

Pulse of China

March 2024

MOTHER AND BABY CARE

WHAT DO CONSUMERS READ
AND RESEARCH AROUND
MATERNITY,
INFANTS AND RELATED TOPICS?



REGULAR FEATURES

What were the most searched and viewed topics in the month of February in China?

Your Monthly update on what Chinese consumers are thinking, feeling and exploring

Brought to you by **Searchlight Management Consulting**
Data provided by **Xiaohongshu (小红书)**

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小红书

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Mother and baby care – pregnancy, maternity, infant nutrition, development and related topics.

What do consumers want to know about the most?

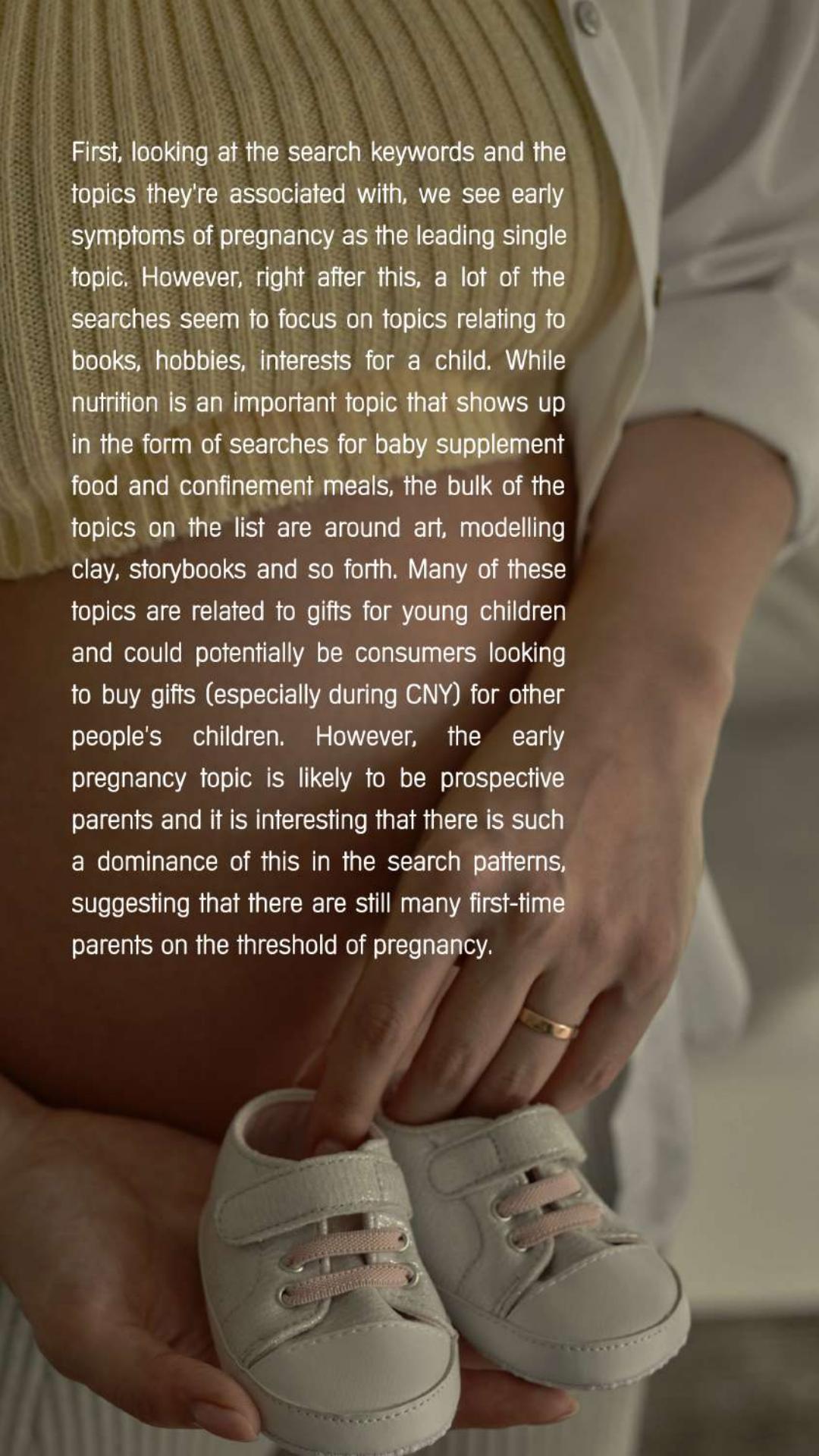
What does it tell us about the opportunities in this category?

