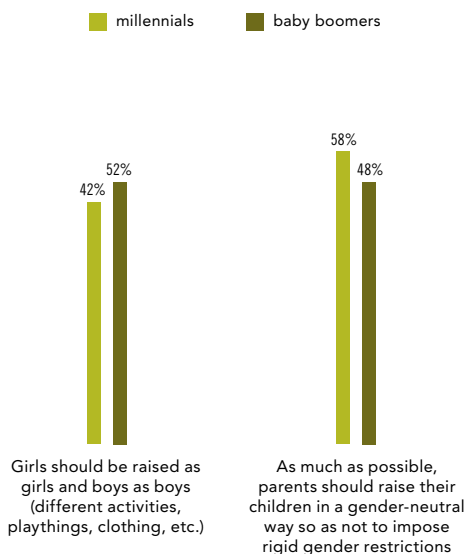
BELIEVE IN SOMETHING

Religious faith is an interesting topic with
regard to millennials. They were significantly
more likely than baby boomers to say that
the move away from religion is helping society
(23 percent versus 15 percent, respectively),
and yet they were also more apt to say
it's important for parents to expose their
children to a particular religious faith
(45 percent versus 30 percent of boomers).
Moreover, 69 percent of millennials said it's
important for parents to instill in their children a
sense of spirituality, compared with 60 percent
of boomers who said the same.

The takeaway seems to be that millennials
want the comfort/security/sense of
interconnectedness that comes from a belief in
something greater than the self. They're sharply
divided, however, on the intrinsic benefits of
organized religions versus a more personalized
spirituality. It may be that, for many,
what one believes matters less than the fact
that one believes in *something*.

BE OPEN

Looking at the question of what parents should
be giving their children, millennials were
consistently more likely to express approval for
exposing children to a broad array of people,
ideas, and experiences.

**HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT A PARENT
GIVE A CHILD EACH OF THESE THINGS?**
(% CITING IT AS VERY/SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT)

EXPOSURE TO OTHER CULTURES

80% millennials
73% baby boomers

....

TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

75% millennials
70% baby boomers

....

TRAINING IN THE ARTS

73% millennials
59% baby boomers

....

EXPOSURE TO MULTIPLE RELIGIONS

45% millennials
31% baby boomers

BE SOMETHING

Disregard the widespread notion that millennials are lazy and disinclined to push themselves. This generation was raised with a clear notion of the value of personal branding and ambitious goal-setting.

WELL DONE, TIGER MOMS

**GOOD PARENTS REALLY PUSH
THEIR CHILDREN TO EXCEL**
(% AGREEING STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)

62% millennials

46% baby boomers

Our research into millennials in recent years has revealed a generation intent on making a difference in the world. More so than in previous eras, today's youth recognize the capacity of individuals to effect change, and they're under no illusion that governments will be able to solve problems on their own.

**HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT A PARENT
GIVE A CHILD EACH OF THESE THINGS?**

COLLEGE EDUCATION

80% millennials

70% baby boomers

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

78% millennials

68% baby boomers

—

AROUND **1/3** OF
MILLENNIALS ADMIT
TO SOMETIMES FEELING
CLOSER TO THEIR
COWORKERS THAN TO
THEIR OWN FAMILIES.

—

—

57% OF **MILLENNIALS**
AGREE: "IN THE FUTURE,
WE WILL SEE A LOT
MORE PEOPLE 'COLIVING'
(SHARING A HOME
WITH COWORKERS
AND/OR PEOPLE WHO
ARE WORKING TOWARD
A COMMON GOAL)."

—

BUILDING GEN NEXT

Throughout the study, the enormous value placed on parenthood was made clear: 7 in 10 respondents believe being a great parent is the absolute greatest success one can achieve. Parenting is an enormous source of pride, and also of joy and fun.

**THERE IS NO GREATER SUCCESS
THAN BEING A GREAT PARENT**
(% AGREEING STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)

Prosumers **81%**

mainstream **68%**

MY FAMILY IS A SOURCE OF...

Joy
81% parents
64% nonparents

Pride
68% parents
51% nonparents

Fun
58% parents
**47%** nonparents

MILLENNIALS ARE SEEKING TO REDEFINE PARENTING

So, how's the newest generation of parents doing? Pretty darn well, if you choose to believe them.

