

# Gen Alpha in 2025: Identity, Digital Influence & Purchasing Power

This report was created using ChatGPT's Deep Research on March 15, 2025 using the following prompt:

*Research: Gen Alpha: Identity, Digital Influence & Purchasing Power\*\*\_(Who they are, how they engage digitally, and how they impact consumer behavior.)\_ - \*\*Core Demographics & Psychographics\*\*: Defining traits, values, and generational shifts. - \*\*Media Consumption & Digital Habits\*\*: Platforms, content preferences, AI/gaming engagement. - \*\*Social & Cultural Perspectives\*\*: Inclusivity, social causes, and authority. - \*\*Path to Purchase & Brand Influence\*\*: - How they discover brands (YouTube, TikTok, influencers, gaming). - The role of parents vs. peers in purchase decisions. - Emotional drivers—what makes something “cool” or “must-have.” - Brand loyalty vs. impulse buying.*

## Core Demographics & Psychographics

Generation Alpha comprises those born roughly 2010 through 2025, making them the children and pre-teens of today ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)). In the U.S., they number around 45 million and are on track to be the most diverse generation in history ([Generation Alpha: Online Habits and Media Preferences by the Numbers - Basis Technologies](#)). Nearly half of American Gen Alpha kids are non-white ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)), and most are being raised by Millennial parents (earning them nicknames like “mini millennials” for mirroring parental habits) ([Generation Alpha: Online Habits and Media Preferences by the Numbers - Basis Technologies](#)). This cohort is poised to outnumber Boomers by 2025, and many will be highly educated – an estimated 90% will finish high school and about half are expected to earn college degrees ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)).

**Values & Traits:** Despite their young age, Gen Alpha displays strong values and a unique outlook. Altruism and empathy are core: when asked what’s important in life, 61% of Gen Alpha (8–15 years old) said **helping people** – with **protecting others from bullying** (51%) and **everyone being treated equally** (51%) also ranking high ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)). Over 30% of Gen Alpha say they dream of careers that help people or the planet, reflecting a desire to “make a difference” from an early age ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)). They have a pronounced **social consciousness**; researchers describe them as the most ethos-driven youth segment seen, caring about issues like fairness and sustainability even as kids ([What's Driving Gen Alpha Shopping Behaviors? - The Robin Report](#))

([Impero Research Shows Gen A More Likely to Copy Their Friends than an Influencer or an Advertisement | LBBOnline](#)). Inclusivity is essentially a given – **84%** of Gen Alpha in one survey believe people’s chosen **pronouns should be respected**, championing everyone’s right to express who they are ([New Research From Cassandra by Big Village Dives Into The Values and Identity of “Gen Alpha” | Big Village](#)). This fluid, open-minded attitude extends to how they see identity and diversity in their friendships: most 13-year-old Alphas report having close friends of a different race or background ([New Data from our Study on Gen Alpha - Springtide Research Institute](#)).

**Generational Shifts:** Unlike prior generations of youth, Gen Alpha tends to *aspire to be like their parents* rather than rebel against them ([What's Driving Gen Alpha Shopping Behaviors? - The Robin Report](#)). Growing up with convention-challenging Millennial parents who encourage openness, they’ve experienced a more dialog-friendly upbringing. There’s less of a strict hierarchy – for instance, many Alphas have witnessed adults (including their parents) candidly discuss mental health and life struggles, and they *respect* this transparency ([What's Driving Gen Alpha Shopping Behaviors? - The Robin Report](#)). As a result, they often expect honesty and authenticity in others. Indeed, **92%** of Gen Alpha say that **“being themselves” is important**, indicating a strong sense of individuality and authenticity ([Generation Alpha: Online Habits and Media Preferences by the Numbers - Basis Technologies](#)). Notably, this generation is also highly attuned to mental wellness: three in four kids aged 8–10 say they already think about mental health ([Generation Alpha: Online Habits and Media Preferences by the Numbers - Basis Technologies](#)), and a majority believe schools should devote more attention to mental health education ([New Research From Cassandra by Big Village Dives Into The Values and Identity of “Gen Alpha” | Big Village](#)).

Finally, as true 21st-century natives, Gen Alpha are *born tech users* – which influences their confidence and independence. Over three-quarters say technology’s benefits outweigh the bad ([New Research From Cassandra by Big Village Dives Into The Values and Identity of “Gen Alpha” | Big Village](#)), and **82%** agree **if they have access to technology, they can figure most things out on their own** ([New Research From Cassandra by Big Village Dives Into The Values and Identity of “Gen Alpha” | Big Village](#)). This self-reliance in problem-solving is a defining psychographic trait, making them adept at learning new things quickly. Interestingly, their motivations skew toward purpose over prestige: *“it’s purpose, not fame, that motivates most Alphas,”* as a 2023 Razorfish study put it ([Exploring Generation Alpha | Razorfish](#)). (In fact, while **64%** would love to be a YouTube/social media influencer, rather than President ([New Research From Cassandra by Big Village Dives Into The Values and Identity of “Gen Alpha” | Big Village](#)), it’s often because they see content creation as creative and authentic – not merely a path to celebrity status.) All these factors paint a picture of a generation that is **incredibly diverse, socially aware, and rooted in authenticity**, even as they navigate childhood.

