



Thirteen

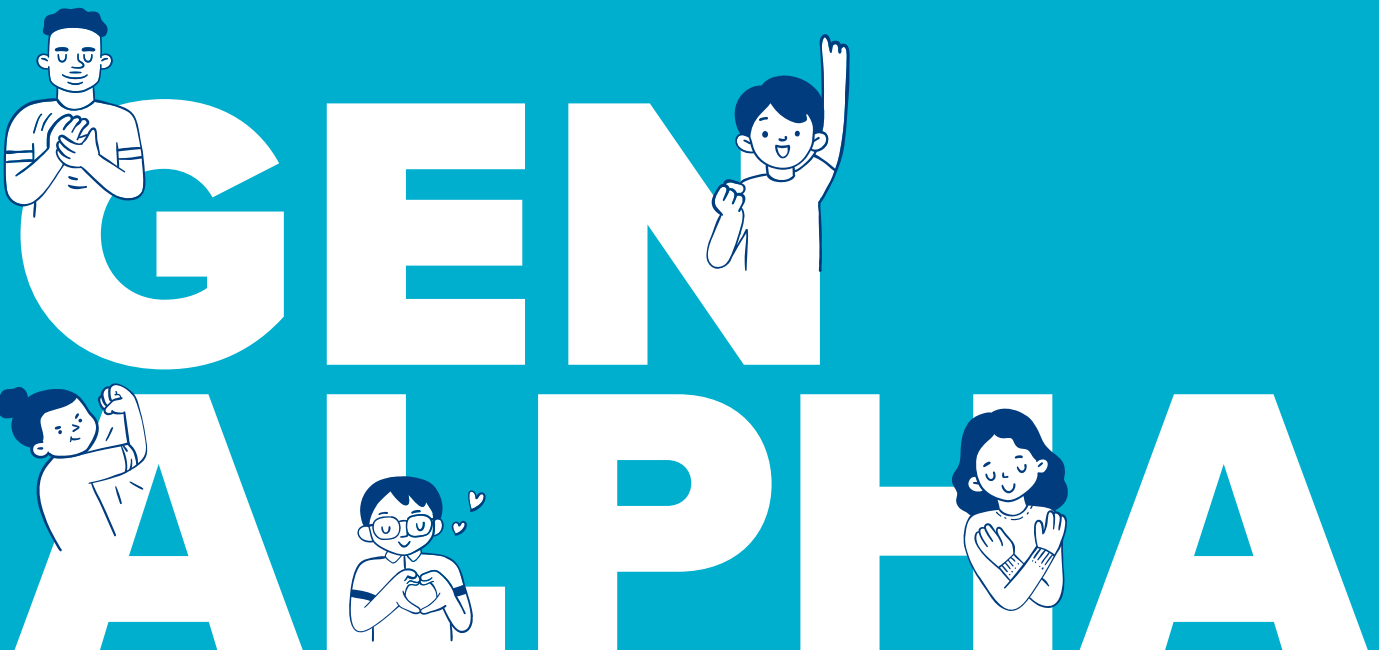
A First Look at Gen Alpha



We Are Springtide

Springtide Research Institute engages the power of social science to learn from and about young people ages 13 to 25. As a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, we deliver accessible research on the perspectives and experiences of the newest generations. Our empirical data amplify the voices of young people, inform those who know and serve them, and lead the way in showing what's next.

To learn more about us, check out the "[About Us](#)" page on our website, where you can read about our mission and approach to research, hear from our Springtide Ambassadors, meet our Research Advisory Board, and more.



About This Study

Springtide Research Institute conducted this study of 13-year-olds in the US—the oldest in “Generation Alpha”—from January 18 to January 24, 2024. An external institutional review board, Sterling IRB, reviewed and approved the study on January 16, 2024. Sterling IRB operates under federal regulations established by the US Department of Health and Human Services to protect the rights of research participants. Springtide Research Institute secured parental consent for all survey participants.

The survey was administered by an online panel provider, Alchemer, using a recruitment strategy guided by quotas to match census demographics for gender and region. To improve data quality from Alchemer’s opt-in sample, Springtide Research Institute eliminated all identifiable phony and inattentive responses from the resulting dataset. The final dataset includes 1,112 respondents. Percentages reported may not total exactly 100% due to rounding. Quotes that appear throughout the report came from respondents who answered open-ended questions on the survey.

See the study methodology and full topline results at the links below:



Methodology: springtideresearch.org/gen-alpha-methodology

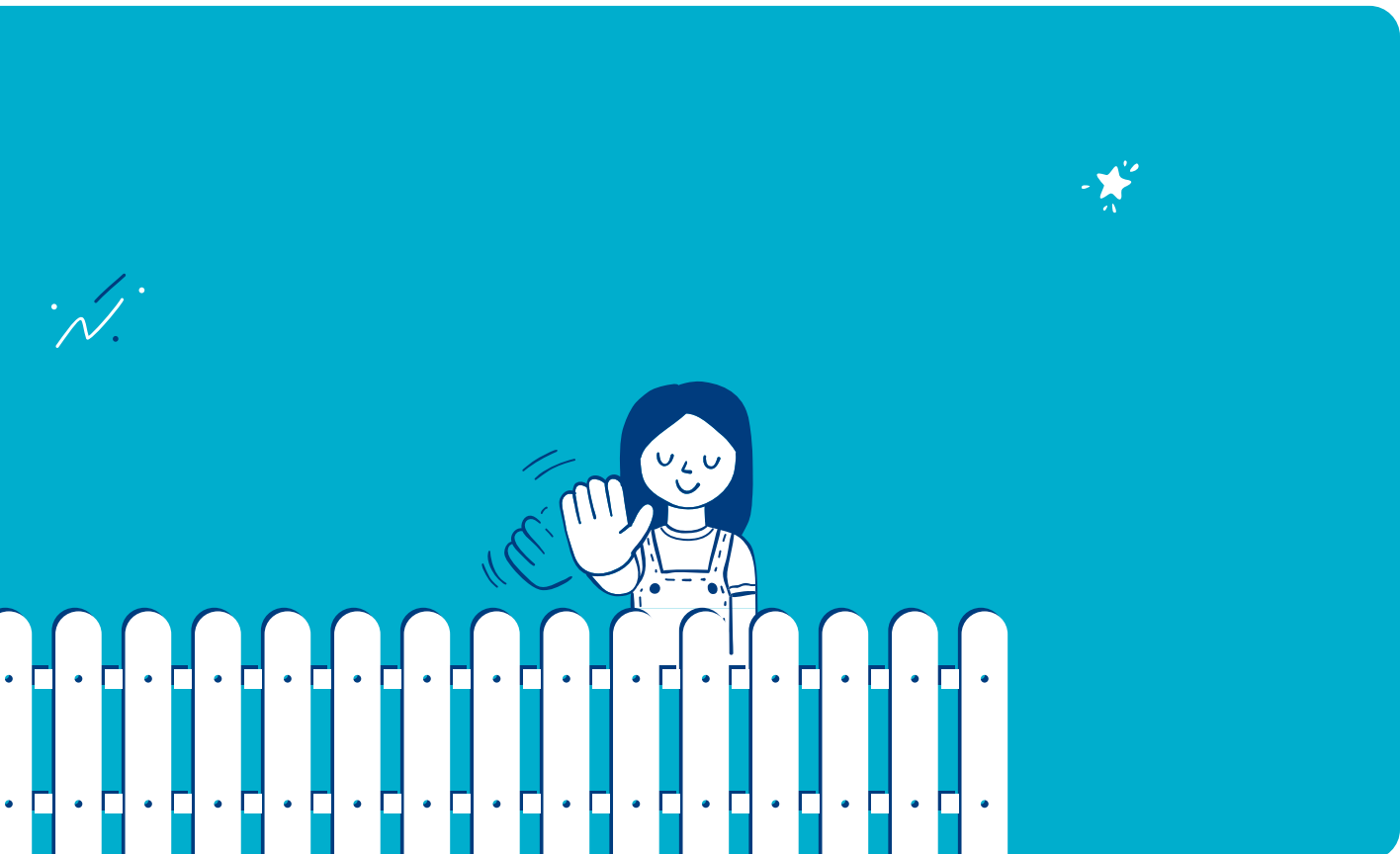


Topline results: springtideresearch.org/gen-alpha-topline



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Introduction: Being 13

Nothing spells transition like turning 13.

No longer a child, but definitely not yet an adult, a young person enters their teenage years on a developmental tightrope, balancing changes within and all around. Being 13 means having a body transformed, emotions heightened, schoolwork intensified, and responsibilities expanded, while also bidding farewell to childlike views of the world...all with a smartphone in hand.

Being 13 is monumental. Mundane. Meaningful.

It is not altogether surprising, then, that when we asked more than 1,000 13-year-olds how they primarily identify themselves, their most common response isn't gender, race, ethnicity, family status, or religion. It is being 13.

And that's about where their certainty about life, labels, and their future stops.

Ahead, we share what we learned from asking 13-year-olds in 2024 how they see themselves and others. We invited their thoughts on religion, politics, and technology; their experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic; their feedback on their mental health and well-being; and more.

These young people may sound resolute about being 13, but almost everything else for them is shrouded in uncertainty and anticipation. Life—and what to think of it all—is still unfolding. Moments of clarity swirl amid tremendous growth and change.

Being 13 in 2024 marks another kind of transition too: **Generation Alpha is growing up.**

At Springtide Research Institute, our core focus on 13-to-25-year-olds has, until now, translated to a focus on Generation Z. But the oldest members of Generation Alpha—born in 2010 or after—are now entering their teenage years too. Teenagers and young adults now span from Gen A to Gen Z.

What members of Gen Alpha tell us now and into the future will help us observe and understand shifts through time in this emerging generation, whether markers of personal experience and maturity, the continuation of broader social trends, or the distinctive hallmarks of a generation. We have much to learn.

We start by asking—and listening to—13-year-olds.



Executive Summary:

Thirteen Insights about Being 13



Age matters most to self-identity.

Given a list of options including gender, race, family status, and more, 13-year-olds most commonly choose age-group as the identity most important to them. They describe life at 13 as fun, exciting, awkward, and hard—sometimes all at once.



Friendships—often racially diverse—feel central.

A large majority of young teens agree that their friendships feel supportive and rewarding. Most 13-year-olds say that their closest friends include someone whose racial identity differs from theirs. Primarily because “my friends use it,” nearly all 13-year-olds are on social media. Most feel as though COVID-19 did not have a negative impact on their relationships with friends.



Smartphones feel “addictive,” and parents monitor use.

Nearly all 13-year-olds say that they have a smartphone, and nearly half agree that they are “addicted” to it. Most spend at least a few hours on their phone daily. Teens commonly have access to laptops, tablets, and gaming consoles too. More than half of 13-year-olds say that they have to ask their parents’ permission to use apps or sites. They also report that their parents limit screen time and monitor online activity.



COVID-19’s impact wasn’t all negative.

Three-quarters of 13-year-olds say that COVID-19 had a positive, mixed, or neutral overall impact on their lives, compared to one-quarter who evaluate it as having negatively impacted their lives in general. Its impact on family relationships is evaluated especially positively.



Inequality meant that COVID-19 was experienced unevenly.

For 13-year-olds in lower-income households, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic felt more negative than positive. Assessments of the impact of COVID-19 in all domains of life (relationships, physical and mental health, education, and in general) are more neutral or positive among those in households with more financial resources.



Racial and ethnic identities frame outlooks.

Race and ethnicity feel especially important to Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) 13-year-olds’ identity, a third of whom say they have felt discriminated against because of their race or ethnicity. BIPOC 13-year-olds are more likely than their white counterparts to feel as though their race or ethnicity will worsen their opportunities in life. White teens, by comparison, are more likely to feel as though their racial identity will better their opportunities.

7

Religion and spirituality are a common part of identity and life.

Many 13-year-olds care about religion and spirituality. Large majorities identify as at least slightly spiritual, slightly religious, or both. Most live in homes where religion and spirituality come up in conversation at least sometimes. Teens who believe in a higher power and who see religion as personally important are less likely to report feeling unhappy or lonely over the past month.

8

Political identities are yet to be formed.

Thirteen-year-olds are more likely to say “I don’t know” than to identify with a specific political party (e.g., Democrat or Republican) or ideological position (e.g., conservative or liberal).

9

Climate change haunts futures.

Six in ten 13-year-olds worry about the effects of climate change at least sometimes. Nearly half expect that their lives will turn out differently than their parents’ lives because of it. A large majority sees efforts to reduce the negative effects of climate change as good for society.

10

Artificial Intelligence sparks familiarity and creativity.

Nearly all young teens have heard or read about artificial intelligence (AI), and a little under half have used it. Most enlist it for schoolwork, yet 13-year-olds also name information-seeking, artistic expression, gaming, and companionship among the reasons they look to AI.

11

Part of the most racially diverse generation, Gen Alpha 13-year-olds tend to see increased racial and ethnic diversity in the US as a good thing.

Far fewer believe that an increase in racial and ethnic diversity is a bad thing. Many 13-year-olds attend racially diverse schools and befriend racially diverse peers.

12

Loneliness, worry, and anxiety happen.

Though far from dominating life, feelings of loneliness crop up at least sometimes over a four-week period for four in ten 13-year-olds. Half feel worried or anxious at least sometimes during the same period.

13

For a good opportunity, feeling nervous or scared is okay.

Most 13-year-olds say that they will do something that makes them feel nervous or scared if it is for a good opportunity, rather than miss out.



“It’s hard. Everyone wants you to be something or know who you are.”

—
“It’s hard being a teen. Like no matter how hard we try, we get disrespected and looked down on. We aren’t stupid. We’re young and learning.”