Nearly 6 in 10 millennials surveyed say they are intentionally raising their children differently from how they were raised—and 44 percent think they're doing a better job than their parents did, while only 16 percent disagree.
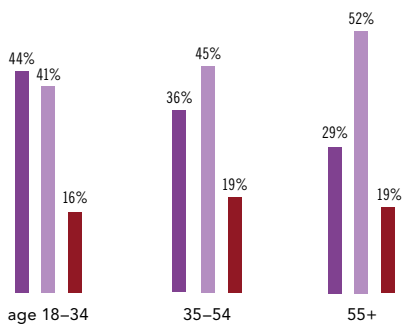
I AM INTENTIONALLY RAISING MY CHILD(REN) DIFFERENTLY THAN MY PARENTS RAISED ME

(% AGREEING STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)

age
18–34 **59%**

35–54 **53%**

55+ **47%**
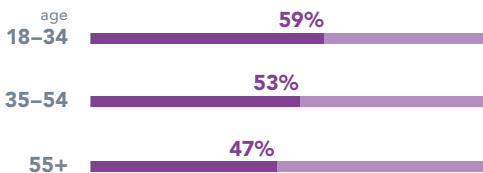
I AM A BETTER PARENT THAN MY PARENTS WERE

■ Agree   ■ Neither agree nor disagree   ■ Disagree

age 18–34: 44%, 41%, 16%

35–54: 36%, 45%, 19%

55+: 29%, 52%, 19%

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE PARENTING JOB YOU HAVE DONE/ARE DOING?

■ Very satisfied   ■ Somewhat satisfied   ■ Very or somewhat dissatisfied

age 18–34: 44%, 51%, 6%

35–54: 35%, 54%, 12%

55+: 32%, 56%, 12%
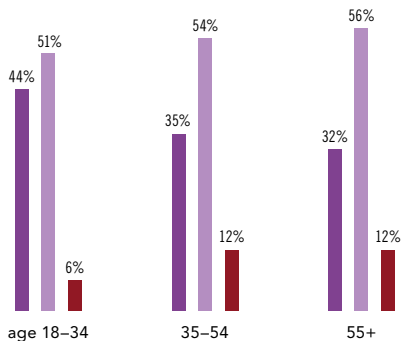
Granted, baby boomers have had a longer period in which to assess how their children's lives have turned out and to second-guess their parenting choices, but it's worth noting the confidence with which millennials are engaged in parenting. They also believe that parent-child relations in general have improved, despite all the alarms raised in the media about families in crisis. These deeper bonds may owe something to today's much smaller generational culture gap: A majority of millennial parents say they and their children enjoy the same music, compared with less than a third of baby boomer parents.

IN GENERAL, PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN HAVE A CLOSER/STRONGER BOND NOW THAN IN PREVIOUS GENERATIONS
(% AGREEING STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)

age 18–34 — **41%**
35–54 — **34%**
55+ — **23%**
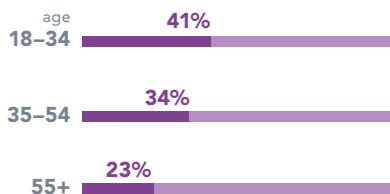
IN GENERAL, MY CHILD(REN) AND I SHARE THE SAME TASTE IN MUSIC

age 18–34 — **55%**
35–54 — **47%**
55+ — **29%**
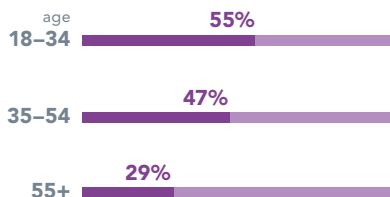
A RECIPE FOR THE PERFECT CHILD

What sort of people do these parents hope their children will grow up to be? Is it more important to be kind or successful? Family oriented or career focused? We discovered some interesting generational distinctions. For millennials, the "perfect" child will grow up to be strong, tolerant, kind, creative, family oriented, resilient, adventurous, and honest. Baby boomers would sacrifice strength for tolerance, creativity for hard work, and adventurousness for resilience.

IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO RAISE CHILDREN TO BE...