## Media Consumption & Digital Habits

Gen Alpha has never known a world without smartphones, streaming, and instant connectivity. They are *the second wave of “digital natives”* (after Gen Z), often introduced to devices practically in infancy. Studies show **43%** of Gen Alphas had used a **tablet by age 6**, and **58%** had a **smartphone by age 10** ([Generation Alpha: Online Habits and Media Preferences by the Numbers - Basis Technologies](#)). By age 11, about 80% are using the internet regularly (often on tablets or connected TVs) ([Generation Alpha: Online Habits and Media Preferences by the Numbers - Basis Technologies](#)). Unsurprisingly, their daily screen time is high: U.S. children 8–12 years old average around **4 hours 44 minutes** of screen time per day ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)), the most of any generation at that age. However, it’s not all passive consumption – these kids are highly *interactive* with their media. Marketers note that Gen Alpha “actively engage, create, and influence digital content” rather than just watching ([Generation Alpha: Online Habits and Media Preferences by the Numbers - Basis Technologies](#)). They gravitate toward **personalized, immersive, and interactive** experiences online ([Generation Alpha: Online Habits and Media Preferences by the Numbers - Basis Technologies](#)), from customizing avatars in games to using creative filters on TikTok.

**Preferred Platforms:** Video reigns supreme for Gen Alpha. **YouTube is the single most popular platform** – in fact, it was ranked the #1 “coolest brand” among kids and teens in 2024, beating out even Netflix ([Beano Brain: YouTube is Gen Alpha’s coolest brand - More About Advertising](#)). A Morning Consult survey found that over *half* (51%) of Gen Alpha hear about new **brands first on YouTube** ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)), highlighting how influential the platform’s content creators and ads are on their awareness. Short-form video is huge as well: TikTok’s popularity has surged among the under-18 set, with U.S. kids reportedly spending an average of **112 minutes a day on TikTok** in 2023 – surpassing YouTube in daily time spent ([Stat: Gen Alpha now favour TikTok over YouTube for daily video watch](#)). (Even so, YouTube remains a go-to hub for longer content and discovery.) They also consume plenty of streaming TV content via services like **Disney+ and Netflix**, though often on-demand and on mobile devices rather than scheduled TV viewing ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)). About half of Gen Alpha (including even toddlers in the stats) stream video content daily ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)). Their favorite genres reflect a love of fun and interaction – for example, one survey found the top TV show types Gen Alpha enjoys are **shows they can dance or sing along to** (around one-third cite these as favorites) ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)), followed by sports and even cooking shows. Notably, having siblings influences media choices: 27% of Gen Alpha say they’ll watch whatever their siblings are watching ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)), underscoring the role of family in media habits.

**Social Media & Content Creation:** Despite being so young, many Gen Alphas are already on social media (often with parental oversight). Over **55%** of kids ages 7–12 in a 2022 study said they use social media apps ([New Research From Cassandra by Big Village Dives Into The Values and Identity of “Gen Alpha” | Big Village](#)). They favor visually engaging, quick-hit platforms – YouTube (with its bite-sized videos and kid-friendly content) was typically the starter, and by the tween years many explore TikTok, Snapchat, or Instagram (platforms like

Facebook hold little appeal for this cohort). Importantly, Gen Alpha uses these platforms not just to watch, but to create. They film dance challenges, start YouTube channels reviewing toys or video games, and engage with interactive content like AR filters. This generation was also introduced to **AI-driven media** early: from talking to Alexa or Siri as preschoolers to experimenting with AI filters and tools in apps. Many are fascinated by emerging tech – for instance, ~42% of Gen Alpha and Gen Z parents say their child is interested in AI tools (especially generative AI and robotics) ([88% of U.S. Parents of Gen Alpha & Gen Z Students Say AI Will Be Crucial to Their Child's Future Success](#)). Gen Alpha gamers even dabble in rudimentary coding or game design via platforms like Roblox and Minecraft. In fact, **around 2 in 5 Gen Alpha gamers prefer video games that allow them to build or create things** ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)). Minecraft is practically a staple – **58%** of Gen Alpha (8–15) report playing Minecraft in the past month, and **43%** played Roblox ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)). These sandbox games' popularity illustrates how play and creation blend for this cohort.

