

# The Modern Family Index

**Bright Horizons**<sup>®</sup> has spent a decade tracking trends in working families, with the annual Modern Family Index research study highlighting parents' unique challenges and priorities over the course of a consequential period in history. In 2025, this landmark piece of thought leadership, conducted by the Harris Poll for Bright Horizons, will focus on important topics impacting families, with several waves of survey data scheduled to be released throughout the year.

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## **New research shows children mastering screens before they even know how to read**

Too much time on social media is a risk to children's mental health, said a report from the U.S. Surgeon General.<sup>1</sup> New data from the latest Bright Horizons Modern Family Index survey shows just how real those effects are — even for the youngest children. Answers from respondents show technology overuse is causing concern for parents of even preschoolers, with mental and even physical effects playing out at home, and children showing signs of needing a digital detox.



## Logged on, tuned out

- **60%** of parents say their children started using **technology before they could read**.
- **61%** of parents feel their children do not spend enough time doing **healthy activities** such as playing outside with friends, playing with toys, coloring, or doing homework or reading.

## In need of a reboot

- **73%** of parents admit their children could use a **“detox”** from technology.
- **78%** of parents with children ages **6 to 17** say their children need a detox from technology.
- **68%** of parents with children **under 6 years of age** report their children could use a “detox” from technology.

## Fighting the effects today

- **58%** of respondents use technology as a **parenting tool** to keep their children quiet while shopping or in a restaurant.
- **55%** of parents use technology as a **bargaining chip** to get their children to do things like chores or homework.
- **45%** of parents **argue with their spouse** over their children’s use of technology.

## Fearful for the future

- **49%** of parents are worried about their children’s **mental health**.
- **47%** are worried about the impact **social media** could have on their children.

### Method statement

The research was conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll between February 6-10, 2025, among 2,000 adults ages 18 and older — among whom 622 are a parent or guardian of child(ren) under 18 years of age (“parents”). Data are weighted where necessary by age, gender, region, race/ethnicity, household income, education, marital status, size of household, and political party affiliation to bring them in line with their actual proportions in the population.

Respondents are selected among those who have agreed to participate in our surveys. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. The sample data is accurate to within  $\pm 2.5$  percentage points using a 95% confidence level. This credible interval will be wider among subsets of the surveyed population of interest.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to other multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including, but not limited to coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Parents Under Pressure, August, 2024



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