



UNDERSTANDING AND COACHING  
GENERATION Z

Shelba Waldron

and

Katie Racki

RECOGNIZE THAT EVERY GYMNAST  
HAS VALUE AS BOTH A PERSON, A  
CHILD, AND AN ATHLETE



US Population  
331,002,651

## POPULATION BY GENERATION

As of 2019...

**Boomers**

1946-1964

21%

**Generation X**

1965-1980

20%

**Millennials**

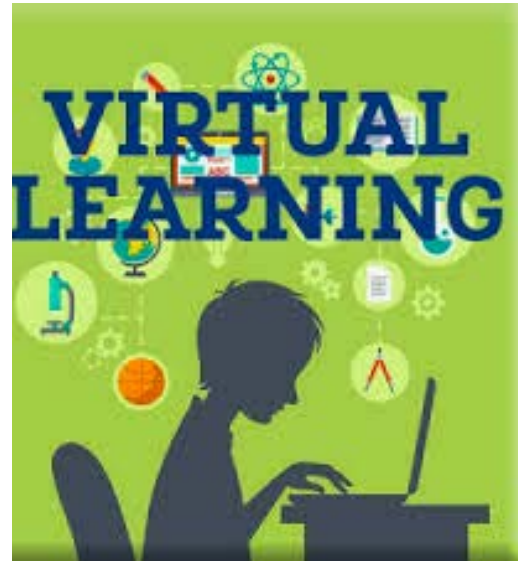
1981-1996

25%

# GENERATION Z

**27%**

**1997-TBD**



The Uber logo, featuring the word "Uber" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font centered on a solid black rectangular background.



THE GENERATION OF DISRUPTION



...AND THEN COVID  
HAPPENED!

Online School

Work from home

Streaming services became  
crucial survival

People rediscovered take out

Online grocery store delivery

Online sports training

## BORN 2000

### 20—Born 2000

- 9/11--2001
- No child left behind--2001
- Global War on Terror-2003
- Cell Phones meet 3G-2001
- Social Media
- Reality Tv

To Grow Up Generation Z





## BORN 2005

*Katrina—2005*

*Virginia Tech Shooting—2007*

*Recession—2008*

*Obama-2008*

*Sonya Sotomayor to Supreme Court-2009*

*National Bullying/Hazing Laws enacted-2007-2011*

# To Grow Up Generation Z



# BORN 2010

- Affordable Care Act-2010
- Don't Ask, Don't Tell ends-2010
- Bin Laden killed-2011
- Sandy Hook-2012
- Aurora Movie Theater Shooting-2012
- Shooting of Trayvon Martin-2012
- Boston Marathon Bombing-2013
- BLM-2013
- Shooting of Tamir Rice-2014

