Kids on Politics Executive Summary

Background

Drawing on Stanford University Professor Shanto Iyengar's research with fellow political scientist Matthew Tyler, which highlighted increasing political polarization among teenagers, this project sought to understand the extent to which similar divisions are reflected among younger children. AC 360 producers collaborated with Professor Iyengar and Professor Asheley Landrum, a media psychologist at Arizona State University's Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication with expertise in children's cognitive development. Together, we crafted an interview protocol for 4th-grade students from elementary schools in politically contrasting districts, aiming to gauge and document the early signs of political polarization in children.

The first round of interviews was conducted during May of 2024, when incumbent Joe Biden was running against former president Donald Trump. A second round of interviewed was conducted in September 2024, after the first debate between Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Trump. Small changes were made to the interview protocol between the first and second round of interviews.

Measures

Our interview protocol consisted of several groups of questions described in detail below.

Likability Items

During the second set of interviews, we added two likability items at the beginning of the interview. We asked participants to rate each candidate on a five-point Likert-type scale from Really Don't Like, to Sort-of Like, to Unsure/Neutral, to Sort of Like, to Really Like. To assist with responding, participants were shown the image below. Responses to the likability items are described in Finding 1.

Attribution Items

Both interview protocols included several attribution items. Of these items, six were positive qualities (e.g., kind, smart, honest), two were negative qualities (e.g., likely to do bad things, selfish), and one was ambiguous (e.g., tough). For the second round of interviews, we added the question, "who would make a better role model for kids?" For each quality, Professor Landrum asked whether it was truer of Biden/Harris, Trump, or both equally. Pictures of the two presidential candidates were on the table. For example, Professor Landrum asked:

> *Which president is kinder? Is Joe Biden kinder? Is Donald Trump kinder? Or are they both the same?*

If participants made a selection, Prof. Landrum asked, for example, whether they think their choice is "a lot" kinder or "a little" kinder. Children were asked to explain their reasoning.
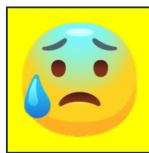
We counterbalanced the order in which Professor Landrum named the presidents between participants. Results from these items are reported in Finding 1. Additionally, select results examining children's explanations of their reasoning are included in Findings 1, 3, and 5.
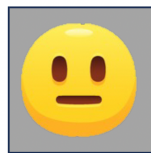
Emotion Items

Professor Landrum showed participants the following image and asked them to point to which emoji best shows how they feel when they think about each president. After stating how they felt, she asked them why they felt that way. Results regarding their selections are reported in Finding 1. Explanations for why they feel this way are included in select results reported in Findings 3 and 5.
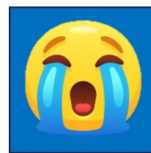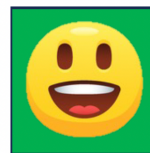

| Angry or Frustrated | Nervous or Worried | I don't know | Sad or Disappointed | Happy or Excited |

Association Items

Professor Landrum showed participants an image of two houses that were nearly identical but one displayed a pro-Trump campaign sign and one displayed a pro-Biden campaign sign. In the second set of interviews, we changed the image so that it displayed the official Trump and Harris signs. See the images below. Professor Landrum told participants that we were pretending that there were two new kids in their school and they moved next door to each other, into these houses. Participants were asked what the people who lived in each house were like. Professor Landrum also asked whether the two kids who lived in these houses could be friends. In May, we used the image on the left and, in September, we used the image on the right.

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Professor Landrum then asked whether they were willing to go to someone's house whose family supported each candidate and whether their family would let them go to someone's house whose family supported each candidate. Children were encouraged to explain their responses. The results of these association items are included in Finding 1.

Candidate Choice Items

Lastly, Professor Landrum asked participants who they would vote for if they were old enough to vote. Participants were encouraged to point to the picture of the candidate that they prefer and then state why they prefer that candidate. During the second round of interviews, we added questions asking participants whether they felt that each candidate would make a good president. Results related to these items are included in Finding 1 and Finding 2.