—
“I think it’s really hard to be a 13-year-old sometimes, but it’s so much fun too.”

“Everything is awkward.”

—
“It’s fun being 13, but it does come with mood swings as well as having to take responsibility for other things going on in my life, such as chores and dealing with my younger siblings.”

“I believe it is different from when my parents were 13.”

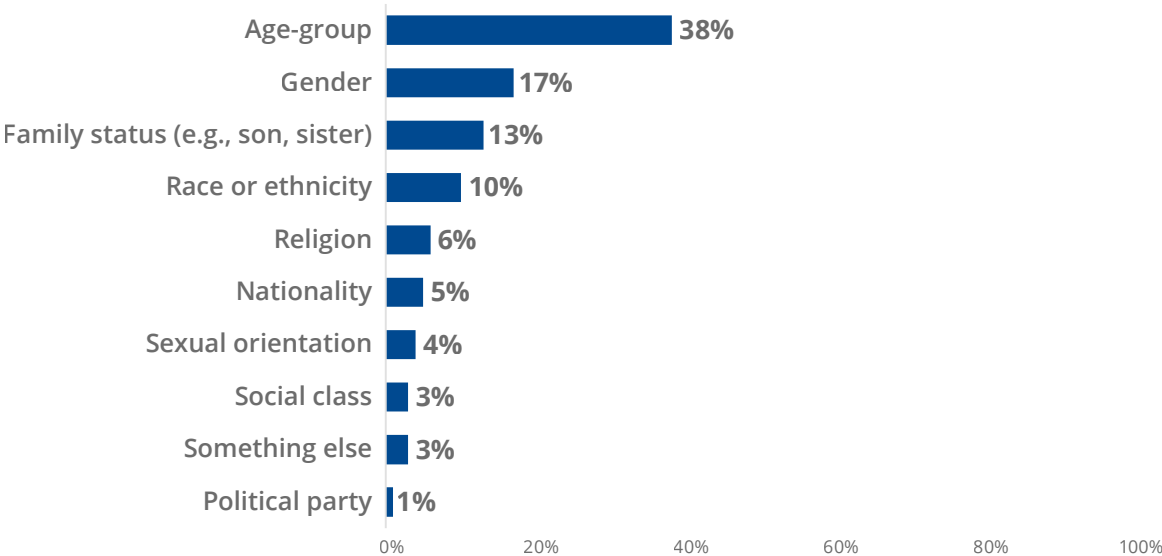


How They Identify & Belong: Age, Race & Ethnicity

Gen Alpha is the most racially and ethnically diverse generation in the US to date. How do its members think about their own identities—and experience relationships and communities—amid such diversity? Similarities and differences emerge between white 13-year-olds and those who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC).

When asked to pick *the most important marker* of their identities, 13-year-olds most often choose their age-group.

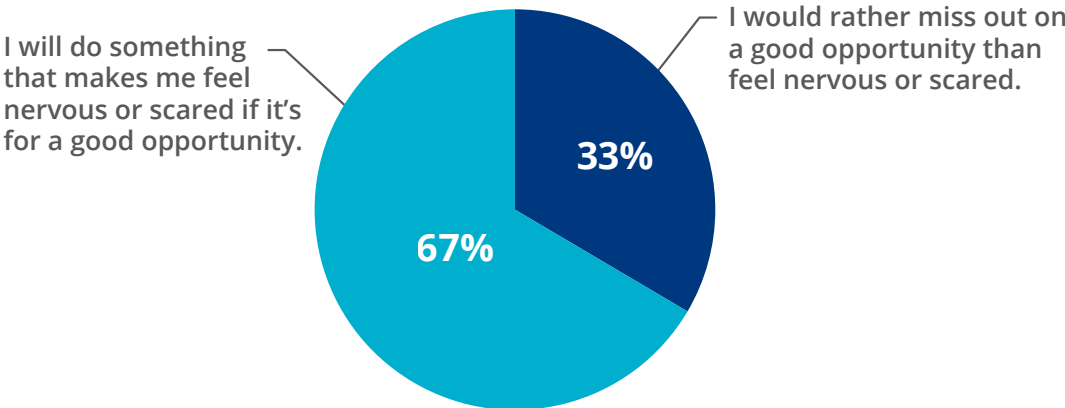
What 13-year-olds see as their most important identity marker



Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

On what it’s like to be 13, we heard a range of responses evoking gratitude, change, connection to others, and a wide spectrum of emotions. Challenge, stress, and confusion surface as key themes. But despite feelings of nervousness or fear, two-thirds of 13-year-olds tell us that they would do something for a good opportunity rather than miss out on it.

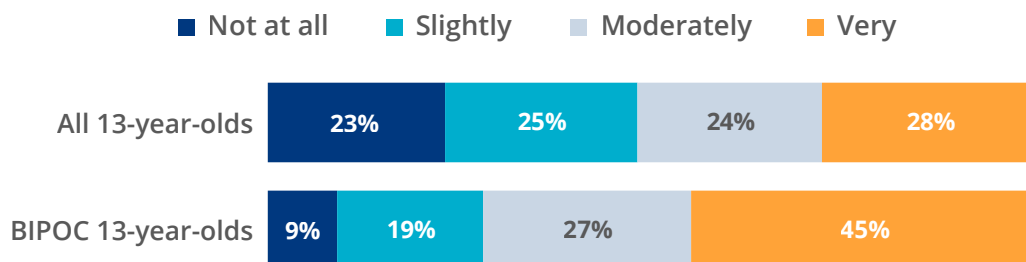
**How 13-year-olds respond to:
“Which of the following comes closest to your own view?”**



Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

Race or ethnicity also stands out as an important self-identifier, particularly among BIPOC respondents. Seventy-seven percent of all 13-year-olds say that race or ethnicity is at least slightly important in describing who they are; 28% of these young people say that this identity is very important. Among BIPOC respondents, 91% consider race or ethnicity to be at least slightly important, and 45% of these young people say that this identity is very important.

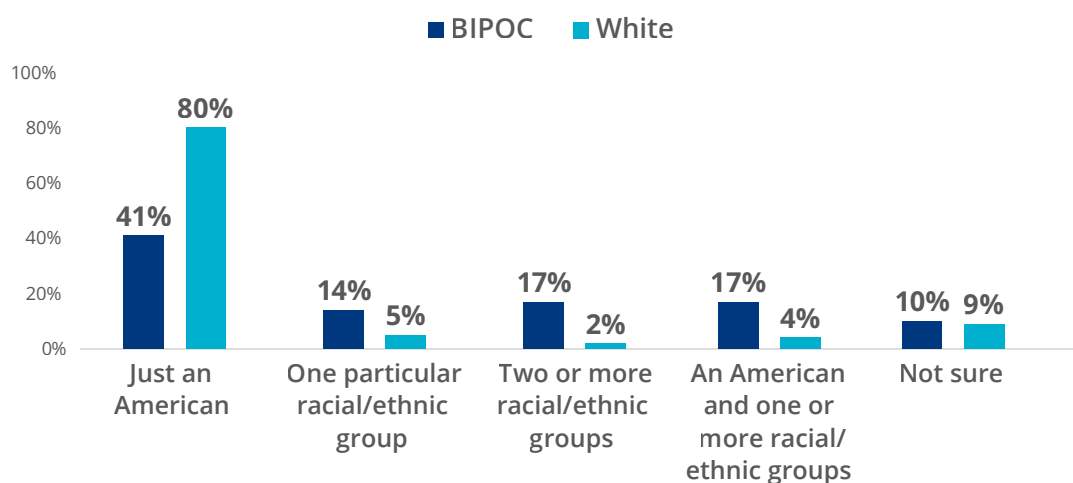
How 13-year-olds respond to: “How important is race or ethnicity in describing who you are?”



Note: Respondents were considered to be BIPOC if they identified with at least one non-white race or ethnicity. BIPOC respondents comprised 35% (n = 391) of the full sample.
Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

While race or ethnicity feels like an important identity to many, both white and BIPOC 13-year-olds most often choose “just an American” to describe themselves. However, BIPOC 13-year-olds are more likely than their white counterparts to identify with their racial or ethnic group instead of, or in addition to, their American identity.

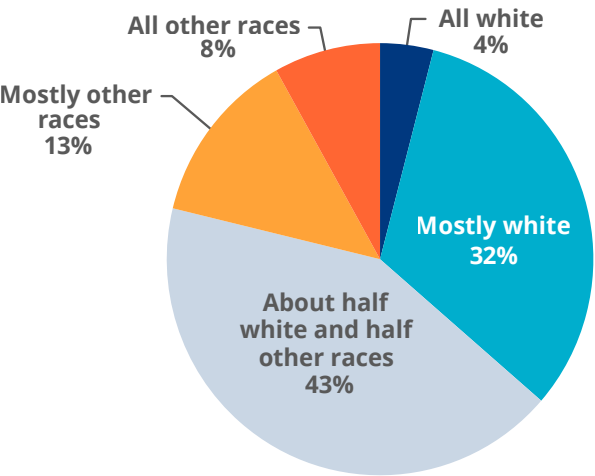
How 13-year-olds think about their racial and national identities



Note: We adapted this question from Pew Research Center’s 2022–2023 “Survey of Asian Americans,” by Neil G. Ruiz and team. Respondents were considered to be BIPOC if they identified with at least one non-white race or ethnicity. BIPOC respondents comprised 35% (n = 391) of the full sample.
Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

For many 13-year-olds today, school offers a racially diverse environment. Forty-three percent say the racial makeup of their school's student body is close to evenly split between white students and students of color. Fewer than one in twenty say that they attend an all-white school; the remainder are more likely to report attending a majority-white school than a school where other races are in the majority.

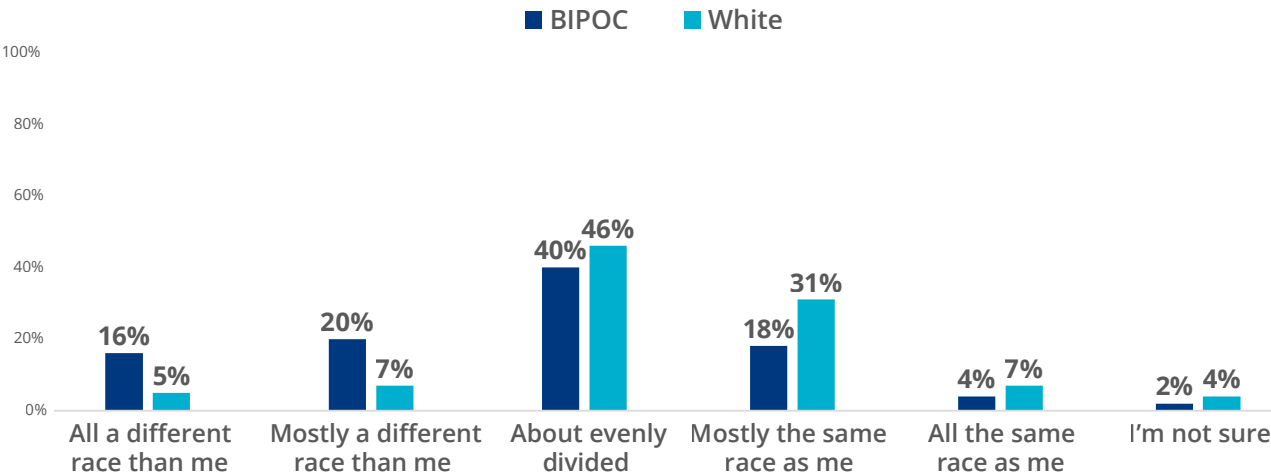
How 13-year-olds respond to: “Students at my school are...”



Note: Respondents who indicated that they are not sure (n = 30) or are not in school (n = 10) are excluded from this figure.
Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

Diverse school environments could play a role in the diversity of friend circles. **Many 13-year-olds, regardless of racial identity, report having close friends from racial groups different from their own.** Yet, BIPOC 13-year-olds are more likely to have close friends who do not share their race, while white 13-year-olds are more likely to have close friends who mostly share their race.

How 13-year-olds respond to: “My closest friends are...”

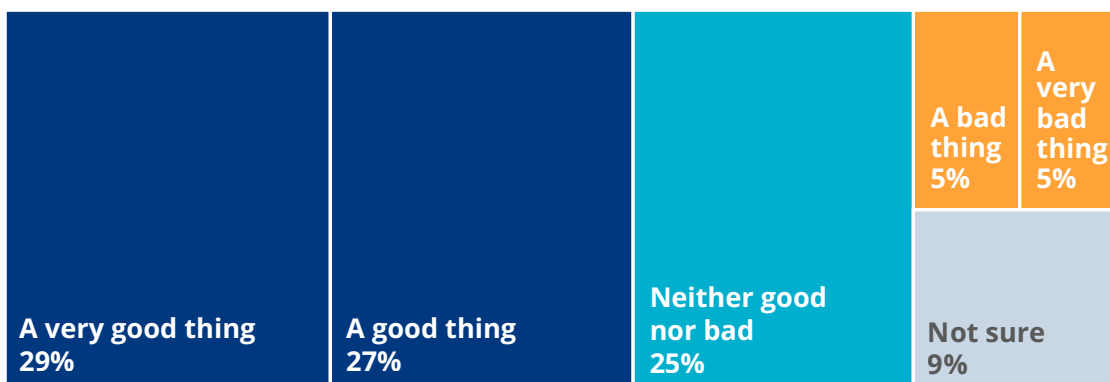


Note: Respondents were considered to be BIPOC if they identified with at least one non-white race or ethnicity. BIPOC respondents comprised 35% (n=391) of the full sample.
Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

Thirteen-year-olds find themselves in a number of environments, many of them at least somewhat racially diverse, which could impact their attitude toward racial diversity overall.

