



Digesting the Family Food Dilemma

Bridge the gap between Parents' meal *ideals* and *realities*

Summer 2024



The Big Picture

Parents are caught in a central tension between nutritional ideals and a real need for convenience



Parents today are concerned about healthy ingredients and a healthy relationship to food.

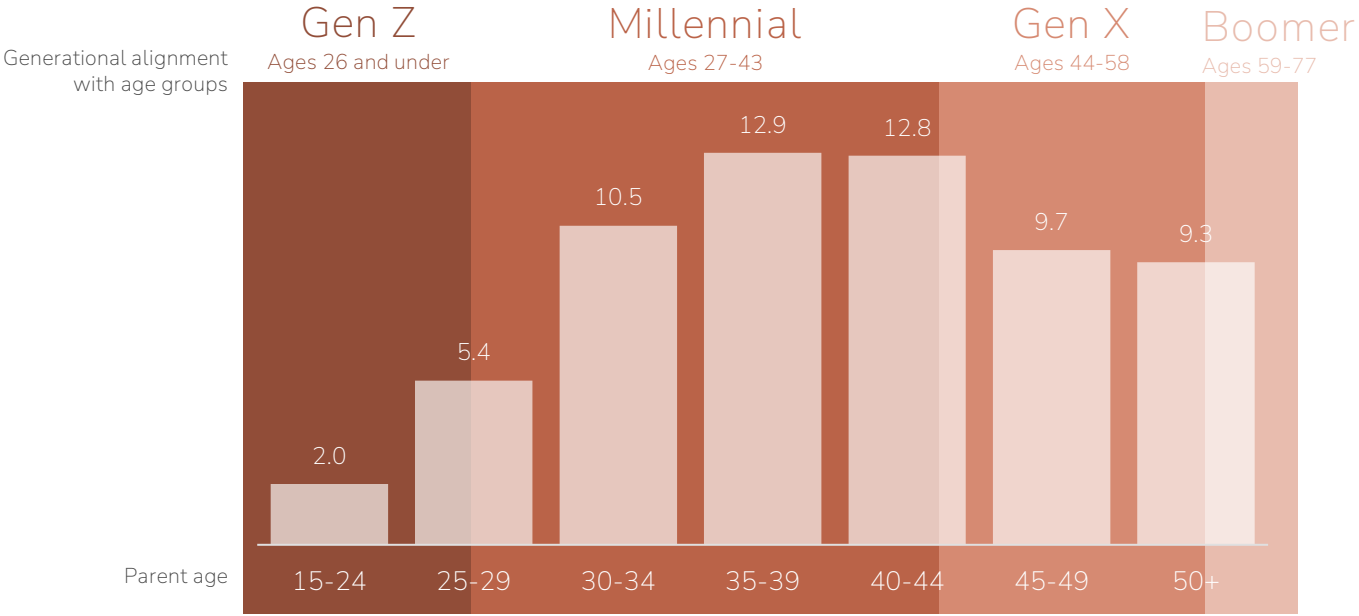
Gen Z's and Gen Alpha's Parents are breaking generational food traumas by nixing the ethos of restrictive eating, and instead focusing on additive nutrition and intuitive eating.

Getting through the daily struggle of meal prep requires a little skill-building and a lot of inspiration.

Brands can partner with parents to help them meet their healthy food goals without burning out. Empower parents with tips and lessons to up their cooking game and remind them of the cultural magic that food can provide.

Millennials make up the largest portion of Parents with kids under 18

Number of parents with children under 18 in the house, by parent age group, in millions



Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2023 Annual Social and Economic Supplement. "America's Families and Living Arrangements: 2023", November 2023.](#)

Today's diverse Millennial parents prioritize culture and connection

43% of American Parents are Multicultural & 66% are Millennials ²

CULTURE-KEEPERS

Parents are preservationists of values from one generation to the next. Their nostalgia motivates them to pass on the traditions of their heritage to their kids.



CONNECTION-SEEKING

Millennials are more expressive than other generations and use it as a tool for forging connections with others.



WORLDLY

Millennials welcome diversity, prioritize new experiences, and pride themselves in being knowledgeable of many cultures.



