



Word of Mom Research Series: Building Trust with Millennial Parents

June 2018



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OVERVIEW

Methodology: Online study conducted among millennial parents with children 0-5 years old

Fielded: January 2018

Sample: Findings based on 748 national respondents who completed the survey

Key questions to be answered

- What does being a parent mean to millennials and what are their family priorities?
- Who is influencing the brands and products millennials buy throughout the parenting journey?
- How and where can marketers earn the trust and dollars of millennial parents?

FINDINGS

Many generational values hold

Millennials, often raised by Boomer parents, grew up receiving constant validation of a job well done in the form of praise or participation acknowledgement. The same holds true for their parenting decisions. 2 in 3 millennials want to know they are doing a good job as a mom or dad.

The approval these millennial parents seek comes from two main sources. The first, and most obvious, is from their peers. 2 in 5 strongly agree they feel better about parenting decisions and purchases when they see other parents doing/using the same thing. The second, and less obvious, is the future approval of their child. Over 80% strongly agree they want their child to look back and think they did the best job they could as a parent.

Millennials, who are stereotyped for being irresponsible in their younger years, take the role of being a parent very seriously. In fact, 3 in 4 consider their job as a parent just as important as the job for which they get paid.

New generational priorities as a parent

Known for moving home after college graduation and putting off careers and home ownership for life experiences, the “me” generation grows up when they become parents. No longer in it just for themselves, over 80% want to ensure their child has everything they need to be happy and healthy.



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Compared to life prior to children, Millennials agree it's more important to have fun (65%), enjoy life (80%) and spend time with family (89%) once you become a parent. Where they really show they have matured is a new outlook on safety. Now that they have children, millennials place a higher value on safety across multiple areas. Nearly 90% agree being financially responsible is a higher priority and 3 in 4 agree feeling safe online is more important than before (75%).

Privacy and safety online were not something parents of millennials had to contend with when their children were born, but a reality that millennials are very conscious of, having grown up in the digital age. Millennial parents are mindful of their child's online footprint and keeping social media private is a bigger priority for 72% of millennial parents. Before posting photos of their children online, 83% of millennials change their social media privacy settings, stemming from the fact that 9 in 10 have certain photos they want to selectively share with very close family and friends.

The path to purchase

For brands, winning the dollars of a millennial parent is worth the investment, but requires marketing in a new way. Top stressors for new parents (stress level 8-10 out of 10) are leaving their child with a new babysitter (64%), having their child sick (59%) and losing their child's digital photos (58%). However, purchasing new products for their child is also a major stress point for 1 in 3 millennial parents.

Why all the stress? When it comes to products for their child, millennials are overwhelmed with choice, flooded with recommendations from endless sources and are constantly trying to make sure they buy the products of which their future child will approve. Making a choice, or making the wrong choice, makes every purchase a bigger decision.

So, it becomes even more important for millennial parents to do research before purchase (78%) and learn what the best products are (71%). Millennials consume and consult many sources of information on a daily basis. For child-related product recommendations and advice, family (94%), friends (89%) and professional/experts (85%) are the most trusted.

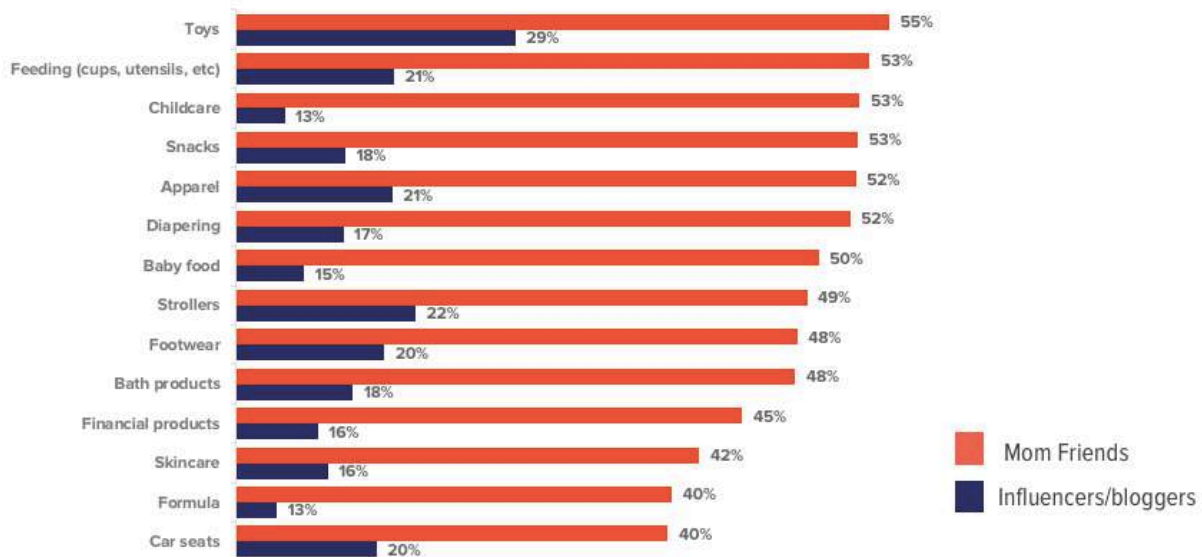
The role of the mom friend

Friends take on an important role in the path to purchase, but certain friends have more influence than others. With the birth of a child, a new and powerful set of friendships are born with parents who may have similar interests, but definitely have a child the same age (54%) and/or developmental stage (44%).



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These are “mom friends”, the go-to network for product recommendations and the real influencers in the space. Compared to influencers/bloggers, millennial parents are much more likely to trust recommendations from mom friends in every product category.



From toys and snacks to formula and car seats, mom friends are recommendation vehicles of what brands to purchase. If a mom friend uses a specific product for their child, it signals to other parents that the brand can be trusted, while also providing the peer-to-peer validation millennials crave.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Influencers aren’t as influential in the parenting space:** Less than 1 in 4 millennial parents make purchase decisions based on what they see influencers using on social media. Nearly 60% are more likely to purchase something for their child recommended by a source they trust
- **Not all friends are created equal:** Becoming a parent leads to the creation of a new social network based on having children of the same age. These “mom friends” wield unmatched power in every child-related product category. (at least +15 pts higher than non-mom friends and at least +20pts higher than influencers)
- **Brands must become “mom friends”:** Brands that show themselves to be a resource on the parenting journey will be the most successful. Over half of millennial parents want brands to engage them with relevant content and nearly 40% want brands to speak to them when they are in the child/family mindset.



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- **Trust translates dollars:** Trust must be built up throughout the purchase journey, not just at point of sale. Brands must begin to cultivate millennial trust during the pre-purchase research phase and align with as many trustworthy sources as possible. More than half of millennial parents will pay more for a product from a brand they trust.
- **Millennial parents value vertical advice:** Millennial parents consult many different channels for news and information, but for parenting and child-related purchase advice, they want a vertical source. 3 in 4 trust parenting apps for purchase recommendations related to their child—the #1 most trusted media platform.

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