Most 13-year-olds (56%) believe that increased racial and ethnic diversity in the US is a good thing. A smaller proportion (10%) believe that it is a bad thing. No significant differences in this opinion appear across racial groups.

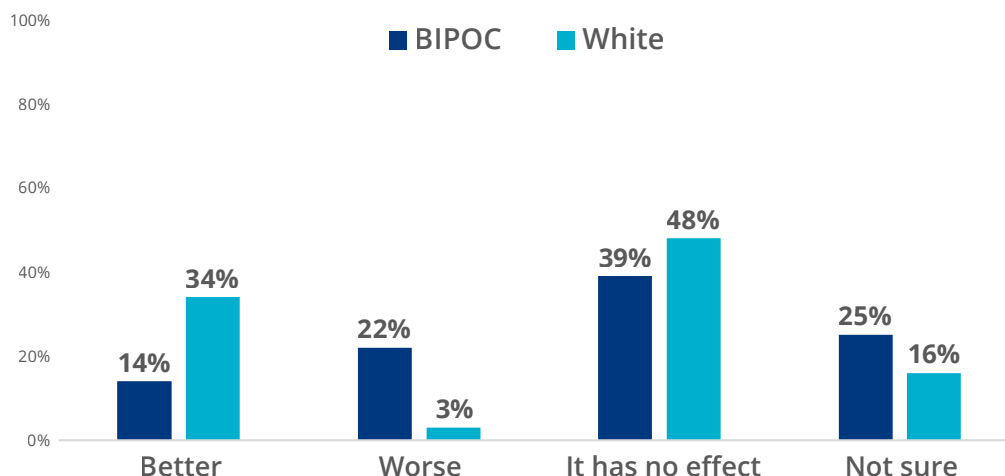
According to 13-year-olds, more racial and ethnic diversity in the US is...



Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

Race-consciousness informs 13-year-olds' outlook on opportunities. Thirteen-year-olds hint at an awareness of how their race or ethnicity may or may not impact their lives, signaling the persistence of patterns of discrimination found historically in the US. Across the full sample, most 13-year-olds feel that their racial or ethnic identity has no effect on their opportunities in life.

How 13-year-olds respond to: "My race or ethnicity makes my opportunities in life..."



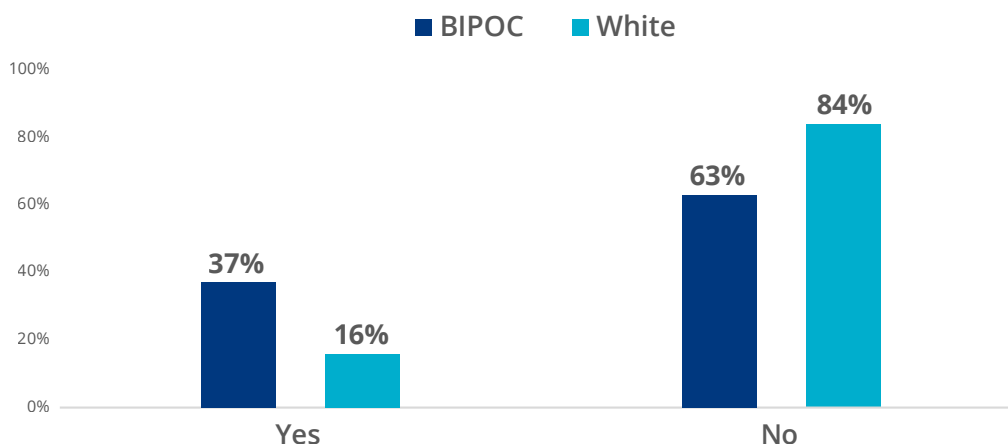
Note: Respondents were considered to be BIPOC if they identified with at least one non-white race or ethnicity. BIPOC respondents comprised 35% (n= 391) of the full sample.

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

Yet, **BIPOC 13-year-olds are more likely to feel that their race or ethnicity negatively impacts their opportunities in life.** Conversely, white 13-year-olds are more likely to feel that their racial or ethnic identity positively impacts their opportunities.

Most 13-year-olds, regardless of identity, do not feel as though they have been discriminated against because of their race or ethnicity. Yet, among those who do feel discriminated against, BIPOC young people are much more likely than white young people to report this experience.

How 13-year-olds respond to: “Have you ever felt discriminated against because of your race or ethnicity?”



Note: Respondents were considered to be BIPOC if they identified with at least one non-white race or ethnicity. BIPOC respondents comprised 35% (n=391) of the full sample.

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.



“I have my own ideas and beliefs.”

—
“It’s not easy. It can be hard sometimes and stressful. However, I am developing and learning to become a stronger person and have a good relationship with God.”

“We need to be more accepting of each other.”

—
“It’s hard being religious because a lot of kids my age don’t care about being religious at all.”

—
“I think it’s a strange time to be alive. I sometimes worry for the future with how addicted I and my peers are to the internet, but if we have faith, I think we’ll be okay.”

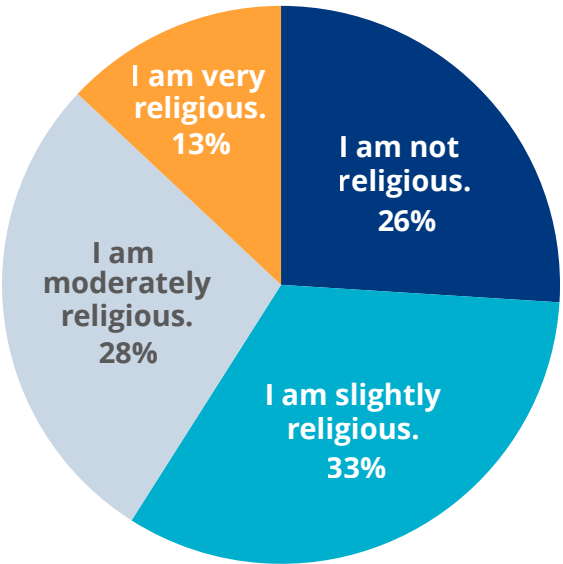


What They Believe: Religion & Spirituality

Today’s 13-year-olds live in a time when rates of religious affiliation and religious service attendance show a decades-long decline. Access to religion and spirituality and their cultural touchpoints, nonetheless, abounds—whether on the news, in classrooms, or in social media feeds. We learned by surveying 13-year-olds that they not only identify with religion and spirituality but also engage in spiritual beliefs and practices.

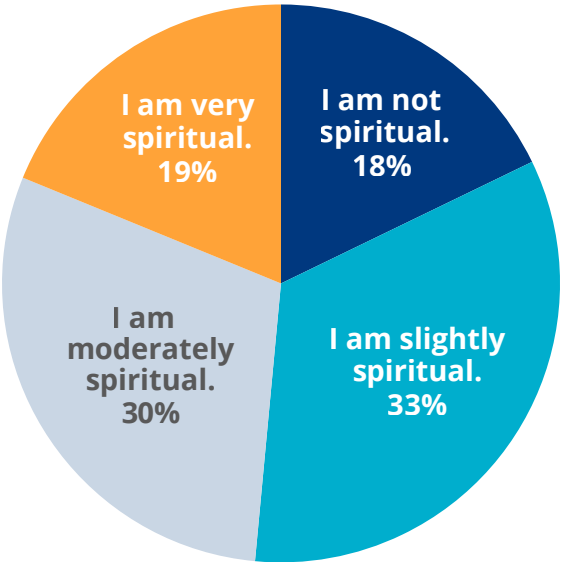
A solid majority of 13-year-olds place enough value on religion or spirituality to assign one or both as part of their identities. **Seventy-four percent of 13-year-olds identify as at least slightly religious; 82% say that they are at least slightly spiritual.** On the other end of the spectrum, 13% do not identify as either religious or spiritual.

How 13-year-olds respond to: “To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person?”



Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

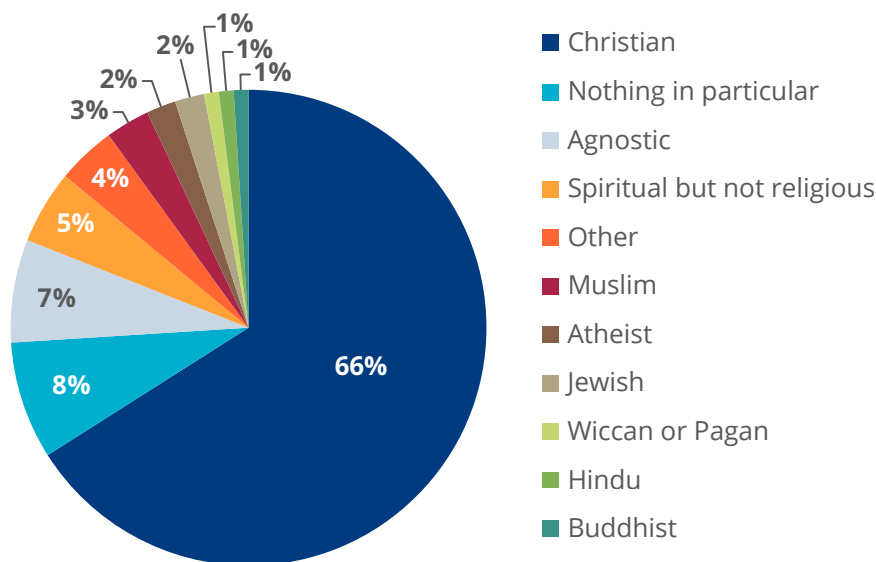
How 13-year-olds respond to: “To what extent do you consider yourself a spiritual person?”



Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

Roughly two-thirds of US adults overall identify as Christian today, a decline from decades past (Pew Research Center, September 2022, *Modeling the Future of Religion in America*). This proportion parallels findings from 13-year-olds, 66% of whom identify as “Christian.” Another **22% of 13-year-olds identify as nonreligious** (“nothing in particular,” “agnostic,” “spiritual but not religious,” or “atheist”).

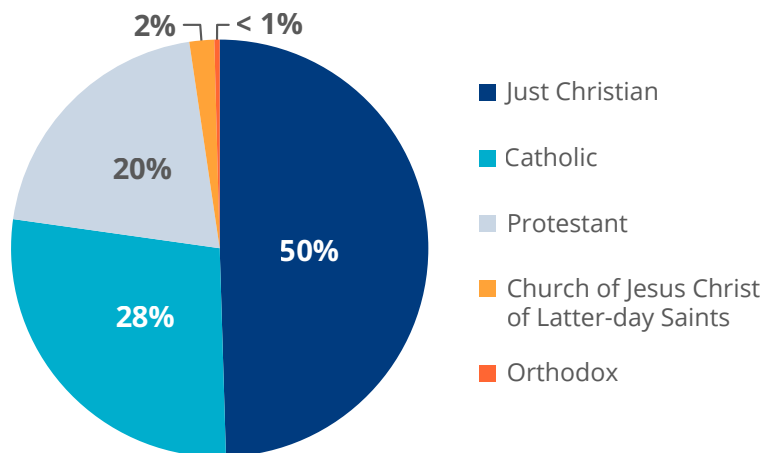
How 13-year-olds respond to: “Which of the following religions, traditions, or worldviews do you most identify with?”



Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.
Pew Research Center, September 2022, *Modeling the Future of Religion in America*.

Of the 66% of 13-year-olds who identify as “Christian,” half identify as “just Christian” and the remainder identify as “Catholic” (28%), “Protestant” (20%), “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” (2%), and “Orthodox” (0.4%).

Percentage of Christian 13-year-olds who are:

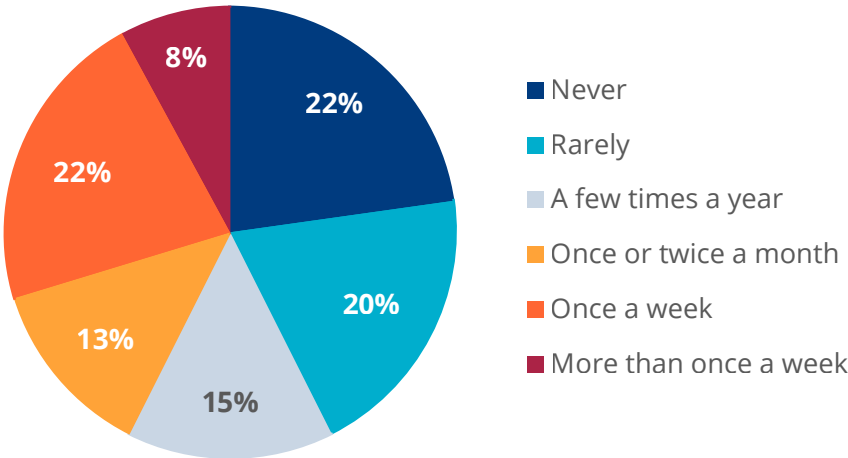


Note: This chart includes only the 66% of respondents who identify as Christian.

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

Regarding religious services, more than half of 13-year-olds report attendance of some frequency. **Thirty percent attend religious services once a week or more.** Twenty-two percent say they never attend religious services.