**Digital Balance:** Interestingly, despite their heavy digital diet, Gen Alpha shows awareness of tech's downsides and a willingness to unplug when needed. Nearly **3 in 4** Gen Alpha kids say they **go outside or otherwise cut back on tech use to manage their mental health** ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)). This aligns with qualitative findings that Alphas view technology as a “double-edged sword” – fun and essential, but something to use in moderation ([Exploring Generation Alpha | Razorfish](#)) ([Exploring Generation Alpha | Razorfish](#)). Many Gen Alpha children actually *cherish offline play*: a majority of Gen Alpha parents in one survey said their kids would **rather play outside with friends than sit in front of a screen** ([Generation Alpha: Online Habits and Media Preferences by the Numbers - Basis Technologies](#)). So while screens are omnipresent, they haven't completely displaced traditional play. Gen Alpha seems to be carving out a more balanced digital life than one might assume, perhaps due to early education on wellness (and maybe some parental rules on screen time).

In summary, Gen Alpha's media habits are defined by **constant connectivity, interactive content, and platform fluidity**. They seamlessly jump from watching a YouTube tutorial, to dancing on TikTok, to building a world in Minecraft. Their comfort with technology is unparalleled for their age – yet many already recognize the importance of downtime and “real world” experiences. Brands hoping to engage them will need to embrace video and gaming platforms, and provide content that is participatory and authentic to hold their attention.

## Social & Cultural Perspectives

Coming of age in the 2020s, Generation Alpha has been shaped by a time of significant social change and challenges. From their vantage point (many are still in middle school or younger), they have witnessed movements for equality, urgent conversations about climate change, and a global pandemic – all before turning 15. These experiences, combined with their diverse

backgrounds, have fostered a generation that is broadly **inclusive, cause-driven, and not afraid to question authority when necessary**.

**Inclusivity & Diversity:** Gen Alpha is **the most diverse U.S. generation ever**, which naturally breeds inclusive attitudes ([New Data from our Study on Gen Alpha - Springtide Research Institute](#)) ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)). Growing up in diverse classrooms and friend groups, they tend to view differences in race, ethnicity, or gender as normal. Many Gen Alpha kids have friends from various backgrounds and show high levels of cross-cultural empathy ([New Data from our Study on Gen Alpha - Springtide Research Institute](#)). They also challenge traditional gender norms more openly. Youth researchers note that Alphas “openly challenge outdated notions around gender and sexuality” ([New Research From Cassandra by Big Village Dives Into The Values and Identity of “Gen Alpha” | Big Village](#)). The overwhelming support for respecting pronouns (84% agreement among surveyed Alphas) is a concrete example of their inclusive ethos ([New Research From Cassandra by Big Village Dives Into The Values and Identity of “Gen Alpha” | Big Village](#)). In short, *tolerance and acceptance* are a baseline for this generation. They expect representation in media and society – whether that’s characters who look like them or acknowledgment of different family structures – and, as they get older, will likely demand it.

**Social Causes & Activism:** Despite their age, Gen Alpha is already tuned into global issues, often expressing concern and a desire to help. Climate change is a prime example. In a 2024 nationwide poll of U.S. middle and high school students, **72% of kids said climate change is already impacting their lives**, and **77%** believed it will require **radical changes in how we all live** ([Boston Museum of Science Survey Finds “Generation Alpha” Taking Up the Challenge to Adapt and Act on Climate | Museum of Science](#)). Notably, a majority felt that *adults, governments, and companies are doing too little* to address the problem ([Boston Museum of Science Survey Finds “Generation Alpha” Taking Up the Challenge to Adapt and Act on Climate | Museum of Science](#)). Instead, these kids have faith in their own generation’s ability: **72% believe their generation will find solutions to climate change** ([Boston Museum of Science Survey Finds “Generation Alpha” Taking Up the Challenge to Adapt and Act on Climate | Museum of Science](#)). This mix of concern and optimism suggests Gen Alpha could become very activist as they grow – they’re essentially saying “*if our leaders can’t fix it, we will.*” Environmental awareness often starts at home; **80% of parents** globally say their Gen Alpha children have influenced them to be more eco-conscious in daily life ([Spotlight on...Generation Alpha | FedEx France](#)). We see similar passion for social justice causes: having watched movements like Black Lives Matter or school walkouts in recent years, many Alphas are already vocal about fairness. For instance, one UK survey of parents found **almost 1 in 3** say their Gen Alpha kids actively prefer brands (snacks, toys, entertainment) that align with the child’s values on **inclusion and sustainability** ([Impero Research Shows Gen A More Likely to Copy Their Friends than an Influencer or an Advertisement | LBBOnline](#)). This indicates that even as consumers, young Alphas are bringing a “cause filter” to their choices – a trait that will only grow stronger in their teens.



