# WHAT THE FUTURE PARENTING

How brands can navigate complex parenting styles PAGE 12

How AI can (maybe?) make parenting roles more equal PAGE 16

How climate anxiety is shaping people's decisions to have kids PAGE 19

Tensions that will drive change PAGE 23

Experts from Pew Research, Kinder, Milo, and a professor and podcaster on climate and parenting discuss the macro shifts and challenges for tomorrow's parents

GAME CHANGERS Ip



## Contents



#### INTRO

2 How technology is reshaping family dynamics and parenting in the future

#### SHIFTS

7 The changes in people, markets and society that will shape the future of parenting

#### **TENSIONS**

23 The opinions that will shape the future

#### **FUTURE DESTINATIONS**

25 Future Jobs to Be Done

#### **PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH**

Thought-provoking insights from industry leaders and Ipsos experts

8 How today's parents are raising tomorrow's leaders differently

Pew Research's **Rachel Minkin** explains the state of parenting in a changing world.

11 The futures parents want — and expect — for their children

#### 12 How brands can navigate complex parenting styles

Kinder's **Catherine Bertrac** discusses the market research that the chocolate treat maker conducted to understand evolving parenting types.

15 Why brands should support modern parents against old biases

16 How AI can (maybe?) make parenting roles more equal

Entrepreneur **Avni Patel Thompson** imagines how technology and artificial intelligence can improve how people navigate parenthood.

## 19 How climate anxiety is shaping people's decisions to have kids

Author and professor **Jade Sasser** discusses how and for whom climate factors into parenting.

22 Why parenting leads to greener perspectives (and purchases)

WHAT THE FUTURE | Parenting

# How technology is reshaping family dynamics and parenting in the future

Imagine it's 2034. Parenthood will be different in one critical way: Parents and kids won't be fighting over screens.

Now, don't go getting too excited. Futurists love to talk about the post-screen era, where we don't carry around pocket computers and stare at screens all the time. But that doesn't mean we're going tech-free, just that we'll replace screens with other tech. We're already seeing new screen-free artificial intelligence assistants and transparent LED displays come on the market, so we're not that far off perhaps. So, let's just assume we'll still be fighting over *something* because what are the odds that whatever replaces screens will be less attention-consuming and addictive?

For now, time spent on screens is the No. 1 tension we have with our children, according to Ipsos data and my personal anecdata as a parent of three teens. It ranks higher than getting them to do chores, eat healthy, or do their homework.

New York City has gone so far as to declare social media an "environmental health toxin" due to its impact on children. As we discussed in Teen What the Future, those social media impacts require further study and are unknown at this point.

In our survey for this issue, parents overwhelmingly agree (88%) that monitoring a child's screentime is an important role for themselves. Most (56%) try to limit screen time. And most (83%) think they're doing it pretty well. But they also think that kids spend too much time on screens and not enough learning real social skills (78%) and that it's overwhelming to raise a child in our current age of technology (70%). Half worry that their kids are lonely.

That seems like a lot of contradiction. Psychologists have a term for the human knack for thinking seemingly mutually exclusive things simultaneously: cognitive polyphasia.

There are some other bits of funky looking data in the Future of Parenting study. For instance, 59% say their kids love trying new foods, but another majority (54%) say their kids are picky eaters.

of 18- to 34-year-olds are

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jan. 18-22, 2024, among 850

U.S. adults that are not parents

not parents of children under age 18, nor do they

plan to have any.

of children under 18.)

Parents have conflicting opinions about their kids and technology

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (% Agree)



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jan. 18-22, 2024, among 500 parents of children under age 18.)

Q. When thinking about the cost of raising children...

I want to be a parent, but I'm concerned about the cost of raising a child



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jan. 18-22, 2024, among 114 U.S. adults who don't have children but want them in the future.)

The funkiness makes perfect sense if you have more than one kid. One can eat everything in the buffet, while the other gets to the Jell-O and mac and cheese and parks their plate there. Kids are all different and parents are, too. It's part of what makes parenthood so challenging.

