



## PARENT GUIDE

# GEN ALPHA



## Who is Gen Alpha?

**They're still trying to figure that out themselves!**

Have you ever looked across the table at your Gen Alpha son or daughter and felt like you were looking at someone you just met? How could this person—your very own kid—be so totally and completely different from you? From what they care about and how they communicate to the values they hold, it can feel like the generation gap between you and your rapidly growing child is wider than you ever thought possible.

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## The good news?

### We're here to help you understand the rising generation!

In the United States, the most recent generation of children born and coming of age in the 21st century is Gen Alpha. With the youngest members in diapers and the oldest in high school, the events, characteristics, and views that will shape them will emerge in the years ahead. Their lives and their world are both still unfolding. With that in mind, we'll use this guide to look at how generations have changed over time, what has shaped Gen Alpha so far, and how you can use that knowledge to connect with the kids in your life.



## What is a “generation”?

We can **define a “generation”** as “a group of people born within a certain period of time whose shared age and experiences shape a distinct worldview.”

Taking a step back to notice and observe how generations differ from each other is a helpful practice. As **Business Insider explains**, “Defining generations helps researchers see how coming of age during certain historical events and technological changes influence the way people see the world.”





# GEN ALPHA



## Which generations came before Gen Alpha?

To start, note that not everyone agrees on the exact name for each generation, nor do they agree on the precise year when each begins and ends. We've done our best to give estimates based on our research.

### The Greatest Generation, born 1901 – 1924

#### Defining events:

- The Great Depression
- FDR's New Deal
- WWII
- Pearl Harbor

#### What are they known for?

News anchor Tom Brokaw is credited with giving this group the well-known moniker of the "Greatest Generation." They are also called the "G.I. Generation" because of their service in World War II. The members of this generation are known for their strong work ethic, high morals, and sense of duty. They helped develop the infrastructure of modern America, and they gave rise to the now-common suburban middle class.



# The Silent Generation, born 1925 – 1945

## Defining events:

- Korean War
- Cold War
- Space race

## What are they known for?

Described by **some** as “grave and fatalistic,” the Silent Generation is known for not wanting to go against established institutions. They had higher employment rates than both the Greatest Generation and the Baby Boomers after them. On **average**, women had children at a younger ages than previous generations. They tended to stay home with them for the duration of childhood, while men placed a high value on being family providers and on company loyalty. Things like divorce or having children out of wedlock became incredibly taboo for this group, who were characterized by valuing conformity.



# Baby Boomers, born 1946 – 1964

## Defining events:

- Vietnam War/protests
- The Civil Rights Movement
- Nixon resignation
- The assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert F. Kennedy
- Woodstock

## What are they known for?

The “Baby Boomers” get their name from the dramatic increase in the birth rate following World War II. They’re actually the only generation **officially named by the U.S. Census Bureau**. In contrast to the Silent Generation, Boomers became known for their willingness to challenge authority, likely because the period when they came of age was one of great social and cultural change. Besides the Civil Rights Movement, there was the controversial Vietnam War, the sexual revolution, and the growing culture of rock and roll. Premarital sex (a.k.a. “free love”) and divorce became much more common. Gender roles began to subtly shift as well, with more women working outside the home.



# Generation X, born 1965 – 1980

## Defining events:

- Fall of the Berlin Wall
- The AIDS crisis
- Premiere of MTV

## What are they known for?

Gen Xers come between two large generations: Boomers and Millennials. They're often stereotyped as cynical and passive, but in reality, they tend to be individualistic and motivated to learn. They're also **the first generation** to see women achieve a higher level of education than men.



# Millennials, born 1981 – 1996

## Defining events:

- 9/11
- Great Recession
- The rise of the Internet

## What are they known for?

**In 2020**, Millennials surpassed Boomers and became the largest living adult generation. Millennials show a greater aversion to labels and institutions compared to previous generations. That means they're **less likely** to identify with a political party, marry, join the military, or identify with a religion. They are, however, **much more likely** to identify as LGBTQ+ compared to previous generations. Overall, they're known for being more optimistic than cynical and pushing against previous cultural norms.