Results

Finding 1: Affective political polarization
Even 10-year-olds are affectively polarized. The strength of polarization appears driven by the strong attitudes displayed by Blue-state participants and Democrat-leaning kids who showed stronger pro-Biden/Harris and anti-Trump sentiments compared to Red-state kids and Republican-leaning kids, who were less intense in their views.

Even 10-year-olds are polarized. Blue-state kids had more extreme responses than red-state kids.

- In May, before Biden dropped out of the race, we found strong polarization between red-state and blue-state participants, with purple-state participants in the middle, using an index of candidate favorability where higher scores indicated greater preference for Donald Trump and lower scores indicated greater preference for Joe Biden. We also saw strong polarization when we grouped the sample by their parents'/guardians' voting preferences.

- In September, we added a question asking kids how much they liked each candidate on a 5-point scale from really dislike to really like. We found evidence that the blue-state participants and the Democrat-leaning participants display strong *affective* polarization; that is, they really liked Democratic candidate (Harris) and really disliked the Republican candidate (Trump). This is less true of Republican-leaning and red-state participants who, though they show positive attitudes toward the Republican candidate, show more neutral to positive attitudes toward the Democratic candidate.

- In May and September, we found evidence that Democratic-leaning kids and blue-state kids expressed negative emotions (angry/frustrated, nervous/worried) more frequently about Trump than the Republican-leaning kids did about Biden or Harris.
    - In May:
        - Blue state kids were approximately 5.83 times more likely (or 483% more likely) to say that Donald Trump makes them feel nervous or worried than red state kids were to say the same about Joe Biden.
        - Democrat-leaning kids were approximately 3.27 times more likely (or 227% more likely) to say that Donald Trump makes them feel nervous or

worried than Republican-leaning kids were likely to express the same about Joe Biden.

- o In September:
  - § Blue state kids were approximately 4.81 times more likely (or 381% more likely) to express negative emotions (nervous/worried or angry/frustrated) about Donald Trump than red state kids were likely to express about Kamala Harris.
  - § Democrat-leaning kids were approximately 9 times more likely (or 800% more likely) to express negative emotions (nervous/worried or angry/frustrated) about Donald Trump than Republican-leaning kids were likely to express about Kamala Harris.

- In September, we asked whether two kids whose parents supported different candidates could be friends with each other. Democrat-leaning kids were approximately 2 times more likely than the Republican-leaning kids to say that the two kids (whose families support opposing candidates) could **not** be friends.

- Across both sets of interviews, most participants were open to visiting the homes of peers whose family support either political party. However, we observed that a higher percentage of Democrat-leaning kids were **less** willing to visit the homes of children whose families support Trump (22% in May and 33% in September said they were **not** willing). In contrast, Republican-leaning kids showed greater willingness to visit the homes of children whose families back the Democratic candidate (only 4% in May and 9% in September said they were **not** willing).
  - o In May:
    - § Blue-state kids were 7 times more likely than red-state kids to say that they would **not** go to a peer's house whose family strongly supported an opposing candidate.
    - § Red-state kids were 10.6 times more likely than blue-state kids to say that they **would** go to a peer's house whose family strongly supported an opposing candidate.
    - § Republican leaning kids were 15 times more likely than Democrat-leaning kids to say that they **would** go to a peer's house whose family strongly supported an opposing candidate.
  - o In September:
    - § Democrat-leaning kids were 5 times more likely than Republican-leaning kids to say that they would **not** go to a peer's house whose family strongly supported an opposing candidate.
    - § Republican-leaning kids were 3.6 times more likely than Democrat-leaning kids to say that they **would** go to a peer's house whose family strongly supported an opposing candidate.

- Furthermore, across both sets of interviews, about a third of participants thought their parents would be unwilling to let them visit the home of a peer whose family supports the

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opposing political party. Amongst Democrat-leaning participants, 33% in May and 26% in September said their families would **not** let them visit the homes of children whose families support Donald Trump. Amongst Republican leaning-participants, 27% in May, but only 9% in September, said their families would **not** let them visit the homes of children whose families support the democratic candidate (Biden and then Harris).