Mothers with babies are an important audience for marketers, as well as a rapidly growing community on Xiaohongshu. 48 million users tagged themselves with the "Mom and baby" label in 2021, which grew to 60 million in 2022 and 88 million by end 2023 – making this a very sizable base of consumers for the platform.

As you might expect, a topic as broad as "mother and baby" has several different specific product categories (and related keywords in it). Broadly what our friends at Xiaohongshu tracked for this report covers keywords related to nursing tools, infant and child skin care, infant and child clothing and shoes, maternal related, maternal and infant travel, maternal and infant milk powder, maternal and infant home bedding, maternal and infant paper product cleaning, maternal and infant supplementary snacks and toys. That tends to fall into roughly 3 groups:

1. Topics related to infant nutrition and feeding
2. Topics related to maternity, mother and child products for nutrition, cleaning, bedding and so on
3. Topics relating to toys, clothing and so forth for children

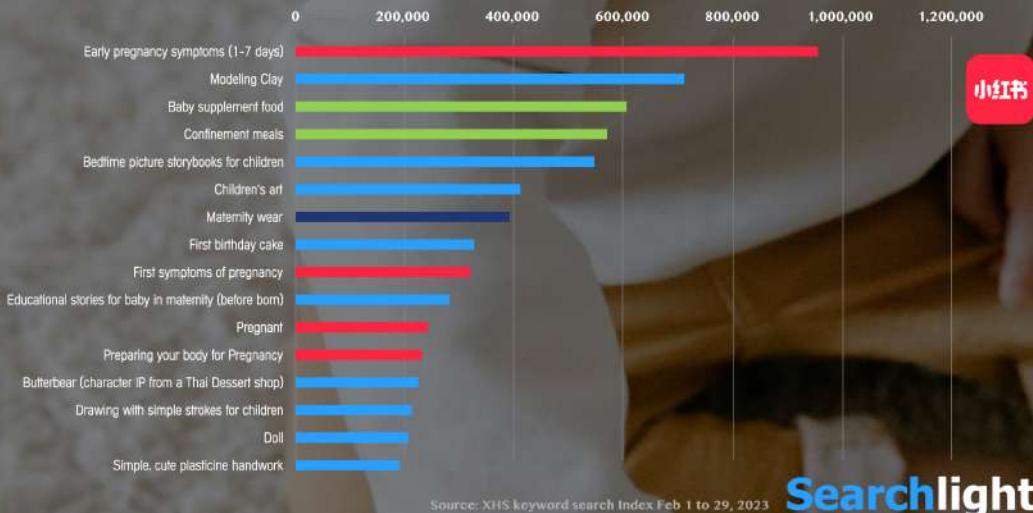
(Note on Data: For this analysis we use Xiaohongshu Search Index, Read index and Post Index data that indicates trends across all parts of the Xiaohongshu site and platform. Data is for the month of Feb 2024).

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a pair of small, light-colored (possibly white or cream) baby sneakers. The sneakers have pink elastic straps with silver buckles. The person's hands are visible, with one hand gripping the toe area and the other supporting the heel. A gold ring is visible on the person's left hand. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

First, looking at the search keywords and the topics they're associated with, we see early symptoms of pregnancy as the leading single topic. However, right after this, a lot of the searches seem to focus on topics relating to books, hobbies, interests for a child. While nutrition is an important topic that shows up in the form of searches for baby supplement food and confinement meals, the bulk of the topics on the list are around art, modelling clay, storybooks and so forth. Many of these topics are related to gifts for young children and could potentially be consumers looking to buy gifts (especially during CNY) for other people's children. However, the early pregnancy topic is likely to be prospective parents and it is interesting that there is such a dominance of this in the search patterns, suggesting that there are still many first-time parents on the threshold of pregnancy.