**How 13-year-olds respond to:
“How often do you attend religious or spiritual services?”**

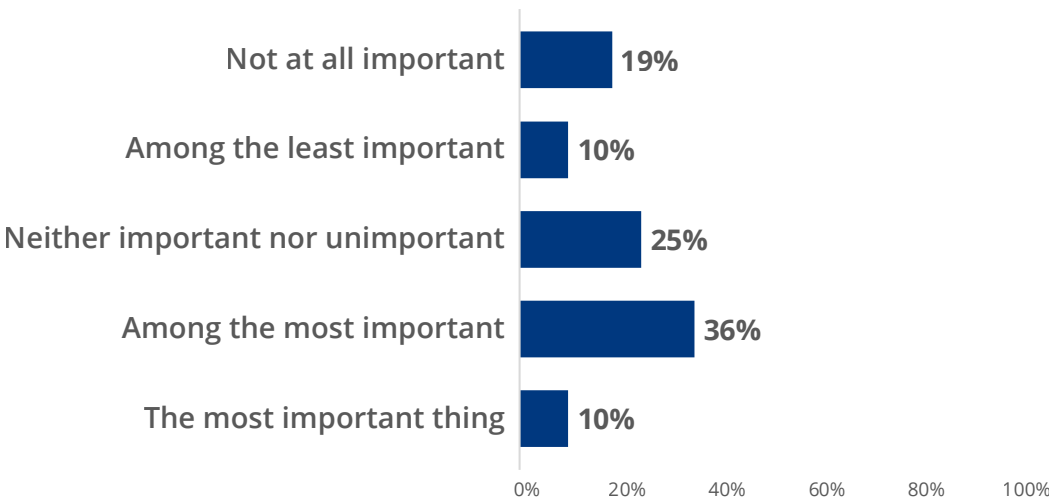


Note: For this question, religious services did not include weddings or funerals. Services did include both in-person and virtual.

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

Most 13-year-olds express an opinion on religion’s importance in their lives, one way or the other. Nearly half (46%) say that religion is important, including 10% for whom it is the most important thing. By contrast, 29% of 13-year-olds say that religion is unimportant in their lives, including 19% who say that religion is not important at all.

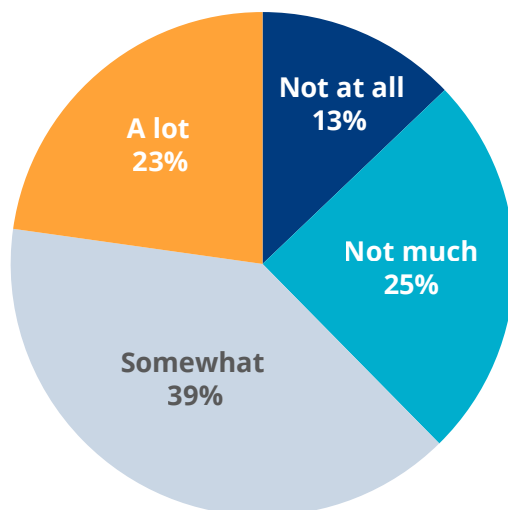
How 13-year-olds see the importance of religion in their lives



Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

For many 13-year-olds, talking about religion or spirituality at home is commonplace; for others, it's an unlikely topic of conversation. Thirteen percent say that religion or spirituality never comes up at home.

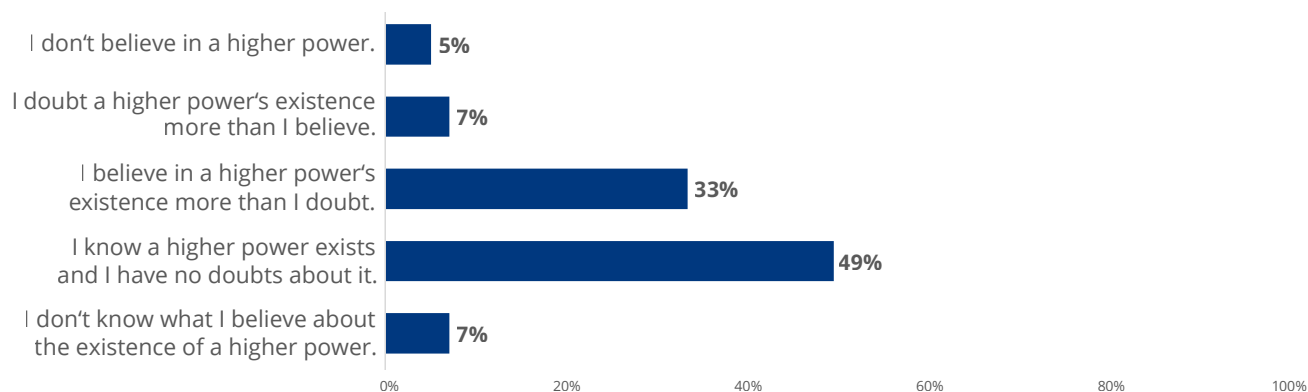
How 13-year-olds respond to: "How much does your close family talk about religion or spirituality at home?"



Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

Regardless of the prevalence of conversations about religion or spirituality at home, a large majority of 13-year-olds profess personal belief in a higher power. Most (82%) say they believe, including nearly half (49%) who believe without a doubt. Few 13-year-olds say they doubt a higher power's existence more than they believe (7%) or say they don't believe at all (5%).

How 13-year-olds respond to: "Which statement comes closest to expressing what you believe about a higher power?"



Note: For this question, we measured higher power as: "God, gods, or some other divine source or universal energy."

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.



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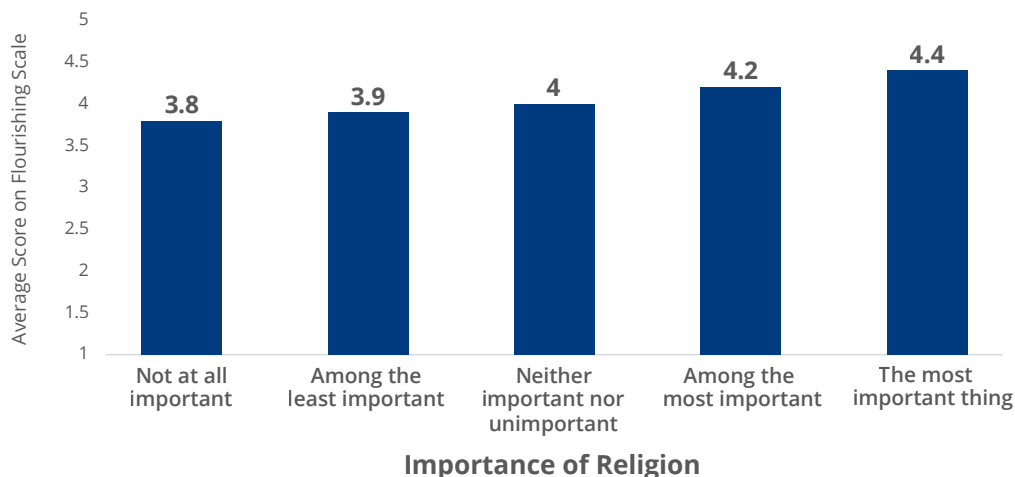
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Prior Springtide research surveying young people ages 13 to 25 has shown a link between various religious and spiritual beliefs and well-being, in terms of both self-reported mental health and flourishing. In the current survey, 13-year-olds who say that religion is important in their lives tend to have higher scores on the Flourishing Scale than those for whom religion is unimportant.

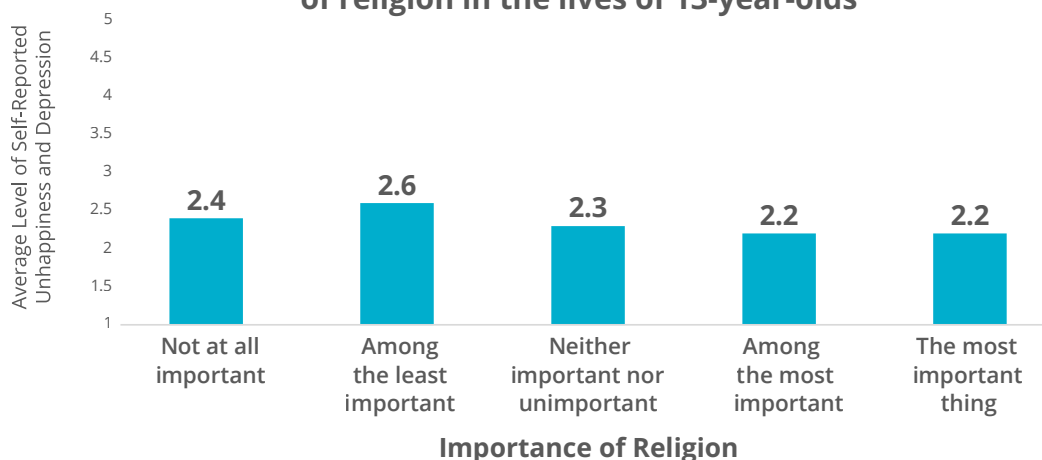
Average flourishing and importance of religion in the lives of 13-year-olds



Note: We used the Flourishing Scale, created by researcher Ed Diener and team, which allows respondents to rate their success in various areas of life. Respondents indicated their agreement with each of eight statements pertaining to flourishing on a scale of 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). A respondent's mean (i.e., average) response across all scale items determined their flourishing score.
Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

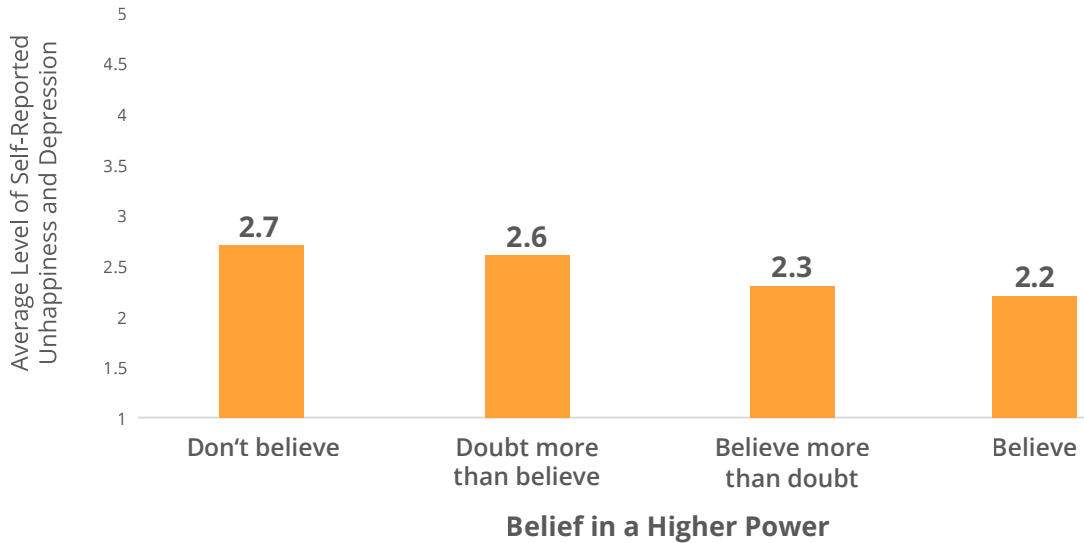
Although the ties between religion, unhappiness, and loneliness aren't strong, young people who say that religion is important in their lives are less likely to report feeling unhappy or lonely over the past month. Belief works similarly: 13-year-olds who express greater belief in a higher power tend to report lower rates of unhappiness and loneliness.

Average self-reported unhappiness and importance of religion in the lives of 13-year-olds



Note: To report unhappiness and depression, respondents indicated how often they "felt unhappy and depressed" during the past four weeks on a scale of 1 ("never") to 5 ("very often").
Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

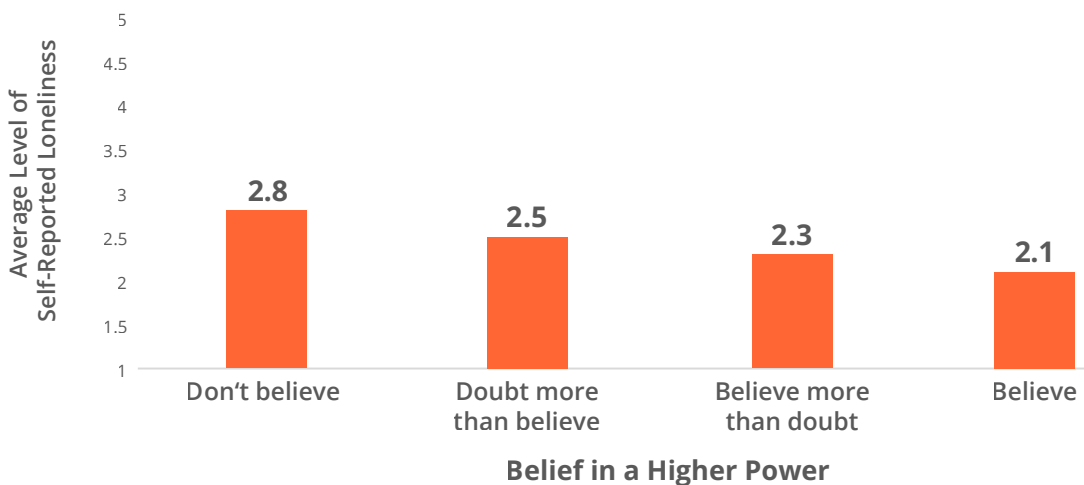
Average self-reported unhappiness and belief in a higher power among 13-year-olds



Note: To report unhappiness and depression, respondents indicated how often they “felt unhappy and depressed” during the past four weeks on a scale of 1 (“never”) to 5 (“very often”).

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

Average self-reported loneliness and belief in a higher power among 13-year-olds



Note: To report loneliness, respondents indicated how often they “felt lonely” during the past four weeks on a scale of 1 (“never”) to 5 (“very often”).

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

“I love growing up in this era!”

—
“I talk to [the Snapchat AI bot] when I’m bored sometimes. She’s good at giving information and talking too.”

“I feel there is more hate, and it is made worse by social media. Bullying is really bad.”

—
“There’s lots of options and choices and things to do, and technology has come a long way.”

—
“With the social media increase, we started comparing to each other’s lives a lot, and that sucks.”

—
“I want to use my iPhone without being locked out of it by my dad.”

