

ParentsTogether Action: Finding a Families First Narrative

A core narrative wrapped in the **'care' value**, that blames some politicians and their corporate enablers for seeking to distract and divide parents, **outperforms** the predominant opposition narrative of **parental choice/control**.

Acknowledging that parents are too often left **feeling like the struggles of raising children today are their own fault** also deeply resonated. Incorporating it into the narrative helped to **inoculate against the opposition** among some groups, including Latinx parents and non-parents.

When **describing their lives** over the last year, voters are more than twice as likely to use negative terms, led by **stressful, difficult**, and **chaotic**, than positive ones.

Current parents were most likely to use positive terms.

Research Goals

From May to July 2022, Avalanche fielded two rounds of research that included deep listening instruments to a sample of over 10,000 registered voters nationally in partnership with ParentsTogether. The research sought to uncover the values, emotions, and internalized narratives of Americans as they relate to families and raising children in America so we can identify the most resonant messaging pathways that unite and mobilize families and those who care about them to demand a families first agenda.

Methodology

An Avalanche Listening Survey combines open and closed-ended questions. Open-ended questions provide rich data sets that allow us to analyze beliefs, values, and emotions related to an issue. Closed-ended questions provide clarity and comparability with existing research. We work with industry leading data collection partners to gather targeted samples of respondents.

6 in 10

voters describe their past year in negative terms like **stressful, difficult**, and **chaotic**.

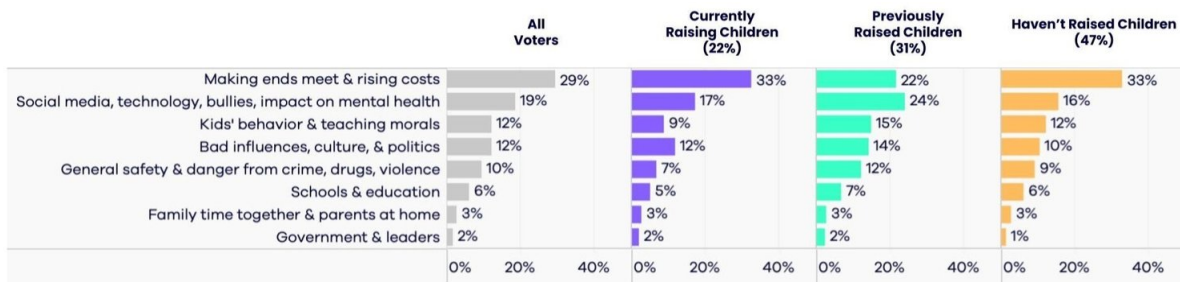
27%

of current parents reported positive terms like **good, fun and exciting**, and **happy and joyous**.

Raising a family in America today

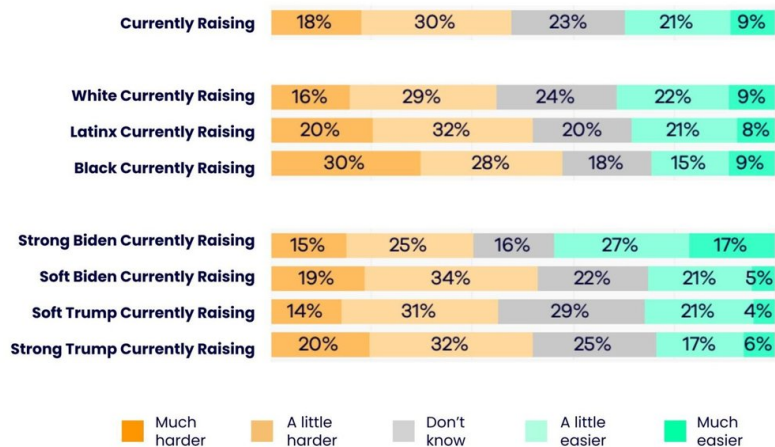
Voters say raising a family is harder than ever before, primarily because of financial struggle.