**Views on Authority:** Gen Alpha's relationship with authority figures and institutions is nuanced. On one hand, within the family unit, they often have a closer, more collaborative relationship with parents than earlier generations did. Millennial parents tend to treat their kids' opinions with respect, and Gen Alpha kids, in turn, trust their parents and even emulate them in certain ways ([What's Driving Gen Alpha Shopping Behaviors? - The Robin Report](#)) ([What's Driving Gen Alpha Shopping Behaviors? - The Robin Report](#)). The old idea of teenagers thinking parents "just don't get it" is less pronounced (at least until now) – in fact, young Alphas don't see as sharp a divide between "kid world" and "adult world." This stems partly from parents being more transparent and treating kids as individuals with a voice. As a result, Alphas are often confident expressing their opinions to adults and may even take part in family decisions (from what brand of cereal to buy to voicing thoughts on community issues).

On the other hand, when it comes to larger authority structures – government, corporations, school systems – Gen Alpha shows healthy skepticism. As noted, many feel the grown-ups in charge aren't doing enough on big issues ([Boston Museum of Science Survey Finds "Generation Alpha" Taking Up the Challenge to Adapt and Act on Climate | Museum of Science](#)). They have grown up amid political turmoil and misinformation online, which may lead them to question things and seek truth independently. Authenticity is key: they respond well to teachers, leaders, or brands that "*keep it real*," and are quick to call out anything phony. One analyst noted that having seen their parents and influencers speak openly about life's challenges, **Gen Alpha expects the same level of transparency from the brands and institutions they engage with** ([What's Driving Gen Alpha Shopping Behaviors? - The Robin Report](#)). In other words, they don't defer to authority blindly – respect has to be earned through honesty and alignment with the values they've been raised with.

It's also worth noting that Gen Alpha has been labeled a *resilient* and adaptive bunch. Early experiences like the COVID-19 pandemic (many had formative years disrupted by remote schooling and lockdowns) have given them a front-row seat to how quickly the world can change. This has reportedly led to some anxiety – e.g. signs of higher rates of childhood anxiety/depression post-pandemic have been observed ([New Data from our Study on Gen Alpha - Springtide Research Institute](#)) – but also a certain level of pragmatism. Some research suggests Gen Alpha may focus more on "**close-to-home**" issues affecting them personally (**safety, local community, cost of living**) rather than solely big global causes, perhaps as a response to seeing their parents worry about global crises ([Impero Research Shows Gen A More Likely to Copy Their Friends than an Influencer or an Advertisement | LBBOnline](#)). Time will tell, but it's clear they are very aware of the world around them and eager to shape it. In summary, socially and culturally, Gen Alpha can be seen as **progressive-minded, empowered kids** – inclusive in their relationships, engaged with causes bigger than themselves, and politely bold in holding adults (and brands) accountable to do the right thing.

## Path to Purchase & Brand Influence

Even as children, Generation Alpha is flexing surprising influence over household spending and redefining how brands connect with consumers. Their total economic impact is already enormous: in 2024, Gen Alpha globally is expected to account for (or directly influence) around **\$1 trillion in spending** – a figure projected to rise to \$1.7 trillion by 2029 ([Spotlight on...Generation Alpha | FedEx France](#)). Though most Alphas won't have their own income for years, they wield **"pester power"** and digital savvy that can sway everything from grocery choices to vacation plans. Below we break down how Gen Alpha discovers brands, the roles of parents and peers in their purchases, what drives something to be "cool" or coveted for them, and how brand loyalty is taking shape (versus impulse-driven behaviors).

## Discovering Brands in a Digital World

**Social video and gaming are the new storefronts.** Gen Alpha primarily discovers brands through the digital content they consume – especially videos and games. YouTube stands out as the top channel for brand discovery: **51% of Gen Alpha hear about brands first via YouTube** ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)), per Razorfish research. This makes sense given the countless product unboxings, game streams, and kid-oriented vlogs on the platform. TikTok and Instagram are also influential via short viral clips and influencer recommendations (for instance, a trending TikTok dance can spark demand for a song or a fashion item). By 2023, TikTok's integration of shopping (e.g. TikTok Shop) and viral product challenges made it a burgeoning source of "I want that!" moments among tweens ([Capturing the immense, overlooked spending power of Gen Alpha](#)) ([LTAI: Is Consumerism & Over Consumption Ruining Gen Alpha? - Girls United](#)).