## Today's macro trends portend a challenging future for tomorrow's parents

One study shows that it can cost \$240,000 at minimum to raise a child. Today's parents have seen rollbacks in pandemic-era economic policies that demonstrably made it a little easier to afford parenting. 72% of people who would like to someday have kids said that costs play a role in determining whether they will have kids, and if so, how many. Parents are also living in a complicated landscape based on decades-long trends such as strains on middle-class incomes, a shift to a more car-centric lifestyle, evolving gender roles. We are having fewer children per household and having them later in life.

Tomorrow's parents are ... your kids. Tomorrow's kids are your grandchildren. So, you have a stake in this future, nana and gramps.

Technology, as we've said, is a problem. But it could play into solutions, too. Consider the roles parents play. They are CEOs, chiefs of finance, logistics, procurement, and technology. They are the U.S. secretary of education and a multi-ring circus ringmaster of entertainment. The complexity of parenthood has made it difficult to create tools to help parents manage their roles. Oh yeah, and the parents have jobs, too.

There's hope that generative AI tools can finally be smart enough and flexible enough and able to learn the ins and outs of which kid eats peas and which will eat the frosting off a cupcake, but only if it's a vanilla one, and which playmates are gluten-free, and if mom is traveling for work, it means dad has to do pick-up from lacrosse today.

#### What worries the parents

To be sure, there's no shortage of things for parents to worry about. In an open-ended question, one parent said that they worry about "everything." Three in four think there are more things to worry about than when they were kids. Ipsos asked what their top concerns were and the top two were mental health and bullying. Those were followed by hot-button issues of sexualization of children and trafficking.

#### An ever-shifting landscape

Parenting is ever shifting and varies from culture to culture. Last year a TikTok went viral showing Nordic babies left in their strollers outside in the cold. Totally normal there. Not so much in the U.S.

#### What worries the parents

Q. Which of the following topics do you find the most worrying as a parent for raising your children? / Which of the following topics do you find the most worrying when thinking about possibly raising children in the future? Select up to three. (% Selected)



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jan. 18-22, 2024, among 614 parents of child under 18 or adults who plan to have children in future.)

When my kids were born, my mom handed down a book she had relied on in raising my older sister and me. It started out with some things that seemed odd to me: Two **weeks** was the standard stay in the hospital after the birth. The dad not being allowed into the maternity ward for days. Advice for how mom should cradle the baby in her arms in the passenger seat on the way home so as not to jostle its head against the car door the whole ride, presumably while dropping ashes on it from her menthols. I am exaggerating only slightly.

The stroller I bought cost more than my mom's first car, which (why, God?!?) of course, she still had a receipt for.

This all sounds absurd, but it was best-selling, normal advice. Part of foresight is trying to figure out the things we take for granted today that tomorrow will seem nuts. Or what seems absurd today that maybe actually was a good idea. Was the "cough syrup" my pediatrician recommended — part honey, part lemon juice and part booze — genius?

Today's parents rely on a wide network of sources old and new to learn how to navigate this world. There's no shortage of advice from friends, family, pastors, doctors, influencers, social media, books and podcasts. How do we figure out what to listen to?

Strangers passing by offer words of wisdom like a fellow dad-of-twins who looked at my newborns in their car seats

at a restaurant and shared this chestnut, which I think of more often than I should:

"It's a blessing. Everyone says it's a blessing. I haven't seen the blessing. I think it is just what it is."

All of this opens a lot of opportunities for brands, and tech companies, and content creators to do whatever they can to *simplify* the parental experience.

Parents have so much going on today and signs don't point to anything getting easier. It comes at great personal, professional and financial costs. Parents are always making trade-offs for their time and energy. But as one parent put it in an open-end comment about the costs:

"But my child is worth it."

Sadly, this was an online survey so we can't discern the level of sarcasm in the response. But I'm sure it was purely on the level. Right?



*Matt Carmichael* is editor of What the Future, and a proud dad of three delightful and flawless teens. "Hey, get away from the keyboard, kids!"



under 18 or who plan to have children in future are most worried about access to affordable childcare when thinking about possibly raising children in the future.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jan. 18-22, 2024, among 614 parents of child under 18 or who plan to have children in future.)

