



The 2026 Teen Financial Readiness Report

Commissioned by



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A Word from Joshua S. Marcus

Founder of Jazmarc Services

Helping teenagers become financially confident doesn't happen through a single lesson or conversation. It happens over years of everyday moments, from talking about saving for a purchase to opening a first bank account or understanding why protecting your financial future matters. Together, these experiences lay the foundation for decisions young adults will make for decades to come.

That belief inspired us to continue our partnership with Wired Research for the third consecutive year to understand how families are preparing teenagers for financial independence. This year, we took the research one step further by including full-time college students, giving us a first-hand look at how financial confidence evolves once young adults begin managing money more independently.

The encouraging news is that parents remain deeply committed to financial education. Nearly all believe it is their responsibility to teach their teenagers how to manage money, and almost every parent hopes their children will achieve even greater financial success than they have themselves.

At the same time, this year's findings remind us that financial readiness isn't something achieved before high school graduation. It develops through experience and continued learning. While many young people have a strong foundation in everyday financial skills, topics like investing, insurance, taxes and planning for the unexpected continue to present opportunities for growth, even into the college years.

The goal of this report isn't to suggest parents or students are falling short. It's to better understand how financial confidence develops and where families can help young people continue building the practical skills they'll carry into adulthood.

We hope this year's findings encourage families to keep the conversation going. While financial decisions become more complex over time, the foundation built at home can shape confidence for years to come.

Josh Marcus
Founder
Jazmarc Services



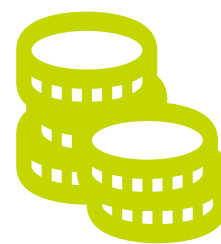
Financial Readiness Starts at Home

Preparing a teenager for adulthood has never been just about earning good grades or choosing the right college. Today's parents recognize that financial confidence is an essential part of preparing young people for life beyond high school and they see money management as a life skill that belongs alongside more traditional measures of readiness.

Three years into this research, that commitment remains unmistakable. Nearly every parent (97%) believes it is their responsibility to teach their teenager about managing money, while the same share (97%) hope their teen will ultimately enjoy greater financial success than they have experienced themselves.

Those findings remain remarkably consistent with last year, suggesting that financial education is not a passing concern for families but an established part of how parents think about preparing their children for adulthood.

That responsibility also extends beyond teaching the mechanics of money. Nearly all parents (96%) believe one of the greatest gifts they can give their teenager is the ability to make smart financial decisions and 97% say they actively try to do everything they can to set their teen up for success in life. Parents are not waiting for financial independence to begin before thinking about these issues. They see the home as the place where that foundation should start.