To Grow Up Generation Z





**MARCH  
FOR OUR  
LIVES** 



## **BORN 2015**

Charleston Church Shooting--2015

Same Sex Marriage becomes legal—2015

Pulse Shooting-2016

Trump-2016

Women's Movement-2017

MeToo-2017

Parkland Shooting-2018

March for Our Lives-2018

Dreamers Movement-2018

Covid-19-2020

# To Grow Up Generation Z

## GENERATION Z PREDICTIONS

---

More accepting of diverse populations

---

Most entrepreneurial generation

---

Better educated

---

Environmentally conscious

---

More comfortable with non-traditional families

---

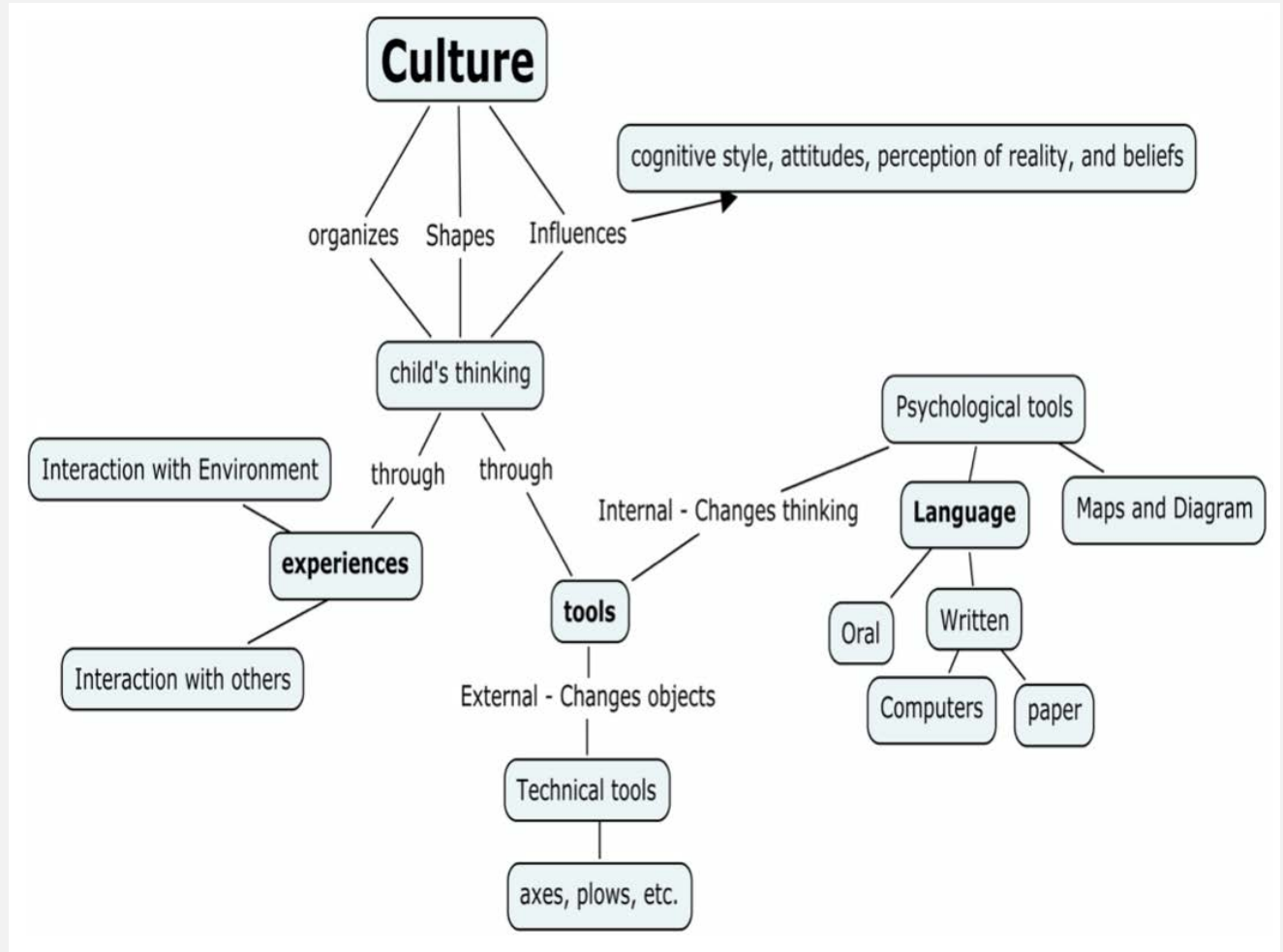
More global

---

Less likely to have job experience entering the workforce

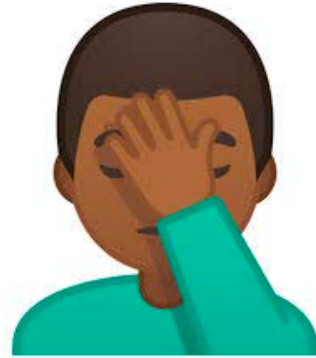
# SOCIAL COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT THEORY

- Everyone a child encounters impacts their socialization
- Socialization happens faster for kids today, because they are exposed to more factors that add to their development now.
- A child's cognitive development is based on social interactions



Technology is socialization for kids today

## GENERATION Z AND SELF EXPRESSION



- In person and talk about the issues of the day
- Their writing skills are weaker than other generations, because of communicating in emojis, lol-ing and brb-ing.
- Candor is respected and they value authenticity
- They are growing up in a post social media confusion. Meaning, they are more likely to be private with their personal details.
- All about re-creation
- Are more than likely to learn a new skill by watching a video, than reading

