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The Parenting Paradox

Navigating Work, Family, and Technology in a New Era

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The Parenting Paradox: Navigating Work, Family, and Technology in a New Era

Flexibility Paradox

The COVID-19 pandemic has permanently reshaped family life, pushing people and parents into unfamiliar territory and increasingly blurring the line between home and work. In an evolving landscape, parenting, coupled with digital transformation, economic pressures, and shifting childcare dynamics, stretches parents in every direction, challenging them to redefine their priorities. Amidst the daily challenges and the lingering guilt of not always being fully present, a story of tension and adaptation unfolds.

- [73% of parents in the USA feel guilty or conflicted about how they divide their time and energy between work and family](#)
- [54% of those experiencing parent guilt feel inadequate in both roles, and 62% say it negatively affects their well-being](#)

Meanwhile, some parents have taken steps to address the situation, for example;

- [61% of Australian mothers have taken a pay cut or reduced their working hours because of inadequate childcare options](#)
- [86% of UK parents claim that working from home makes it easier to balance work with parenting](#)

Hybrid working brings benefits, but its long-term viability remains uncertain, and the balancing act continues.



The Value of Time

For parents, time is the most coveted resource, not merely for its quantity, but for its meaningful quality. A significant 38% of parents identify paid work commitments as a primary barrier to spending quality time on family activities (Foresight Factory, 2025). Nearly as many, 33%, feel that unpaid responsibilities, such as household chores, are equally restrictive.

Despite these competing demands, parents still strongly desire to participate in enriching and educational experiences, such as visiting museums. There is a notable 13% discrepancy between the time they currently spend and the time they wish to dedicate to these activities (Foresight Factory, 2025).

The daily reality for many parents is time-intensive. In the US, the average working parent dedicates an overwhelming 18 hours daily to paid work, household tasks, and family logistics, [leaving only 31 minutes of personal 'me time' per day](#). Non-working parents face a similarly demanding schedule, where they [spend on average 17 hours daily focusing on childcare and domestic responsibilities](#). Amid these pressures, parents, like all individuals, seek moments of personal respite. However, this often translates into increased screen time. [For instance, 31% of parents admit to frequently spending time on their own electronic devices](#), rather than participating in shared family activities, an 11% increase since 2022. Moreover, [38% of parents perceive their child's device usage as a detriment to valuable family time](#).



Despite such challenges, the desire for connection remains strong. When asked how they would spend an extra hour each day, 21% of parents would choose to spend it with their family (OMD Signals, 2025). With relentless commitments pulling parents in multiple directions, they increasingly prioritize quality over quantity as they navigate the challenges of digital overload and information fatigue.

Parenting, Technology, and Gen Alpha

Parenting today is undeniably shaped by technology. Whether parents wholeheartedly embrace it or prefer to maintain a distance, children today are growing up immersed in an increasingly digital world. For instance, Ofcom reports that [1 in 3 children aged 5 to 7 in the UK use social media unsupervised](#). Additionally, research from the World Health Organisation (WHO) reveals that [34% of adolescents play digital games daily, with 22% spending at least 4 hours playing on the days they game](#). Even the most tech-savvy parents often struggle to keep up with the latest trends, the evolving meanings of emojis, and the complex nuances of popular apps and platforms.



This challenge is further compounded as younger Millennials and Gen Z become parents, raising Gen Alpha, the first generation to grow up with full access to and comfort with technology from iPads to Generative AI. Gen Alpha is the true definition of a tech-savvy generation. While a growing number of parents with children under 16 report having open conversations about internet safety, parents are having to balance the benefits of technology with its associated risks, which remains complex. Consequently, 19% of parents have adopted stricter rules regarding their children's technology usage (GWI, 2025).

While online safety is a primary concern, many parents are also motivated by a desire to encourage their children to disconnect from screens and engage with the real world.

Valuing Quality Time: Co-Play and Co-Creation

To find meaningful ways to connect with their children and address concerns about online safety, parents are increasingly turning to shared play experiences.

Data from Wildbrain reveals that [65% of parents actively engage in co-play with their kids](#), highlighting a strong desire to spend quality time together. For parents who co-game, [63% cite quality time as their primary motivation, while 56% aim to create fun, lasting memories with children aged 6 to 15](#).

This approach to play is often influenced by parents' own nostalgia, a yearning to connect through familiar activities amidst today's complex digital and socio-economic landscape. With rising concerns about the impact of social media, many parents intentionally seek out forms of play that feel safe and familiar. This blend of co-play and co-creation not only strengthens family bonds but also provides a reassuring counterbalance to the digital challenges families face.



Brand Implications

In an increasingly digitalized world, parents don't want more complexity; they want support. They actively seek brands and services that simplify their lives and help prioritize meaningful time with their children, particularly during moments of relaxation and unwinding. [More than half of the surveyed parents have already utilized AI-powered services for their parental needs](#), from discovering engaging activities to accessing practical advice. This reveals a growing demand for brands that reframe chores into connection points (e.g., co-cooking kits), simplify planning (AI-assisted scheduling), or fuel co-play moments (collaborative gaming, co-viewing campaigns). To win, brands must show how their offerings genuinely enable quality family interactions, positioning themselves as enablers of time well spent, facilitators of shared play, and supportive allies that ease parental guilt. By aligning with parents' core priorities, brands can evolve from functional helpers into trusted favorites, delivering both efficiency and emotional connection.



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