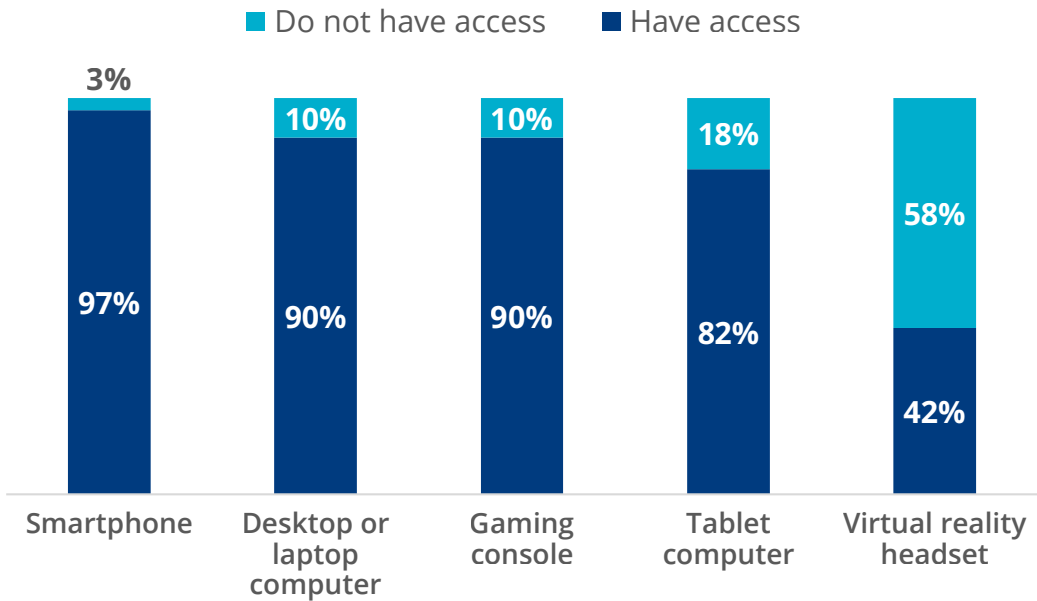
What They Do: **Media & Technology**

While members of Gen Z are often called digital natives, Gen Alpha’s technological foundation goes beyond knowing their way around a smartphone. This generation faces rapid and complex technological innovation, especially in artificial intelligence and virtual reality. Such digital wonders will be their norm.

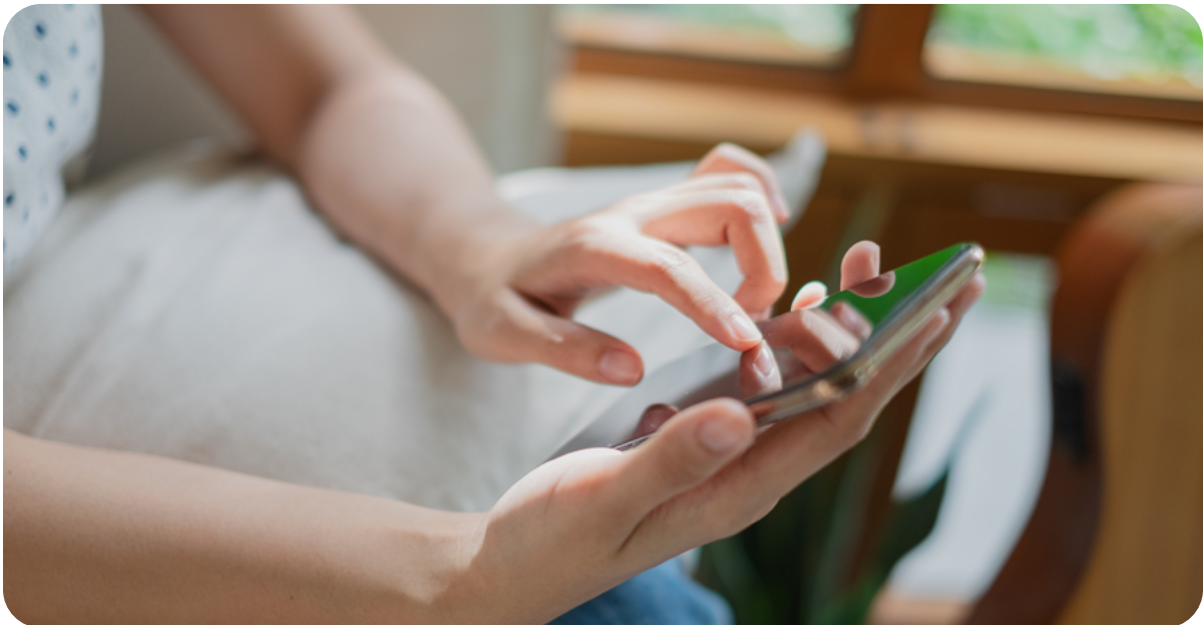
Thirteen-year-olds tell us how (and how much) they use the technology readily available to them, why they use it, and how it makes them feel. Most spend hours on their smartphones daily, but they also report screen time supervision and do not consistently exhibit the negative mental health outcomes often associated with smartphone use.

Smartphones are nearly universal in the lives of 13-year-olds. Ninety-seven percent have access to a smartphone at home, and most can also access other devices such as a laptop, tablet, or gaming console.

Access to technology among 13-year-olds

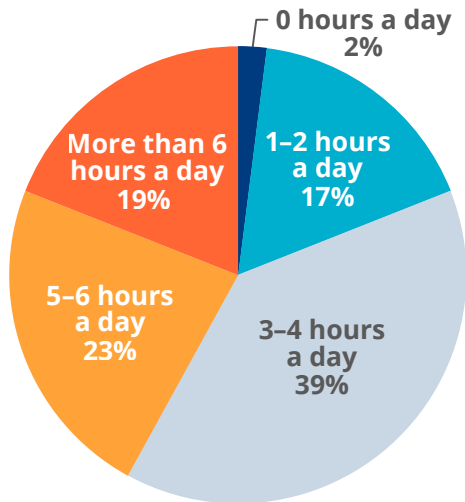


Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.
Note: We adapted this question from Pew Research Center's survey "Teens, Social Media and Technology 2023," by Monica Anderson and team.



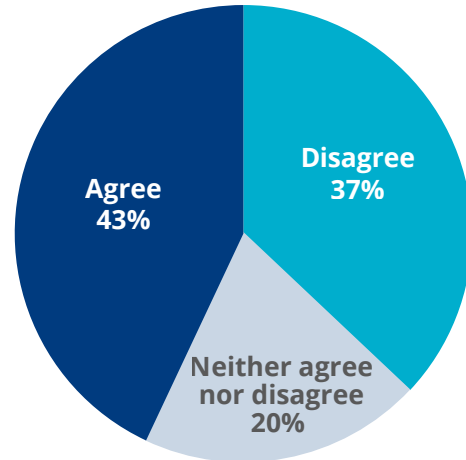
Almost four in ten 13-year-olds report spending 3–4 hours per day on their smartphone—the most common time estimate chosen. A similar proportion (42%) say they spend 5 or more hours a day on their phone. Forty-three percent of 13-year-olds agree that they are “addicted” to their phone.

How 13-year-olds respond to: “In general, I am on my phone...”



Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

How 13-year-olds respond to: “I am addicted to my phone.”



Note: For this chart, response options “strongly agree” and “agree” are combined under “agree”; response options “strongly disagree” and “disagree” are combined under “disagree.”

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

We used the term addicted for this question because it is a recognizable term representing a certain kind of behavior. We caution, however, against labeling young people as addicted without knowing specific patterns of use and underlying motivations for that use. Studies on addiction show that it is a disease with complex factors, not just a pattern of behavior. Smartphone addiction is not a recognized medical or psychological condition. Stigma and the multifaceted character of addiction suggest addressing usage as problematic rather than as addiction.

Parent regulation of screen time for 13-year-olds

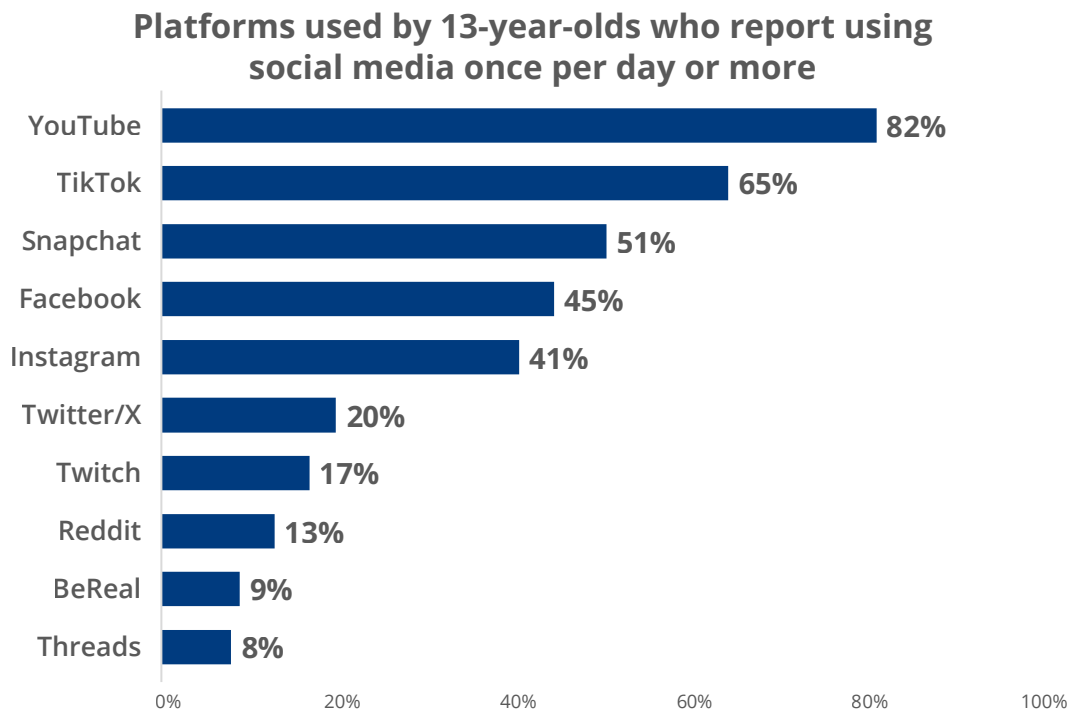
■ Yes ■ No



Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

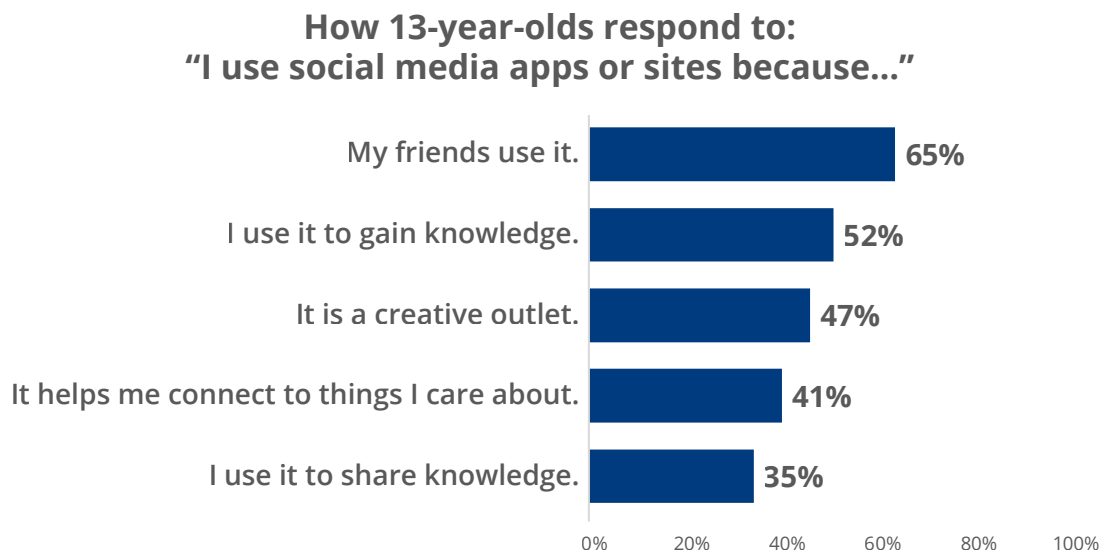
Almost all (99%) 13-year-olds report using social media. Most social media platforms require users to be at least 13 years old. YouTube, TikTok, and Snapchat are especially popular among this audience of young teens.

When asked about all the reasons they use social media, 13-year-olds commonly report the value-add of social connection, knowledge-sharing, and creativity.



Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

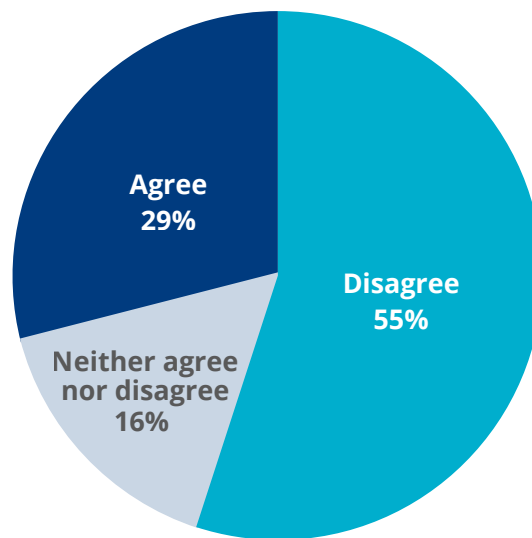
Note: We adapted this question from Pew Research Center's survey "Teens, Social Media and Technology 2023," by Monica Anderson and team.



Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

Avid social media use means that 13-year-olds constantly make choices about what they share online. Most disagree that they use social media to share a lot of information about their personal lives.