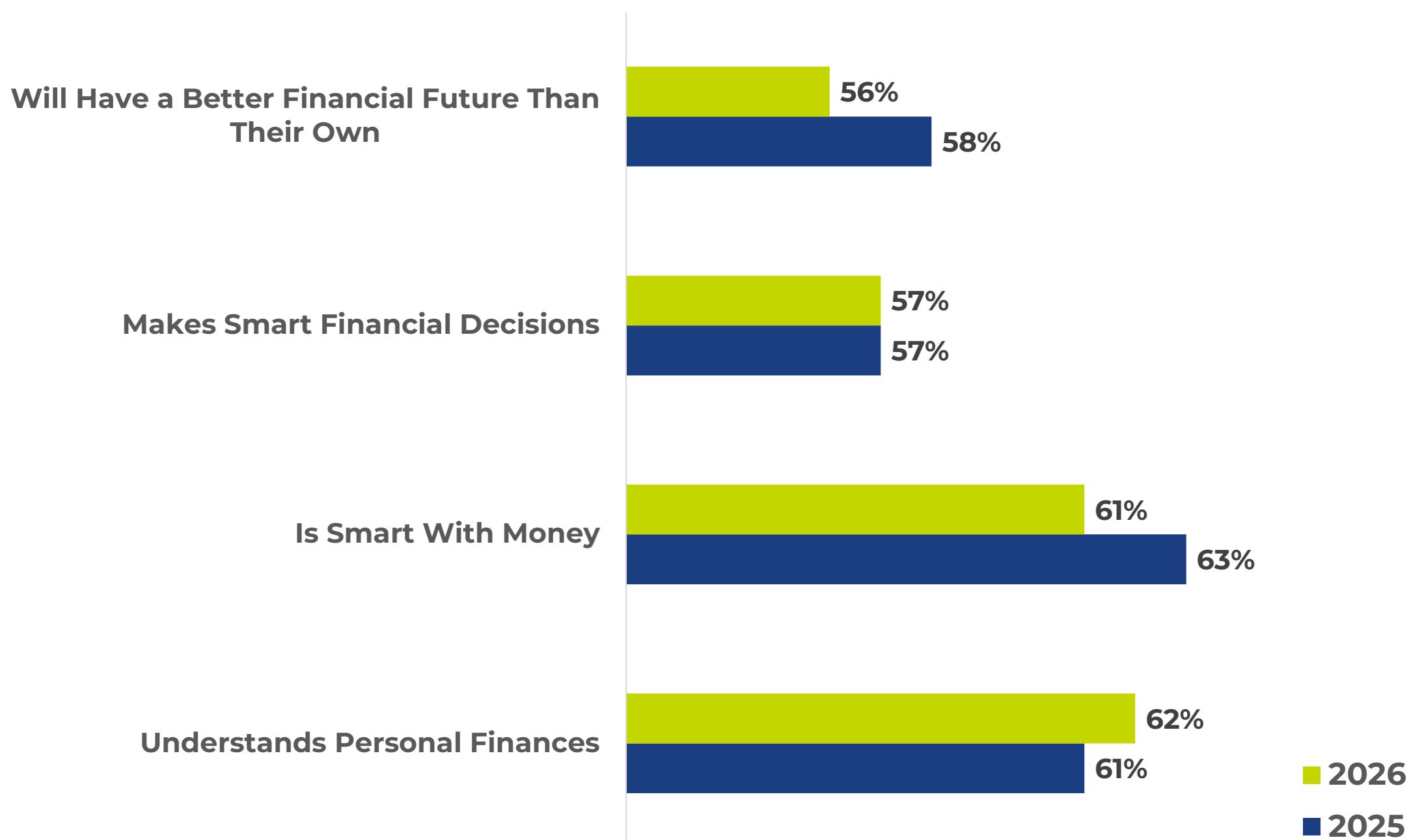


97% of parents believe it is their responsibility to teach their teens about managing their finances

Parents Still See Room to Grow

Parents may be deeply committed to preparing their teenagers for adulthood, but commitment does not automatically translate into confidence. When parents evaluate how ready their own teen is to manage money independently, many still see a meaningful gap between the financial future they want for their child and where that child is today.

Parents Are NOT Extremely Confident That Their Teen...



Compared to last year's findings, the broader story remains largely unchanged. Parents continue to recognize the importance of financial literacy, but many still believe there is significant work to do before their teenagers are ready to confidently navigate adulthood on their own.

This becomes even clearer when parents step back and assess preparedness overall. Just 7% believe their teen is completely financially prepared for adulthood. At the same time, nearly 7 in 10 (68%) are not extremely confident they have taught their teenager everything they need to know about managing money.

These findings reveal a distinctly parental tension: families take financial education seriously, yet most do not believe the job is finished. Parents appear to understand that wanting a teenager to succeed financially and feeling certain they are ready to do so are two very different things.

That gap between aspiration and assurance sets up the next question: how do teenagers evaluate their own financial readiness when they look at the skills they will soon need to use independently?

