

# ACTIVITIES OF TEENS AND TWEENS – US – 2024

Teens and tweens spend their days juggling both formal and informal activities, making them a key audience for on-the-go solutions and mental wellbeing reminders.



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# Activities Of Teens And Tweens - US - 2024

## This report looks at the following areas:

- An overview of the teen/tween population (aged 11-17) in the US
- Market factors impacting US teens/tweens including COVID-19 recovery, ongoing mental wellness issues, and the effects of long-term social media usage
- A look at the formal and informal activities teens/tweens participate in
- Teens/tweens role in deciding what activities they participate in and key motivations behind their choices
- Breakdown of teens/tweens daily schedule and their attitudes towards their free-time
- Teens/tweens device ownership and social media usage
- How teens/tweens get spending money and what they put it towards



Teens and tweens spend their days juggling both formal and informal activities, making them a key audience for on-the-go solutions and mental wellbeing reminders.

## Overview

Consisting of a blend of **Gen Alpha and Gen Z**, teens and tweens (ages 10-17) make up about 13% of the US population. This cohort is a diverse segment of young adults who are digital natives and **almost universally use social media**. In addition to school and homework, teens and tweens are also juggling various hobbies and after-school activities. While informal activities such as playing **video games, watching TV and browsing social media are nearly ubiquitous**, 81% also participate in at least one formally organized activity. **Formal activities range from school-sponsored sports, to music and arts programs to supplementary academic tutoring or community service.**

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In general, teens/tweens have a say in the activities they participate in, and while half feel pressure to maintain a diverse mix of extracurriculars, the majority also have a distinct passion for the activities they are committed to. Although they do not necessarily feel overwhelmed, the majority of **teens and tweens wish they had more freedom and free-time** to simply hang-out.

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# Report Content

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Key issues covered in this Report

- Overview
- What you need to know
- Consumer trends: key takeaways
- Market predictions
- Opportunities

## TARGET AUDIENCE OVERVIEW

### The teen/tween population and context

- About 22% of the US population is under 18 years old
  - Graph 1: estimated population, by age, 2023
- Teens and tweens today are more diverse than previous generations
  - Graph 2: population distribution by race among <55s, by age groups, 2023
  - Graph 3: share of Hispanic population among <55s, by age groups, 2023
- While the majority of teens/tweens live with both parents, more than a quarter live with only one parent or an alternative guardian
  - Graph 4: household context – who lives in the same household, 2024
- Child poverty rates spike after the Child Tax Credit expires
- Teen and tweens' parents are most likely to be Millennials
  - Graph 5: age of parents with child under 18, 2022
- The majority of teens and tweens' parents aspire for their child to achieve a mix of high-pressure and low-pressure life goals
  - Graph 6: parents' top three goals for their child – "My greatest goals as a parent are that my child..." 2024

### Market factors

- Impact of COVID-19 on teens and tweens
- The mental wellbeing crisis among US young adults continues
  - Graph 7: teens' outlook on mental health and wellbeing (any agree), 2023
- On the positive side, the pandemic seems to have inspired new activities and hobbies among teens/tweens
  - Graph 8: outlook on impact of COVID-19, 2024
- Parents and legislators alike seek ways to regulate and/or restrict social media usage among children and teens

## CONSUMER INSIGHTS

### Consumer fast facts

#### Activities: organized vs informal

- Informal, non-organized activities are more common overall among tweens and teens
  - Graph 9: activities of teens/tweens, organized and informal, 2024
- High-pressure parents are more likely to have their children remain focused on only one formally-organized activity
  - Graph 10: repertoire of formal and informal activities, by parent expectations, 2024
- Ages 12-14 are prime ages for tweens to explore and try out various formal activities while still maintaining their informal activities
  - Graph 11: teens/tweens activities, by age, 2024
- Household income also influences the types of activities teens and tweens participate in
  - Graph 12: teens/tweens activities, by household income, 2024
- Participation in formally-organized activities is likely to be multiple times a week, but not daily
  - Graph 13: frequency of organized activities, 2024
  - Graph 14: frequency of informal activities, 2024
- Participation in youth sports remains strong, but needs support
- Gaming is a social and all-encompassing activity that brands can effectively engage in
- Parents have more influence when it comes to formally-organized activities than informal ones
  - Graph 15: activity decision-making, for organized and informal activities, 2024
- Older teens/tweens have the most independence and autonomy in choosing their formal and informal activities
  - Graph 16: activity decision-making, for organized and informal activities, by age and race/ethnicity, 2024