How 13-year-olds respond to: “I share a lot of information about my personal life on social media.”



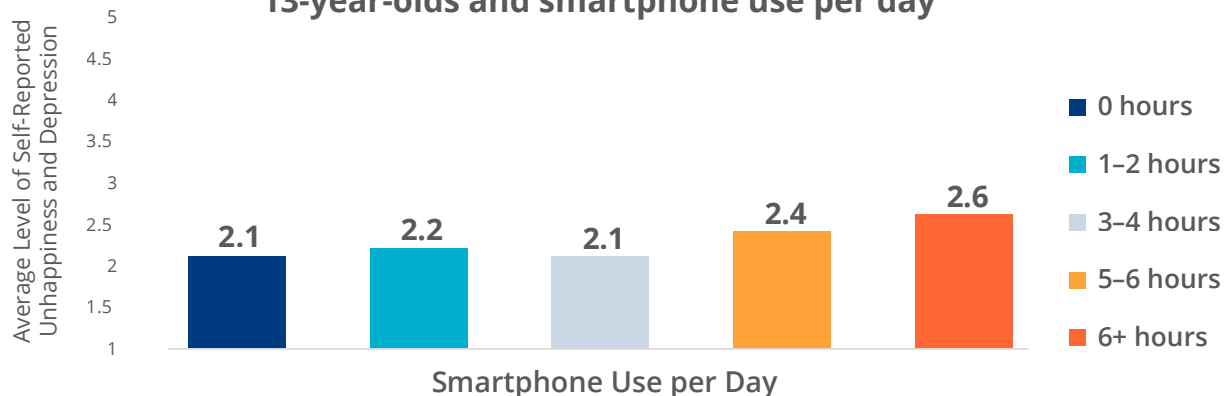
Note: For this chart, response options “strongly agree” and “agree” are combined under “agree”; response options “strongly disagree” and “disagree” are combined under “disagree.”

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

Our findings show no strong ties between smartphone or social media use and mental health outcomes. Thirteen-year-olds who use their phones more often are only slightly more likely to report feeling unhappy or depressed, worried or anxious, and lonely over the past month.

Those who report spending more time on social media are slightly more likely to report feeling worse about themselves after using the platforms. A multitude of factors fuel anxiety, depression, and loneliness; weak statistical correlations do not suggest that increased smartphone or social media use causes negative mental health outcomes.

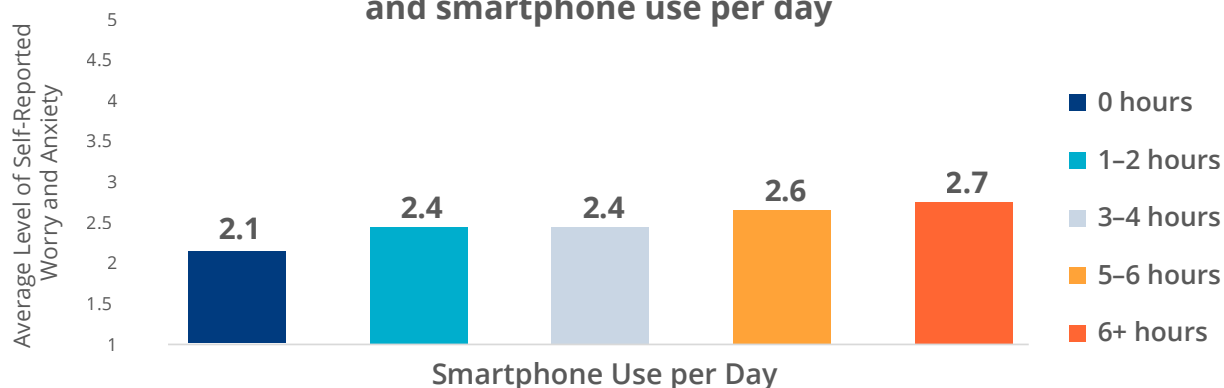
Average self-reported *unhappiness* of 13-year-olds and smartphone use per day



Note: To report unhappiness and depression, respondents indicated how often they “felt unhappy and depressed” during the past four weeks on a scale of 1 (“never”) to 5 (“very often”).

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

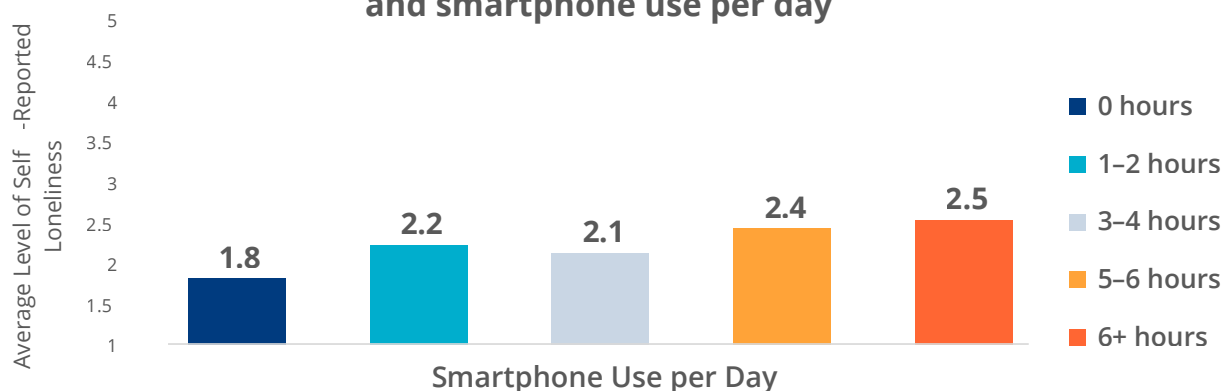
Average self-reported *anxiety* of 13-year-olds and smartphone use per day



Note: To report worry and anxiety, respondents indicated how often they “felt worried or anxious” during the past four weeks on a scale of 1 (“never”) to 5 (“very often”).

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

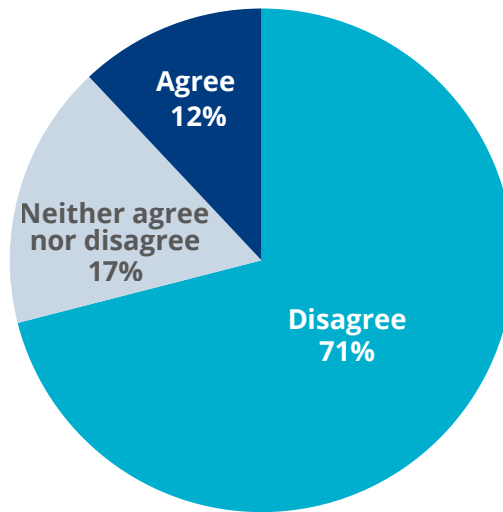
Average self-reported *loneliness* of 13-year-olds and smartphone use per day



Note: To report loneliness, respondents indicated how often they “felt lonely” during the past four weeks on a scale of 1 (“never”) to 5 (“very often”).

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

How 13-year-olds respond to: “I often feel worse about myself after spending time on social media.”

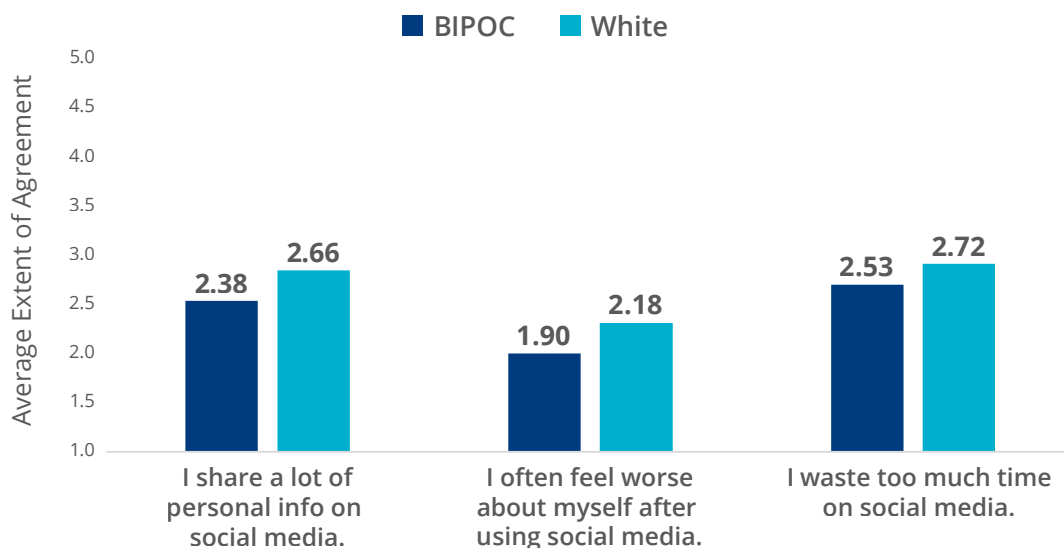


Note: For this chart, response options “strongly agree” and “agree” are combined under “agree”; response options “strongly disagree” and “disagree” are combined under “disagree.”

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

When it comes to perceptions of technology use (i.e., sharing personal information, feeling worse, or wasting time), white 13-year-olds are slightly more likely than BIPOC 13-year-olds to agree with the statements shown in the following graph.

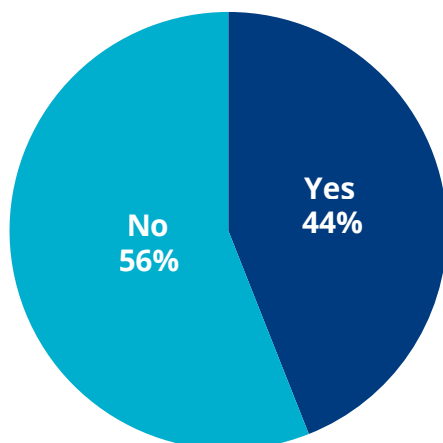
Technology outcomes for 13-year-olds by racial identity



Note: Respondents indicated their agreement with each statement on a scale of 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”).

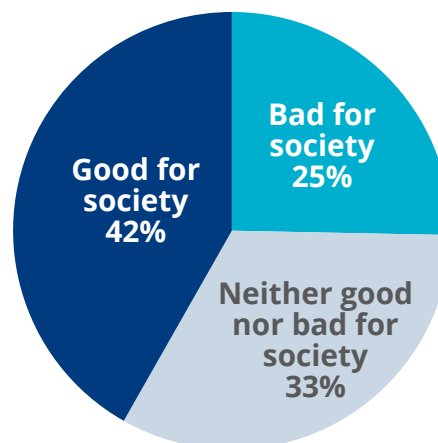
Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

How 13-year-olds respond to:
“Have you ever personally used AI?”



Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

How 13-year-olds see the
increased use of AI



Note: For this chart, response options “very good for society” and “somewhat good for society” are combined under “good for society”; response options “very bad for society” and “somewhat bad for society” are combined under “bad for society.”

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is emerging as commonplace among 13-year-olds. Nearly all (94%) have heard or read about AI. Forty-four percent have used it in some capacity. Most often, 13-year-olds report using AI for help with schoolwork, looking up information, creative purposes (e.g., producing art/images), and gaming. Three-quarters of young teens see the greater use of AI as neutral or good for society rather than bad.



“It’s a little scary at times when thinking about the future.”

“I think there’s a lot of strange behavior that’s being normalized that I don’t agree with.”

“It can be scary due to adults acting more like 13-year-olds than I do as a 13-year-old.”

“It’s very hard to learn at school without wondering if I’m safe or not and having to think of an escape plan around my school.”

“It’s a bit difficult with a lot of social and political issues.”

“It is kind of scary. It is very different than years ago. The world is such a big mess. I worry a lot. I am hopeful and optimistic.”

“It’s a wide open world with dreams of my future. We need to be taught to make more income while we’re young and to save for the future.”

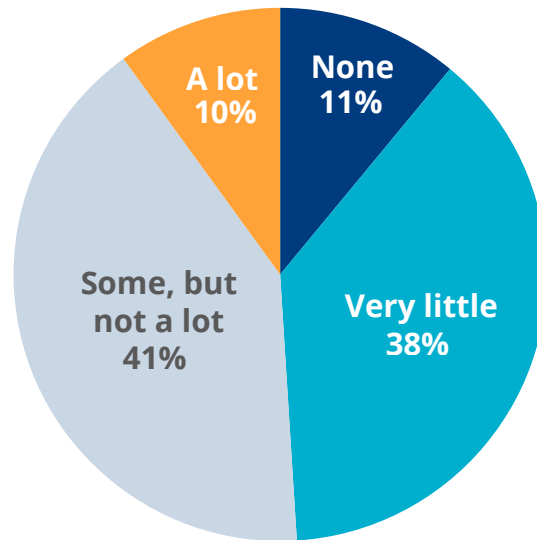


What They Think: Politics

By age 13, most young people have had some exposure to political concepts, such as the presidency, branches of government, and elections. Still five years from the legal voting age in the US, 13-year-olds may not have other political concepts and issues top of mind. The charts in this section illustrate how much young people say they know about politics and what they think about current political issues.