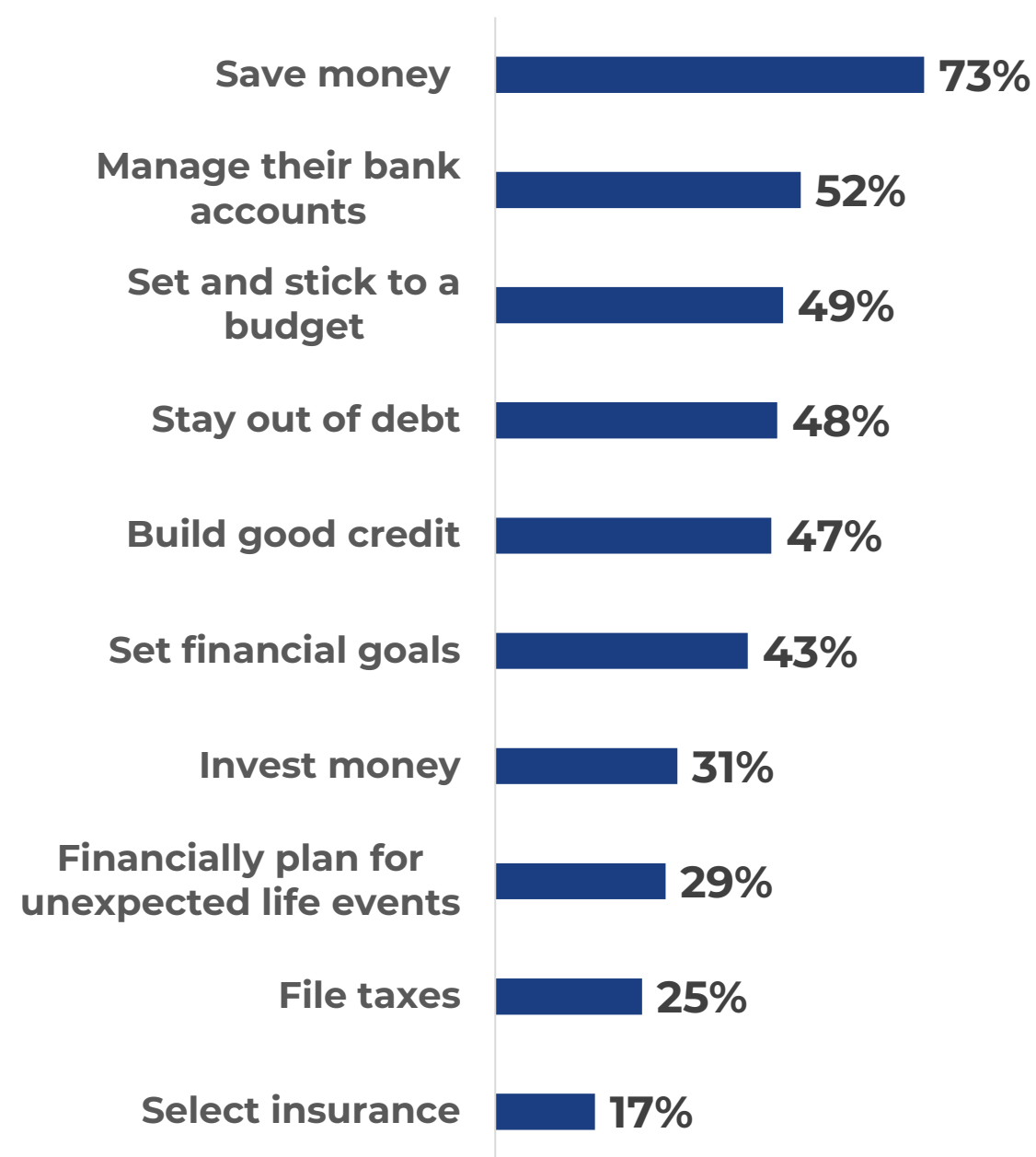
If they had to rate their teen's financial preparedness, only 7% of parents think their teen is extremely prepared.



Teens Are Building Confidence But Not Yet Mastery

Teenagers are more likely to see themselves as works in progress than financial experts. Many believe they are on the right path and already feel capable of handling basic money decisions, but their confidence becomes far less certain as the skills in question grow more complex.

Nearly half (45%) of teens rate themselves between an 8 and a 10 for overall financial preparedness. And when asked about the financial responsibilities they'd be completely confident doing when needed, their strongest confidence centers on everyday fundamentals, such as knowing how to save money (73%). However, teen confidence begins to decline as financial decisions become more complex:



The divide is revealing. Teens are beginning adulthood with a stronger sense of how to handle money in the here and now than how to plan for financial decisions that may feel farther away. Saving and day-to-day money management are more familiar; investing, taxes, insurance and preparing for the unexpected remain much less certain territory.

That does not mean teens lack financial confidence. Rather, their confidence appears highly dependent on the task. The closer a financial skill is to something they can already practice, the more capable they tend to feel. The more specialized or future-focused the decision becomes, the more room there is to learn.

The Conversations That Matter Most

Parents overwhelmingly recognize the value of talking to their teenagers about money. Two in 3 (65%) believe it is extremely important to discuss managing finances with their teen and nearly as many (60%) place the same level of importance on helping them protect their financial future. The question is not whether parents want these conversations to happen, but which conversations are actually making it to the kitchen table. Nearly all (96%) parents report talking to their teens about finances and saving clearly leads the discussion as 4 in 5 (80%) of them have talked about the importance of saving money, making it the most addressed financial topic by a wide margin.