Strong   vs.   Tolerant

50% millennials   **50%** millennials
33.5% baby boomers   **66.5%** baby boomers

Kind   vs.   Successful

65% millennials   **35%** millennials
74% baby boomers   **26%** baby boomers

Creative   vs.   Hardworking

54% millennials   **46%** millennials
43% baby boomers   **57%** baby boomers

Family oriented   vs.   Career minded

75% millennials   **25%** millennials
80% baby boomers   **20%** baby boomers

Resilient   vs.   Adventurous

50% millennials   **50%** millennials
70.5% baby boomers   **29.5%** baby boomers

Honest   vs.   Fearless

81% millennials   **19%** millennials
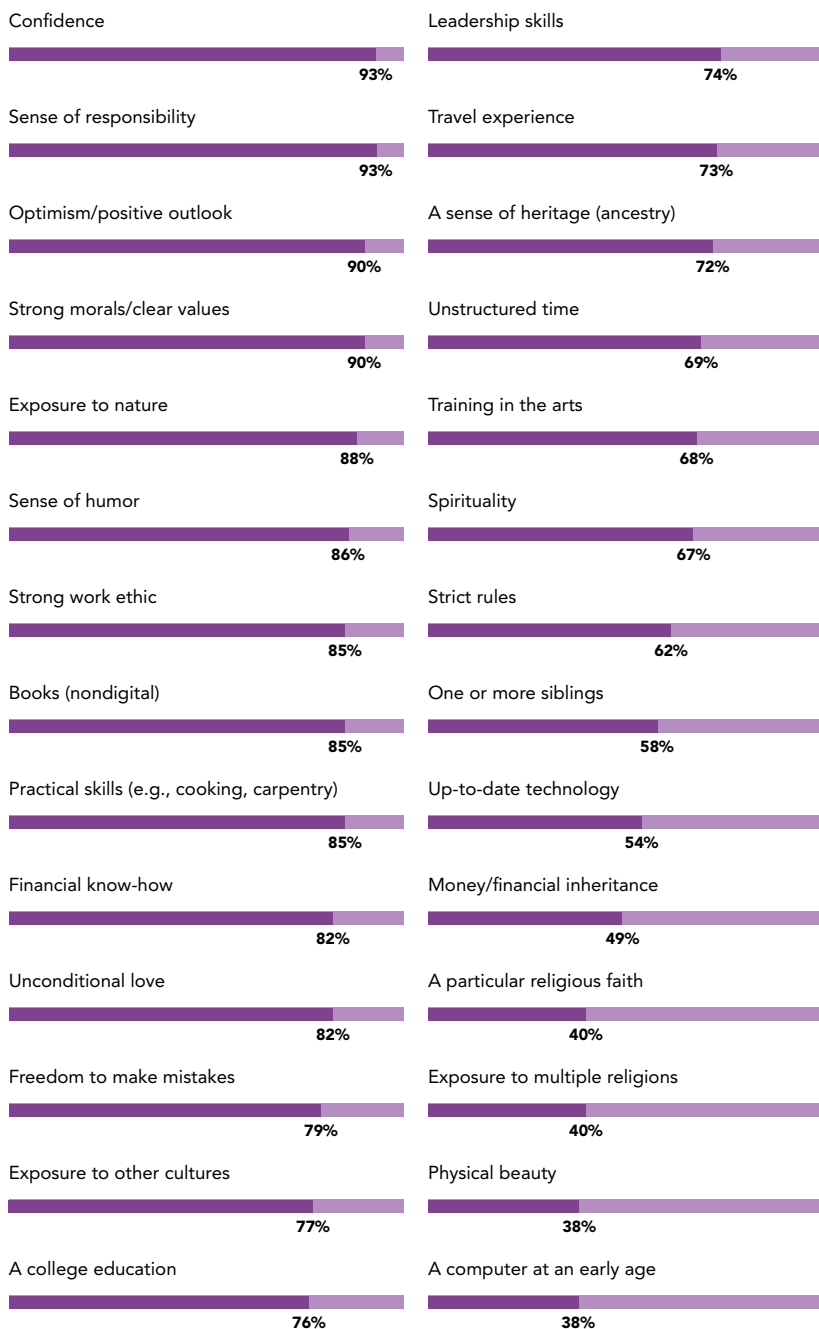**87%** baby boomers   **13%** baby boomers

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT A PARENT GIVE A CHILD EACH OF THESE THINGS?