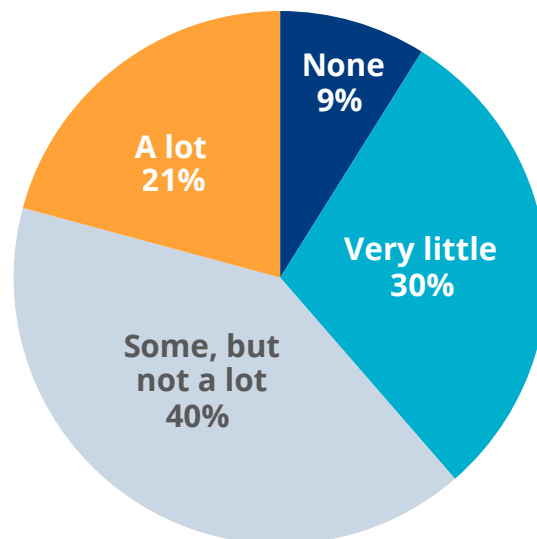
Most 13-year-olds report knowing “very little” or “some, but not a lot” about government or politics, and their families’ discussions about government or politics at home follow similar rates. Thirteen-year-olds whose families talk about these topics more often at home report knowing more about government or politics.

**How 13-year-olds respond to:
“How much do you know about government or politics?”**



Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

How 13-year-olds respond to: “How much does your close family talk about government or politics at home?”

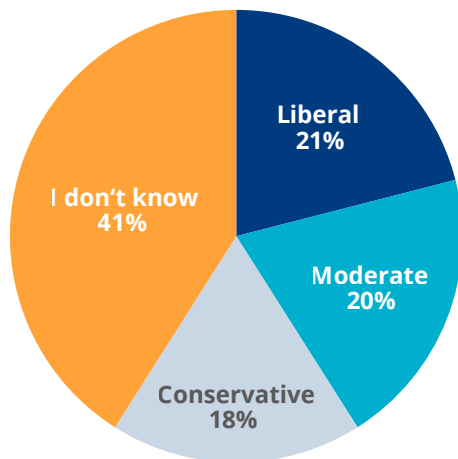


Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

Many 13-year-olds don't know where to place themselves in terms of political ideology or party. Forty-one percent are not sure how to describe their political ideology. The remaining respondents identify as liberal (21%), moderate (20%), and conservative (18%).

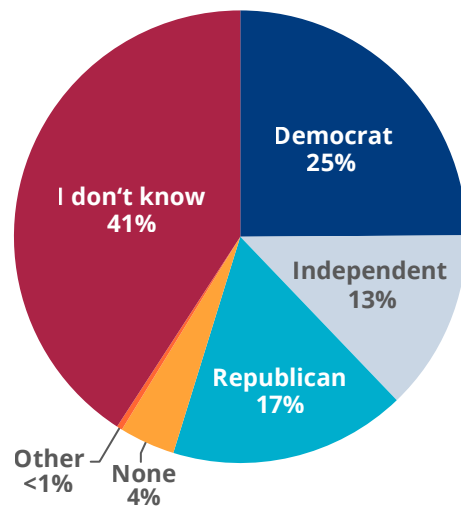
Similarly, 41% of 13-year-olds say they “don't know” in response to a question about political party identification. The remaining respondents identify as Democrat (25%), Republican (17%), and Independent (13%). Few say that political party affiliation is an important identity they use to describe themselves.

How 13-year-olds identify their political ideology

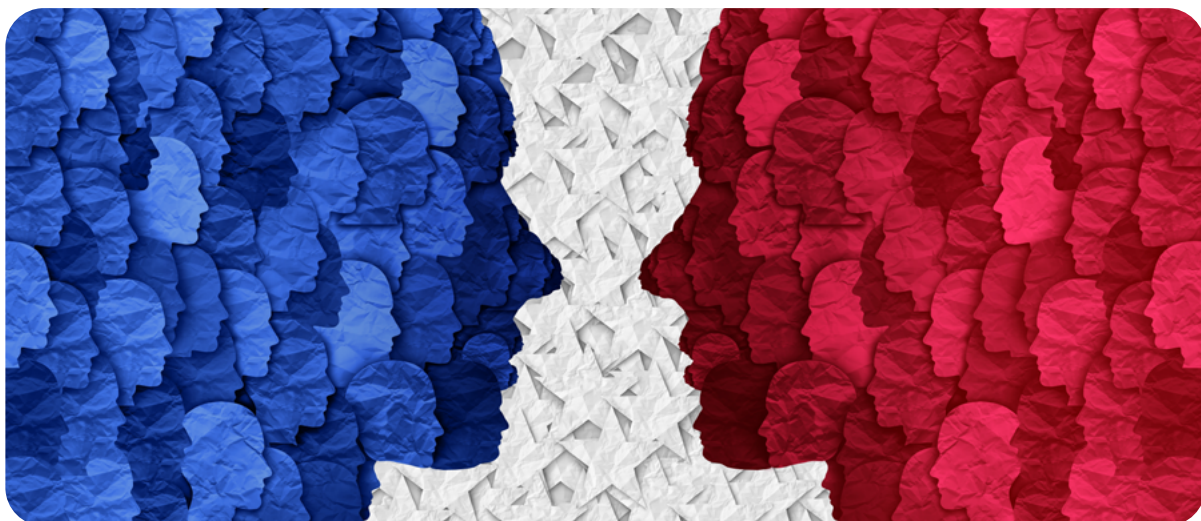


Note: For this question, we asked 13-year-olds, “Where would you place yourself on a scale from extremely liberal to extremely conservative?” For this chart, response options “extremely liberal,” “liberal,” and “slightly liberal” are combined under “liberal”; response options “extremely conservative,” “conservative,” and “slightly conservative” are combined under “conservative.”
Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

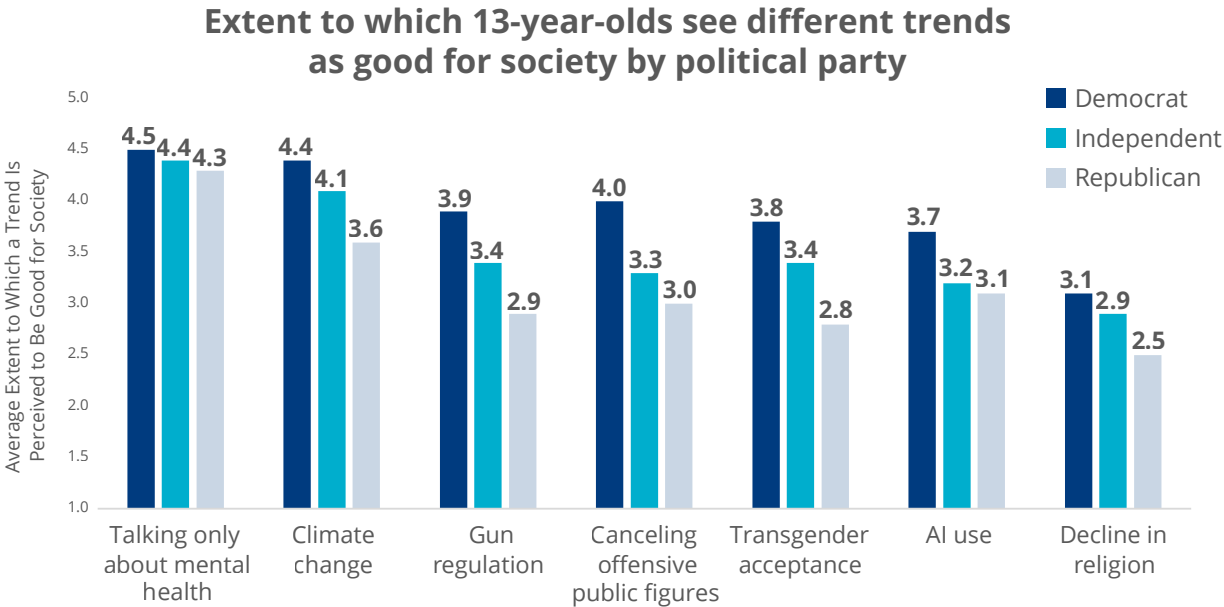
How 13-year-olds respond to: “Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or something else?”



Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.



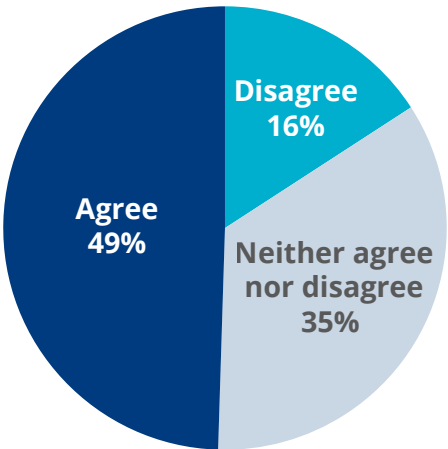
We asked 13-year-olds to share their views on a handful of issues being “good” or “bad” (or neither) for society. Among those who name a political party affiliation, small variations arise when comparing how different 13-year-olds see the direction of these social issues.



Note: The items in this question are from Pew Research Center's 2021 survey “American Trends Panel.” Respondents indicated the extent to which they think each trend is good or bad for society on a scale of 1 (“very bad for society”) to 5 (“very good for society”).
Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

At age 13, respondents are aware of climate change and its potential impacts on their lives. Nearly half of 13-year-olds believe that climate change will result in their lives being different than their parents’. Almost three-quarters (73%) see efforts to reduce the negative effects of climate change as a good thing.

How 13-year-olds respond to: “Because of climate change, my life will turn out much differently from my parents’ lives.”



Note: For this chart, response options “strongly agree” and “agree” are combined under “agree”; response options “strongly disagree” and “disagree” are combined under “disagree.”
Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

**“Being 13 is good because
I have and love my family.”**

—
“A lot of kids do not have a good family. If
you are a kid with a good family, you are very
lucky and will do ok in school and in life.”

—
“It’s a hard
time to be
13. COVID
has affected
my school.
I feel like
I’m behind.”

**“It helps to
have loving,
supportive
parents to
deal with life.”**

—
“School sucks and I shouldn’t have to
go. I miss when COVID was around,
and the schools were shut down.”



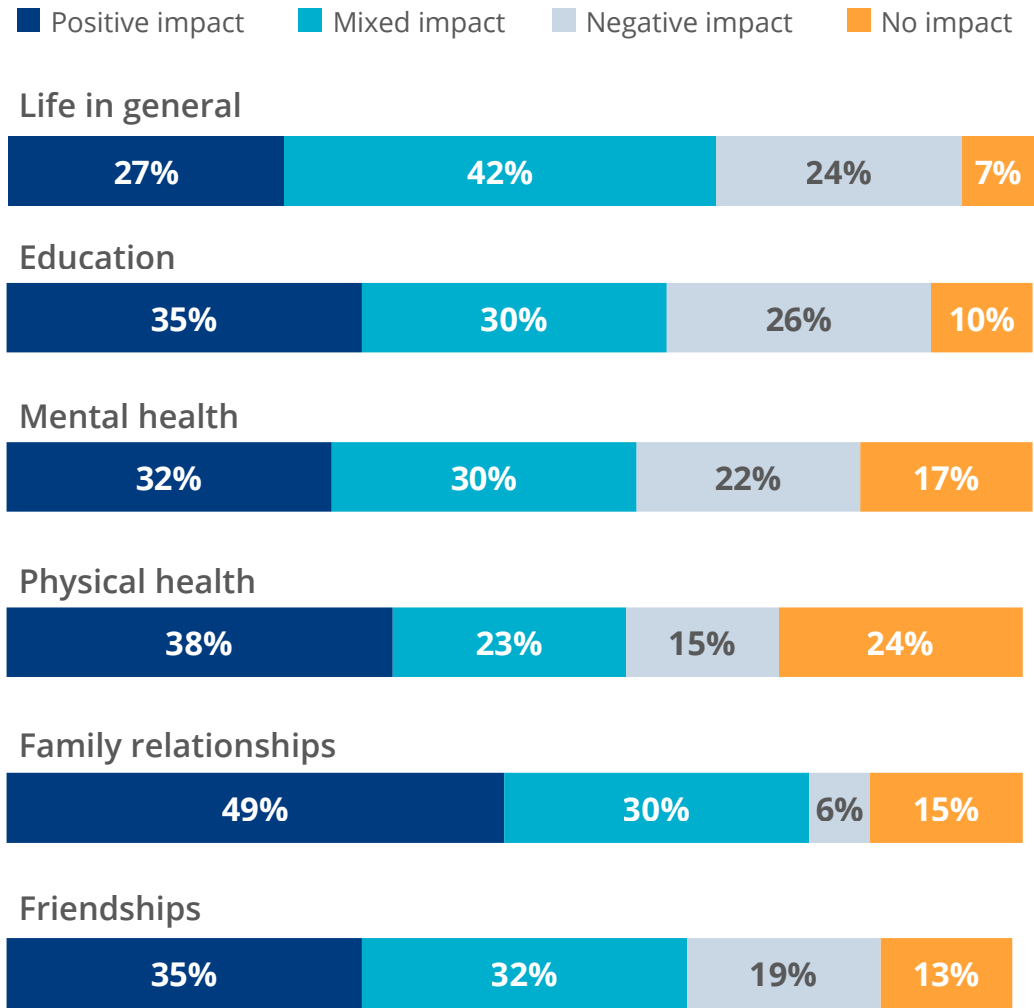
What They’ve Experienced: COVID-19

Thirteen-year-olds are the oldest members of Gen Alpha to experience the COVID-19 pandemic, the long-term effects of which remain unknown. Counter to some common narratives around COVID-19, 13-year-olds we surveyed believe the pandemic actually had some positive effects. Perceptions of the impact vary, however, by domain of life and by household income.

Less than a quarter of 13-year-olds feel that the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted their lives in general. In each domain of life, many feel that the pandemic actually impacted them *positively*. Specifically, they say relationships with family were most positively impacted by the pandemic. Physical health follows as the next most positively impacted—a notable takeaway amid COVID-19’s status as a public health crisis.

Thirteen-year-olds most often tie the pandemic’s negative impacts to education, a domain that experienced an abrupt shift to online schooling for many.

