

Methodology

Pew Research Center has long studied changes in parenting and family dynamics, as well as in the adoption of digital technologies. This analysis of parents' experiences with and attitudes about their children's tech use is based on data from 1,681 parents who had at least one child age 11 or younger as of March 2020 and participated in two surveys conducted on the Center's American Trends Panel (ATP) between spring 2020 and 2021 – coinciding with the first year of the coronavirus outbreak.

The first survey was ATP Wave 63, conducted March 2-15, 2020, among 3,640 U.S. parents who had at least one child age 17 or younger as of that time. It included interviews with 2,647 parents of at least one child age 11 or younger, of which 2,201 belonged to the ATP, and 446 were oversampled from Ipsos' KnowledgePanel. For a portion of the survey, parents were asked questions about one of their children's use of the internet and electronic devices. Parents with more than one child age 11 or younger were randomly assigned to answer about either their oldest or youngest child in that age range.

The second survey was ATP Wave 88, fielded April 12-18, 2021, on which a series of follow-up questions were asked of ATP respondents to Wave 63 who had a child age 11 or younger in March 2020. All such panelists that remained active ATP members, 1,980 in total, were invited to participate in Wave 88. A total of 1,786 responded to the survey overall, and the follow-up questions were administered to 1,681 who said they were comfortable answering questions about the same child as before. These 1,681 parents who answered questions about their child in both surveys are the focus of this report.

See the survey methodologies for [Wave 63](#) and [Wave 88](#) for additional details about these waves.

Weighting

The data used in this report was weighted in a multistep process that accounts for multiple stages of sampling and nonresponse that occur at different points in the survey process. First, each panelist begins with a base weight that reflects their probability of selection for their initial recruitment survey. The base weights for panelists recruited in different years are scaled to be proportionate to the effective sample size for all active panelists in their cohort and then calibrated to align with population benchmarks to correct for nonresponse to recruitment surveys and panel attrition. This process was applied to the full sample of respondents to Wave 88 and is described in the [survey methodology](#). These weights were then adjusted to account for each panelist's probability of selection for both Wave 63 and Wave 88.

Among those who responded to both surveys, including those whose children were all older than 11 in Wave 63, these weights were calibrated to align with the population benchmarks listed in the accompanying table and trimmed at the 1st and 99th percentiles to reduce the loss in precision stemming from variance in the weights. These are the same population benchmarks that were originally used for Wave 63 and are intended to represent the population of parents with one or more children ages 17 or younger who lived in their household as of March 2020. This was done because many of the benchmarks used in weighting are unavailable for the subset of parents with children 11 and younger. Respondents who said they were not comfortable answering questions about the same child as in Wave 63 were treated as nonrespondents. Sampling errors and tests of statistical significance take into account the effect of weighting.

Because this analysis includes only those panelists who responded to both Wave 63 and Wave 88, some 2020 estimates reported in this analysis differ slightly from those published in [prior Pew Research Center publications](#), which are based on all Wave 63 respondents.

Weighting dimensions

Variable	Benchmark source
Gender	2018 American Community Survey
Age	
Education	
Race/Hispanic origin	
Country of birth among Hispanics	
Home internet access	
Number and age(s) of children in the household	
Region x Metropolitan status	2019 CPS March Supplement
Volunteerism	2017 CPS Volunteering & Civic Life Supplement
Voter registration	2018 CPS Voting and Registration Supplement
Party affiliation	Average of the three most recent Pew Research Center telephone surveys.

Note: Estimates from the ACS are based on non-institutionalized adults. Voter registration is calculated using procedures from Hur, Achen (2013) and rescaled to include the total US adult population.

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The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey.

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Parents of a child who was age 11 or younger in March 2020	1,681	4.2 percentage points
Parents of a child who was age 0 to 4 in March 2020	613	6.4 percentage points
Parents of a child who was age 5 to 11 in March 2020	1,058	5.5 percentage points

Note: Unweighted sample sizes do not account for the sample design or weighting and do not describe a group's contribution to weighted estimates. See the weighting section above for details.

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request. In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**2021 PEW RESEARCH CENTER'S AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL
WAVE 88 APRIL 2021
FINAL TOPLINE
APRIL 12-18, 2021
N=1,681**

THE QUESTIONS PRESENTED BELOW ARE PART OF A LARGER SURVEY CONDUCTED ON THE AMERICAN TRENDS PANEL. OTHER QUESTIONS ON THIS SURVEY HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY RELEASED OR ARE BEING HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE.