(% RESPONDING VERY/SOMEWHAT)

Confidence
93%

Leadership skills
74%

Sense of responsibility
93%

Travel experience
73%

Optimism/positive outlook
90%

A sense of heritage (ancestry)
72%

Strong morals/clear values
90%

Unstructured time
69%

Exposure to nature
88%

Training in the arts
68%

Sense of humor
86%

Spirituality
67%

Strong work ethic
85%

Strict rules
62%

Books (nondigital)
85%

One or more siblings
58%

Practical skills (e.g., cooking, carpentry)
85%

Up-to-date technology
54%

Financial know-how
82%

Money/financial inheritance
49%

Unconditional love
82%

A particular religious faith
40%

Freedom to make mistakes
79%

Exposure to multiple religions
40%

Exposure to other cultures
77%

Physical beauty
38%

A college education
76%

A computer at an early age
38%

68%   **32%**

Parents should let their young children experience hardships/disappointments/struggles to make them tough enough to handle the "real world"

Parents should shield their young children from negative experiences as much as possible to make them strong and secure enough to handle the "real world"

— **55%**

Allowing your young son or daughter to get fat is a form of child abuse

—

ONLY **50%** OF RESPONDENTS IN **INDONESIA** AND **62%** OF RESPONDENTS IN **TAIWAN** BELIEVE IT'S IMPORTANT TO GIVE CHILDREN THE FREEDOM TO MAKE MISTAKES, COMPARED WITH **90%** OR MORE IN **THE UK, MEXICO, THE US, AND AUSTRALIA**.

—

— **35%**

Good parents spank/physically discipline their children

IS IT IMPORTANT TO BESTOW ONE'S CHILD WITH GOOD LOOKS?

That depends on where you live. A majority of respondents in Ukraine, India, Indonesia, China, and Thailand consider it important, compared with less than a quarter of those in the Czech Republic, Australia, the UK, and the US. It also depends on age: **44%** of **millennials** think it's important for parents to pass on good looks to their children, compared with just **26%** of **boomers**.

—

ONLY **56%** OF RESPONDENTS IN **FRANCE** BELIEVE IT'S IMPORTANT TO LOVE THEIR CHILDREN UNCONDITIONALLY, COMPARED WITH MORE THAN **9 IN 10** RESPONDENTS IN **COLOMBIA, ECUADOR, PORTUGAL, MEXICO, THE US, AND AUSTRALIA**.

—

FAMILY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Humanity is caught up in a massive, angst-filled lovefest with digital technology. We love it. We crave it. We need it. And yet…oh, how we worry about what it's doing to us as individuals and as a society. And we especially worry about what it's doing to the youngest among us.

Let's start with the fact that a majority of the people we surveyed around the globe believe that digital technology and the Internet are ruining childhood. Levels of agreement range from a low of 25 percent in tech-happy Japan to a high of 70 percent in India. Around a third of the global sample (and a majority of those in India) believe that technology is destroying family life. And half the sample believe that allowing a child unrestricted access to the Internet is a form of child abuse. After all, time spent online not only replaces activities such as reading, playing outside, and engaging in person with peers and others, it also exposes young people to any number of dangers and poor influences.

So, obviously, everyone is going to ditch their tablets and smartphones…right? Of course not. Even as we fear what this new digital life is doing to us, we recognize how essential it has become. More than half the sample believe that children who grow up without Internet access are at a real disadvantage. And, as we showed earlier in this report, a majority consider up-to-date technology an important thing for parents to give their children.

The trick seems to be to find a balance that best serves the needs of minors. That means giving them access to the latest technologies without allowing them to be sucked entirely into the digital world.

AMBIVALENT ABOUT THIS DIGITAL LIFE
(% AGREEING STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT)

Today's children aren't given
enough of a chance to just be kids

65%

Children who grow up without Internet access/
digital technology are at a real disadvantage

52%

Parents share too much about
their children on social media

54%

Allowing a child unlimited access
to the Internet is a form of child abuse

50%

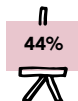Digital technology and
the Internet are ruining childhood

53%

Technology is destroying family life

30%

56% I would rather my child be a brilliant software engineer/web developer (**60%** males vs. **53%** females)

44% I would rather my child be a brilliant artist (**41%** males vs. **48%** females)

The loss of unstructured playtime is a big issue for people: Around two-thirds of our respondents agree that today's children aren't given enough of a chance to just be kids. And we know from our earlier studies that people are concerned about how disconnected children now are from the natural world. There's also the issue of privacy and oversharing: Half the sample believe parents are sharing too much about their children on social media. And there's a general sense that families simply don't enjoy as much downtime together anymore: Nearly 7 in 10 parents surveyed said they wish their families ate together more often.