Millennials are **three times as likely not to be married** compared to the Silent Generation at the same age, and Millennial women are twice as likely to be in the workforce as women from the Silent Generation. Economically, it became **more common** for Millennials to continue living at home between the ages of 25 and 35.



## Gen Z, born 1997 – 2009

### Defining events:

- COVID-19 pandemic
- #MeToo movement
- Overturning of *Roe v. Wade*
- Trump election/Brexit



### What are they known for?

Gen Z is known for being a unique combination of anxious and hard-working. Because of that, some think they'll end up being the most entrepreneurial generation. They are growing up in a far more diverse world than previous generations, specifically regarding race and gender identity. According to a 2023 Gallup poll, **22.3%** of Gen Z identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community—an increase of 20 points over the Baby Boomers.

## Gen Alpha, born 2010 – 2024

### Defining events:

- Advancements in AI
- Political polarization
- Prevalence of streaming services and social media

### What are they known for?

Because the youngest members of Gen Alpha just entered the world, there is still much to discover about who this generation is. Their defining events and characteristics are still developing.

Named after the first letter of the Greek alphabet, Gen Alpha represents the first generation born solely in the 21st century. As such, they're likely to be more connected to screens than any generation prior. They have near constant access to smartphones, tablets, social networks, and streaming services. They've been born into a time of cultural polarization, increased challenges with mental and physical health, and immediate access to information. As **Springtide Research Institute** indicates, "Our understandings about Gen Alpha will shift and change as they grow and mature, and as the world evolves alongside them."



# How does Gen Alpha compare to Gen Z?

## Technology

For members of Gen Z, the integration of technology into daily life was a growing necessity. In their lifetime, the internet and social media became a key part of everyday life.

Like their Gen Z predecessors, members of Gen Alpha are born into a world where digital and technological literacy is a part of their DNA. So-called “digital natives,” their generation began the same year the iPad was launched, Instagram was created, and “app” was named **word of the year**. As a result, they not only have unprecedented access to and understanding of technology, they are also quick to adapt to new platforms, devices, and technological programs.

Unlike any generation, Gen Alpha is growing up in the age of AI. According to **a marketing research firm**, almost half (46%) are already using it as a search engine. And they aren’t just using it for easy answers. One in four parents report that their teen regularly chats with AI, often for advice, companionship, or emotional support. Along with other technological innovations that have the potential to change so much about the world—and the future.

## Mental Health

Gen Z puts a high priority on seeking mental health treatment and using resources like therapy and medication. They’re well-versed and comfortable with tossing around “**therapy-speak**” as part of their everyday vernacular. However, this level of comfort with discussing mental health doesn’t necessarily mean they’re mentally healthier. According to data collected by the **American Psychological Association** in 2019, only half of Gen Zers surveyed feel they do enough to manage their stress. They’re far more likely to report a clinical mental health diagnosis—with anxiety disorders and clinical depression being among the most common diagnoses—and to have known someone who attempted or committed suicide, as the rates **tripled** amongst teens in their lifetime.

From what we can tell so far, Gen Alpha is following in the footsteps of Gen Z in this category. While they’re **noted** to be “more emotional, conscious, confident, and freer than their Gen Z counterparts,” that doesn’t mean they aren’t also suffering under the same mental health crisis called out as an “epidemic” by **the Center for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) as well as the American Association of Pediatricians**.

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, more teens and young people reported isolation, depression, anxiety, and a general sense of unease and unhappiness. This includes Gen Alpha. **Data focused on Gen Z** found that half of young people reported depression, and **initial research** into Gen Alpha hints at a similar number related to both depression and anxiety.