- o In May:
    - ▪ Blue-state kids were 2.6 times more likely than red-state kids to say that their families would **not** allow them to go to a peer's house whose family strongly supports an opposing candidate.
    - ▪ Republican-leaning kids were 2.7 times more likely than Democrat-leaning kids to say that their families **would** allow them to go to a peer's house whose family strongly supports an opposing candidate.
- o In September
    - ▪ Blue-state kids were 2.6 times more likely than red-state kids to say that their families would **not** allow them to go to a peer's house whose family strongly supports an opposing candidate.
    - ▪ Democrat-leaning kids were 3.57 times more likely than Republican-leaning kids to say that their families would **not** let them go to a peer's house whose family strongly supports an opposing candidate.
    - ▪ Republican-leaning kids were a little over 4 times more likely than Democrat leaning kids to say that their families **would** let them go to a peer's house whose family strongly supports an opposing candidate.

Finding 2: Kamala Harris as the first president who is a woman of color
Across the whole sample, 65% of kids supported Kamala Harris for the next president, though this differed by location (86% of the blue-state kids and 50% of the red-state kids); and the majority of kids think Kamala Harris would make a good president (even if they don't support her). In fact, red-state kids were 2.6 times more likely to say they'd vote for the Democrat when it was Harris than when it was Biden. Furthermore, kids think it matters more to voters (in a good way) that Kamala Harris is a woman than that she's a person of color, and they are excited about the prospect of the first woman president.

Kids think it matters more to voters that Kamala Harris is a woman than that she's a person of color. Generally, kids were positive toward Kamala Harris.

- Kids generally preferred Kamala Harris to Donald Trump, 34 out of 52 total participants (65%), when choosing who should be president. In comparison, only 15 participants (29%) said they would vote for Trump if they were old enough to vote and 3 participants refused to choose one or the other.
    - o Broken down by location, 86% of blue-state kids said they'd vote for Kamala Harris compared to 50% of red-state kids.

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- All but one of the Democrat-leaning kids said that they'd vote for Kamala Harris, three of the 12 Republican-leaning kids said they'd support Kamala Harris, and 12 of the 20 "other-leaning" participants said they'd support Kamala Harris.

- Support for Kamala Harris did not vary by participant gender, 65% of male participants and 65% of female participants both selected Kamala Harris.

- Kids generally thought Kamala Harris would be a good president, regardless of whether they were Democrat- or Republican-leaning.

  - The majority of Democrat-leaning kids think that Harris would make a "really good" president (79%), with 16% saying she'd be "sort of good," and only 1 kid saying she'd be "sort of bad."

  - The majority of Republican-leaning kids (those with parents who support Trump) also think Kamala Harris would be a good president. Approximately 58% felt that Kamala Harris would be "sort-of good" as president, whereas 17% said they weren't sure (or somewhere in the middle) and another 17% saying she'd be really bad.

    - Even if we break it down by which kids said they'd choose Trump if they were old enough to vote, we find a majority think she would do a good job (combining across "sort of" good, 47%, and "really" good, 7%).

  - Red-state kids were 2.6 times more likely to say they'd vote for the Democratic candidate when it was Kamala Harris than when it was Joe Biden.

- Participants believe it matters more that she's a woman than that she's a person of color. We discussed how Kamala Harris might be the first woman (and first woman who's also a person of color) elected as president. Professor Landrum asked the kids whether it matters more to voters that she's a woman or that she's a person of color. The majority of kids asked (58%) said that it matters more that she's a woman. A few themes emerged:

  - ***Race can't matter to voters because it is not supposed to matter what color of skin someone has***. (5 kids, 3 from NJ and 2 from TX)

  - ***Race won't matter more to voters because we've already elected a person of color, Obama.*** (5 kids, 1 in NJ and 4 in TX)

  - ***Related to the previous, its historic that a woman would be elected president, so that's why it matters more that she's a woman.*** (7 kids, 3 from NJ and 4 in TX)

- Race seemed to be a non-issue generally; 86% of the sample said voters are ready for a woman of color as president.