Worries over digital technology are but one component in a more generalized concern about the changing nature of our home lives.

IN GENERAL, THE INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA HAVE MADE PARENTING...

Easier

millennials **39%**

baby boomers **25%**

Harder

millennials **36%**

baby boomers **39%**

No effect

millennials **25%**

baby boomers **37%**

FAMILY
@ RETAIL

And finally, we wanted to examine the dynamics of spending within the modern household. We are marketers, after all.

For starters, there was widespread agreement (72 percent) that children today are spoiled with too many material goods. That's not surprising, given that three-quarters of the parents surveyed said they get more pleasure from buying things for their children than for themselves. And more than a third of parents (including 46 percent of millennials) admit that they often give in to pressure to buy things for their children that they don't really want them to have.

In which areas do children have the most influence on purchases? Parents indicated that their children have a moderate or strong influence on their purchases in 7 of the 10 categories we listed. The chart on the right shows the two age groups most likely to still have children within the home: those 18–34 and 35–54. In every instance but one (electronics), the younger parents were more likely to let their kids have a say.

The influence of children is more often felt in relation to everyday purchases such as food and beverages, but it also extends to such big-ticket items as travel, home furnishings, cars, and luxury goods. And there were some distinct differences between markets. For instance, 7 in 10 parents in India and half in China say their children influence their luxury purchases, compared with just 15 percent of parents in France.

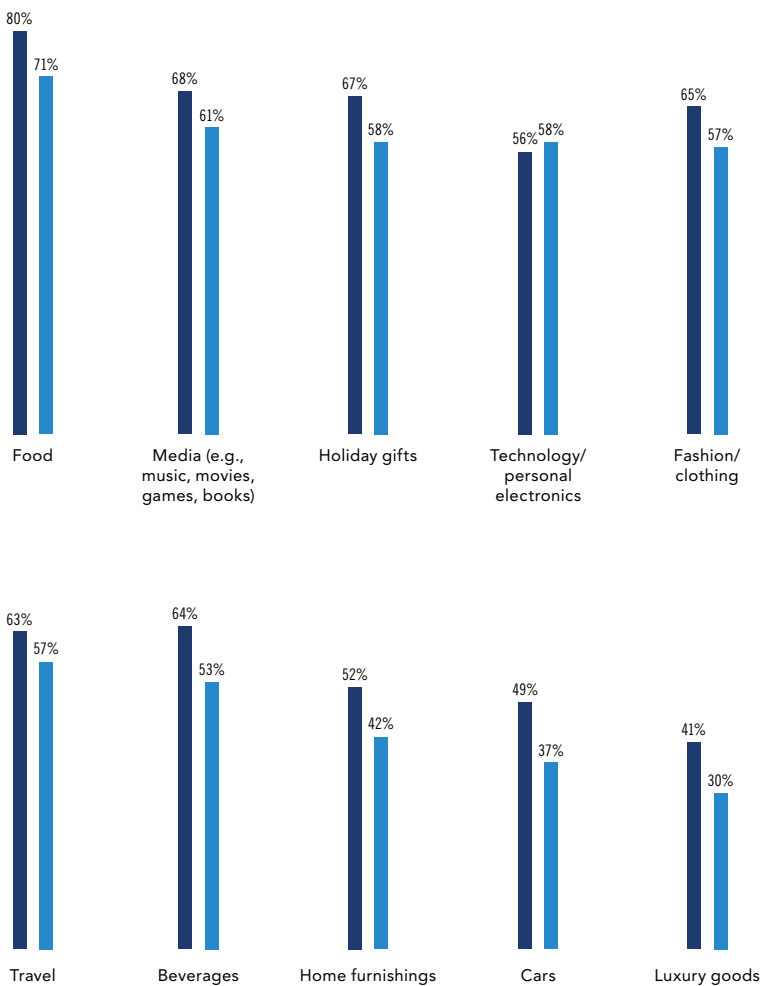**75%** of **parents** agree: "I get more pleasure from spending money on my children than on myself."

