



Marketing to Millennial Parents? Here's How They're Redefining Parenting for Their Generation

Written by
Netta Gross,
Celie O'Neil-Hart

Published
March 2017

Topics
Video

Millennials are tackling parenting differently than generations before them. How they watch YouTube reveals some broader insights into their unique values and parenting styles. Consider these rules of thumb for connecting with millennial parents.

think with **Google**

Picture a millennial. What do you see? A tech bro in a sweatshirt parked in front of a computer? A twenty-something snapping a selfie? You probably didn't picture a parent spending time with one or two children. And yet, as the oldest millennials approach 40, more than 40% of the generation identifies as parents.¹ The stereotypes don't align with the stats.

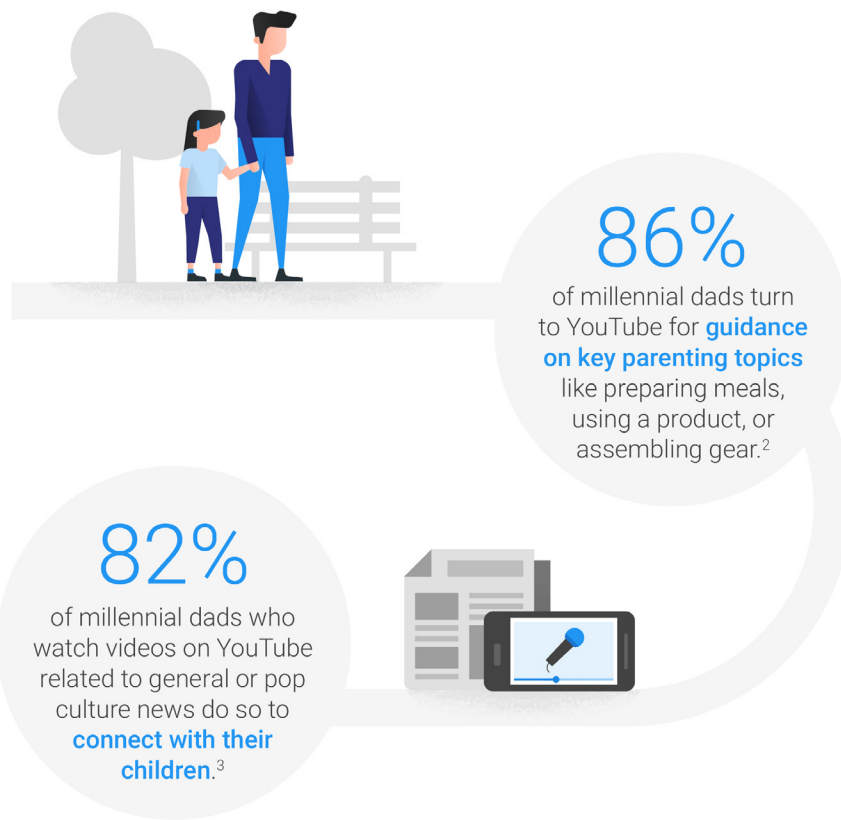
We recently conducted research with Flamingo and Ipsos Connect to understand what makes millennial parents different, and what those differences mean for brands that are trying to make contact.

If you're marketing to millennials, maybe it's time to question if your preconceptions match reality. Here are a few do's and don'ts for connecting with millennial parents.

Don't assume you're talking to Mom

"We're not adhering to gender roles. My daughter does joke that she's never seen me [mom] wash a dish. We want our daughter to see herself as an equal person in the world who is worthy of her work being respected, her thoughts being respected." —Tenika, 30

Millennial dads are taking active roles as parents. This is especially true on YouTube, where we find that dads watch more parenting-related content than moms do.



Takeaway: Millennial parents break down the stereotypical gender roles, and dads are involved more than ever. On YouTube we see that play out in how dads engage. Dads are more likely than moms to look for parenting guidance on YouTube, and to use YouTube to connect with their children.⁴ When you're marketing to parents or pairing your ads to parenting content, don't assume you're talking only to mom.