  - This was similar across locations (88% of blue-state kids and 82% of red-state kids).

  - There was a stronger division based on parent's vote; 92% of democrat-leaning kids said voters are ready for a woman of color to be president and 78% of republican-leaning voters said the same.

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- o It's worth noting that only approximately 3% explicitly said that voters are not ready. Approximately 6% said they weren't sure and another 6% said readiness was contingent on other factors such as gender and political views.

- Participants are excited about the prospect of a woman president.

  - o Most of the kids in NJ (15, 68%) and over half of the kids in Texas (19, 63%) said it would be a good thing to have a woman as president.

  - o Only one kid, herself, thought it was a bad idea for a woman to be president. She said that women are "too dramatic" and she gave the impression that her dad told her this.

  - o Five kids (4 from Texas and 1 from NJ) were concerned that *other* people wouldn't want to vote for women, particularly republicans and men. This didn't appear to vary based on gender of the participants, either.

  - o Approximately half of the kids who said *other* people won't vote for a woman were male (and half were female) and the one participant who was concerned about having a woman as president was female.

Finding 3: Trump's Legal Troubles
Although only 4 students explicitly brought up Trump's legal issues when explaining why they'd vote for one candidate or another, 32% of participants brought this up in other contexts, sometimes multiple times during one interview and sometimes across both interviews (May and September). The vast majority of these children were Biden supporters in New Jersey and most often, this was in response to being asked who is more likely to do bad things. Trump-leaning participants did not see legal issues as reasons not to support him.

32% of kids brought up Donald Trump's legal issues and Republican-leaning participants didn't see that as a reason not to support him.

- 32% of the participants, in total, brought up Trump's legal issues, at least once, in some form.

  - o Participants described the legal issues in different ways. The majority of kids said he went to court/was on trial or that he went to jail/prison. Four said he was found guilty or convicted of a crime.

  - o Several participants brought up his legal issues more than once and 8 brought them up across both interviews.

  - o Approximately half of the kids to bring this up were from the blue-state school. There are at least two possible reasons for this.

    - ▪ First, they are more likely to be aligned with the democratic party and watch left leaning news outlets. Therefore, they have no reason to underplay or ignore Trump's legal troubles and they are more likely to see related coverage.

    - ▪ Second, Trump was convicted in the New York case the week before we interviewed the New Jersey participants (but after the Arizona and Texas

interviews). Therefore, they likely had a heightened awareness of Trump's legal issues compared to the other two schools.

- In May, most participants (20%) brought up Trump's legal issues when reasoning about who was more likely to do bad things (attribution items).

- In May, 60% of these participants who brought up Trump's legal issues were not aware of the specific actions that led to Donald Trump's legal issues
    - Of those who had some idea (accurate or inaccurate):
        - One said falsifying business records, two said paid someone to say nothing, one said paid someone to be on Trump's side, one said lied about a business, and one said it was "something about money" but "not extortion".
        - One participant mentioned the classified documents case brought by the special counsel. He said Trump "put illegal papers in his house."
        - Four participants cited various other reasons, including beliefs that Trump stole money, lied about the election, or possessed a weapon.

- In May, most of these participants—the ones who brought up Trump's legal issues but also support Donald Trump—did recognize Donald Trump's flaws
    - Although two participants thought Biden was both a little more likely to do bad things and a little more selfish than Donald Trump, 4 participants were willing to say Trump was at least a little more selfish than Biden and a little more likely to do bad things than Biden.

- Despite recognizing his legal trouble, these Republican-leaning participants generally attributed positive characteristics to Trump over Biden
    - Each participant attributed between 4 and 7 (out of 7) positive characteristics to Donald Trump, usually saying he was a little or a lot better than Joe Biden.
    - A majority of these participants said Trump is kinder, smarter, more honest, cares more about them, and will keep them safer than Joe Biden.