46% of **millennial parents** agree: "I often give in to pressure to buy things for my children that I don't really want them to have."

72% of **global respondents** say that today's parents spoil their children with too many things.

IN EACH OF THESE AREAS, HOW MUCH INFLUENCE DOES YOUR CHILD/DO YOUR CHILDREN HAVE ON WHAT YOU BUY?

*(% INDICATING STRONG OR MODERATE INFLUENCE)*

■ age 18–34   ■ age 35–54

Category	age 18–34	age 35–54
Food	80%	71%
Media (e.g., music, movies, games, books)	68%	61%
Holiday gifts	67%	58%
Technology/personal electronics	56%	58%
Fashion/clothing	65%	57%
Travel	63%	57%
Beverages	64%	53%
Home furnishings	52%	42%
Cars	49%	37%
Luxury goods	41%	30%

IMPLICATIONS FOR BRANDS

Whatever configuration a person's family takes these days, it's a sure bet that he or she could use a hand—whether that means help experiencing more quality time with loved ones or simply managing the logistics of the modern household. Brands in all sorts of categories are stepping into the breach.

HELPING KIDS JUST BE KIDS— PREFERABLY OUTDOORS

Getting young people to break free from their screens and embrace the natural world and physical activity is no easy task. It's an issue under increasing focus as more people express concern about potential consequences ranging from the rise in child obesity to the newest generation's purported inability to engage in self-created play. Brands are stepping in to get kids off the couch—and out of the house.

→ For each of the past four years, **CLIF Kid**, a maker of organic snacks, has held its Backyard Game of the Year contest to inspire children to turn off their gadgets and have fun outdoors. Children aged 6–12 are invited to create and submit an original backyard game for a chance to win prizes.

→ In partnership with KaBOOM! and Good Sports, **Dr Pepper Snapple Group** has devoted tens of millions of dollars to building playgrounds and providing athletic equipment and apparel to disadvantaged youth across the US. The aim of the Let's Play initiative is to get kids outside and engaged in healthful, active play.

→ **LeapFrog**, maker of the LeapPad learning tablet, has entered the wearable tech space with the LeapBand, a wrist-based device that rewards kids with points for engaging in physical challenges and offers "fun facts" on health and nutrition.
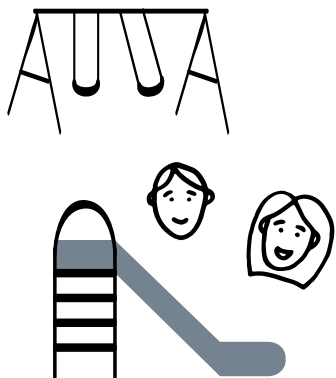
HELPING TO RAISE INDEPENDENT ADULTS

Today's teens may know how to code, build a smartphone app, and knowledgeably discuss the merits of iOS versus Android, but that doesn't mean they have the insights and skills they need to make it on their own.

→ Studies underline show a real problem with financial illiteracy among young people, which is especially problematic for those who leave college already saddled with debt. A growing number of financial companies, including UK–based mobile bank **Osper**, are creating prepaid debit cards especially for kids aged eight and up. The idea is to teach children to manage money before they're out on their own. Education company **MediaSpark** works toward the same end with GoVenture, a line of software that teaches financial literacy through simulation games.

→ Young people also face tough barriers to obtaining credit once out of the nest. This makes it tough to buy a home, start a business, or simply consolidate debt. Online peer-to-peer lending platform **Upstart** is trying to solve the problem by using high-potential college graduates' academic credentials (school, major, GPA) and projected earning capacity as criteria for loans.

→ In Poland, Nestlé's **Winiary** brand has created a nationwide program that teaches junior high school students to prepare nutritious meals using fresh ingredients. Teachers can register their classes in order to receive lesson plans and other materials.

CONNECTING FAMILIES

Just over two-thirds of the parents we surveyed (and nearly three-quarters of millennial parents) said they wish their families had meals together more often. Dining on the run is just one family-unfriendly effect of our frenetic schedules. The longer work week for many parents and the extended hours some children spend in daycare facilities means it's not unusual for family members to barely see each other during the week, even when they live under the same roof.

→ China's work culture has raised concerns about insufficient direct communication between parents and their children. To address the issue, **Mondelēz International** created a game in which photos of family members could be pasted onto emojis and used in a mobile game. The Oreo Bonding Emoji campaign generated more than 99 million emojis in just 11 weeks.