NOTE: ALL NUMBERS ARE PERCENTAGES UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. THE PERCENTAGES LESS THAN 0.5% ARE REPLACED BY AN ASTERISK (*). ROWS/COLUMNS MAY NOT TOTAL 100% DUE TO ROUNDING.

	Sample size	Margin of error at 95% confidence level
U.S. parents of a child who was age 11 or younger in March 2020	1,681	+/- 4.2 percentage points

DISPLAY IF PARENT IS STILL COMFORTABLE ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHILD WAVE 63 FOCUSED ON (KIDCONFIRM=1) [N=1,681]:¹

The next set of questions are about this same child. When answering, please think specifically about that child and choose the answers that apply only to them.

¹ KIDCONFIRM was asked of 1,786 parents who were part of Wave 63 in March 2020 and had a child age 11 or younger in that survey, reminding them of which child the first survey asked specific questions about: "About a year ago, we asked you some questions about your [FILL WITH XCHILDDDESC: (YOUNGEST child/OLDEST child age 11 or younger) and their use of the internet and technology. At that time, this child was an (AGE) year old (boy/girl)]. We'd now like to ask you some follow-up questions about this same child to learn how things might have changed over the past year. Are you still comfortable answering questions about this child?" Parents who said no or did not answer KIDCONFIRM were not shown the questions asking about this child. Because this analysis includes only those panelists who responded to both Wave 63 and Wave 88, some 2020 estimates reported in this analysis differ slightly from those published in prior Pew Research Center publications, which are based on all Wave 63 respondents.

**ASK IF PARENT IS STILL COMFORTABLE ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHILD WAVE 63
FOCUSED ON (KIDCONFIRM=1) [N=1,681]:**

CHILDTECH As far as you know, does your child ever use or interact with the following types of devices, even if just to watch videos or listen to music? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	Yes, my child uses or interacts with <u>this</u>	No, my child does not use or <u>interact with this</u>	<u>No answer</u>
NO ITEMS a-b			
c. A tablet computer			
Apr 12-18, 2021	81	19	0
Mar 2-15, 2020	68	32	*
d. A game console or portable game device			
Apr 12-18, 2021	51	49	*
Mar 2-15, 2020	45	55	*
NO ITEM e			
f. A smartphone			
Apr 12-18, 2021	71	29	*
Mar 2-15, 2020	63	37	*

DISPLAY IF PARENT IS STILL COMFORTABLE ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHILD WAVE 63 FOCUSED ON (KIDCONFIRM=1) [N=1,681]:

Still thinking about that same child ...

ASK IF PARENT IS STILL COMFORTABLE ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHILD WAVE 63 FOCUSED ON (KIDCONFIRM=1) [N=1,681]:

CHILDSOCIAL As far as you know, does this child ever use ... **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS BUT ITEM E SHOULD ALWAYS BE LAST]**

	Yes, my child uses <u>this</u>	No, my child <u>does not use this</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Facebook			
Apr 12-18, 2021	7	92	1
Mar 2-15, 2020	3	97	*
b. Instagram			
Apr 12-18, 2021	7	92	1
Mar 2-15, 2020	4	96	*
c. Snapchat			
Apr 12-18, 2021	10	90	1
Mar 2-15, 2020	9	91	*
d. TikTok			
Apr 12-18, 2021	21	79	*
Mar 2-15, 2020	13	87	*
e. Other social media site			
Apr 12-18, 2021	17	82	1
Mar 2-15, 2020	8	91	*

ASK IF PARENT IS STILL COMFORTABLE ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHILD WAVE 63 FOCUSED ON (KIDCONFIRM=1) AND (CHILD USES A SMARTPHONE (CHILDTECHF=1) OR CHILD USES SOCIAL MEDIA (CHILDSOCIALa-e=1) OR CHILD USES VIDEOGAMES (CHILDTECHd=1)):

CHILDTIME Overall, how much time would you say this child spends ... **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS; RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1 AND 2, WITH OPTION 3 ALWAYS LAST; SHOW RESPONSES IN SAME ORDER FOR ITEMS A-C]**

	Too much <u>time</u>	Too little <u>time</u>	About the right amount <u>of time</u>	<u>No answer</u>
ASK IF PARENT IS STILL COMFORTABLE (KIDCONFIRM=1) AND CHILD USES SMARTPHONE (CHILDTECHF=1) [N=1,185]:				
a. On a smartphone				
Apr 12-18, 2021	36	9	55	*
Mar 2-15, 2020	26	13	60	1
ASK IF PARENT IS STILL COMFORTABLE (KIDCONFIRM=1) AND CHILD USES SOCIAL MEDIA (CHILDSOCIALa-e=1) [N=556]:				
b. On social media sites				
Apr 12-18, 2021	24	16	56	3
Mar 2-15, 2020	20	21	57	2
ASK IF PARENT IS STILL COMFORTABLE (KIDCONFIRM=1) AND CHILD USES VIDEOGAMES (CHILDTECHd=1) [N=890]:				
c. Playing video games				
Apr 12-18, 2021	44	7	49	0
Mar 2-15, 2020	27	11	61	1