Shifts: The changes in people, markets and society that will shape the future of parenting

# Economic stress, multigeneration homes, and digital living



*Trevor Sudano* is a principal at Ipsos Strategy3. trevor.sudano@ipsos.com

**Rising cost of living:** From the cost of housing to education, healthcare, and food, it seems nothing is safe from the increasing costs of daily life. Economic pressures from these realities can profoundly affect parenting. For those that do choose to have children, families might need to further prioritize necessities, possibly curtailing extracurricular activities for children, or limit access to resources and educational opportunities. Parents working longer hours or multiple jobs diminishes quality family time, and interactions may be less than ideal with stressed and overworked parents, possibly affecting children's emotional well-being long-term.

**Intergenerational households:** Intergenerational living, within the context of an aging population, can greatly influence parenting dynamics. It may provide built-in elder wisdom and support, potentially lightening the parenting load and bringing a range of styles and approaches to the household. However, not all aging people will have the strength or abilities to chip in, with some families, and predominately women, shouldering the burden of added responsibility of elder care, stretching parental resources and energy. These arrangements can offer rich cultural and familial learning opportunities for children but will require careful management of generational needs, expectations, and boundaries to maintain harmony and well-being within the family.

**Technology and social media:** While technology has been shaping parenting and childhood for millennia, the recent digitization of our lives and introduction of social media has added a great deal of complexity to family dynamics, with few clear answers. Parents face the challenge of monitoring screen time and content, protecting against cyber threats, and teaching responsible digital citizenship, while trying to glean the educational and enrichment benefits available. Social media can impact children's self-esteem and attention spans, with parents needing to keep close tabs on usage, while also fostering resilience and real-world connections. Striking a balance will be key to ensuring technology serves as a tool for growth rather than a barrier to family engagement and child development.

# How today's parents are raising tomorrow's leaders differently



### Rachel Minkin

Research associate, Pew Research Center

Rachel Minkin is a research associate at the nonpartisan think tank Pew Research Center, a long-time partner with Ipsos. She has contributed to studies on subjects such as parenting, family life trends, gender identity, and the evolving workplace, all of which shape how we approach the task of raising future generations. She sees a shift in parenting methods, compared to past generations, as part of Pew's "<u>Parenting in America Today</u>" report. Here are some of her insights, along with the factors driving this change.



of Americans ages 18-34 say mental health is the most worrying topic as a parent in raising their children or possibly raising their children in the future.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jan. 18-22, 2024, among 494 parents of child under 18 or who plan to have children in the future.)

### What The Future interview with Rachel Minkin

## Kate MacArthur: What was the most interesting finding about where parents are today?

Rachel Minkin: With parents of children under 18, it's striking that 62% say parenting is harder than they expected it to be. We also see that parents emphasize financial independence and job satisfaction as goals for their children when their children are adults over graduating from college, getting married and having children.

#### MacArthur: What was the most dramatic difference between people wanting to parent like they were raised versus not?

Minkin: Roughly as many parents say they're trying to raise their children in a similar way to how they were raised as trying to raise them differently. For those raising their children similarly, some of the largest themes are about passing on values, and religion is included in that. Among those saying they're trying to raise their children differently, 44% mentioned love and their relationship with their children, a sense of openness, sharing emotions, and creating a relationship with their children. Another 32% of parents who say they are raising their children differently mentioned their expectations for behavior and approach to discipline.

#### How parents say they are raising their children similarly to or different from their own upbringing

Among parents who are raising their children in a similar or different way from how they were raised, % who give an answer that falls in each category



(Source: Pew Research Center survey of U.S. parents, conducted on the American Trends Panel, managed by Ipsos, Sept. 20-Oct.2, 2022.)

## MacArthur: Are you able to ascertain any societal shifts that might be driving those differences?

Minkin: A lot of those who said they were raising their children differently mention the type of behavior and discipline that they grew up with is not an approach they want with their children. Some mentions of gentle parenting and different approaches had come up in the responses.

## MacArthur: How do the parents' ages shape their parenting styles?

Minkin: Parents under 30 are more likely than older parents to be overprotective. But at least some of these differences could be driven by the age of their children. Parents 50 and older are more likely than other age groups to say they're raising their children somewhat or very similarly to how they were raised.