Source: ¹ Collage Group Cultural Traits Survey, January 2024 (18-78 population); weighted data

² U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2022 Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Table A3. Parents with Coresident Children Under 18, November 12, 2022



1

Tensions & Tradeoffs

Unpacking the attitudes and motivations Parents consider when filling their kids' tummies

2

Solving the Family Food Dilemma

Uncovering opportunities for brands to help Parents meet their ideals while catering to their realities

1

Tensions & Tradeoffs

Unpacking the attitudes and motivations Parents consider when filling their kids' tummies



Parents balance nutrition with convenience, taste, and price



42% of Parents of kids under 18 feel pressure to be a “perfect” parent.

Nutrition

Health is an important ideal, but can easily fall to the wayside

Taste

Flavor is at odds with nutrition, and rarely satisfies all family members

Convenience

Easy preparation and quick options are paramount to family lifestyles

Price

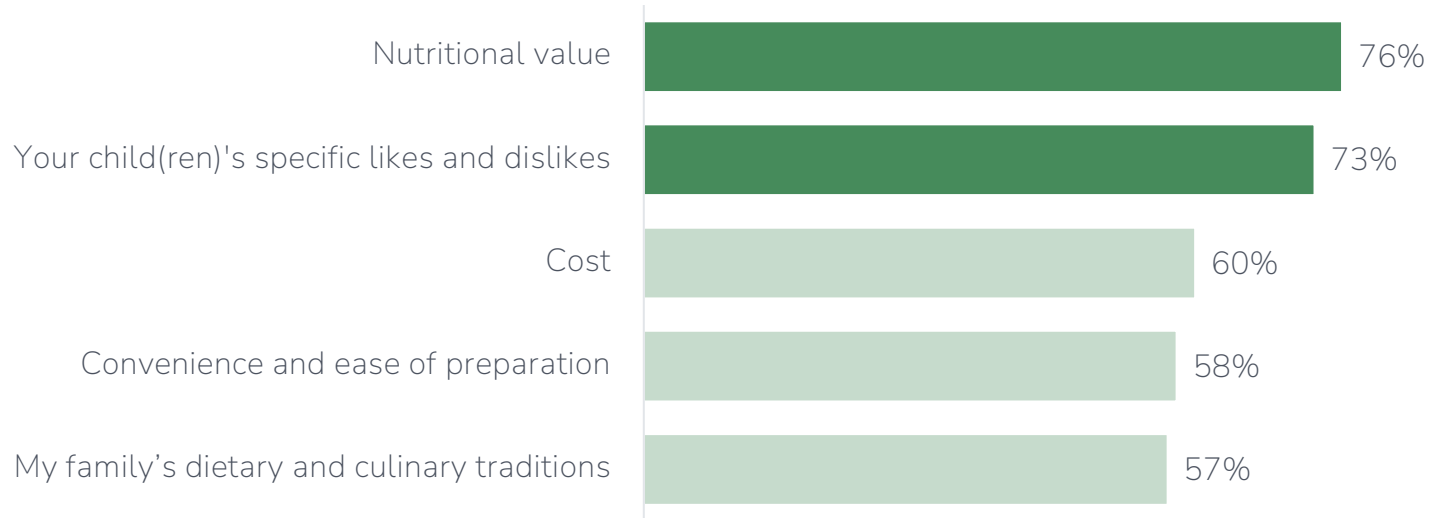
Rising food costs impact what Parents buy, how much, and where



Nutritional value and taste preferences are competing mealtime priorities

Cost and convenience are also highly important, but take a secondary role

How important are the following factors to you when deciding what to feed your child? % very important



Source: Collage Group CultureRate:Ad Survey June 2024 (18-78 Parents of Kids 0-17), weighted data
% very important

But ultimately, health wins out as the top family food priority

Which of the following things are most important when choosing food and/or beverage (e.g., snack, meal) for your child(ren)?

	Parents	
1	Healthy	59%
2	Good taste	43%
3	Beneficial to development	29%
	Natural or organic	27%
	Easy to prepare	25%
	Lowest price	22%
	Filling	16%
	Easy to eat “on-the-go”	16%
	Well-known brand	10%

73% of Gen X parents prioritize healthiness.