**Influencers & "Normfluencers":** Influencer marketing resonates strongly with this generation, but in a unique way. Kids today often trust relatable online personalities as much as traditional authorities. **Nearly half of Gen Alpha (49%) say they trust influencers as much as family when it comes to purchasing decisions** ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)). However, they're discerning about *which* influencers. A recent UK study found that **friends' influence actually edges out influencers** – 41% of parents said their Gen Alpha kids want branded products because their *friends* have them, versus 35% citing social media influencers ([Impero Research Shows Gen A More Likely to Copy Their Friends than an Influencer or an Advertisement | LBBOnline](#)). That same research suggests brands may have more success with "ordinary" content creators (so-called "*normfluencers*" who feel like real people with shared passions) rather than glossy celebrities ([Impero Research Shows Gen A More Likely to Copy Their Friends than an Influencer or an Advertisement | LBBOnline](#)) ([Impero Research Shows Gen A More Likely to Copy Their Friends than an Influencer or an Advertisement | LBBOnline](#)). In practice, a Gen Alpha girl might beg for a certain toy after seeing a classmate show it off on Snapchat, or a boy might want a new sneaker because a popular YouTuber (who isn't a huge celeb, but a cool older teen) praised them.

**Gaming platforms & virtual worlds:** Another key discovery channel is video games and virtual spaces. Many Gen Alpha kids encounter branded content *within* games – e.g. sponsored events

in Roblox, ads in mobile games, or seeing favorite games cross over with real products (like Minecraft-themed LEGO sets). As Mark McCrindle (the researcher who coined Gen Alpha) notes, “almost the entire online interaction [Gen Alpha has] is commercially oriented,” from pop-up in-game offers to merchandise tied to their shows ([Capturing the immense, overlooked spending power of Gen Alpha](#)). They are literally a click away from purchasing at any moment ([Capturing the immense, overlooked spending power of Gen Alpha](#)). A telling anecdote: when asked about gifts, a lot of kids now opt for **digital currency** (Roblox’s “Robux” or Fortnite V-Bucks) instead of physical toys ([Capturing the immense, overlooked spending power of Gen Alpha](#)), indicating how brands within gaming ecosystems are top-of-mind.

Finally, it’s worth noting that **traditional advertising** (TV commercials, banner ads) is far less effective on Gen Alpha. They often skip or ignore ads, and instead their purchase desires are driven by content and community. To reach them, brands are investing in being present *inside* the content Gen Alpha consumes – whether via a YouTube toy review channel, a TikTok challenge, or a cool integration in Minecraft. In short, if a brand isn’t showing up in their feeds or their games, it might as well not exist.

## Parents vs. Peers: Who Holds the Wallet?

Because Gen Alpha are, by definition, mostly not even teens yet, their **purchasing power is largely “proxy power”** – i.e. enacted through their parents. But make no mistake, kids as young as elementary school are driving a sizable share of household buying decisions. Marketing researchers estimate Gen Alpha *directly influences* an estimated **\$300 billion or more in annual spending via parents** ([Understanding Gen Alpha: The Future Generation – Greenbook](#))

([Understanding Gen Alpha: The Future Generation – Greenbook](#)). In practical terms, that influence starts early: children begin influencing family purchases by around age 5 ([What's Driving Gen Alpha Shopping Behaviors? - The Robin Report](#)). By grade school, many kids are deciding what snacks or cereals get added to the cart, which brand of sneakers they want for school, and so on – and parents often oblige. In fact, **87% of parents** (surveyed in the UK) said their purchasing decisions are influenced by their Gen Alpha children ([Impero Research Shows Gen A More Likely to Copy Their Friends than an Influencer or an Advertisement | LBBOnline](#)).

This “pester power” isn’t just about begging; today’s kids often make a reasoned case.

Moderately tech-savvy Millennial parents sometimes even **trust their kids’ research** on products ([What's Driving Gen Alpha Shopping Behaviors? - The Robin Report](#)). It’s not unheard of for a 10-year-old to compare online reviews or watch YouTube demos, then steer their parent toward a particular gadget or brand. As one commentator put it, *the trust goes both ways* – parents influence kids’ brand preferences, but kids also have more say than ever before ([What's Driving Gen Alpha Shopping Behaviors? - The Robin Report](#)).

**Parental Gatekeepers:** Of course, parents remain the actual purchasers (especially for big-ticket items), and they set boundaries. Gen Alpha’s preferences are often *shaped in tandem* with their parents’ values. Many Alphas are inclined to favor the **same brands as their parents** in certain categories ([What's Driving Gen Alpha Shopping Behaviors? - The Robin Report](#)). For example, a



child whose mom swears by Nike and Whole Foods may develop loyalty to those brands simply through exposure and family identity. This is why one strategy to win Gen Alpha's loyalty is to first win over Millennial parents ([Gen Alpha and brand loyalty—6 ways to build a relationship with the ...](#)). Some observers note that unlike teens of the past who *rejected* whatever Mom and Dad liked, Gen Alpha kids don't mind overlapping with their parents' brand choices ([What's Driving Gen Alpha Shopping Behaviors? - The Robin Report](#)) – if anything, they see it as connecting with grown-ups they admire. Still, peers and pop culture can quickly override parental influence for trend-driven purchases (the latest game console, a fashion fad, etc.). It's a dynamic push-pull: **parents hold the purse strings, but kids set the priorities** for many purchases.