## MacArthur: How might evolving gender roles or gender differences reflect in the parenting styles?

Minkin: We didn't find a difference between mothers who work for pay and mothers who don't work for pay for responses about finding parenting to be stressful. One might look for that there. Mothers tend to say they do more than their spouse or partner in opposite-sex relationships, while fathers tend to say they share responsibilities about equally. Majorities of mothers say they do more when it comes to managing their children's schedule and activities, helping their children with homework or other school assignments, providing comfort or emotional support to their children and meeting their children's basic needs among those with children younger than age 5.

## MacArthur: How might non-traditional families shape the bigger picture?

Minkin: Both married and cohabiting parents and parents who aren't married or cohabiting prioritize financial independence and career satisfaction for their children. They see those as very important, more so than the other things we asked about. But those who are married are the more likely to say it's extremely or very important that their children get married when they're older.

#### MacArthur: What's the biggest question you have about the future of parenting from the "Parenting in America Today" study?

Minkin: Thinking about all the things that parents could worry about for their children, seeing that 40% are extremely or very worried their children will struggle with anxiety or depression is a key finding.

Kate MacArthur is managing editor of What the Future.

"Thinking about all the things that parents could worry about for their children, seeing that 40% are extremely or very worried their children will struggle with anxiety or depression is a key finding."

## The futures parents want and expect — for their children

For all their differences, parents in the U.S. share common hopes (and fears) about their kids' futures, as revealed by a recent lpsos ethnographic study of parents of school-aged children.

Parents' wishes and worries don't just shape how they spend their time and money, but how they view brands and institutions. That means businesses and policymakers alike should be paying close attention.

In Ipsos' study, most parents said their children's happiness was the most important thing. But that optimism is tempered by age-old anxieties around racism, and the pressures of a competitive world, from the classroom to the workforce.

To address these problems and meet these needs, businesses should go beyond the data and listen to what parents have to say, in their own words. It's often real stories that shape the most powerful and effective policies and marketing.



**Sheena Singh** is a sociocultural anthropologist with Ipsos' Ethnography Center of Excellence. sheena.singh@ipsos.com *"I hope that they can be able to experience a world where that speech Martin Luther King [Jr.] gave, might ring true a little bit."* 

Dunnovan, 46, Georgia, two children, ages 8 & 5

*"It's going to be times where it's not going to go his way or it's not going to be fair, so we're going to have to prepare for it."* 

Parris, 43, Texas, one child, age 9

"I just want him to never feel stuck [...] and know that any of his interests he can change, and that's not the biggest deal." Cirene, 36, Texas, one child, age 14

(Source: Ipsos ECE Parents & Education Research)

# How brands can navigate complex parenting styles



### Catherine Bertrac

Senior vice president of marketing, Kinder

As we emerged from the pandemic, the parenting landscape was complicated, to say the least. It was a challenging time to bring a global brand into a new market like the U.S. So, Ferrero's Kinder Chocolate brand worked with Ipsos on a segmentation to understand today's parents. And what they learned portends an increasingly complicated landscape of parenting in the future.



of parents agree that kids should get the chance to be kids.

(Source: Kinder Chocolate Parenting study conducted by Ipsos July 10-20, 2023, among 1,500 U.S. parents of children ages 3 to 12.)

### What The Future interview with Catherine Bertrac

## Matt Carmichael: As a marketer, why is it important to understand parents?

Catherine Bertrac: When Ferrero wanted to launch Kinder in the United States, we saw that parents have evolved. We used to have three types of parents: traditional authoritarian parents, permissible parents and some parents that were in between. But through the study, we discovered that there were more complex attitudes and behaviors in parenting, and the group of authoritarian parents is really small now.

#### Carmichael: How does that shape your strategy?

Bertrac: We see the importance of communication between the parents and kids and the transversal groups, and the importance of having fun together. It's a playful moment for parents to connect with their kids. We developed a marketing strategy and a communication platform that leverages this to shape a new approach of showing kids and parents interacting together.

## Carmichael: How can that lead to product innovation?

Bertrac: We have Kinder Joy, which is a product combining a treat and a toy. It could inform the way we design the toys, for instance, or select the right toys according to what parents are interested in.