CHILDTIME BASED ON PARENTS WHO WERE STILL COMFORTABLE ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHILD WAVE 63 FOCUSED ON AND WHOSE CHILD USED EACH TECHNOLOGY IN BOTH WAVE 63 AND WAVE 88:

CHILDTIME Overall, how much time would you say this child spends ... [RANDOMIZE ITEMS; RANDOMIZE RESPONSE OPTIONS 1 AND 2, WITH OPTION 3 ALWAYS LAST; SHOW RESPONSES IN SAME ORDER FOR ITEMS A-C]

	Too much <u>time</u>	Too little <u>time</u>	About the right amount <u>of time</u>	<u>No answer</u>
ASK IF PARENT IS STILL COMFORTABLE (KIDCONFIRM=1) AND CHILD USED SMARTPHONE IN BOTH WAVE 63 AND WAVE 88 (CHILDTECHf=1) [N=924]:				
a. On a smartphone				
Apr 12-18, 2021	42	6	52	*
Mar 2-15, 2020	28	13	58	1

ITEM b NOT SHOWN²

ASK IF PARENT IS STILL COMFORTABLE (KIDCONFIRM=1) AND CHILD USED VIDEOGAMES IN BOTH WAVE 63 AND WAVE 88 (CHILDTECHd=1) [N=633]:

c. Playing video games				
Apr 12-18, 2021	51	5	45	0
Mar 2-15, 2020	31	8	61	*

² There were not enough parents of a child age 11 or younger who said their child used social media in both waves to report results for CHILDTIMEb - "on social media sites" - for this base.

ASK IF PARENT IS STILL COMFORTABLE ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHILD WAVE 63 FOCUSED ON (KIDCONFIRM=1) AND CHILD WAS AGE 5-11 IN WAVE 63 (XW63CHILD511=1) [N=1,058]:

MONITOR Do you ever do any of the following things? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	<u>Yes, I do this</u>	<u>No, I do not do this</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. Check the websites this child visits or the mobile apps they use			
Apr 12-18, 2021	84	16	*
Mar 2-15, 2020	78	22	1
b. Take away this child's smartphone or internet privileges as punishment			
Apr 12-18, 2021	74	26	*
Mar 2-15, 2020	81	18	1
c. Limit the times of day or length of time when this child can use screens			
Apr 12-18, 2021	78	22	*
Mar 2-15, 2020	86	13	*

ASK IF PARENT IS STILL COMFORTABLE ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHILD WAVE 63 FOCUSED ON (KIDCONFIRM=1) [N=1,681]:

ALLOWED In general, are you OK with this child using mobile devices, like a smartphone or tablet computer, during any of the following times? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	<u>Yes, I would allow this</u>	<u>No, I would not allow this</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. While dining with family at home			
Apr 12-18, 2021	15	85	*
Mar 2-15, 2020	11	89	*
b. While dining out with family at a restaurant			
Apr 12-18, 2021	29	70	*
Mar 2-15, 2020	28	71	*
c. Just before bedtime			
Apr 12-18, 2021	42	58	1
Mar 2-15, 2020	35	65	*
d. While they are a passenger in your car			
Apr 12-18, 2021	81	19	*
Mar 2-15, 2020	80	20	*

ALLOWED BASED ON PARENTS STILL COMFORTABLE ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHILD WAVE 63 FOCUSED ON (KIDCONFIRM=1) AND CHILD WAS AGE 5-11 IN WAVE 63 (XW63CHILD511=1) [N=1,058]:

ALLOWED In general, are you OK with this child using mobile devices, like a smartphone or tablet computer, during any of the following times? **[RANDOMIZE ITEMS]**

	Yes, I would allow <u>this</u>	No, I would not <u>allow this</u>	<u>No answer</u>
a. While dining with family at home			
Apr 12-18, 2021	13	87	*
Mar 2-15, 2020	13	87	*
b. While dining out with family at a restaurant			
Apr 12-18, 2021	24	75	*
Mar 2-15, 2020	24	76	*
c. Just before bedtime			
Apr 12-18, 2021	48	51	1
Mar 2-15, 2020	41	59	*
d. While they are a passenger in your car			
Apr 12-18, 2021	87	13	*
Mar 2-15, 2020	88	12	*