## Religion/Values

**Barna calls Gen Z** the “first truly ‘post-Christian’ generation,” and that’s proven so far to be rather accurate. They typically see truth as subjective to experience, and seek to “do their own research” on controversial topics. With that, Gen Z’s view of the church and religious institutions has been shaped in many ways by negative headlines and experiences with faith leaders. With scandals surrounding abuse, financial crimes, and misuse of power all coming to light as they came of age, Gen Zers are more likely to see the Christian church as a broken institution and Christian leaders as people to be skeptical of overall.

In a **Gen Alpha survey by Fuller Youth Institute**, 18% of participants identified with the statement, “I’m spiritual but not really religious,” following **a similar pattern** as Gen Z.



Most 13-year-olds (the oldest members of Gen Alpha to date) **report being at least slightly religious or spiritual**. This is likely because most live in homes where religion, faith, or spirituality are part of the conversation or routine of their lives. According to a report by **Springtide Research Institute**, 22% of those surveyed identify as non-religious, while some 66% claim Christianity as their faith. However, less than half of those surveyed saw religion as an important part of their everyday lives.

**Spiritual openness** is something that Gen Alpha and Gen Z share, which can make them receptive to the gospel—although this can extend far beyond Christian spaces. This is particularly true for young women. In **a Canadian study** of 300 11 to 13-year-olds, 32% of girls surveyed regularly participated in spiritual activities—manifesting, crystal healing, ouija boards, saging/smudging, astrology/zodiac signs, or tarot cards—compared to boys who were only at 13%. Gen Alpha is searching for a connection to the divine, in whatever form it may come in.

## Diversity

Gen Z is the first generation to be seen as **“truly global”** in their diversity and worldview. They are on track to become the most racially diverse generation yet. Most 13-year-olds **surveyed by Springtide Research Institute** indicated that their closest friends include people whose racial identity is different than their own. While these experiences and viewpoints are certainly not new or exclusive to Gen Alpha, what is unique is their willingness to address them honestly and openly amongst racially diverse groups. **A majority (56%) of Gen Alpha** sees racial and ethnic diversity in the United States as a positive thing.

## Sexuality

Gen Z, famously, embraced a **nontraditional view of sexuality**. **In 2023**, more than one in five Gen Z adults, ranging in age from 18 to 26, identified as LGBTQ+. The same goes for nearly one in 10 millennials (aged 27 to 42). **20.8% of Gen Z** identified as LGBTQ+. They're more likely to see gender as fluid and non-binary and dip their toes into testing the limits of gender norms and identity. Members of Gen Z are also more likely to support same-sex marriage and transgender rights than their predecessors.

With this in mind, Gen Alpha is growing up in a world where conversations about sexuality and gender are commonplace. Born after the Marriage Equality Act and raised amid ongoing culture wars about gender and sex, a traditional view of sexuality and heterosexual relationships is no longer their baseline. Culture observers predict that **more and more young people are understanding themselves as LGBTQ+ at younger ages**, making previously controversial things like coming out as gay, changing pronouns, or choosing to lean into non-traditional gender norms much more common for members of Gen Alpha.

There have been **reports** of a substantial decline in LGBTQ+ identification in the last few years. **The Cooperative Election Study (CES)**, administered by Tufts University, found that among 18- to 22-year-olds, trans identification fell by nearly half from 2022 to 2024. Nonbinary identification dropped by more than half between 2023 and 2024.





# What makes Gen Alpha unique?

## How they learn

Thanks at least in part to the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional education has undergone incredible change. Gen Alpha will grow up in a world where hybrid forms of education that integrate both in-person classroom experiences and online learning are prominent. As **Springtide Research Institute** puts it, “online and digital learning will be a core part of their educational experience.”

In another **Springtide report**, researchers found that “members of Gen Alpha are accustomed to high-speed learning, making random connections, processing visual and dynamic information, and learning through game-based activities.” The same report indicates they also tend to work individually rather than in groups, displaying leadership behaviors rather than taking on a collaborative role. **A study on Gen Alpha by McCrindle** predicts that their generation is likely to stay in school longer than previous generations.