**Autonomy & Digital Spending:** Importantly, Gen Alpha is the first generation where even pre-teens can make purchases (mostly small ones) semi-independently thanks to digital platforms. With saved credit cards and one-click purchasing, a child playing on a tablet can, say, buy an in-app item or order a toy online (sometimes with parental controls, sometimes via “oops” moments). Nothing is stopping a determined 9-year-old from buying things online if a payment method is accessible ([Capturing the immense, overlooked spending power of Gen Alpha](#)). As a result, they are learning to be “serious consumers at a young age” ([Capturing the immense, overlooked spending power of Gen Alpha](#)). Many brands are responding by creating *kid-friendly shopping experiences*. For example, several banks offer **gamified finance apps** or debit cards for kids, which let children (with parental oversight) spend a small allowance digitally – teaching them money skills while also acclimating them to those financial brands early ([Capturing the immense, overlooked spending power of Gen Alpha](#)). All of this means Gen Alpha has more autonomy in spending than previous generations did at age 10 or 12. Still, for most purchases, parents and kids operate as a unit: parents provide the budget and guidance, while kids provide input and enthusiasm. Peers come into play heavily in categories like clothes, toys, and entertainment, whereas parents might have more say in “serious” categories like health or schooling – but even that is changing as family decision-making becomes more democratized.

## Emotional Drivers: What Makes Something “Cool”?

For Gen Alpha, “cool” is a blend of **peer approval, fun factor, and alignment with their identity**. Some key emotional drivers behind their must-haves:

- **Peer Approval & FOMO:** Perhaps the strongest motivator is wanting what their friends have. If “everyone at school is talking about it,” a Gen Alpha kid is bound to think it's cool. We see this in the data: kids are *more likely to copy their friends* than celebrities when it comes to brands ([Impero Research Shows Gen A More Likely to Copy Their Friends than an Influencer or an Advertisement | LBBOnline](#)) ([Impero Research Shows Gen A More Likely to Copy Their Friends than an Influencer or an Advertisement | LBBOnline](#)). Owning the same Pokémon cards or doll or gadget as your friends means you fit in and have something to bond over. Social media amplifies this – seeing classmates show off a new hoverboard or a trending gadget on TikTok creates a fear of missing out. Gen Alpha,

like generations before, don't want to be left behind in a trend. The difference is how fast trends spread now: one week every kid is trading fidget spinners; the next, it's all about Squishmallows (collectible plush toys). In fact, **77% of UK kids 7–10** said they think **Squishmallows are cool**, showing how a peer-driven craze can sweep this age group. The cycle of "I saw it on TikTok/YouTube, now I want it" is extremely rapid, making their sense of "must-have" quite dynamic.

- **Fun, Play & Experience:** Products that promise *fun experiences* or emotional reward are big winners. For example, classic treats and fast-food brands rank high with kids because they are associated with enjoyment. A recent "Coolest Brands" survey of 21,000 youngsters showed food and snack brands dominating the top 20 – McDonald's, Oreo, Skittles, Coca-Cola and so on made the list – **because kids link them with treats and happy family moments** ([Beano Brain: YouTube is Gen Alpha's coolest brand - More About Advertising](#)). "Fun" also means interactive or gamified. Gen Alpha loves toys and games that they can personalize or use creatively (hence the appeal of Lego – which cracked the top 10 coolest brands ([Beano Brain: YouTube is Gen Alpha's coolest brand - More About Advertising](#)) ([Beano Brain: YouTube is Gen Alpha's coolest brand - More About Advertising](#)) – and games like Roblox or Mario). A brand or product that can spark joy *and* be shared with others (online or offline) hits the sweet spot. Even in fashion, "fun" matters – bright colors, novelty designs, or limited-edition collaborations (like a cool sneaker drop) can drive the cool factor for them.
- **Innovation & "Newness":** As true digital kids, many Gen Alphas are drawn to the *latest technology* and innovations. **63% of Gen Alpha value having the latest tech** ([Spotlight on...Generation Alpha | FedEx France](#)) – more than double the rate for Gen Z – suggesting that being an early adopter is a status symbol. Whether it's the newest iPad, a smart toy, or even a trendy gadget like a kids' smartwatch, having something cutting-edge makes them feel ahead of the curve (and maybe a bit "grown-up"). "Cool" can simply mean *new* or *novel* to this generation, which is why many of their obsessions tend to be fads that burst onto the scene. Brands that continuously introduce fresh updates, new characters, or new features keep Gen Alpha's interest better than those that stay the same. They have been conditioned by rapid content cycles to expect constant refreshment.
- **Authenticity & Relatability:** Interestingly, as much as they chase new trends, Gen Alpha also shows a tendency to see *authentic, relatable things* as cool. They appreciate when a brand or product "gets" kids and doesn't talk down to them. For instance, they find YouTube cooler than broadcast TV in part because it feels like real people making content, and they can engage (comment, like) rather than passively watch. When asked about personal qualities, kids often cite **humor and creativity** as things they value in others ([New Research From Cassandra by Big Village Dives Into The Values and Identity of "Gen Alpha" | Big Village](#)) – so a "cool" brand might be one that's funny, creative, or