BRB

J4F

TBH

OMG P911

KPC

CWOT

TXT-ESE



## SOCIAL MEDIA

85% YouTube  
72% Instagram  
69% Snapchat  
51% Facebook

### **YouTube**

- Used more than any other site
- 63% of Gen Z uses it at least 2 hours a day

### **TikTok**

- 800 million active users worldwide.
- 41 percent of TikTok users are aged between 16 and 24

### **Influencers**

- 76% follow an influencer on social media
- 85% learn of new products through social media influencers

**55% say their social media image is very or somewhat close to who they are in real life.**

# INTERESTING TECHNOLOGY FACTS

## Smartphones

95% of 13-17 year olds have access to a smartphone

## Gaming

61% of Gen Z game at least once a week

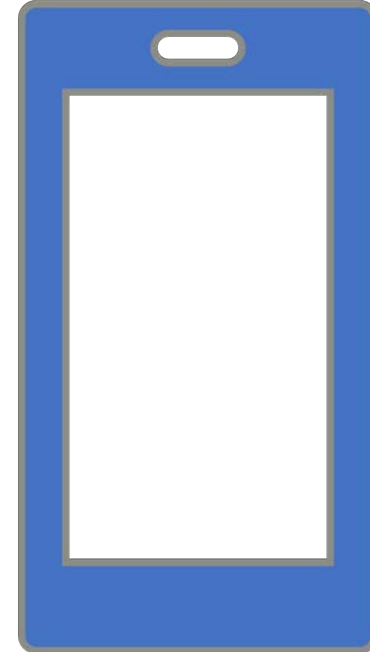
48% of gamers believe gaming is a skill that will help them later in life

## Fitness Apps

40% of Gen Z use a fitness App at least once a week

## Cash

28% want to go completely cashless





College  
educated

Older

Stealth-fighter

Communication

Choices


Engaged

Realistic

Online reviews  
matter

## THE PARENTS

Parents can get instant, real time info on their children's academic performance, why wouldn't they want this for their child's athletic performance?



## WHAT YOU COULD SEE AS A COACH

- Highly independent
- More likely to talk about mental health than previous generations
- More likely to speak out
- Heightened awareness of diversity
- Want to see a digital strategy
- Acknowledgement of their hard work
- On-demand critique
- Shorter attention spans
- An explanation of the “why”

Did you know...

There is no scientific evidence that kids want awards that weren't deserved.

# DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

Early 5-8

Middle 9-11

Early adolescence 12-14

Middle adolescence 15-18

Late adolescence 19-23



As coaches, we need to instill a frame of mind that is optimistic so we can influence the students to participate in the world in a positive manner.

## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT THEORY

Positive youth development is an approach to working with youth that emphasizes **building** on youth's **strengths** and **providing supports** and **opportunities** that will help them achieve goals and transition to adulthood in a productive, healthy manner.--HHS.Gov

# BRAIN ARCHITECTURE



Not fully matured



Development and connectivity develops from back to front



Continues to develop well into the 20's



Emotions rule, because the pre-frontal cortex that regulates decision-making is last to mature.

# CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

- Positive relationships with caring adults
- Inclusive environment
- Safe environments
- Structured environments
- Free time
- Opportunities to achieve competency and mastery
- Opportunities for self-determination
- Purposeful
- Opportunity to serve others

# THE 40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

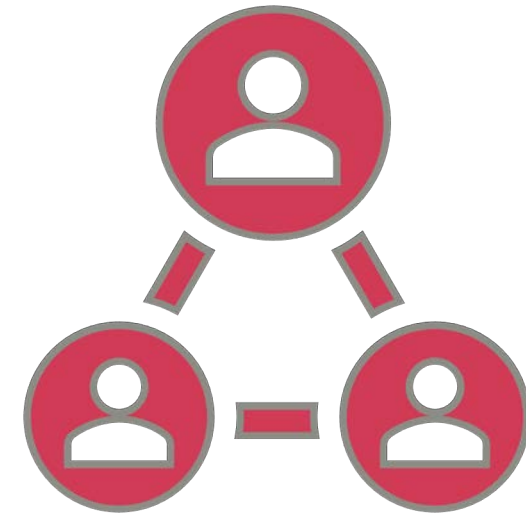
## **EXTERNAL ASSETS**

The supports, opportunities, and relationships young people need across all aspects of their lives.