- Three justifications were used by these participants for choosing Trump
    - Among these seven participants, three justifications were used and each participant used at least two of the three: Donald Trump is nicer/kinder than Joe Biden, Donald Trump was a really good president the first time, the child really likes (or is a fan of) Donald Trump.
        - Although it is possible that these kids like Trump because they see him as a good president and nicer than Biden, it is also possible that they say that he is a good president and nicer than Biden because they are loyal to Trump.
    - Only one participant explicitly reasoned about why Trump is electable even in the face of the criminal charges, stating that previous presidents have also done bad things but been great presidents.

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Finding 4: Third-person Taylor Swift Effects
Over half of female participants said that they like Taylor Swift compared to only 11% of male participants. Although whether kids liked Taylor Swift did not vary by location, whether they thought she'd impact the election did. Almost all of the NJ kids thought she'd have a big impact compared to a little over half of the TX participants. Furthermore, more boys (93%) felt that Taylor Swift's endorsement would significantly impact the election (compared to 64% of female participants). This is likely illustrative of a third-person Taylor Swift effect where non-fans anticipate that Taylor Swift will have a larger influence on her fans than her fans believe.

- Female participants (61%) more frequently said that they liked Taylor Swift than male participants (11%), and this did not vary significantly based on location (New Jersey versus Texas).

- However, belief of whether Taylor Swift would significantly impact the election varied significantly by location.
  - Almost all (95%) of the New Jersey participants asked said that Taylor Swift would likely influence the election (in favor of Kamala Harris), whereas 56% of Texas participants asked said so.
  - When broken down by gender, more of the male participants asked (93%) said that they'd expect that Taylor Swift would have an impact on the election compared with 64% of female participants. This is likely illustrative of a third-person Taylor Swift effect where non-fans anticipate that Taylor Swift will have a larger influence on her fans than her fans believe.

Finding 5: Misinformation, Misleading Information, and the Resulting Misunderstandings in Kids
38% of the children interviewed shared claims reflective of misunderstandings stemming from (sometimes misinterpreted) communication with family or exposure to online misinformation and misleading information. Predictably, the Democrat-leaning kids echo negative claims about Donald Trump and the Republican-leaning kids echo negative claims about Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.

- 38% of the sample shared misinformative claims that could be characterized as misunderstandings likely resulting from exposure to misinformation or misleading information.
  - Fewer blue-state kids (24%) repeated such claims purple-state kids (50%) and red-state kids (41%). This doesn't take into consideration the varying degrees of extremity or implausibility associated with each claim.

- In September, we were prepared to follow up on any claims that might be categorized as misinformation with a question about where participants heard that claim. Although one claim was attributed to social media and one to television news, **the vast majority of claims were attributed to friends and family members, most often parents.**

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o In one case, a participant repeated a misinformative claim made about Kamala Harris that her dad said he found on the internet, but she remains skeptical:

My dad said that he found it online. He just said that he believes it because he thinks that Google's always right. I don't believe that though. [TX29, Supports Harris]

- Misinformative claims about Donald Trump were typically shared by the Democrat-leaning kids, and misinformative claims about Joe Biden were typically shared by Republican-leaning kids. Notably, the vast majority of claims were about Donald Trump.
  o 60% of the claims made focused on Donald Trump. Although most of them depict Donald Trump in a negative light, one was very positive, suggesting that Donald Trump gives away half of his personal money to the military to purchase better gear [AZ03, Supports Donald Trump]. It is possible that this is a misinterpretation of a different misinformative claim made by Donald Trump about defense department budgets.

  o 30% of the claims focused on Joe Biden. Many of these claims were shared in May when Joe Biden was still in the race and depicted him negatively (e.g., "Joe Biden sniffs kids", see examples below). However, three of these claims were made in September, after Joe Biden had dropped out of the race, and focused on his reasons for dropping out. For example, one participant suggested that Biden dropped out of the race because he realized that he could get assassinated [TX24, Supports Donald Trump].

  o Only three claims focused on Kamala Harris, two of them were clearly negative and one was more ambiguous, suggesting that Kamala was taunting Donald Trump during the debate by doing the chicken dance [NJ13, Supports Kamala]. It is possible that the child was talking about social media posts by the Harris campaign that were released a few weeks prior to the debate accusing Trump of being "chicken" if he were to back out. But Kamala did not do the chicken dance during the debate.