empowering. One could say **being real is the new cool** for Gen Alpha. This might be why some formerly “uncool” items have spiked in popularity when reimagined authentically – e.g., Crocs (the quirky foam clogs) soared in kid popularity recently, going from cringe to coveted ([Beano Brain: YouTube is Gen Alpha’s coolest brand - More About Advertising](#)), possibly because kids embraced their comfortable, individualistic vibe (helped by fun charms and bright colors). Likewise, the rise of “kid influencers” who are just normal children playing with toys or doing DIY crafts has made *everyday authenticity* something Gen Alpha connects with coolness.

- **Social Impact & Meaning:** For the older edge of Gen Alpha (preteens entering adolescence), there are signs that a product or brand’s *values* can contribute to its cool factor. This generation is already quite socially conscious; a brand with an environmental mission or inclusive message can be seen as admirable (and thus cool to support). While a 10-year-old might not articulate brand ethics in depth, they do pick up on messaging. For example, a sustainable water bottle brand or a shoe brand that donates to charity might be appealing because it aligns with what they’ve learned about helping others. In one survey, **one-third of parents said their Gen Alpha kids actively prefer brands that reflect their values** (like eco-friendliness) ([Impero Research Shows Gen A More Likely to Copy Their Friends than an Influencer or an Advertisement | LBBOnline](#)). So a “must-have” for some may be an item that makes them feel like they’re doing good or being part of something positive.

In essence, Gen Alpha defines “cool” both through the **lens of peer culture** (what’s trending, what friends have) and their own emerging **sense of identity** (fun-loving, tech-savvy, and justice-minded). Marketers note that this generation can spot inauthenticity easily, so chasing “cool” in their eyes requires genuinely resonating with their interests and world.

## Brand Loyalty vs. Impulse Buying

Gen Alpha is a fascinating mix of **brand-loyal behaviors instilled early** and **whirlwind impulse trends** driven by their digital environment. On the one hand, these kids are extremely brand-aware and can develop loyalties at a young age. Compared to prior cohorts, today’s children are exposed to branding everywhere (even in their educational apps and YouTube videos). It’s said that *each youngest generation is more brand-conscious than the last*, and Alphas are no exception ([What’s Driving Gen Alpha Shopping Behaviors? - The Robin Report](#)). They often latch onto favorite brands for the long term, especially if those brands are part of family routines or strongly align with their values. For example, a child who grows up with Disney movies might remain loyal to Disney content and merchandise throughout childhood, or a kid who loves Nike might refuse to switch to another shoe brand as they grow if Nike continues to appeal. Gen Alpha’s high expectations can actually intensify loyalty: they demand brands be inclusive, eco-friendly, and transparent ([What’s Driving Gen Alpha Shopping Behaviors? - The Robin Report](#)) – those that live up to these ideals can earn lifelong fans. A 2024 retail report

suggested brands that **engage Gen Alpha now (with genuine connections and co-creation)** can ensure long-term loyalty as these kids mature ([Gen Alpha's Growing Influence: Understanding the \\$28 Billion Direct Spending Power Shaping Retail Trends | C+R](#)). Many companies are racing to “plant the seed” of loyalty early, from kids’ loyalty programs to collaborations that make their brand feel like part of a child’s personal story.