Source: Collage Group CultureRate:Ad Survey June 2024 (18-78 Parents of Kids 0-17), weighted data Multiselect, max. 3

Parents view healthiness through the lens of natural and fresh ingredients

What makes food healthy?

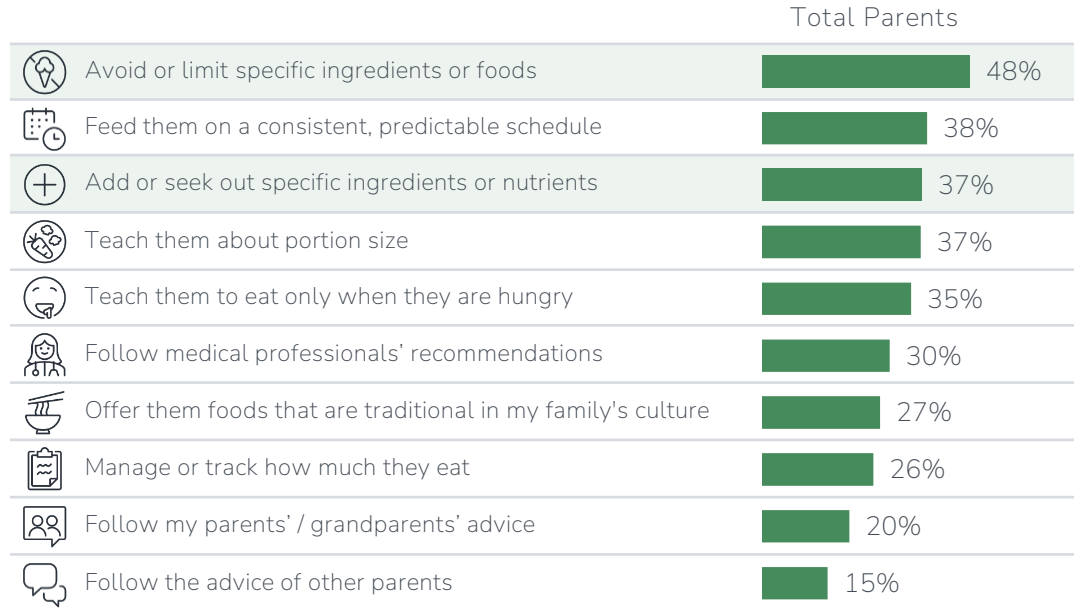
	Parents
All of the ingredients are natural	59%
All of the ingredients are fresh	57%
It's low in sugar	49%
It's low in salt/sodium	47%
It's low in fat	45%
It's low calorie	38%
All of the ingredients are organic	36%



Source: Collage Group Category Essentials Spring 2024 (18-78 Parents of Kids under 18), weighted data
Multiselect
Significance test: Confidence level 95%. ▲ ▼ over/under Non-Parents

But it's not so simple: Parents consider many aspects beyond food quality

When it comes to making sure your child(ren) eats healthy, what are the 5 most important things you do?



The tension between restrictive and additive nutrition is a key focus among today's Parents.

"Shunning the toxic diet-culture norms of the 1980s, '90s and early aughts—which included enforcing extreme food restrictions on children—modish moms of Gen Alphas and Gen Zs are now creatively incorporating confections into their kids' everyday lives.

The seemingly topsy-turvy trend is meant to gear youngsters toward developing healthy relationships with all foods, rather than singling out sugary snacks as strictly 'off-limits.'"¹



Source: Collage Group CultureRate:Ad Survey June 2024 (18-78 Parents of Kids 0-17), weighted data
Multiselect, max. 5

Significance test: Confidence level 95%. ▲ ▼ over/under Total Parents

¹ [New York Post, "Giving my kids dessert with breakfast and dinner has been a game-changer — other moms don't understand", April 16, 2024.](#)

Parents balance restricting unhealthy foods while wanting to instill a healthy and intuitive relationship with food

71%
of Parents

say it's important that their kids eat healthy, even if that means they have to say no or restrict their eating.

- ▼ Moms: 68%
- ▼ Gen Z: 62% & Millennials: 69%

Women and younger generations are more attuned to the potential harm of restriction.

85%
of Parents

say it's important to them that their kids develop a healthy relationship with food.