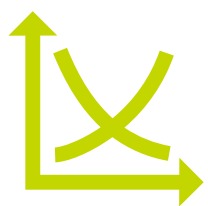
After saving, the conversation becomes less consistent. Among those parents who have discussed finances, more than half have spoken with their teen about building good credit (56%), staying out of debt (56%), setting and sticking to a budget (55%) and managing a bank account (52%). These are practical topics many teens are likely to encounter early as they begin managing money more independently. Yet more specialized financial topics like setting achievable financial goals (46%) receive substantially less attention:



40% have discussed financially planning for unexpected life events



23% have discussed filing taxes



38% have discussed investing



18% have discussed selecting insurance to protect their financial future

The pattern points to a clear conversation gap. Families are most likely to talk about the financial behaviors that feel immediate and familiar, while topics that are more complex or farther in the future are easier to postpone. Yet those are precisely the areas that can become consequential quickly once young people begin earning, borrowing, paying taxes or taking responsibility for their own protection.

Rather than suggesting parents are having the wrong conversations, the findings highlight an opportunity to widen them. The strong emphasis on saving provides a natural entry point for moving into credit, debt, planning and the less familiar decisions that follow as financial independence grows.

When Financial Decisions Become Real

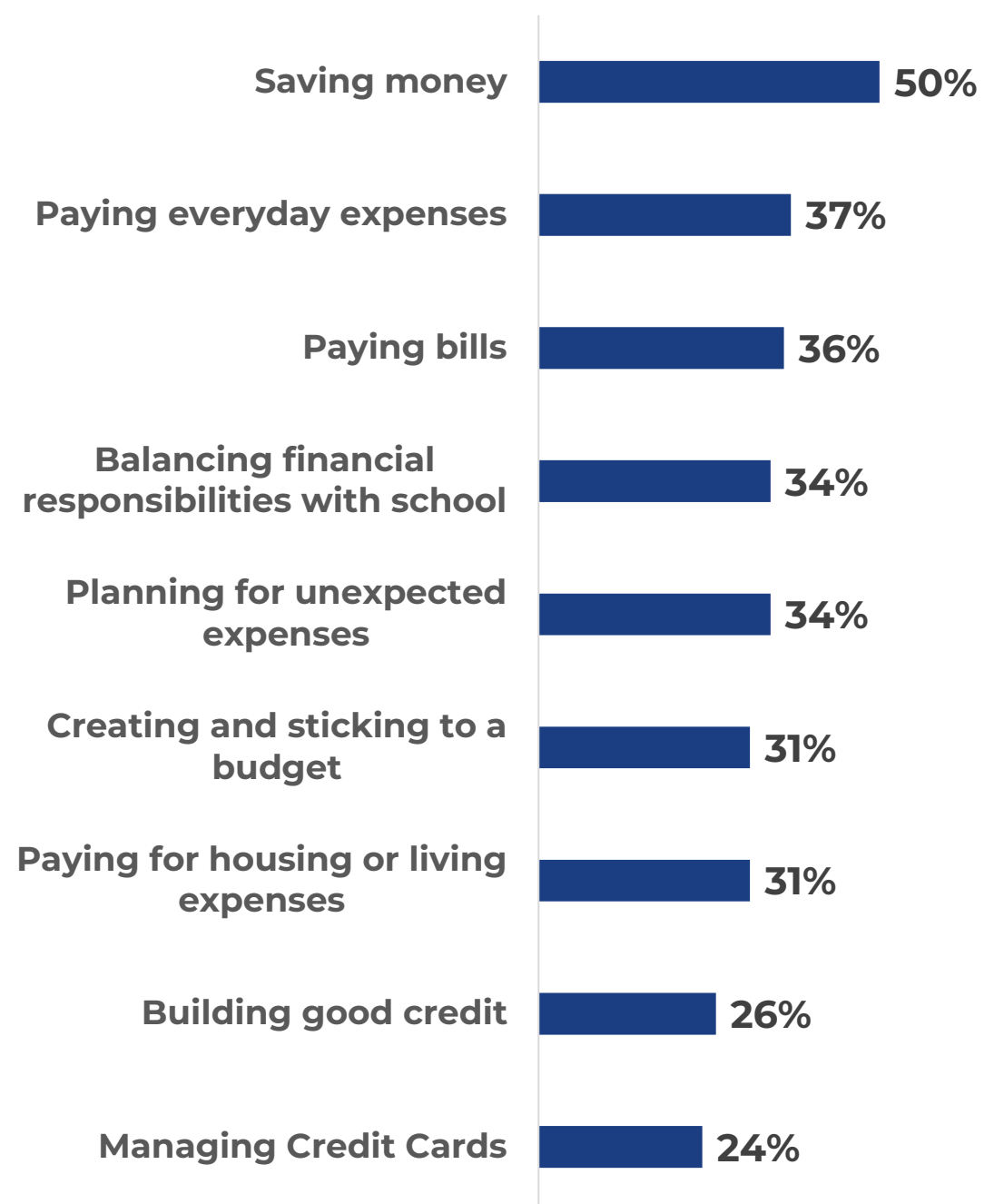
College offers a first-hand look at what happens when financial education moves from something young people have heard about to something they increasingly have to practice. For the first time this year, the research included full-time college students, creating a window into how preparedness changes after high school as money decisions become more personal and immediate.