1. While “early pregnancy symptoms” is the single topic that dominates, many of the top 20 topics related to books, toys, art and hobby related items for children

Most searches focused around entertaining / enriching a child's life with books, hobbies and interests. Early pregnancy signs top the list of individual keywords



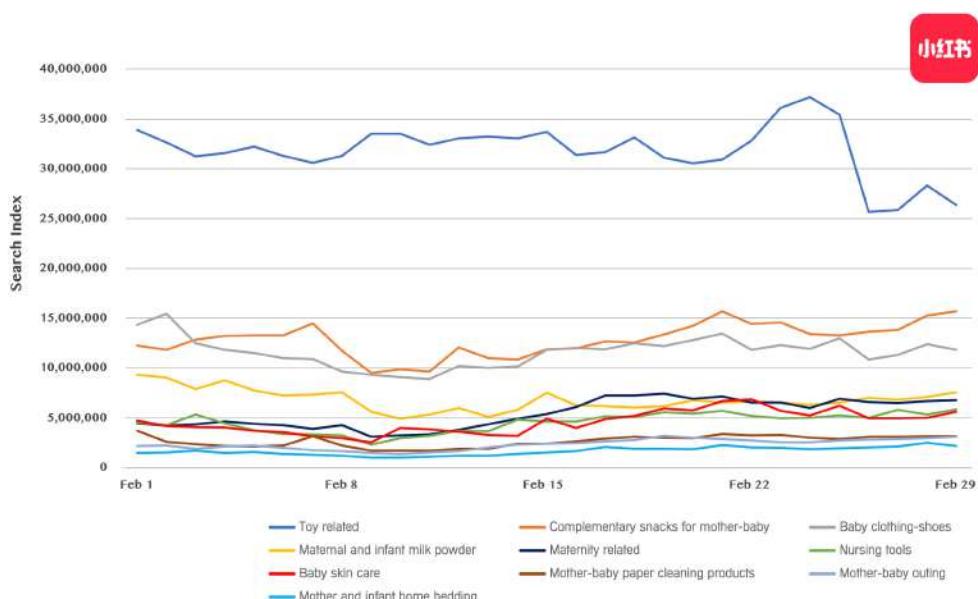
Source: XHS keyword search Index Feb 1 to 29, 2023

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When we examine reading behavior across the month it is consistent with what we see in the keyword search data. Toy related posts are the most read across the month, suggesting that a large part of the content and market relating to children is around the toys they're given to play with. Again, this could be as much driven by potential gift-givers as by the parents of the children in question. There is also a group of topics around infant nutrition, skin-care and nursing as well as maternity related topics that form the bulk of the post reading behavior of consumers in this context, but the fact that it's much lower down suggests that consumers are not relying on user generated content for knowledge about these areas. Presumably these are areas where consumers seek specialist advice from doctors rather than look for the experiences and wisdom of fellow-consumers.

2. Posts relating to toys top the list of posts read across the month – dominating other groups of topics by a significant margin

Toy related posts are read the most. Posts related to infant related nutrition, skin-care, nursing along with maternity related topics come far behind. Reading behavior steady across the month



Source: XHS product keyword posts read Index Feb 1 to Feb 29, 2024

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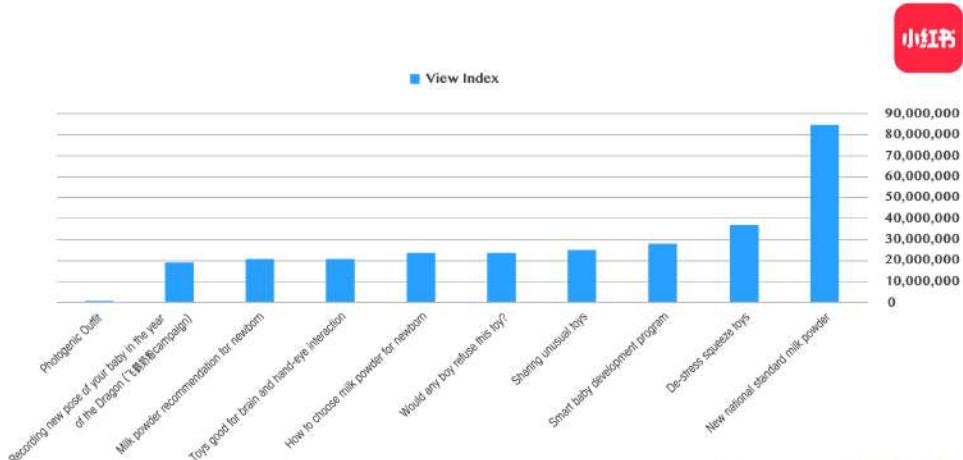
3. Looking at individual topics for posts rather than keyword associated reading, we find toys still dominate the reading, although nutrition as a single topic tops the list



Image Source : www.classicntoys.com

Again, this is probably because topics around nutrition, child development and so forth are where parents look for expert advice rather than what other consumers are saying. Toys do dominate the UGC based reading that they follow, which suggests a significant opportunity for brands in this broad category. Clearly, however, toys are seen in several different roles relating both to their ability to help children develop, as well as, somewhat disturbingly, dealing with stress. One does hope that children are not subjected to so much stress that we need special de-stressing toys to help them deal with it.