“Giving my kids dessert with their dinner normalizes dessert. Sweets are not something kids should believe they have to ‘earn’ as a ‘special treat’ for finishing their meals... Desserts are just food.”

— CAITLIN KIARIE
40-YEAR-OLD MOTHER AND REGISTERED DIETICIAN¹



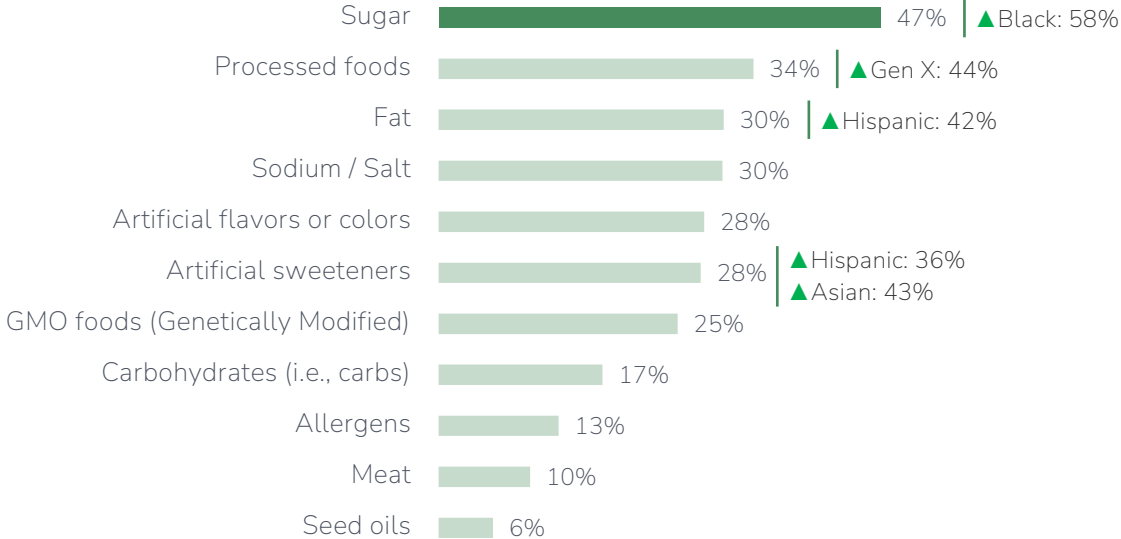
Collage Group CultureRate:Ad Survey June 2024 (18-78 Parents of Kids 0-17), weighted data
% agree strongly agree

Significance test: Confidence level 95%. ▲ ▼ over/under Total Parents

¹ [New York Post, “Giving my kids dessert with breakfast and dinner has been a game-changer — other moms don’t understand”, April 16, 2024.](#)

Yet when parents do limit ingredients, sugar is the main priority

Are you actively trying to reduce or limit any of the following things in your child(ren)'s diet?



Parents largely prefer to make food at home, partially because of cost savings but also for greater control over ingredients

77%

of Parents prefer to make food and eat at home over eating out at a restaurant.¹

Compared to 73% of Non-Parents

What are you doing to reduce your child(ren)'s consumption of the things you're trying to limit in their diet?²

	Parents
Eat less prepared and/or packaged foods	46%
Look for new recipes	45%
Cook more from scratch	45%
Read labels	41%
Eat out at restaurants less	35%
Research food items online	31%
Prepare my kid's food separately from my own	23%
Use substitutes for these ingredients	21%
Shop at different stores	21%



Source: ¹ Collage Group Passion Points Study April 2024 (18-78 Parents of Kids under 18), weighted data; Forced choice

² Collage Group CultureRate:Ad Survey June 2024 (18-78 Parents of Kids 0-17), weighted data; Multiselect

Significance test: Confidence level 95%. ▲ ▼ over/under Non-Parents

Many Parents, especially Dads, lack time for cooking and struggle to achieve both nutrition and taste

35% ▲

of Parents say they rarely have enough time to prepare and cook foods the way that they like to.²

Compared to 28% of Non-Parents

- ▲ Dads: 41%
- ▲ Asian: 45%

36% ▲

of Parents say they struggle to make healthy food that tastes good.