#### How parenting styles and candy intersect for modern child-rearing

How parenting priorities, philosophies, and the role candy plays in their child's life shapes parenting approaches among parents of children ages 3 to 12.



(Source: Kinder Chocolate Parenting study conducted by Ipsos July 10-20, 2023, among 1,500 U.S. parents of children ages 3 to 12.)

#### Carmichael: What else was important to parents?

Bertrac: Parents in the U.S. are very keen on creating happy memories in the sense of "I need to create a happy childhood and happy memories," because this is how we build a better adult in the future. And this is particularly strong, and parents are able to do that in the U.S. They're not shy about it.

## Carmichael: That's interesting since food has such connection to memories.

Bertrac: The ritual is important, but so is creating happy memories through new things. Gen Z parents want to share new experiences with the kids, with new brands and products and have kids discover more things and experience different tastes.

#### Carmichael: It's like instant nostalgia.

Bertrac: You don't need to wait for 25 years to have the generation change in order to have this brand be relevant for U.S. families.

## Carmichael: How are different segments of parents dealing with reward and treats differently?

Bertrac: All parents use treats and chocolate. It's a moment of joy that every kind of parent is authorizing for the kids. It depends on the frequencies and the way you

use the treat. The treat is a reward, of course. But it's also sharing a moment of joy. So, the parents eat it as well, the same way they jump into play with the kids.

#### Carmichael: Is the broadening of segments partially also a reflection of kind of the fragmentation of society and the complexity of being a parent today?

Bertrac: Demographics and societal evolution is generating this kind of clusterization. And Gen Z's access to digital tools is changing their way of living and how they're addressing their priorities in life and family. Gen Z parents really want to raise their kids a different way. They don't want to play the same role model that their parents played for them.

#### Carmichael: What other complexities arise?

Bertrac: When you're in a couple, you may not have the same style of parenting because not everybody's the same. It could be because of your background or your gender or you just have a different approach. How parents combine different styles is not easy. And the style may change according to the age of the kids.

Matt Carmichael is editor of What the Future.

"Gen Z parents really want to raise their kids a different way. They don't want to play the same role model that their parents played for them." WHAT THE FUTURE | Parenting

# Why brands should support modern parents against old biases

Americans are often told by businesses and brands that dated gender roles are firmly in the past, but when it comes to raising a family, not all parents feel that same support.

Ipsos data indicates that many American parents think businesses have further to go. Even as broader views on gender evolve in the U.S., outdated prejudices can persist in the workplace. Nearly two in five Americans agree that having childcare responsibilities come up during the working day is more likely to damage the career of a woman, while almost a quarter of American men say a man who stays home to look after his children is less of a man.

That means that brands and businesses looking to promote ESG to buttress their reputations should start by looking inward — and implement gender-neutral policies that reflect and encourage equal opportunities, like paternal and caregiver leave.

In a social age, employees are increasingly visible (and vocal) as brand ambassadors — so businesses should ensure that their workers' experiences match their brand's public-facing values.



*Melissa Dunne* is a senior data journalist for Ipsos' Global Advisor team. melissa.dunne@ipsos.com

of Americans say having childcare responsibilities come up during the working day is more likely to damage the career of a woman.

(Source: Ipsos Global Advisor's International Women's Day 2022 report. 20,542 people across 30 countries polled Jan. 21, 2022 – Feb. 4, 2022.)

#### Intro I Shifts I Perspectives and research | Tensions | Future destination

## How AI can (maybe?) make parenting roles more equal



## Avni Patel Thompson

#### Founder, Milo

Parenting is a complicated set of logistics, finance, procurement, education, entertainment and more logistics. It is ripe for simplification. More often than not, moms bear more of that burden. Avni Patel Thompson is parent to 9- and 11-year-old daughters. She's leading a company backed by OpenAI and Y Combinator called Milo, which aims to be your one-stop AI assistant and co-pilot for managing your parenting life. She hopes it can ease the "invisible load" moms bear and make it easier for families to coordinate.



of parents with children at home want Al to make life easier.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jan. 18-22, 2024, among 500 U.S. adults with children in the household.)