## What they care about

Gen Alpha is poised to follow the Gen Z trend of caring deeply about social issues impacting their local communities and the world at large. According to one **market research report**, “Gen Alpha are what researchers call ‘upagers,’ meaning they’re more socially aware at a young age.”

But what issues are they aware of and caring about in the world right now?

- Climate justice
- Global health initiatives
- The end of the age of endless wars

As GWI, a consumer research company, **reports**, “It’s likely many Gen Alphas will expect big organizations to do the heavy lifting on sustainability and will show loyalty toward those who do. Teens currently rate caring for the planet higher than recycling, which is a sign they’re already making distinctions between individual behavior and large-scale goals.”



## How they communicate

Of those 13-year-olds surveyed by **Springtide Research Institute**, 97% have access to a smartphone at home or for personal use, 90% have access to computers and gaming systems, and 82% have access to tablets. According to **Business Insider**, one quarter of parents say their kids have friends online that they've never met in person. They're most likely to interact with friends—both those they know in person and those they don't—in DMs, private messages, or created group chats rather than on public forums or platforms.

Online gaming platforms have become an essential part of daily communication for this generation. **Business Insider** says that “gaming has become the most social ecosystem on the planet,” and “Roblox, Minecraft, and Fortnite have been highly successful in facilitating social experiences that bring young people together.” One **Gen Alpha study** showed that 97% of those surveyed reported gaming every day for 2 hours and 12 minutes on average. Gen Alpha's comfort level in connecting with others behind screens isn't unexpected. As **Springtide** reports, visual and video elements have been a core to most of Gen Alpha's everyday experiences—including in education, entertainment, and yes, social communication and connection, too.

## Where they're online

While Gen Alpha's social media consumption is predicted to be similar to Gen Z's, the social media platforms they use in that consumption will likely be different. Thanks to their Millennial parents' habitual use of social media to share videos, photos, and stories, most members of Gen Alpha will have an online presence that began at birth. **Business Insider** calls this “sharenting,” a term coined to indicate the ways in which their parents have shared photos, anecdotes, and milestones about their Gen Alpha offspring as part of their own parenting.

Of those surveyed by **Springtide Research Institute**, an overwhelming majority (99%) of 13-year-olds report using social media. At the top is YouTube, with 82% saying this is the primary place they're online. Coming next is TikTok at 62% and Snapchat at 51%. Then, older platforms like Facebook (45%), Instagram (41%), and Twitter/X (20%) rank slightly behind. Finally, the online gaming platform Twitch comes in at 17%, though research expects its prominence to grow as Gen Alpha grows up.

In addition to cultivating an online community, one **market research report** shows that Gen Alpha has a craving for doing things IRL. Since 2021, there has been a 44% increase in those who prefer to watch movies in theaters and a 15% increase in those who usually see friends on the weekends. Plus, there has also been a 17% reduction in parents who describe their child's internet usage as ‘heavy.’





## What are Gen Alpha's challenges?

### Screen time and brain rot

Market research firm **McCrindle** reminds us that Gen Alpha has been exposed to screens to pacify, entertain, and educate them from an early age. Devices play a major role in emotional regulation, particularly for younger members of Gen Alpha. 17% of parents with a child under 8 report that their child sometimes or often uses a mobile device to calm down when feeling angry, sad, or upset. More than one in five in this age range use a mobile device while eating at home or dining out in a restaurant. Gen Alpha also sees screens as soothing, with 20% of kids age 8 and under watching or playing on a device every night or most nights to fall asleep.