How 13-year-olds see the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

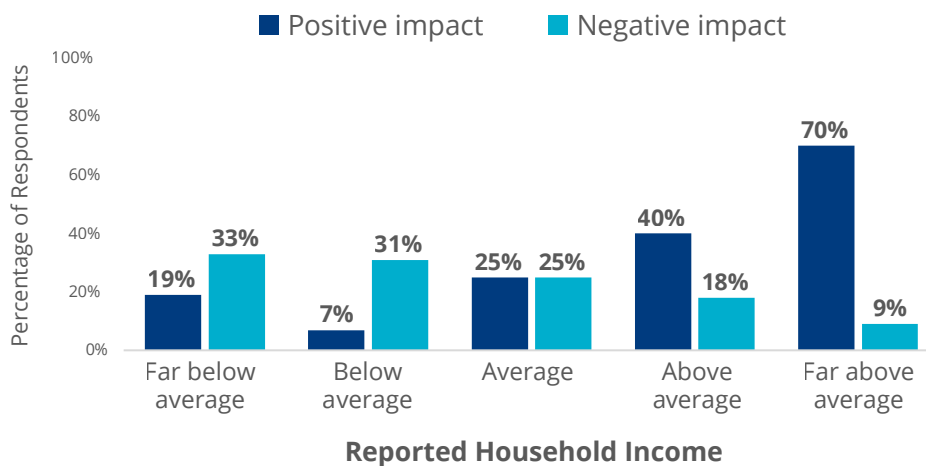


Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

When looking at experiences by individual demographics, **household income makes the most difference in 13-year-olds' perceptions of the COVID-19 pandemic.** As compared to 13-year-olds in higher-income households, those in lower-income households are more likely to report negative impacts of COVID-19 and less likely to report positive impacts.

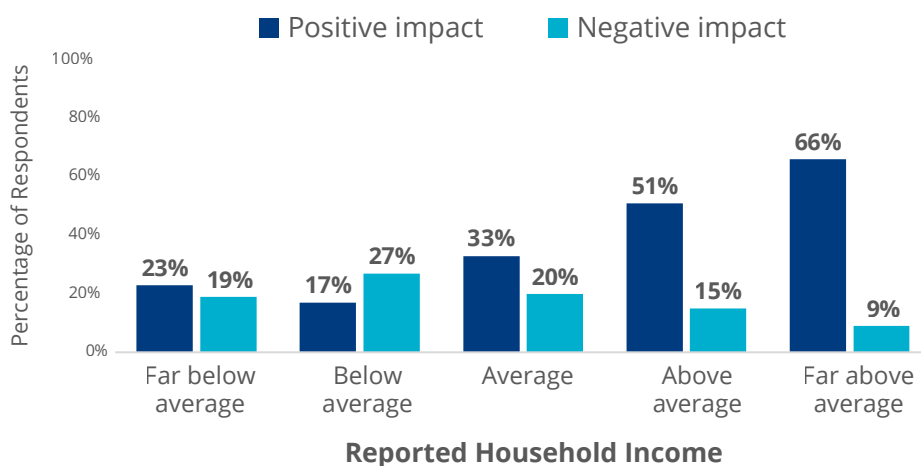
Thirteen-year-olds who identify as BIPOC, LGBTQ+, or female, or who live in rural or suburban communities, are also more likely to report negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic—but in smaller degrees of impact than those in lower-income households.

How 13-year-olds see the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on life in general by household income



Note: This graph shows the percentage of respondents from each income level who said that COVID-19 had a positive or negative impact on their life in general. Respondents who said they were “not sure” about their household income (n = 32) are not included in this graph.
Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

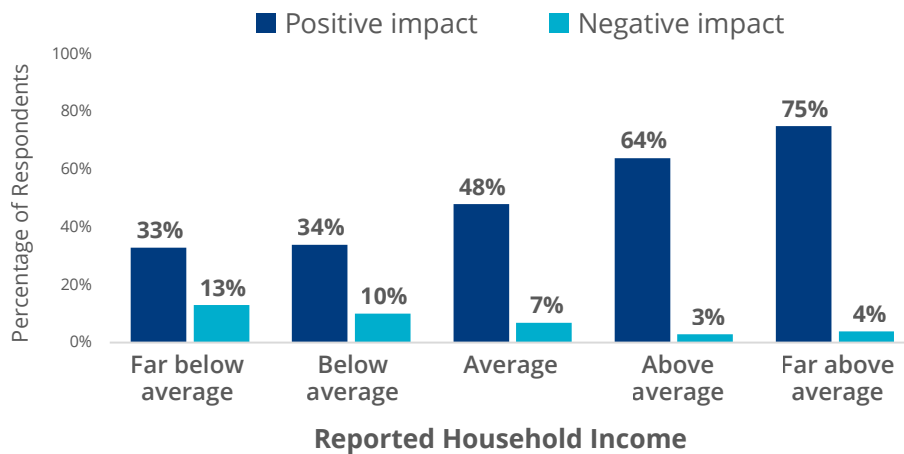
How 13-year-olds see the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on friendships by household income



Note: This graph shows the percentage of respondents from each income level who said that COVID-19 had a positive or negative impact on their friendships. Respondents who said they were “not sure” about their household income (n = 32) are not included in this graph.
Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.



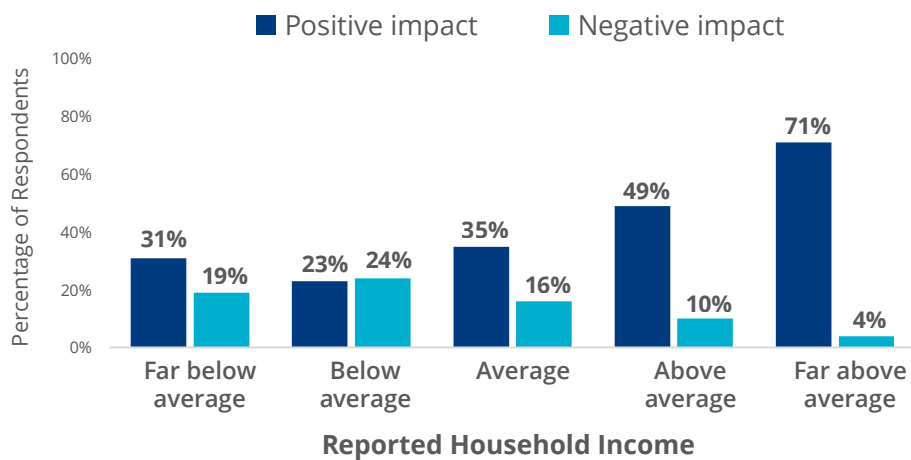
How 13-year-olds see the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on family relationships by household income



Note: This graph shows the percentage of respondents from each income level who said that COVID-19 had a positive or negative impact on their family relationships. Respondents who said they were “not sure” about their household income (n = 32) are not included in this graph.

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

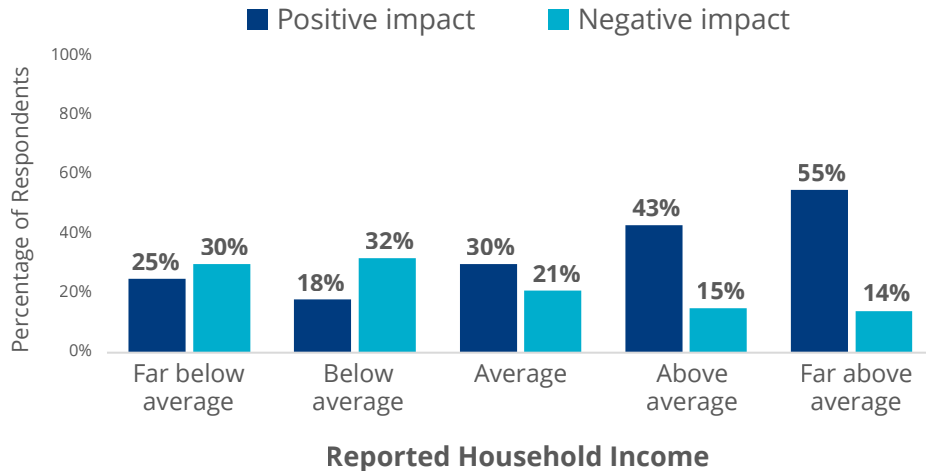
How 13-year-olds see the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on physical health by household income



Note: This graph shows the percentage of respondents from each income level who said that COVID-19 had a positive or negative impact on their physical health. Respondents who said they were “not sure” about their household income (n = 32) are not included in this graph.

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

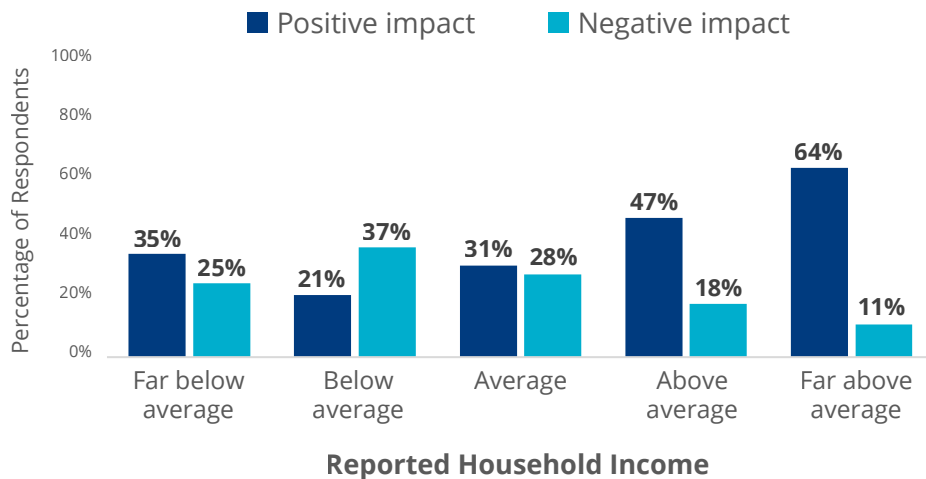
How 13-year-olds see the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health by household income



Note: This graph shows the percentage of respondents from each income level who said that COVID-19 had a positive or negative impact on their mental health. Respondents who said they were “not sure” about their household income (n = 32) are not included in this graph.

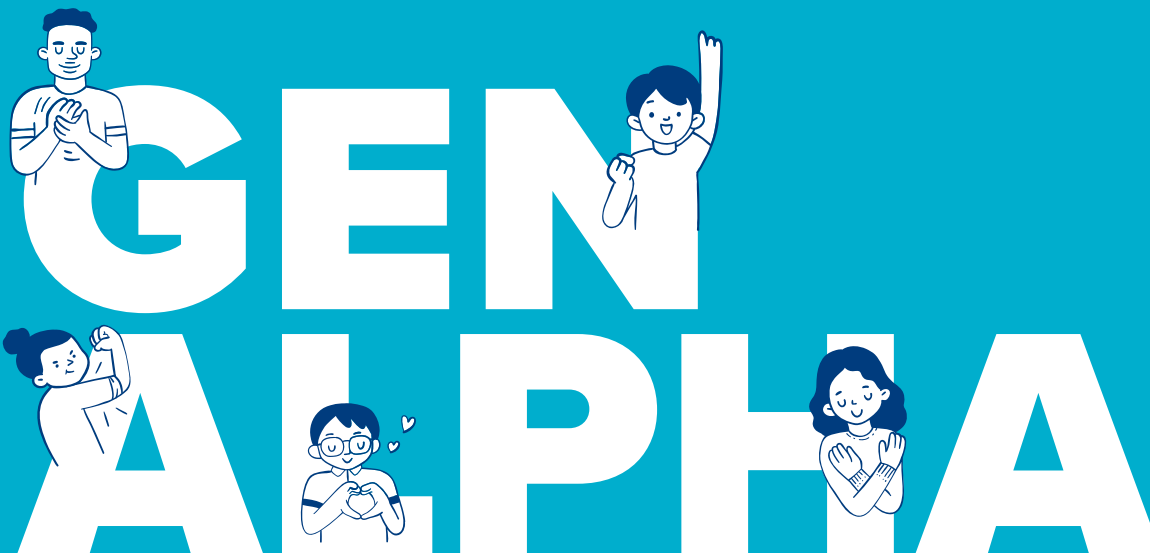
Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.

How 13-year-olds see the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education by household income



Note: This graph shows the percentage of respondents from each income level who said that COVID-19 had a positive or negative impact on their education. Respondents who said they were “not sure” about their household income (n = 32) are not included in this graph.

Source: Springtide Research Institute survey of 1,112 young people, age 13, conducted in January 2024.



Conclusion

What lies ahead for Gen Alpha, the newest generation of Americans?

At 13, the oldest members of this generation have lived through a global pandemic and have experienced discrimination and inequality. They are coming of age in the most technologically advanced society to date. They have felt the fun, excitement, confusion, and stress of growing up.

A majority of 13-year-olds say they feel optimistic about their future. Most see themselves as good people living a good life, respected by others, with supportive and rewarding friendships. They say they feel hopeful about the future.

What the future holds remains a mystery, informed by patterns of the past and previews of the present.

Or, as one 13-year-old respondent put it: “We have some much better stuff than my dad did growing up. I’m happy with how my future is looking.”



Respondent Demographics

Gender	
Female	49%
Male	50%
Nonbinary	1%
Other	< 1%

Race or Ethnicity	
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%
Asian	2%
Black or African American	15%
Hispanic or Latino	9%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	<1%
White	64%
Two or more races/ethnicities	7%
Other	1%

Region	
Midwest	21%
Northeast	17%
South	43%
West	19%

Community Type	
Rural	22%
Suburban	41%
Urban	35%
Not sure	2%

Household Income	
Far below average	6%
Below average	18%
Average	45%
Above average	23%
Far above average	5%
Not sure	3%

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