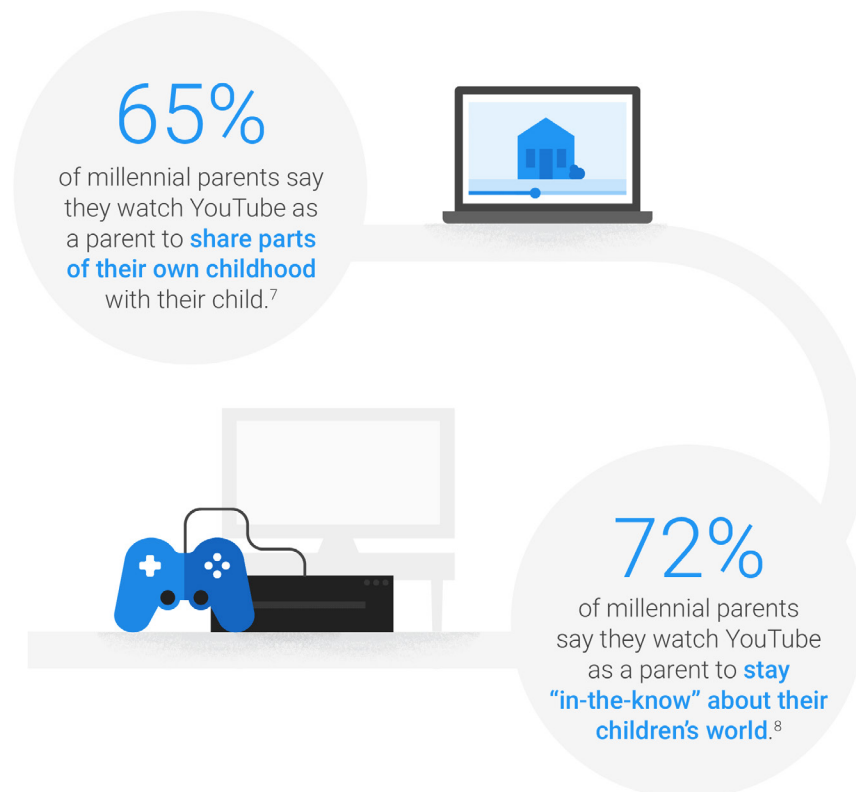
[Audi's #DriveProgress](#) work is a great example of a brand that's thinking creatively about dads.

Do reflect candid conversations with kids

"I want my daughter to understand some mistakes that I've made. We can talk to each other. I want her to have a humanized experience and not feel

like she has to perform as if she's perfect, because it's not real." —Lauren, 30

Millennial parents take on a more intimate, less hierarchical role with their children than parents of previous generations. To that end, they want an open, honest dialogue with their children. In fact, nearly 8 out of 10 millennial parents agree that their child is one of their best friends.⁵ And 74% of millennial parents involve their children in household decisions. This is significantly higher than Gen X parents.⁶ So it's no surprise that millennial parents watch YouTube as a way of starting those candid conversations.



Takeaway: Millennials get real with their kids, and that has implications for the kind of content they watch. Millennial parents don't just use YouTube to tune out. They also use it to tune into what their kids watch and love. Marquita (32) says, "My son always shows me gaming videos that he's watching. I'm not into gaming per se, but I'm interested in what