## What The Future interview with Avni Patel Thompson

## Matt Carmichael: What is different about parenting vs. general busy adulting?

Avni Patel Thompson: Parenting looks more like specialized knowledge akin to medicine or architecture or law. We need to think about the invisible dependencies.

## Carmichael: What can a tool like Milo solve for busy parents?

Patel Thompson: The invisible load, which for me and my husband would feel like we have another someone in our family unit whose sole responsibility is scanning all these different things and staying on top of [them] as a parent would. But the question is what needs to be done with that? What is that logic? What is the intuition and understanding of the parenting experience?

#### Carmichael: What is "the invisible load"?

Patel Thompson: In my family, I carry the greatest weight in terms of meals. I have to figure out what are the dinners for next week? What are the lunches? If AI can help me figure out what the meals are, then what's the grocery list that needs to come out of it? Then actually having someone go to the grocery store and get those things. It is absolutely a task that takes up time.

#### Parents mostly feel like they trade self time for parent time

Q. As a parent, which of the following, if any, do you feel like you miss out on most specifically due to the time spent raising children?



Child(ren) in household - under 5 - Child(ren) in household - ages 5 - 13 - Child(ren) in household - ages 14 - 17

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jan. 18-22, 2024, among 500 parents of children under age 18.)

## Carmichael: Do you think the invisible load is generally shared equally?

Patel Thompson: Generally speaking, women's brains are being used as the computers to run all these things: holding the information, reminding people and anticipating all this stuff. We can build that tool with the logic and the database and it's something that everyone can equally access.

#### Carmichael: What does a solution look like?

Patel Thompson: When I'm talking to parents, it turns into half a therapy session. I'm not surprised anymore because we have no other choice. We don't have good tools for collaboration. I don't have a good way to tell my husband what the meal plan is for next week because I hold it in my head. If he wants to help on groceries, there's no other place for this conversation to end up other than one of frustration because if you want to do grocery shopping, you have to take on the rest of the things. It is absolutely a task that takes up time. There are lots of different ways to purchase a banana. You could use Instacart, you could send someone to the store. But there aren't nearly enough ways to help on the upstream part of thinking through all those other pieces. We are singularly focused on how to create one place that everyone can access that isn't my brain, my inbox.

#### Carmichael: How can Al personalize dividing labor?

Patel Thompson: We think about parent intuition and Milo getting better and better about how it understand a problem like school lunches with more nuance. It's important to understand geographic or cultural differences. Lunches might be done differently in this part of the country or this part of the world. From a parent standpoint, we all care the same way, and we all have picky eaters in the same way, but how that shows up in our part of the world and our culture is different.

#### Carmichael: We'll still need actual parents, right?

Patel Thompson: We're seeing the results of a lot of software and technology making our lives feel increasingly efficient and productive. But also devoid of the good friction that makes us human. There's a lot of human interactions that we have stripped out of the system. I love the fact that I have the option to go on Amazon and have toothpaste arrive on my door tonight. I love the option of having DoorDash come to my door when the kids are hungry, and I don't have time. But I also want to live in a world where our technology enables us to have all this stuff run in the background but then also allows me to go be more human with my people. I'm trying to figure out what's the balance and what's our role in enabling some of that.

Matt Carmichael is editor of What the Future.

"Parenting looks more like specialized knowledge akin to medicine or architecture or law. We need to think about the invisible dependencies."

# How climate anxiety is shaping people's decisions to have kids



### Jade Sasser

Podcaster; associate professor, University of California, Riverside

The world is increasingly complicated to navigate as a parent, and more people are choosing to delay or avoid becoming parents at all. Climate change is the latest reason why, says Jade Sasser, an associate professor of Gender and Sexuality Studies at the University of California, Riverside. She hosts a podcast on the issue and has a forthcoming book dropping in April called "Climate Anxiety and the Kid Question: Deciding Whether to Have Children in an Uncertain Future." Here's how it's shaping people's family planning decisions.



of U.S. adults ages 18-35, including 16% of Black adults, have chosen to delay or not have children in the last two years because they're worried about climate change.

(Source: The Ipsos Consumer Tracker conducted Feb. 6-7, 2024, among 610 U.S. adults ages 18-49.)