Milk powder as a single topic dominates. However, top 10 topics are mostly related to toys - de - stressing toys, unusual toys, toys for boys and development stimulating toys.



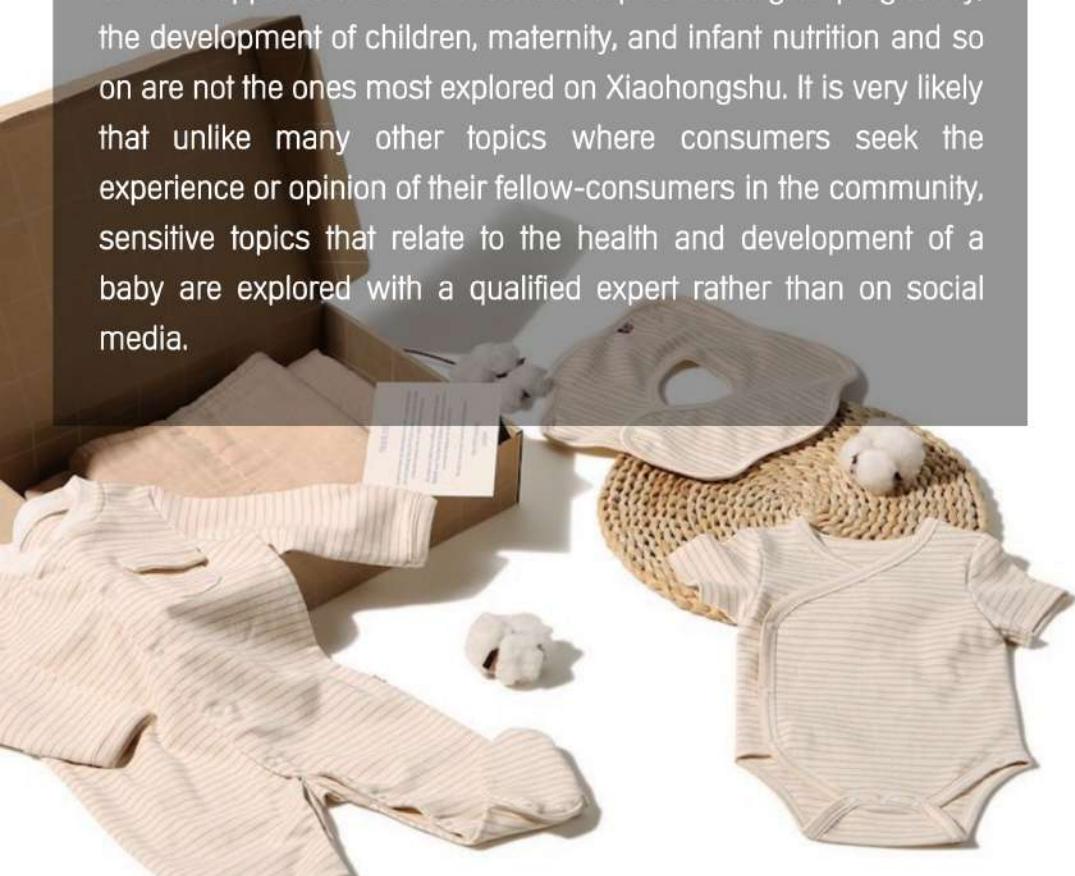
Source: XHS top 10 mother-baby related topics – by post viewing index from Feb 1 to 29, 2024

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Summary

One consistent trend across search, keyword based reads and topic based reads is that toys dominate most of what consumers are looking for on Xiaohongshu. Clearly, toys occupy various areas of interest – from being purely a way to entertain a child to being ways to stimulate their mind, physical coordination or interest in a particular hobby. Also, toys are something that not just the parents of a child would explore, but also extended family or friends since they form popular gifts. It is less likely that someone outside immediate family would gift valuable but purely functional gifts like diapers, maternity wear, or infant food, or instance.

While it appears that more serious topics relating to pregnancy, the development of children, maternity, and infant nutrition and so on are not the ones most explored on Xiaohongshu. It is very likely that unlike many other topics where consumers seek the experience or opinion of their fellow-consumers in the community, sensitive topics that relate to the health and development of a baby are explored with a qualified expert rather than on social media.