(Harder Today) What is one thing about raising a family in America today that you think is harder than it should be? (Open)



Black parents, specifically, are more likely than other groups to say it is harder for people like them to raise children today.

(Compared to Others) When you think about raising a family in America today, how would you describe what it's like for people like you, compared to other people? (Closed)



(Harder Today) What is one thing about raising a family in America today that you think is harder than it should be? (Open)

In their own words:

Making ends meet & rising costs (29%)

Social media, technology, bullies, mental health (19%)

Bad influences, culture, & politics (12%)

- Currently Raising Children, Woman, Black, Biden

*Finding **reliable child care while juggling career and home.***

- Currently Raising Children, Woman, White, Trump

*The **hours that parents have to work because of inflation** and wages not being raised.*

- Currently Raising Children, Woman, White, Trump

*Everything is so **desensitized** now and children are **exposed to way too much way too young.** They're being targeted by tv, internet, ads, etc.*

- Currently Raising Children, Woman, White, Other

*The **peer pressure kids have to face,** teaching your child to stay away from violence.*

- Currently Raising Children, Woman, Black, Biden

- Currently Raising Children, Woman, Latinx, Biden

*There are **too many outside influences** telling you how to raise your children.*

- Previously Raised Children, Woman, White, Trump

*There is **too much exposure for young people today.** It makes it **harder to allow them to enjoying being children.***

- Currently Raising Children, Woman, White, Biden

Crafting the right narrative

After identifying the best ingredients for a core narrative in round 1, we tested two potential values frames and two potential approaches to identifying the villain in the story against an **opposition narrative**, which centered on the value of "**parental choice**" and self-reliance for families, and mentioned the threat of exposing children to "**radical left-wing ideas.**"

The winning message was grounded in a shared **value of care and love** and identified **politicians and their corporate enablers seeking to distract and divide** us to maintain power as the **villains**.

Our Winning Families First Message

(Value) We all want to be able to provide, support, and care for our loved ones, especially our children.

(Problem) Yet today, across America, parents are struggling: they're worrying about how to pay for rent, groceries, and childcare, how to keep their kids safe, and how to be present for the most precious moments. Too often, parents are left feeling like these struggles are all their fault.

(Villain) It doesn't need to be this hard, but some politicians want to distract us from the solutions that would help by intentionally creating conflicts that divide parents — in our schools and online — all to keep themselves in power and protect the profits of the big corporations that fund their campaigns.

(Solution) It's time to join together to demand that our leaders reinstate the child tax credit that puts money in parents' wallets, require Big Tech to make social media platforms safer, fully fund our schools so our children can reach their potential, and pass paid family leave so parents can be there when it counts. **(Value)** It's time to join together to see to it that every child has the care and support they need to thrive.

Our messages performed fairly well across a variety of metrics, including emotional activation, outperforming the parental choice message — but not by a very comfortable margin. Parents don't necessarily find the two messages in conflict with one another, and inoculating against the parental choice narrative remains a challenge.

Strategic Recommendations

wrap the story of families in America with care.

The evidence is clear that care, support, and providing for loved ones performed the best in the test.

Voters see this as the clearest contrast between Democrats and Republicans, so using care will resonate with messages on other issues and ensure wider adoption by electeds.

blame some politicians and their corporate enablers for seeking to divide us.

The best performing message includes the villain "some politicians" and attributes their motivation to "seeking to distract and divide us."

At the same time, other variations of successful messages show that the idea that "some politicians want parents to keep blaming themselves for these problems" also resonated deeply with the experiences of some groups of parents and has advantages in inoculating against the opposition narrative. "Blaming themselves" language can be incorporated into the problem statement of the core narrative.

in content, make the families first Agenda come alive.

The policy proposals in the messages are broadly popular and coherent as part of a package.

What will life in America look like and feel like if these policies are enacted?

Helping voters see an achievable near future will increase urgency and hope, both of which drive mobilization and turnout.

We give you the power to truly understand **people at scale**

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