Compared to 32% of Non-Parents

- ▲ Dads: 41%



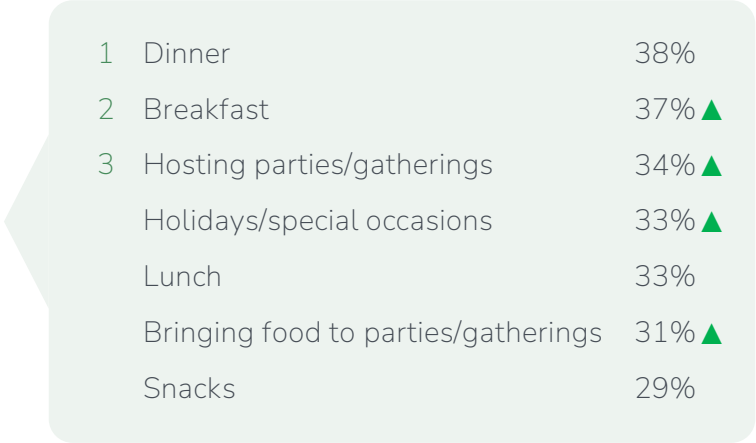
Source: Collage Group Category Essentials Fall 2023 (18-78 Parents of Kids under 18), weighted data
% agree, strongly agree
Significance test: Confidence level 95%. ▲ ▼ over/under Non-Parents; Parents by segment over/under Total Parents

Parents are always scouring for ways they can cut corners in the kitchen in order to accomplish mealtime

9 in 10 ▲

Parents look for shortcuts when making or preparing food for at least one type of meal or occasion.

Compared to 84% of Non-Parents



While supporting Parents' food ideals, give them permission to simplify

Pure Leaf provides grants to help alleviate the real pressures of motherhood.

The ad acknowledges how overwhelming parenthood is and encourages moms to say “no” to unrealistic expectations and endless demands. The brand funds “No” Grants to provide short-term support to women who want to say “no” more, designed to give moms the extra help they need.

The ad appeals to Parents' group trait of **Fortitude** by backing their resilience in the face of a multitude of pressures. The brand fosters **relevance** among Moms and their tangible support makes it worthy of **advocacy**.

157

Pure Leaf's B-CFQ* rank for Parents of Kids¹ out of 743 brands



Pure Leaf, “No’ Grants are helping moms say ‘no’ to doing it all and ‘yes’ to simplifying their lives”



2

Solving the Family Food Dilemma

Uncovering opportunities for brands to help Parents meet their ideals while catering to their realities



Use key strategies to overcome the tradeoffs Parents face



Level Up

Help parents emphasize additive ingredients and enjoy the process by increasing cooking skills.

Embrace Convenience

Cooking a full meal isn't always possible. Point parents toward high quality alternatives.

Boost Benefits

Cooking perks aren't limited to the physical. Remind parents of all the other benefits of meal-making.

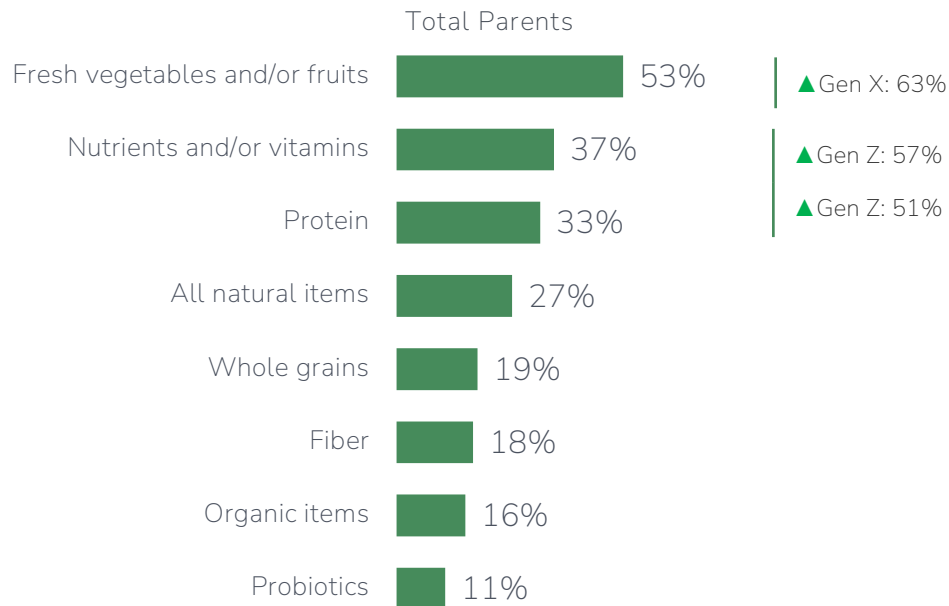
Celebrate Culture

Connect on a deeper level by tapping into the power of cultural food experiences and identity.