FOLLOW YOUR NOT YOUR POLITICIAN!

BURNING

OUR FUTURE!

### What The Future interview with Jade Sasser

## Kate MacArthur: How does climate change shape the decisions people are making about having kids?

Jade Sasser: There are a lot of decisions that young people are making about having kids. Most are not specifically about climate change. However, when it does come to climate change, more young people, especially in Generation Z, are saying, "I don't know if I can bring children into this climate disaster."

## MacArthur: So how does climate anxiety weigh on people's decision making?

Sasser: The decision to have a child and to raise them doesn't mean that you're not concerned about issues in the world, including climate change. It means you have chosen to have a child amid navigating those feelings.

## MacArthur: What about the biological drive to have children?

Sasser: What I am finding in my research is not that people don't want children. They're now asking these moral and ethical questions, which basically boil down to this: If we know that the climate is continuing to change and will get worse in the future, how can we bring a child into that knowing that that is the case? That's what it comes down to.

#### Reasons for delaying or deciding against having a child

Q. In the past two years, have you delayed or decided against having a child or more children for any of the following reasons or not? (% Yes)





#### MacArthur: In your research, women of color overindex on wanting fewer children because of climate concerns. Can you explain why?

Sasser: I have a book coming out April 9th. It is called "Climate Anxiety and the Kid Question: Deciding Whether to Have Children in an Uncertain Future," and that gets at some of those qualitative questions. There have been studies that have shown that communities of color tend to be more vulnerable to harsher climate impacts and tend to be less likely to receive the necessary support to recover and be resilient in the wake of a disaster. I wouldn't be surprised if that is factoring into some of these decisions that women of color are making.

#### MacArthur: In scenario planning, we consider extreme outcomes, like the world's going to end or we're going to be fine. What does that mean for how we talk about climate change?

Sasser: We have to understand that we are not fine right now.

#### MacArthur: If we're not fine now, are we too late?

Sasser: No. It is never too late. The situation is not hopeless. And we cannot fight or solve the issue of climate change alone as individuals. I firmly believe in the power of groups and community organizing and holding our elected leaders accountable.

## MacArthur: What's going to make a difference for potential parents who are having climate anxiety?

Sasser: They're going to need to see that there are resources available to them so that they don't have to feel that they're the only ones struggling with their climate anxieties by themselves. That's also the reason why there are more climate-aware therapists because there is more of a need for climate-aware therapy. Also though, we need to hear more from people who are parents and who have become parents while navigating climate anxiety. Becoming a parent is not something that you do after you have solved all your climate anxiety issues and have now become confident that you can parent without your child ever experiencing climate change. What is more likely to make people feel comfortable about this set of issues is to understand that people are navigating climate anxiety and becoming parents all the time.

## MacArthur: So, how do parents raise their kids dealing with both of their climate anxiety?

Sasser: They won't be able to avoid the issue. They'll also have to be sensitive that the facts about climate change, and the experience of living through strong climate impacts, can cause their children to have emotional reactions, including fear, uncertainty, or even anxiety. It will be important for parents to help their children navigate these feelings.

Kate MacArthur is managing editor of What the Future.

## "We have to understand that we are not fine right now."



#### Intro I Shifts I Perspectives and research I Tensions I Future destinations

# Why parenting leads to greener perspectives (and purchases)

Having kids doesn't just change parents' social lives and sleep patterns: It changes how they view the world. Ipsos research suggests this makes them more likely to act on environmental values.

When it comes to their spending, many consumers fail to act on their stated beliefs — what Ipsos calls a "say-do gap." But a recent Ipsos survey of affluent Americans (those with a household income of \$125k or more) suggests that parents are more likely to close that gap and spend in line with their environmental priorities.

Compared with non-parents, affluent parents were more likely to consider a hybrid car, purchase locally grown food, or seek out eco-friendly products.

Regardless of whether they have kids (or a high salary), more Americans than ever are concerned about the planet. But brands should understand that these values have an outsized impact on affluent parents — and that their purchases influence others in their communities.