→ **Life360** is a smartphone app that creates "circles" families can use to coordinate everything from carpools to that night's dinner plans. Parents can also employ location sharing to track where their children are at any time. An alert function lets kids signal when they need immediate help.

→ In some cases, what's keeping families apart is not schedules but physical distance. In the United Arab Emirates, millions of foreigners, primarily from South Asia, work as laborers. Earning an average income of just $6 a day, they find it cost prohibitive to phone the families they've left behind. To help out, **Coca-Cola** created Hello Happiness, a program that let workers enjoy three minutes of international telephone service for each Coke bottle cap they placed in a specially created phone booth.
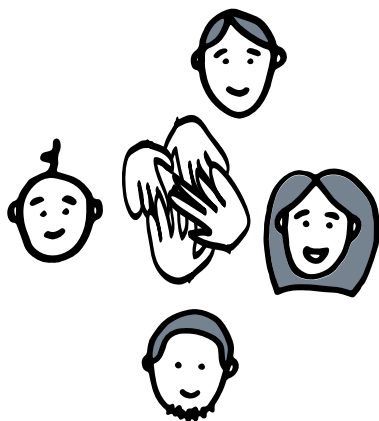
PROVIDING QUALITY TIME

Now that we have schedules so complex that we need apps to track them, it can be a real luxury to spend a concentrated period alone with family. Brands are working to reduce the hassles of making that happen.

→ Often referred to as "the Airbnb for families," **Kid & Coe** is a peer-to-peer home rental service that makes traveling with young children easier for all involved. Rental units offer amenities such as cribs and toddler beds, and may even be stocked with toys.

→ As the number of single-parent and single-person households continues to grow, more travel companies are tailoring their services to these groups' unique needs. In the UK, the **Single Parents on Holiday** service offers group vacation packages exclusively for single parents and their children. And US-based **CruiseMates.com** lets solo travelers avoid the dreaded singles supplement fee by pairing them with a roommate.

→ There's not much point in vacationing as a family if everyone's going to be focused on their digital devices rather than on each other. The **Arawak Beach Inn** in Anguilla is one of a number of hotels and resorts solving this problem by offering "unplugged" packages to vacation goers. Those who sign up for the Isolation Vacation hand over all their devices to the staff upon arrival and are housed in guestrooms free of televisions, phones, and Internet access.
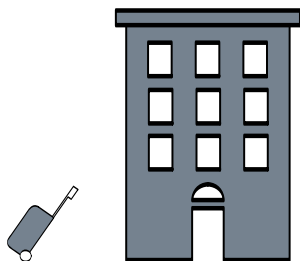
LETTING KIDS SHINE

The ubiquity and relative affordability of digital tools and communications channels mean today's kids can start building their own businesses long before they've left school. Companies are finding ways to ease the process.

→ **Google** has underlined announced plans to launch versions of a number of its products for children age 12 and under. Infused with a heavier dose of educational tools, the products will also be designed to be fun and safe for the younger set. The tech giant already has engaged in other kid-centric initiatives, including its virtual Maker Camp and Made with Code program. It's never too early to start earning those techie creds!

→ More toy makers are getting serious about helping kids unleash their inner makers and entrepreneurs. Stanford University engineer Debbie Sterling designed **GoldieBlox** to get young girls interested in engineering. And **Mattel** has introduced Entrepreneur Barbie, complete with smartphone and tablet. With an assist from a crowdfunding campaign, three alumni of Google, Apple, and Frog Design teamed up to create and sell **Dash & Dot**, robots that help kids learn to code.

→ Clothing retailer **J.Crew** has hired a budding fashionista to help design a collection. This particular designer has more than 450,000 Instagram followers, despite working entirely in crepe paper, plastic bags, sticky tape, and other arts-and-crafts supplies. Her choice of materials actually makes sense, given that she's still in preschool. You can check out the work of this four-year-old phenomenon on her blog, Fashion By Mayhem.

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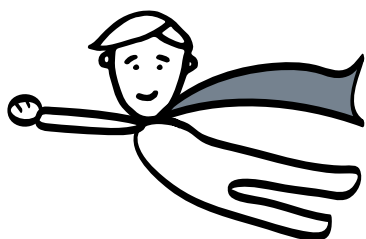
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