However, *impulse buying and rapid changes in taste are equally hallmarks* of Gen Alpha’s consumer behavior. Living in an era of one-click purchases and algorithm-driven ads, they are susceptible to **immediate gratification** impulses. Social media has essentially blurred the line between content and commerce for them ([LTAI: Is Consumerism & Over Consumption Ruining Gen Alpha? - Girls United](#)). As they scroll through entertaining videos, they’re constantly encountering stealth ads and product placements. This “**content blurring**” means they can develop a sudden urge to buy something without the usual deliberation – it feels like a natural extension of the content they enjoy ([LTAI: Is Consumerism & Over Consumption Ruining Gen Alpha? - Girls United](#)). The culture of online “haul” videos, unboxings, and ever-changing micro-trends encourages a kind of excessive *buying behavior* even in very young consumers ([LTAI: Is Consumerism & Over Consumption Ruining Gen Alpha? - Girls United](#)). Psychologically, they might see a favorite influencer show 20 new slime toys and think it’s normal to always get new things. Social comparison is powerful: seeing peers and influencers constantly acquiring stuff can normalize overconsumption, leading Gen Alpha to crave more **stuff** (from collectible toys to the latest fashion accessory) just to keep up ([LTAI: Is Consumerism & Over Consumption Ruining Gen Alpha? - Girls United](#)) ([LTAI: Is Consumerism & Over Consumption Ruining Gen Alpha? - Girls United](#)). Marketers observe that platforms like TikTok create a sense of *urgency* and FOMO, almost like a casino effect, encouraging quick purchases to “get it before it’s gone” ([LTAI: Is Consumerism & Over Consumption Ruining Gen Alpha? - Girls United](#)).

The result is that Gen Alpha’s brand loyalties can sometimes be fickle in practice – a child might love Brand A, but still beg for a one-off product from Brand B because it went viral this week. Impulse trends can override loyalty momentarily. That said, when a brand consistently delivers on what Gen Alpha cares about (fun, innovation, values), these kids do come back to it again and again. For instance, a game like Fortnite can hold their loyalty over multiple years because it constantly updates (feeding the novelty impulse) while also building a community and identity for the player (feeding loyalty).

To summarize, **Gen Alpha exhibits both strong early brand affinities and a penchant for spontaneous, peer-influenced purchases**. They are loyal, but on their own terms – a loyalty that demands constant engagement and ethical alignment from brands. Impulse buying is almost a generational trait given the environment they’re in, but as they grow older, their core values may guide them to be more intentional consumers than one might expect. Brands hoping to win Gen Alpha in the long run need to balance *speaking to their values* (to earn loyalty) with *staying relevant in fast-moving trends* (to capture their attention). If done right, the payoff is huge: by some estimates Gen Alpha will control **nearly as much spending power as Millennials and Gen Z combined in the coming decades** ([What's Driving Gen Alpha Shopping Behaviors? - The Robin](#)

[Report](#)). Businesses that earn their trust and excitement now could be riding a wave of loyalty as this big, influential generation comes of age.

**Sources:** Generation Alpha stats and trends from explodingtopics ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)) ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)) ([Generation Alpha: Statistics, Data and Trends \(2024\)](#)), Razorfish and GWI research ([Exploring Generation Alpha | Razorfish](#)) ([Generation Alpha: Online Habits and Media Preferences by the Numbers - Basis Technologies](#)), Cassandra/BIG Village Gen Alpha report ([New Research From Cassandra by Big Village Dives Into The Values and Identity of “Gen Alpha” | Big Village](#)) ([New Research From Cassandra by Big Village Dives Into The Values and Identity of “Gen Alpha” | Big Village](#)), Impero’s “The Alpha Project” (UK) ([Impero Research Shows Gen A More Likely to Copy Their Friends than an Influencer or an Advertisement | LBBOnline](#)) ([Impero Research Shows Gen A More Likely to Copy Their Friends than an Influencer or an Advertisement | LBBOnline](#)), Morning Consult & eMarketer data ([Generation Alpha: Online Habits and Media Preferences by the Numbers - Basis Technologies](#)) ([Generation Alpha: Online Habits and Media Preferences by the Numbers - Basis Technologies](#)), Springtide research on 13-year-olds ([New Data from our Study on Gen Alpha - Springtide Research Institute](#)) ([New Data from our Study on Gen Alpha - Springtide Research Institute](#)), Boston Museum of Science poll ([Boston Museum of Science Survey Finds “Generation Alpha” Taking Up the Challenge to Adapt and Act on Climate | Museum of Science](#)), FedEx Trends report ([Spotlight on...Generation Alpha | FedEx France](#)) ([Spotlight on...Generation Alpha | FedEx France](#)), CFO Brew/McCrindle insights ([Capturing the immense, overlooked spending power of Gen Alpha](#)) ([Capturing the immense, overlooked spending power of Gen Alpha](#)), The Robin Report ([What's Driving Gen Alpha Shopping Behaviors? - The Robin Report](#)) ([What's Driving Gen Alpha Shopping Behaviors? - The Robin Report](#)), and C+R Research ([Gen Alpha’s Growing Influence: Understanding the \\$28 Billion Direct Spending Power Shaping Retail Trends | C+R](#)) ([Gen Alpha’s Growing Influence: Understanding the \\$28 Billion Direct Spending Power Shaping Retail Trends | C+R](#)). All data points cited above reflect the latest available as of 2024–2025.