#### Activity motivations

- To have fun, for personal pride and to avoid boredom are the primary motivations behind the activities teens/tweens choose to participate in
  - Graph 17: top three motivations behind formal and informal activities, 2024
- Household income impacts teens'/tweens' considerations and motivations when choosing their activities
  - Graph 18: motivations behind formal activities, by household income, 2024
  - Graph 19: motivations behind informal activities, by household income, 2024
- While half of teens and tweens feel pressure to participate in activities, they are also personally passionate about their hobbies and interests
- Teens/tweens from high-income households and those in academic-focused activities are more likely to feel high-pressure expectations
  - Graph 20: attitudes towards passion and pressure (any agreement), by household income and type of formal activity, 2024
- Garmin offers high school seniors a fast-track to a career in tech

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## Daily schedule

- After time spent at school, teens and tweens spend most of their time participating in informal activities followed by formal activities
  - Graph 21: average hours a day dedicated to various activities, by age, 2024
- Brands can offer convenient, on-the-go solutions to help teens/tweens navigate their hectic, daily schedules
  - Graph 22: average hours a day dedicated to various activities, by type of formal activities and type of parents, 2024
- Brands appealing to the busy, on-the-go lifestyles of teens and tweens
- There are also opportunities for brands to help teens/tweens relax, recover and avoid burnout
- Brands taking a stand to support mental health and wellness among young adults
- Tweens ages 12-14 and those participating in academic-based activities are most likely to feel overwhelmed by their busy schedule
  - Graph 23: attitudes towards activities schedule – any agree – by age and race/Hispanic origin, 2024
  - Graph 24: attitudes towards activities schedule – any agree – by type of parent and activity type , 2024
- The majority of teens and tweens dream of more free-time and freedom
- Teens/tweens who participate in academic activities are more likely to feel stifled and desired free time
  - Graph 25: attitudes towards activities schedule – any agree – by type of parent and activity type, 2024
  - Graph 26: attitudes towards free-time and freedom – any agree – by age and race/Hispanic origin, 2024
- GOAT Mentality seeks to prevent burnout among high school athletes

## Digital and social media behaviors

- The majority of teens/tweens own their own smartphone, video game console and social media accounts
  - Graph 27: teen/tweens device ownership, "I have my own..." 2024
- Smartphone, social media and credit/debit ownership increases with age, while tablet and gaming console ownership decreases
  - Graph 28: teen/tweens device ownership, "I have my own..." by age, 2024
- YouTube and TikTok are key spaces to engage tween and teens
  - Graph 29: social media sites visited daily, 2024
- 12-14 year olds frequent the greatest variety of social media sites
  - Graph 30: social media sites visited daily, by gender and by age, 2024
- Teens/tweens ages 12-14 try to be more attentive to their screen time than younger tweens
  - Graph 31: attitudes towards screen time (any agreement), by age, 2024
- TikTok time-out

## Teen and tween finances

- The share of teens/tweens who receive an allowance stayed consistent since 2020, however, fewer young adults are receiving monetary gifts today
  - Graph 32: how teens/tweens get their spending money, 2024 vs 2020
- As formal part-time jobs become available to older teens ages 15-17, parent-provided allowances become less common

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- Graph 33: how teens/tweens get their spending money, by age, 2024
- Teens and tweens' leisure spending has seen notable changes since 2020
  - Graph 34: teen/tween spending - "when I have money, I spend it on..." 2024 vs 2020
- Younger tweens are more likely to spend money on video games, while older teens' spending interests become more varied
  - Graph 35: teen/tween spending – "when I have money, I spend it on..." by gender and age, 2024
- Claire's speaks to teen/tween girls' vast interests through a collab with Roblox

## COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES

### Launch activity and innovation

- Dove and Nike launch Body Confident Sport to keep girls participating in sports activity
- Hot Pockets invests in brand redesign to better appeal to gamer teens
- Venmo enables teens to experience financial autonomy, within reason
- Doritos, Mtn Dew and Rockstar Energy Drink team up to reward Xbox fans

### Marketing and advertising

- Uber appeals to teens' desire for independence and parents' desire for safety with Uber Teen accounts
- Drunk Elephant leans into Gen Alpha's obsession with beauty and brand names
- McDonald's taps into anime fandom, appealing to teens/tweens as well as adults
- Chamerlain RTD coffee beverages offer teens' indulgent caffeine buzz on the go

## APPENDIX

- Market definition
- Consumer research methodology: data collection among minors
- Consumer research methodology (cont.)
- Generations
- Abbreviations and terms

### Disclaimer

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