Their research goes on to say that “this great screen age in which we are all living has bigger impacts on the generation exposed to such screen saturation during their formative years.” Backing this up, **Springtide Research Institute** reports that 43% of those surveyed in Gen Alpha said they're “addicted” to their smartphones already, with 39% spending up to four hours daily on their phones and 23% pushing more than six hours. Around 90% of U.S. children are exposed to a screen, such as a smartphone, tablet, or TV, by their first birthday, according to **SQ Magazine**.

That same study found that high internet users (five or more hours per day) are less likely than lower internet users to seek advice from family on topics of morality/gender and sexuality. Even though high screen time can impact this, overall, Gen Alpha still chooses family and friends as their highest influencers around these topics as opposed to online sources. Despite the time they spend online, they want to hear real, authentic answers to their questions from parents and other caring adults.

The struggle with screen time and its subsequent effects seems to be strongly felt by Gen Alpha. Take the Oxford University Press selection of 2024's word of the year: “**brain rot**.” The publishing house defines the term as “the supposed deterioration of a person's mental health or intellectual state, especially viewed as the result of overconsumption of material (now particularly online content) considered to be trivial or unchallenging.”



**According to ABC News**, usage of the term increased by 230% from 2023 to 2024, an indicator that the fears and concerns of the negative impact of social media and online content and the possible mental health burnout that comes with the overconsumption of both are incredibly prevalent in the world Gen Alpha will grow up in.

## Mental health in a post-COVID world

Members of Gen Alpha have been born into or are being raised in a post-COVID world. While most young teenagers in Gen Alpha say the pandemic had a **“mixed impact”** on their lives in general, early research indicates that the pandemic may have impacted Gen Alpha more negatively than they realize. Britannica **suggests** that Gen Alpha will “likely be affected more than those of any other generation by the COVID-19 pandemic... They will be the first generation to grow up largely or entirely in a world touched by the COVID-19 pandemic and the response to it.”

With predicted high numbers of anxiety and depression again for this group, **some researchers** suspect a direct link between growing up with COVID restrictions and Gen Alpha’s mental health. Four in 10 pre-teens and teenagers in Gen Alpha **say** that feelings of loneliness come up at least sometimes every month, while half say they feel worried or anxious in that same period. And the numbers don’t look much better as we look at the younger members of Gen Alpha. Most parents rank mental health as a **“primary concern”** for their young kids, with **75% of parents** with kids under eight expressing concern about screen media’s impact on their child’s mental health. Other concerns include spending too much time with screen media (80%), impact on attention spans (79%) and prevalence of sexual content (75%). Those working closely with young members of Gen Alpha have observed that they’re **“already showing signs of depression,”** a concerning statement as this generation is only just beginning to grow and develop.

## A lack of resilience and the struggle to bounce back

Like most generations before them, Gen Alpha is in the midst of the age-old debate on nature vs. nurture. Raised by primarily Millennial parents who have embraced **“positive parenting,”** a trend that emphasizes spending more time with their children, Gen Alpha are set to grow up with an increased parental presence and involvement in their lives.

Coupled with the fact that **40% of kids** with parents under 18 say they worry about their child’s mental health and almost ½ describe themselves as “overprotective,” there’s a potential downside to consider for Gen Alpha here. One clinical psychologist **suggests** that, “parents are doing all kinds of things to prevent kids from feeling anxious. The problem with that is that avoidance makes anxiety grow.”

In general, members of Gen Alpha are showing early signs of a struggle to bounce back from challenges and may struggle to develop resilience. **Early research** attributes this in part to COVID lockdowns, where kids spent their early developmental years online, separated from peers, and with increased parental presence on a day-to-day basis.