- Perhaps unsurprisingly, multiple misinformative claims were made about COVID-19 and the 2020 election.

Here are some examples of the misinformation and misunderstandings shared by the participants:

1. **Joe Biden sniffs kids.**

   Claims: Two participants in Texas mentioned that they heard that Joe Biden sniffs kids.

   There's like videos on public, let's say TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, that show Joe Biden doing all this crazy stuff. And some of it shows him sniffing kids' hair, which is weird. [TX30, Supports Trump]

   I've heard he sniffs little kids. [TX24, Supports Trump]

   Context: A video clip of Joe Biden talking to a mother and her child were edited to add in "sniffing" noises to make it appear as though he "aggressively sniffed" the child. The claim was fact checked by PolitiFact. This was not the only deceptive edit of the video.

Others were posted across multiple social media platforms and were fact checked by [Snopes](#).

2.   **Donald Trump/Joe Biden sleeps during meetings**

Claims: Three students suggested that Joe Biden or Donald Trump aren't effective presidents because they fall asleep during meetings.

Donald Trump Context: This claim likely stems from [reports](#) that Trump was nodding off (or simply closing his eyes) during his trial. Various outlets, including the [Washington Post](#), [Newsweek](#), [CNBC](#), [Axios](#), [New York Magazine](#), and [the New York Times](#), covered this.

Joe Biden Context: This claim may come from stories over the past several years suggesting Biden has fallen asleep during meetings, speeches, and other events. This has earned him the nickname "Sleepy Joe" from Trump and his supporters. Some viral videos appear to show Biden nodding off, though [Factcheck.org](#), [NBC News](#), [Newsweek](#), and other outlets have debunked some as "[cheap fakes](#)," clarifying that Biden did not fall asleep in those instances.

A related claim, echoed by one participant, accused Biden of using drugs to stay awake. This likely originates from [accusations](#) made without evidence by Trump and members of the Republican party to explain Biden's strong performance during the State of the Union Address.

3.   **Trump says COVID-19 vaccines make metal stick to you**

Claims: One participant in New Jersey indicated that he really did not like Donald Trump. When asked why they felt that way, the participant said "many reasons," one being that Donald Trump endorses vaccine misinformation:

> *Well one of them was that he said that the Coronavirus vaccine, he supported people who said that the Coronavirus vaccine apparently makes metal stick to you.* [NJ13, Supports Harris]

Later, when asked why Harris is more honest, he repeated the claim:

> *Supporting the whole Coronavirus vaccine causes metal to stick to you is not.* [NJ13, Supports Harris]

In fact, in the first round of interviews this past May, this participant said that Trump, himself, made this claim:

> *Like he said that the Coronavirus vaccine, he said some things like this about how apparently it makes like, utensils and metal stuff stick to you. Which is 100% a lie.* [NJ13, Supports Harris]

Context: It is possible that the participant is referring to a claim made by osteopathic physician Sherry Tenpenny, an anti-vaccine activist, amidst the public debate about COVID-19 vaccines. Tenpenny testified at an Ohio legislative hearing in 2021 that COVID-19 vaccines cause people to become magnetized. As reported by *The Columbus Dispatch*, Dr. Tenpenny was asked by Ohio Republican lawmakers to testify about vaccines in effort to pass HB248 which sought to dramatically reduce state public health restrictions due to the outbreak of the virus. In addition to Sherry Tenpenny's claims, conspiracy theories about being "magnetized" from COVID-19 vaccination have been shared across social media and are linked to a conspiracy theory about Bill Gates wanting to put microchips in people. Though Donald Trump has expressed vaccine skepticism before, there is no evidence that Donald Trump has made this claim nor that he has endorsed it.

4.   **Kamala Harris cheated during the debate**

Claims: One of the students suggested that Kamala Harris cheated during the Harris vs. Trump debate by having notes and by having earbuds disguised as earrings. The participant said that his father suggested this to him while watching the debate.