Emphasize how your brand is additive—not restrictive—and helps kids meet their nutritional needs

Are you actively trying to increase your child(ren)'s consumption of any of the following things?



“Gordon Ramsay becomes first-ever Welch’s® Fruit Snacks Chief Fruit Officer underscoring brand commitment to using whole fruit as its main ingredient”



Source: Collage Group CultureRate:Ad Survey June 2024 (18-78 Parents of Kids 0-17), weighted data Multiselect, max. 3
Significance test: Confidence level 95%. ▲ ▼ over/under Total Parents
[PR Newswire, May 14, 2024.](#)

Help parents level up their cooking while staying nutritious

Social media is the key place to reach Parents seeking food and cooking ideas

72% ▲

of Parents are always looking for tips and tricks to improve their cooking.¹

Compared to 59% of Non-Parents

Gen Z	Millennial	Gen X	Boomer
67%	75% ▲	70% ▲	58%

Where do you usually look for new recipes when you're interested in cooking or baking something new?²

	Parents	Non-Parents
Social media	51% ▲	33%
General online search	47%	45%
Food blogs or websites (e.g., Allrecipes, Food.com, etc.)	35% ▲	30%
Cookbooks	33%	34%
Brand websites	26% ▲	18%
The packages of products I buy	23% ▲	18%



Source: ¹ Collage Group Category Essentials Fall 2023 (18-78 Parents of Kids under 18), weighted data; % agree, strongly agree

² Collage Group Category Essentials Spring 2024 (18-78 Parents of Kids under 18), weighted data; Multiselect

Significance test: Confidence level 95%. ▲ ▼ over/under Non-Parents

When cooking isn't feasible, offer quick and convenient options while staying focused on nutrition

47%
of Parents

agree frozen meals can be just as good as fresh meals.¹

Green Giant Enlists 'Corn Kid' to Promote All Types of Veggies

By Aaron Baar September 25, 2023



% of Parents that eat the following items 1-3 times a month or more²

Deli / lunch meat	83% ▲
Packaged bars / bites	79% ▲
Grab-and-go food items	76% ▲
Frozen pizza	75% ▲
Frozen snacks	70% ▲
Frozen waffles or pancakes	69% ▲
Canned / jarred soup	66% ▲
Frozen individual meals	66% ▲
Frozen family-sized meals	65% ▲
Frozen breakfast sandwiches	59% ▲
Canned meat	49% ▲

Source: ¹ Collage Group Category Essentials Spring 2024 (18-78 Parents of Kids under 18), weighted data; % agree, strongly agree

² Collage Group Category Essentials Fall 2023 (18-78 Parents of Kids under 18), weighted data; Single-select grid

Significance test: Confidence level 95%. ▲ ▼ over/under Non-Parents

[Green Giant on YouTube](#)



Remind Parents of the multifaceted benefits of cooking, beyond just nutrition

Creativity, relaxation, and connection are all parent-endorsed benefits of cooking together

I like to cook and/or bake because:

	Parents	Hispanic	Black	Asian	White
It allows me to be creative	56%	53%	57%	58%	56%
It helps me relax	47%	41% ▼	44%	50%	49%
It helps me save money	46%	40% ▼	44%	60% ▲	49%
It helps me show people I care	44% ▲	37%	44%	49% ▲	46% ▲
It helps me be healthy	43%	41%	43%	58% ▲	42%
It helps me connect with my family's culture	36% ▲	45% ▲	41% ▲	52% ▲	28%



Lean into food nostalgia and help Parents continue to make positive mealtime memories

71% ▲

of Parents say they have memories associated with food, and they're overwhelmingly positive.^{1a}