At least one psychologist **suggests** that children are “less able to deal with conflicts and the normal bumps and bruises of interacting with other people because they’d had less practice with it.” **Springtide Research Institute** found that “because of a variety of factors... they’re not developing the coping skills needed to form resilience.” As one psychologist suggests, Gen Alpha needs more opportunities to struggle and fail so that **“they can learn they are strong enough to do that.”**



## Short attention spans and high algorithm expectations

A clear connection to their upbringing in a truly digital world, Gen Alpha struggles with maintaining a long attention span with... well, just about anything. They say they **struggle with short attention spans**, thanks in large part to being born in a world of digital immediacy and access. Technologies like **touch screen and voice activation** are base-level standards for Gen Alpha, contributing to their need for immediate results. As of 2026, 40% of children under eight years old had a tablet by age two, and nearly one in four have a personal cellphone by age eight. While they're well-versed in accessing multiple devices or focusing on multiple screens at once, the **unexpected result** is that they now struggle to focus on any one screen-based activity for long amounts of time. Common Sense Media reports that **79% of parents** with kids under eight reported being concerned about screens' impact on children's attention spans.

Along with this shorter attention span, Gen Alpha has high expectations for what should hold their attention. They're "**adept at scanning for information**," so much so that they expect to have to do little more than scan to find what they need to know. With that, they also expect curated, tailored experiences or information to be presented to them. If it's not what they're looking for, just when they look for it, then it's not what they want. Gen Alpha is likely to "**demand resources and experiences** that are highly tailored to them... Algorithms will shape the actions of Gen Alpha."





## How can we support Gen Alpha?

- 1. Care about what they care about.** Gen Alpha values action. Ask questions, learn more, and find ways to get involved with causes they're passionate about.
- 2. Invite them into IRL experiences.** Gen Alpha instinctively reaches for screens and devices to soothe, educate, and entertain themselves. Instead of complaining about their screen time, consider inviting them into a meaningful IRL experience. **Data** shows that Gen Alpha craves in-person experiences, like going to the movies with others instead of streaming alone. Even if they seem to be content in their rooms on their personal devices, offer an embodied experience that includes connection.
- 3. Emphasize authenticity and honesty.** Gen Alpha can sniff out false narratives, dishonesty, and disingenuous sentiments quickly. If we want to build their trust, we have to lead with honesty and authenticity. This authenticity can begin with parents. **Research that tracks families across four generations** has identified three critical factors in parents who successfully pass a faith to the next generation: warm relationships, open conversations, and authentic modeling.
- 4. Reframe the way they see failure.** As this generation works to develop resilience, it's important to let them fail a little. But it's also important to work to reframe the way they see failure. Praise their efforts rather than the outcome, and "**encourage them to think about what they'd do differently next time**" rather than giving them the answers they're looking for quickly and easily.
- 5. Pray for them.** You can never underestimate the power of prayer, especially for your kids and those you care about in the next generation. No matter how young they may be, it's never too early to start praying for a faith that's strong, resilient, and well-rounded to develop in the hearts of your Gen Alpha kids. Try praying *with* your kids, too. One **Gen Alpha study** showed that 34% of participants have recently used a meditation, mindfulness, or prayer app. Facilitate and share that sacred space with your Gen Alpha kids.



# Conclusion

Speaking of prayer, it's our prayer that this guide will help you better understand Gen Alpha as they continue to grow and develop. As you seek to love, understand, and lead the next generation, be patient and compassionate with both yourself and the members of Gen Alpha you care for and serve. Just like you, they're humans made in the image of God navigating life in this broken world.

No matter how much the world changes and advances around Gen Alpha, their need for a Savior—just like our own—remains the same. So let's commit to pointing them toward Him as we disciple, encourage, and show up in their lives.



## Discussion Questions

- What do you see as the greatest strengths of Gen Alpha?
- What do you see as the greatest weaknesses of Gen Alpha?
- What do you think other generations misunderstand about the current generation?
- What do you think Gen Alpha should appreciate about other generations?
- What have you learned from people in other generations?
- What's one thing you think you can learn more about from Gen Alpha?
- What do you think are the best ways to connect with members of Gen Alpha?
- In what ways do you think faith can be helpful or relevant to Gen Alpha?

**What's one way you think people can pray specifically for Gen Alpha as they grow up?**