Alicia Levers is an account manager at Ipsos. alicia.levers@ipsos.com

## Affluent parents are more likely to hold green beliefs than affluent non-parents

Q. For each of the following statements about your attitudes and opinions about yourself, please select the box that indicates the extent to which you, yourself, agree or disagree with that statement.



Q. To which, if any, of the following organizations do you, yourself, belong?



(Source: Spring 2023 Ipsos Affluent Survey USA, HH Income \$125K+)

## Will money or climate shape whether to have kids?

Most people think that climate change will lead to a tougher future for today's kids and that it will be harder to afford to have children, both of which are likely scenarios without some major tech and policy shifts. But say we do turn things around? What could those better worlds look like? Here are some ideas.



#### TODAY'S CHILDREN WILL FACE MORE SEVERE CLIMATE CHALLENGES

## Tensions that will drive change: Family time or generational wealth?

Today more people say they want to be able to pass on wealth to their children. We're a little more torn on whether we want to spend more time at the office or home (and there are no doubt days every parent thinks, "a little less time with the kids sounds great right now."). But what happens if those tensions shift? Here are four scenarios:

I WANT TO PASS ON WEALTH



one side of this tension (passing on wealth) drives the other side because to earn wealth, we focus on our careers more, even if it means spending less time with our kids. But as lifespans increase, passing on generational wealth, if it works out, happens much later in the offspring's adulthood, giving a steep upfront cost (time with kids) for a very delayed payoff.

**ADVANCING IN MY CAREER IS MY TOP GOAL RIGHT NOW** 

we outsource most of our child-rearing through the service economy and increasingly with AI assistants for scheduling, teaching, meal planning, and more. Moving up the corporate ladder is time-consuming. In many ways, parents are modeling the behavior they want for their children: "Learn to fend for yourself, kiddos, and grow up fast."

## **Future Jobs to Be Done**

**Ipsos spins the traditional "Jobs to Be Done" framework forward with future Jobs to Be Done (fJTBD).** This builds on the theory that people buy products and services to fulfill certain needs or accomplish specific tasks. For example, we don't buy a baby monitor; we hire it to help us keep an eye on our babies as they sleep and to give us peace of mind so that we can sleep. We don't buy our kids jackets; we hire them to help our kids be fashionable, express themselves, and keep them warm.

To bring it into the future, we envision powerful and plausible scenarios through strategic foresight. While many needs are enduring and do not change over time, the context of that job will change along with the potential solutions and alternatives. These scenarios help us define the circumstances in which people may find themselves, like considering how to balance providing for their children with affording daycare and life expenses vs. actually being there for them. We use fJTBD to tie these scenarios to actions that organizations can take to help people meet future needs.

While it's typical in foresight to create fJTBD clusters, we're sharing one scenario here as an example.

*Philip Ryan* is the managing partner at Ipsos Strategy3. philip.ryan@ipsos.com

## Help me take care of my family, our present and our future

In a world where our population is rapidly aging, the roles of family members have shifted as more households are multi-generational ones. Parents are working more than ever with grandparents taking on more of a daily caregiving role for their grandkids. Of course, parents don't want to be left out of rearing our most precious resource: our kids.

Potential fJTBD:

- Help me be fully present at the key daily and life moments of my kids
- Help me seamlessly shift between work mode, parent mode and elder caregiver mode
- Prevent me from missing out on anything important (work promotions, kids' milestones, unexpected curveballs, etc.)

Imagine a world where ... adults of working ages are needed to power our economy *and* pay for increasingly unaffordable day care and elder care. In this world, there are more multigenerational households where everyone has a key role to play.

For full results and methodology, visit future.ipsos.com and subscribe to our newsletter to receive our next issue of What the Future

What the Future is produced by the Ipsos Trends & Foresight Lab

Newsletter Ben Meyerson he/him

> Copy editing Zoe Galland

Web James De Los Santos

Survey design Mallory Newall she/her, Johnny Sawyer

**Survey execution** Melissa Kordik, Rachel Franz, Loren Mastracci she/her

Stephen Geary he/him Graphics

Art director

Avalon Leonetti they/them,

Kahren Kim she/her

Editor Matt Carmichael he/him

**Deputy editor** Kate MacArthur she/her

Staff writer Christopher Good he/him



www.ipsos.com/en-us