XIAOHONGSHU **HOT TOPICS** **of THE MONTH**

Moving away from the specific category-related behaviors, when we look at the hot topics of February 2024 we find the Xiaohongshu community has a wide variety of interests that they're following.

Chinese New Year was on the 10th of February this year, late enough that a lot of the hot topics for the month were still related to CNY.

Preparing for examinations and study related tips were another big area of interest on the platform. There is, specifically, an exam that students who went into a vocational study stream can write to requalify for a more academic stream in college and there was significant interest in a guide for acing this examination.

There are, of course, some evergreen, perennial topics which keep coming up regularly. We saw a return of seasonal home décor, no doubt related to the change of seasons from winter to spring. Additionally, the “10 minute make-up routine at 8 in the morning before leaving for work” theme returned to our list of hot topics.

Topic	Content Description	Views	Links to The Topics
How did your pets celebrate CNY?	Post Interesting photos of your pets to win CNY gifts for them	580 million	Article Link
CNY vlog party	Video posts related to life during CNY	440 million	Article Link
Illustrated guide to landing a bachelor's degree	Sharing tips and experiences on exam preparation for vocational school students keen on transferring to university for an academic degree	380 million	Article Link
Let spring move into your home	Create your own spring celebrations and rituals and let spring bring colour into your life at home	370 million	Article Link
Our family CNY is unique	Recording and sharing the CNY moments at your home	340 million	Article Link
Makeup at 8 for going to work	Fast make-up with exquisite effect in 10 minutes before heading off to office at 8 every morning.	330 million	Article Link
The Gamer's CNY celebration	What CNY decoration or activities were you involved in as a gamer?	160 million	Article Link
Show my handiwork	An opportunity to share your skills with arts, crafts and calligraphy	140 million	Article Link
Magical study methods	Collecting learning tips that deliver better results with less effort	70 million	Article Link

the platform, the users, and the consumers

Xiaohongshu is China's leading lifestyle platform that inspires people to discover and connect with a range of diverse lifestyles. As of the end of 2023, Xiaohongshu has attracted over 300 million monthly active users sharing content about their daily lives on the platform. On Xiaohongshu, consumers can search, read and share authentic content about all kinds of product categories and lifestyle related experiences and services. On Xiaohongshu, 90% of content on the platform are UGC (user-generated content) coming from ordinary users.

Xiaohongshu has truly become the trusted source where ordinary people turn for making consumption decisions. Its average number of searches daily has exceeded 300 million. Xiaohongshu's users engage through authentic, interesting and useful content, building a relationship based on trust. They share, discuss and are constantly "seeding recommendations" about their favorite products and lifestyle trends. 70% of users are from the post-90s generation, and 50% of users come from first-and second-tier cities in China, representing strong spending power. Consumers can directly engage with a feed based on topics they are interested in, follow certain specific content creators or influencers, or search for content on specific topics and subtopics.

Marketers can look at broad sweep statistics to get a sense of what's hot in their category, which brands / segments / consumer needs and questions are most current. They can examine what content consumers are engaging with, separate brand content from UGC, and see consumer trends expressed in posts, content views, and searches.

If you want to know more about Xiaohongshu, come and explore our consumer experience for yourselves via the web on

<https://www.xiaohongshu.com>



ABOUT
XIAOHONGSHU



ABOUT US

Searchlight

Set up in early 2020, Searchlight is a boutique management consulting firm headquartered in Shanghai.

Our typical scope of work covers:

- a. Market and consumer analysis to identify opportunities
- b. Defining business strategy and business model to leverage these opportunities
- c. Brand architecture, proposition and positioning to deliver the strategy

Our team of 14 associates covers a wide range of specialist areas – marketing, advertising, media, content marketing, brand management, HR, CRM, sales management, technology, and business management. Each of us has at least 20 years of work experience, a large part of that in China.

We coach and assist client teams to make quality decisions for the business. We also assist in the design of organizational processes and financial models, especially building internal and external capabilities for strategy implementation.

We've worked with both international and local brands, startups and public listed companies - J&J, Hollister Medical and Pandora as well as Sunner Foods (a listed company that leads the food processing category with a 40-year history) and startups like Little Ondine, LeBunna and Unibrown coffee. For more about us visit

www.searchlightchina.com

If you want to convert information into usable insights and strategy, contact us:

enquiries@searchlightchina.com