

Changing parenting styles for Generation Alpha



Those tasked with the important job of parenting today's children are likely to be those of Generations X and Y. They are parenting their children (Gen Z and Gen Alpha) in different ways to how they themselves were parented.

The changing context for parents of Generation Alpha

Parents of today have, in general, departed from a 'one size fits all' approach to parenting. Along with changing gender roles, we have seen changes in the expectations of mums and dads in their parental responsibilities. While most Baby Boomers were shaped in households where fewer mums worked outside the home, today the majority of the parents of Generation Alpha are two-income earning. Along with the massive increase in the proportion of mums working full-time, expectations towards fathers have also changed, as

many have become more actively involved in childrearing. From attendance at parent-teacher nights and class concerts to the school drop-off, pickup, and taking parental leave, it's the dads of Generation Alpha, not just the mums, who are stepping up.

The increase in news coverage of issues around child harm and abuse have led to an increased focus on safety, with the introduction of home surveillance and 'helicopter' parenting. And beyond safety, there's the trend known as Tiger parenting, where parents drive the academic success of their children through an authoritarian approach. Tiger parents put their children in top-performing schools and pay for after-school tuition to ensure their kids are given every opportunity to get high grades, which will then lead to acceptance into a highranking university and a prestigious profession.

A balanced approach to parenting in the 21st Century

Every generation has a mix of parenting styles, but traditionally, parents of the Baby Boomers tended to use a more authoritarian style. Then we saw the pendulum swing the other way to the permissive approach for parents of Gen Y. What we see emerging today is a more balanced approach, where both mums and dads show love and affection for their children - both verbally and physically. At the same time, parents recognise the benefit of raising children who understand boundaries, are emotionally equipped to make wise choices and are aware of the consequences of breaching boundaries and exhibiting poor behaviour. Today, children are asked to contribute to household tasks rather than just being told to do chores. Consequences for poor behaviour are discussed, with children taking ownership for their outcomes, rather than simply being 'given a punishment'. High standards and appropriate behaviour are expected now, as in the past, but a culture of discipline is shaped very differently to prior eras.

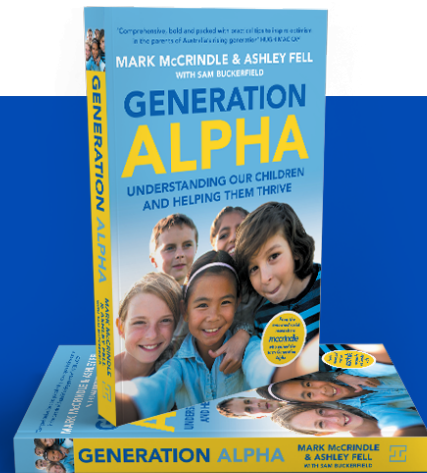
Generation Y parents

Generation Y, the emerging generation of parents, are parenting in different ways to those in the past. Having been shaped in their twenties by technology, this generation of parents are turning to the internet, not just family or friends, for parenting advice. As a result, they know more about child development than ever before - which, as many parents know, can be both empowering and overwhelming. This new generation of parents are documenting their kids' lives on social media, along with their family activities and parenting philosophies. Gen Y fathers are more likely to take on housework and childcare than in the past - even though women are still doing most of it. Generation Y parents are well positioned to raise children who are empathetic, holistic and have a well-rounded

understanding of the global and diverse society they live in. Their children are more often viewed as little people to be understood and guided rather than 'blank slates' to be prescribed and directed.

Generation Alpha
Understanding our children and helping them to thrive

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