

DOORS OPEN

Culture & Communities Study

Parents and Guardians of Minor Children

WINTER 2026



DOORS
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4 CULTURE


Wilkening Consulting
audience research | knowledge curation

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RESULTS BY LIFE STAGE

People move through different stages over the course of a lifetime, from early adulthood, middle age, to eventual old age. Some people become parents, and some do not.

These life stages can deeply influence engagement in culture. For instance, young adults have different time and financial resources available for cultural consumption. They also have different social needs than retirees. The needs of children, as they progress through their mini-life stages of childhood, also exert extraordinary influence on household cultural consumption.



To optimize engagement and reduce barriers, it is extremely useful to examine cultural participation by life stage. Some patterns are unique to each life stage, while other behaviors are consistent among all adults.

RESULTS BY LIFE STAGE

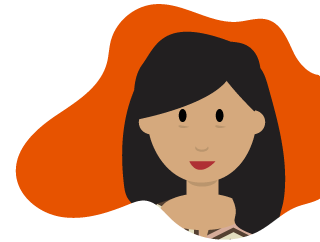
The following four pages examine the life stages delineated in this report:



Young adults
(under 40) with
no minor
children



Parents and
guardians of
minor children



Adults 40 – 59
with no minor
children



Adults 60 or
older with no
minor children

A word of caution: it is easy to take the characteristics and behaviors described here and extend them to all individuals who fit within that age and parental status. But what is shared here are *overall patterns* and individuals within each life stage can vary widely in their values, attitudes, and behaviors. Understanding overall patterns is extremely useful, but always make room for individual difference.

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS OF MINOR CHILDREN



“As a mom, these spaces matter to my family. Music classes, festivals, libraries, performances and community events give my daughter chances to explore creativity and see herself as something bigger. Without them, our lives would feel smaller.”

Cultural Engagement Patterns

- Most avid cultural participants, across the cultural sector
- But participation decreases as children get older

Motivations for Leisure Time

- Family time, pursuing interests, child enjoyment/enrichment

How They Hear About Community Events

- Facebook, Instagram, word-of-mouth

Barriers to Cultural Participation

- Cost, time, perceptions of family-friendliness

Cultural Activities Most Likely to Visit/Participate in

- Live music, zoos/aquariums, movies, festivals, theater

Expectations of Cultural Organizations

- A sense of welcome and belonging
- Educational for children