Compared to 63% of Non-Parents

It's important to me that my child(ren) and I eat together as a family.² 81%

I like to take my child(ren) to the fast food / quick service restaurants I went to as a kid.^{1b} 73%



Source: ¹ Collage Group Category Essentials Fall 2023 (18-78 Parents of Kids under 18), weighted data; ^a % agree, strongly agree; ^b % agree

² Collage Group CultureRate:Ad Survey June 2024 (18-78 Parents of Kids 0-17), weighted data; % agree, strongly agree

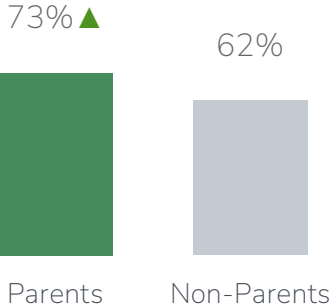
Significance test: Confidence level 95%. ▲ ▼ over/under Non-Parents

Tap into Parents' love for holidays and celebrations

Cooking and enjoying meals is a central holiday tradition for families

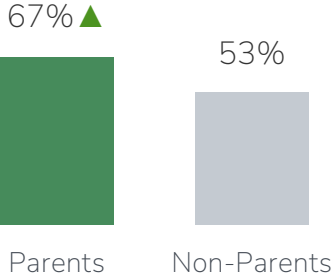
SEASONAL ENJOYMENT

I like to eat seasonal foods



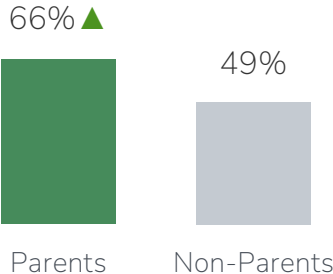
SEASONAL INFLUENCE

The seasons influence my grocery shopping routines



HOMEMADE PREFERENCE






I tend to cook/bake from scratch more around holidays or special occasions



Source: Collage Group Category Essentials Fall 2023, 18-77 population, weighted data; % agree, strongly agree
▲ ▼ Significantly over/under Non-Parents. Confidence level 95%

Thanksgiving and Christmas are standout food holidays, but don't overlook other celebratory opportunities

Key holidays for eating and making foods

- 1  Thanksgiving
81%
- 2  Christmas
70%
- 3  Fourth of July
55%
- 4  Mother's Day
47%
- 5  Easter
47%



Krispy Kreme helps Parents celebrate a variety of holidays with themed doughnuts.



Source: Collage Group Parents & Kids Holidays & Occasions Survey, April 2024 (18-78 parents of kids under 18), weighted data Multiselect; Separate questions by holiday: "Which of the following does your family do to celebrate_____?"

Connect families to their heritage through food and cooking

53% ▲

of Parents agree that preparing meals from their culture helps them connect to their heritage.

Compared to 38% of Non-Parents

Hispanic	Black	Asian	White
68% ▲	54% ▲	71% ▲	42%



Source: Collage Group Category Essentials Spring 2024 (18-78 Parents of Kids under 18), weighted data
 % agree, strongly agree
 Significance test: Confidence level 95%. ▲ ▼ over/under Non-Parents

Offer global flavors to bridge Parents' sophisticated pallets with cultural learning opportunities for their kids

Which of the following types of flavors and/or cuisines are you interested in, either when eating at home or at a restaurant?
% I'd like to try this

	Parents	Non-Parents
Caribbean	40%	37%
Filipino	39%	36%
Cuban	38%	36%
Korean	37% ▲	31%
Vietnamese	37% ▲	30%
Greek	36% ▲	27%
Thai	34% ▲	28%
Indian	33% ▲	26%
Japanese	29% ▲	26%
Mexican	23% ▲	19%
Chinese	21% ▲	18%

Serenity Kids on creating global cuisines for the next generation of foodies

By Deniz Ataman
15-Apr-2024 - Last updated on 15-Apr-2024 at 14:40 GMT

New World Explorers Pouches!

Little ones can explore some of the best flavor combos inspired by cuisines from around the world.