## **INTERNAL ASSETS**

The personal skills, commitments, and values they need to make good choices, take responsibility for their own lives, and be independent and fulfilled.

--Search Institute



Support

Empowerment

Boundaries  
and  
Expectations

Constructive  
Use of Time

Commitment  
to Learning

Positive Values

Social  
Competencies

Positive  
Identity


## 40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

Youth need at least three adults with whom they trust aside from their parents.



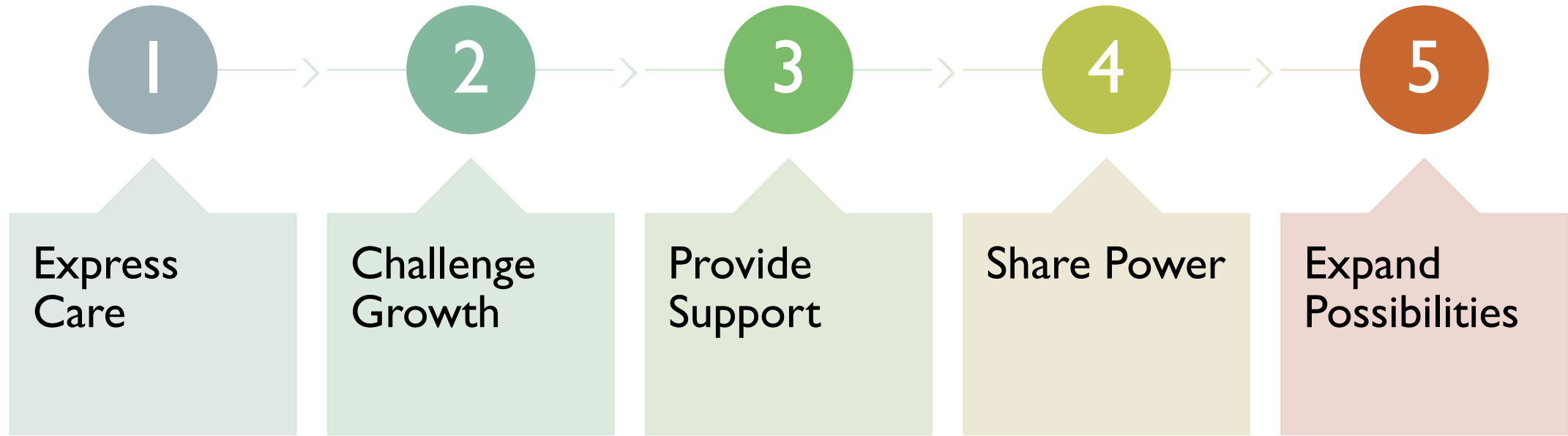
# CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

- **Creative activities**—three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
- **Youth programs**—three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.
- **Religious community**—one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
- **Time at home**—Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do,” two or fewer nights per week.



## COACHING THE WHOLE CHILD

- **Gym environment values youth**—Young person perceives that adults in the gym value them as youth.
- **Youth as resources**—Young people are given useful roles within the gym community
- **Safety**—Young person feels both physically and emotionally safe
- **Family**—Coaches support family time and welcomes the family as a part of the conversation
- **Personal power**—Young person feels they have control over things that happen to them.
- **Self-esteem**—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
- **Bonding**—Young person feels they are able to bond to multiple institutions including school, church, family, and sports.



## DEVELOPMENTAL RELATIONSHIPS

# WHAT DO THEY NEED FROM YOU, THE COACH?

## **R: Reaching/Repeating**

Operating on the edge of one's ability.  
How many reaches are you making  
each minute? Each hour?

## **E: Engagement**

Immersive, attention gaining, emotion  
driven practice

## **P: Purposefulness**

Tasks are directly connected to skill  
building

## **S: Direct, Immediate, Feedback**

Real time, clear, and concise feedback  
on achievement, mistakes, and  
directions

THE 4 S'S  
INTERVIEW FROM  
SEARCH

Sparks

Strengths

Struggles

Supports

THX!

For more information or to  
schedule a tailored training for  
your club, please contact:

Shelba Waldron  
[Swaldron@usagym.org](mailto:Swaldron@usagym.org)