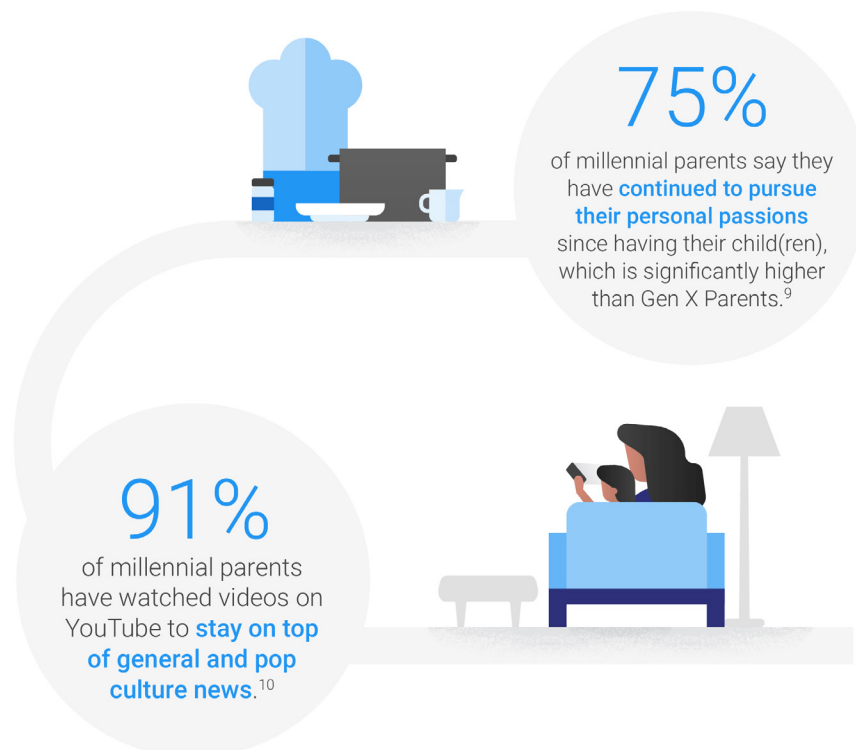
he's interested in." Ads and content can be a catalyst for those real conversations, which opens up opportunities for brands to play a role.

[Always' "Keep Playing"](#) is a great example of a brand fueling those conversations.

Don't reduce millennials to parenting alone

"The thing about parenting that defined us so far is how do we prioritize our kid and also prioritize us as well." —Matt, 31

Even as parents, millennials hold onto their personal passions more than past generations. That can mean making time for themselves, incorporating their kids into their hobbies, or both. And YouTube often plays a role in that "me time."



Takeaway: *More than any generation before them, millennials care about preserving a sense of self as they face parenthood. Becoming "Mom" or "Dad" doesn't mean "kayaker" or "dancer" or "baker" go by the wayside. From creative development to targeting, don't forget that "parent" is just one part of a millennial's identity.*

If you're looking for some inspiration to reflect millennial parents as they really are, the [Millennial Moms YouTube channel](#) is as real as it gets.

Do be there for young parents in their moments of need

"I would definitely trust brands. When an actual brand is telling you how to use a particular product, especially when dealing with an infant, it tells you whether or not you're doing the procedure correctly." —Rudresh, 33

There is no rulebook for parenting, and millennial parents are open to guidance. In other words, they get by with a little help from their friends. And that even includes brands. Millennials welcome branded content, especially when they need an answer.



Takeaway: *Millennial parents seek guidance, and on YouTube that's about everything from parenting to products. They see some brands as thought leaders in this space, and they're open to hearing from them.*

[Johnson's Baby](#) is a great example of a brand that was there in a moment of need, with step-by-step tutorials for putting baby to sleep.

If your brand is looking to engage millennial parents, consider how they differentiate themselves in this new role compared to previous generations. They're making parenting all their own by sharing responsibilities, breaking gender stereotypes, keeping their passions as a priority, and being "real" with their kids. Marketing effectively to millennial parents means reflecting those realities back to them.

Sources

- 1-12** Google/Ipsos Connect, Ipsos research among 3,206 U.S. respondents aged 18–54; n=1,027 respondents aged 21–34 who go online at least monthly, with children 18 years or younger living in their household (biological, adopted, or stepchild) ("millennial parents"), inclusive of n=803 respondents aged 21–34 who visit YouTube at least monthly, with children 18 years or younger living in their household (biological, adopted, or stepchild) ("YouTube millennial parents"), Sept. 2016.