



# Parental Supervision and Adulthood

A photograph of two Black women sitting at a table in a well-lit room, looking at a laptop. The woman on the left is wearing glasses and a blue shirt, and the woman on the right is wearing a striped shirt. Both are smiling. There are white mugs and papers on the table.

## White Paper

This paper examines whether parental supervision has redefined how Gen Z defines adulthood.

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# Survey Intro

## The Research Question and Preliminary Results

In the Fall 2023, one of our Market Research student groups conducted research on the hypothesis that the parental oversight of Gen Z has cast “adulting” in a negative light. Their goal was to ask questions about how Gen Z views adulthood, whether their parents level of supervision is appropriate, and what it means to be independent.

### Demographics

They collected 169 survey responses from people ranging from 18 to 27 years old. 62% of their respondents were female, 86% were White, and 15% grew up in a single parent household.

### Preliminary Results

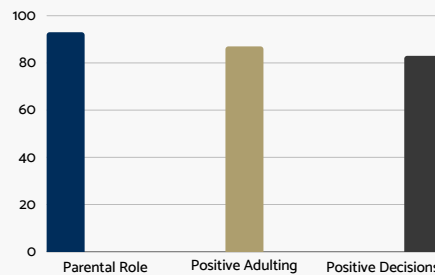
The survey results showed that Gen Z feels confident in their understanding of what it means to be an adult (in line with [our other White Paper on adulthood from this semester](#)). Most respondents believe that their parents have positively influenced their ability to take on adult responsibilities and to make decisions about their career or finances.



# Parental Involvement

The origins of this survey came from our writing and researching on Gen Z parents (predominately Gen Xers) as “lawnmower” parents. The term goes back to 2018, and means that “instead of preparing children for challenges, [parents] mow obstacles down so kids won’t experience them in the first place.” We knew that surveying the level of parental involvement would be an important first step to determining how Gen Zers felt about their “lawnmower” parents.

Our results found overwhelming evidence that our respondents had positive associations with their parents involvement. 93% say their parents played a significant role in defining adulthood. 87% say parents have positively influenced their ability to take on adult responsibilities and 83% say their parents positively influenced their decision making.



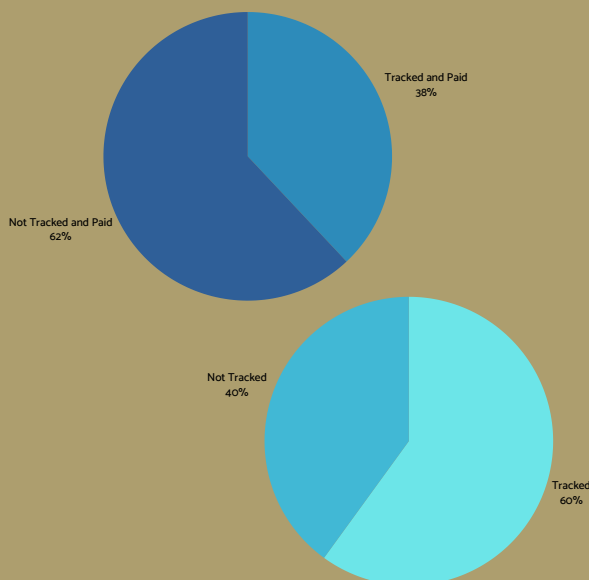
These results show that even though other generations might judge the level of parental involvement that Gen Zers have, they clearly feel is it normal and appropriate. As researchers, we would assume from this data that Gen Z doesn't have strong feelings of independence. However, what we learned is that they are in fact redefining what it means to be an independent adult.

# Achieving Independence

Our student researchers examined their data results, comparing the percentage of respondents who feel they are independent with data on whether the students are tracked by their parents (with location sharing apps) and whether they have current expenses paid by their parents.

This selection of responses from the survey shows how respondents articulated that they are independent, while also admitting that their parents track their location and help with day-to-day expenses.

Q11 - Please explain your previous answer.	Q9 - I rely on financial support from my parents for my day-to-day expenses.	Q14 - My parents have access to my location through apps like Life360
I am independent in my decisions concerning my life	<input type="radio"/> Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly agree
My parents always encouraged independence	<input type="radio"/> Strongly agree	<input type="radio"/> Strongly agree



Our survey found that 60% of students are tracked by their parents and believe they are independent. 38% of respondents believe they are independent even though they are tracked by their parents and have day-to-day expenses paid by them.

These results indicate that this generation has a different understanding of independent adulthood than previous generations. For many Gen Z members, maintaining a strong relationship with their parents, and even relying on them for financial support, does not mean that they aren't independent adults.

# Location Sharing & Safety

As two Elder Millennials (40 years old), both Dr. Kristen and I couldn't imagine a world in which we were okay with our parents using location sharing to track out movements when we were in college.

But with the results of this survey and subsequent research, we've come to the conclusion that Gen Z's feelings about safety, especially in public places, plays a big role in their comfort with location sharing. The Life 360 application has cornered the market on this unique facet of Gen Z life.

## Why does Gen Z use the Life 360 app?

50+ million active users

94% say their life benefits from location sharing

54% say it is necessary for parents to ask kids to use location sharing

When asked in a [Life 360 commissioned survey](#) what comes to mind when they think of location sharing, 66% of respondents said that "safe" is the number one term. 72% of Gen Z women surveyed believe their physical well-being benefits from location sharing.

To hammer home the point, the survey found that 74% of Gen Z respondents agreed that increased physical safety and convenience provided by location sharing is worth the cost of having less privacy. In [our White Paper on Gen Z's relationship to death](#), we talked a lot about how this generation does not feel there are many safe public spaces. We believe this connects to their willingness to use location sharing. They are okay adopting technology that allows them to know where their loved ones are and vice versa, because of their lived experiences.

*The turbulence of Gen Z's adolescence spawned a mental health crisis that was only amplified by the pandemic, social media, and the 24-hour news cycle. During uncertain times, this generation has come to crave the added layer of security that location sharing provides.*

[Dr. Michelle Borba, educational psychologist](#)



# Findings

What does this mean about our understanding of this rising generation and their perspective on parental supervision and involvement?

Here is what we've learned:

- Our survey data showed that contrary to the perceptions of older generations, Gen Z members do not think negatively about the high level of parental involvement.
- Another surprising finding was that Gen Z could be redefining what it means to be independent. Most of our respondents considered themselves independent even though they used location sharing technology with their parents.
- We found that their comfort with location sharing has to do with their perception of safety, especially in public spaces.

# Applications

What does it all mean?

Every research project tells a story, and here's how this story can help you better understand this rising generation in the workforce:

- We often hear horror stories of parents showing up with their kids to job interviews, or calling professors for grade updates - this data might explain why some of those things might happen.
- Consider doing a survey of your employees to see what safety means to them - you could find different ways to make your culture more inclusive.
- The more we understand how Gen Z sees and interacts with the world, the better we can make adjustments for their role as workers.

# How can we help?

This White Paper only scratched the surface of our understanding of Gen Z and how they impact multigenerational workplaces.

If we can help you or your organization reach a fuller understanding of generations, please reach out via the contact information below, or scan the QR code to book a call with us or learn more about the trainings we offer!



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 **BOOK A CALL**



 **Our Trainings**