Students do report some progress. Their average financial preparedness rating rises from 5.3 out of 10 when they look back on high school graduation to 5.8 today. But the shift is gradual rather than dramatic: only 21% currently rate themselves an 8–10. When it comes to their financial experience since starting college, 37% of students say most of what they know today about managing money came from their parents. However, 14% admit they are still figuring out how to manage their finances as they go.

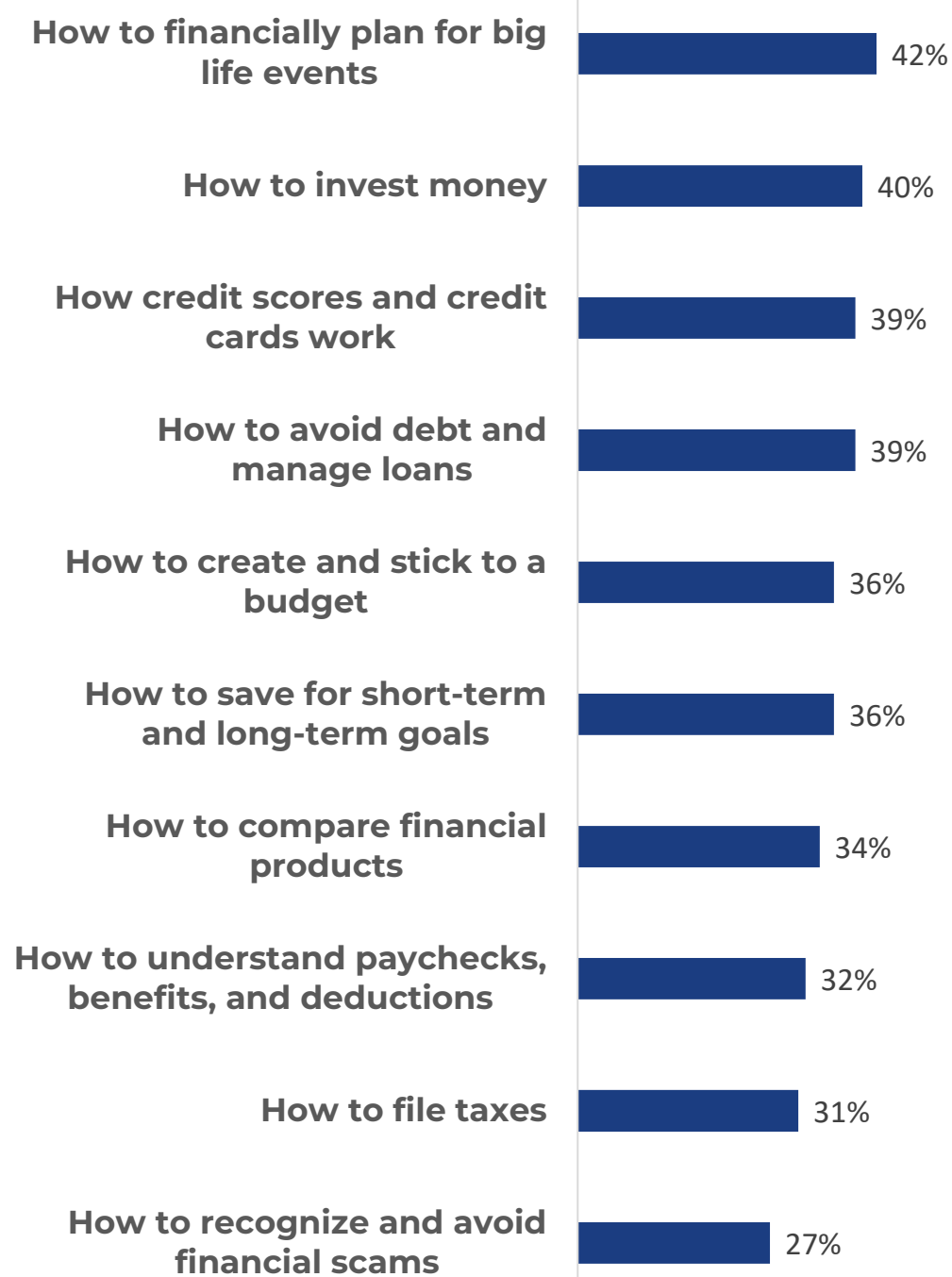


That learning is happening through real responsibility. Nearly 2 in 3 (64%) manage saving money on their own, 52% manage their own bank accounts and 45% are responsible for staying out of debt. Fewer currently manage more complex areas such as investing (32%), filing taxes (27%) or understanding the insurance coverage they need (23%). Real-world responsibility also exposes where the transition is harder than expected:

Things More Difficult Than Expected Since Starting College



Those experiences are creating new demand for knowledge. Nearly every college student (98%) wishes they had learned more about at least one financial topic before starting college:



Their sources of learning are evolving, too: 46% say social media is one of the places where they have learned the most about managing money, right alongside parents or guardians (44%).

College therefore adds an important dimension to the story. Financial preparedness does not simply rise in a straight line with age. Experience can build confidence, but it also reveals new gaps. The move toward independence turns financial literacy from a set of concepts into a series of decisions and each new decision creates another opportunity to learn.

Nearly **half** of college students say **social media** is one of the places where they've **learned the most about managing money.**



Closing Thoughts

For the third consecutive year, one message remains clear: parents are deeply invested in helping their teenagers build successful financial futures. They see financial literacy as an important part of preparing their children for adulthood and are already creating a strong foundation at home.

This year's expanded research shows what happens as that foundation meets real life. Teenagers begin with confidence in many of the financial basics, even as more complex decisions remain unfamiliar. Parents recognize there is still more to teach. And once young adults reach college, greater independence brings both new capability and new questions.

That progression may be the most useful way to think about financial readiness. It is not a finish line young people are expected to cross before graduation. It is a process in which knowledge becomes practice, practice becomes experience and experience reveals what needs to be learned next.