> *Also, I want to say this, Kamala Harris was cheating on the debate, and I know how. David Muir said clearly before it started, that there is no handwritten notes allowed at the debate. But guess what! Kamala Harris left the debate with a notebook in her hand, meaning she wrote notes… written for her what to say.*

Context: The candidates agreed to a set of rules for the September 10th debate, one of which was that no pre-written notes were allowed. However, candidates were provided with a pen and a pad of paper to take notes during the debate. As the *Wall Street Journal* reported, although Harris took advantage of the pen and paper to take notes during the debate, Trump did not.

He also stated:
> *Also, her earrings looked like they were little earbuds telling … her what to say, which is kind of fishy.* [TX30, Supports Trump]

Context: Though the participant attributes this to his father, similar claims went viral on social media and were debunked by FactCheck.org. To summarize, during the Sept. 10 presidential debate, viral social media posts falsely claimed Vice President Kamala Harris wore earrings containing earphones, suggesting she received assistance during the event. These claims echoed previous baseless allegations made against political figures who debated Trump, including Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden, about using hidden earpieces during debates. However, Harris wore Tiffany & Co. earrings she had previously worn, not the Nova H1 audio earrings referenced in the posts. The Harris campaign declined to comment, but fact-checks debunked the rumors, pointing out the similarities to past conspiracy theories about political candidates using hidden electronic devices. Furthermore, the company that makes the NOVA H1 Audio Earrings confirmed that the earrings Harris wore in the debate were not their audio earrings.

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Finding 6: Sources of information and devices
Blue-state kids are more likely to get their news from their families and mainstream sources, like TV news, and less likely to report using other sources, though a few reported seeing political ads while playing games like Roblox and Minecraft. In contrast, red-state kids report using more diverse sources; in addition to family members and television, many of these kids are also using YouTube, TikTok and the internet for news. Perhaps related, blue-state kids are more likely to have tablets and red-state kids are more likely to have smartphones.

- At the end of the September interview, we asked participants where they get most of their information about the presidents and the elections from, generally, and what devices they own.
    - The blue-state kids were most likely to get their news from mainstream sources like their family members and television, though some kids mentioned seeing political ads while playing games like Roblox and Minecraft. Red-state kids were more diverse in their sources of news with large numbers of kids getting their news from YouTube, TikTok, and news apps in addition to family members and television.

Source	Blue State	Red State
Parents/Family	68%	60%
TV News	63.6%	63%
News Apps	9%	13%
YouTube	9%	60%
TikTok	0%	30%
Google/Internet	0%	16%
Ads in Games	14%	0%

    - The blue-state kids were more likely to have tablets than smartphones and the red-state kids were more likely to have smartphones than tablets.
        - **Smartphones:** 63% of red-state kids have smartphones compared with 38% of blue-state kids.
        - **Tablets:** 76% of blue-state kids have tablets compared to 47% of red-state kids. Note that 20% of red-state kids said that they used to have a tablet, but it is broken now.

Devices	Blue State	Red State
Smartphone Only	9%	36.6%
Tablet Only	40%	20%
Smartphone & Tablet	31%	26.6%
Neither	18%	16%

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Definitions:

Ideological Polarization: the divergence of political opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and stances of political adversaries.

Affective Polarization: the extent to which people like their political allies and dislike their political opponents.

Democrat-leaning Kids: participants who had parents or guardians who stated that they support Joe Biden, prior to his exit from the race, and/or said that they wanted Joe Biden (1st interviews) or Kamala Harris (2nd interviews) to win the 2024 election.

Republican-leaning Kids: participants who had parents or guardians who stated that they support Donald Trump and/or said that they want Donald Trump to win the 2024 election.

Misunderstanding: a belief that is incorrect. In the scholarly literature, this is often referred to as a misconception or a misbelief. People may hold misunderstandings for a variety of reasons including exposure to misinformation.

Misinformation: false or inaccurate information that is spread, regardless of whether there is an intent to deceive.

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