[Shop Now](#)



Source: Collage Group Category Essentials Spring 2024 (18-78 Parents of Kids under 18), weighted data
Single-select grid; (Alternative answer options: "I'm not sure if I'd try this", "I have tried this and like it", "I have tried this and do NOT like it")
Significance test: Confidence level 95%. ▲ ▼ over/under Non-Parents

Connect your product to family activities that foster positive memories and a healthy lifestyle



78

Nature Valley's A-CFQ* score for Parents out of 100

Nature Valley shows how their product helps families create memories together

The ad's emphasis on the importance of getting outside and making memories together cultivates a strong Message to Parents.

The ad's emphasis on encouraging children to explore outdoors is Relevant for Parents who care strongly about their kids' health and seek out foods that fuel their activities.



HALO EFFECT



The ad also appeals to Black Americans' proactive and joyful approach to their health and wellness.



Key Takeaways & Action Steps

KNOW THIS

Despite having many mealtime goals, parents agree that serving their kids healthy ingredients is their top priority.

Specifically, parents are defining “healthy” as meals that include natural and fresh ingredients.

Today’s parents want to avoid what they see as their own parents’ mistakes over-emphasizing restrictive eating. Instead, they’re looking for additive solutions.

Although, one ingredient does still get the restrictive treatment: sugar.

It’s tough to stay high-minded amid busy schedules and parents are looking to maintain healthy ideals with allowances for convenient alternatives.

DO THIS

- Acknowledge and celebrate Parents’ ambitious desire to serve their families healthy meals. Their thoughtful approach deserves your kudos.
- Foreground your products’ natural and fresh ingredients.
- Avoid potentially problematic and triggering language around restrictive eating. This goes against modern parents’ ideas about healthy eating and limits marketing opportunities to show your products’ health benefits.
- But do make an exception for sugar; Work to limit its inclusion in your products and showcase its reduction.
- Take a multi-faceted approach to meal prep by helping Parents level up their cooking skills, embracing convenience (without guilt), welcoming the holistic benefits of cooking, and celebrating food’s cultural importance.





Engage your diverse consumers and drive immediate and lasting impact on your brand’s favorability, revenue growth, and success.



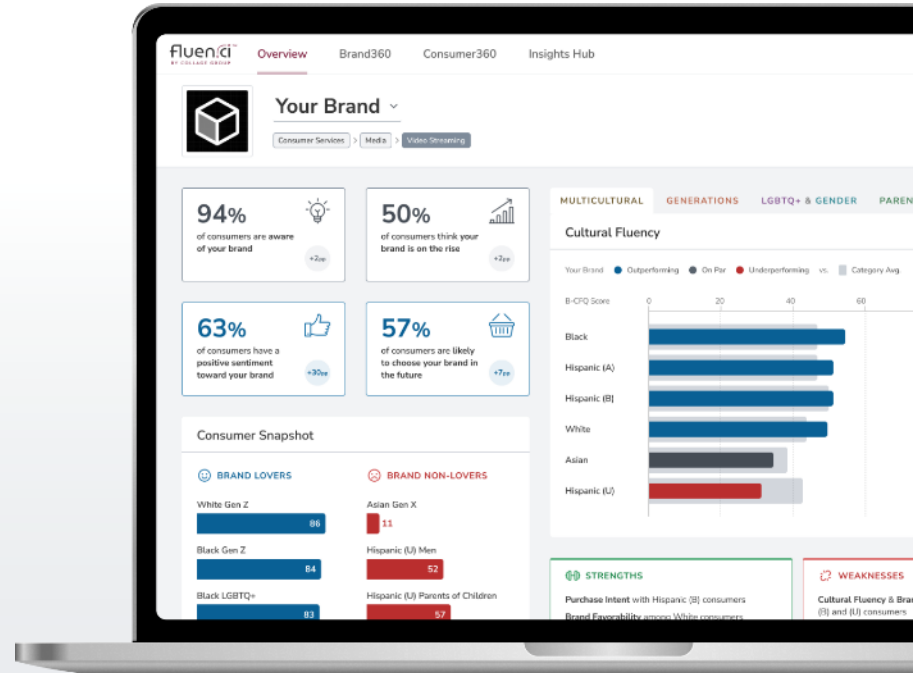
Fresh data and faster time to value



Intersecting cultural, demographic, and brand insights for actionability



Unrivaled depth of brand-specific cultural insights





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