Financial education, then, is not about preparing someone to know every answer before they leave home. It is about giving them a foundation strong enough to keep building on. The conversations that begin during the teen years can continue to evolve alongside the financial decisions young adults face, helping confidence grow with experience over time.



A premier insurance planning brokerage.

For more than two decades, Jazmarc Services has helped individuals, families and financial professionals navigate important financial protection decisions with greater clarity and confidence. As a premier insurance planning brokerage, the firm develops customized strategies designed to help clients protect their income, their families and their financial futures.

Jazmarc Services works directly with individuals and families while also providing back-office expertise and support to insurance professionals across the country. With an emphasis on education and personalized guidance, the firm helps make complex financial protection strategies easier to understand and put into action.

At the heart of Jazmarc Services is a belief that greater financial confidence starts with greater financial understanding. That commitment extends beyond the solutions it provides to the conversations it helps create, including original research exploring how Americans think about, prepare for and navigate important financial decisions.

To learn more about Jazmarc Services or start a conversation, visit www.jazmarc.com.



About the Research

The Jazmarc Services Teen Financial Readiness Report was created using research designed and conducted by Wired Research. The first survey reached 1,000 parents of teens ages 14-18 and their respective teens and was conducted online in April 2026. The second survey reached 1,000 full-time college students enrolled in the 2026-2027 academic year and was conducted online in August 2026.

Each study has a margin of error of +/- 3.1%. Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results.

In these particular studies, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percent from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all personas in the universe represented by the sample. The margin of error for any subgroups will be slightly higher.

About Wired Research

Wired Research is a full-service market research firm that transforms human insights into compelling stories that move brands forward. Specializing in custom quantitative research and survey-driven thought leadership, Wired Research helps organizations uncover the perspectives, behaviors and cultural shifts that matter most to their audiences, then turns those findings into insights built to inform strategy and spark conversation. From research design through storytelling, Wired Research brings a journalistic lens to data, helping brands discover the story within the numbers and activate it across PR, marketing and beyond. For more information about Wired Research, please visit www.wiredresearch.com

