

2017 Kid & Family Trends

A Year of Spinning, Sliming, Streaming, Shipping and Snapping



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Overview & Methods

Welcome to the **2017 KID & FAMILY TRENDS REPORT**, a comprehensive look at the macro- and micro-trends driven by and impacting U.S. kids and their families.

The report—published by **SMARTY PANTS**® youth and family research firm—is derived from national news, case studies, primary qualitative research, and quantitative findings from the 2017 **BRAND LOVE**® study.

BRAND LOVE® is a proprietary study of the **lifestyles** and **behaviors** of kids and tweens ages 6-12. The study also covers their **awareness**, **affinity**, **perceptions** and **usage** of hundreds of family-facing brands. Parents of 6 to 12-year-olds evaluate the same brands, providing a holistic look at U.S. families with children.

The 2017 wave of the annual study—its 9th—was

fielded online with a nationally-representative sample of **over 8,200 kids and tweens ages 6 to 12 and their parents**. Data collection took place in June and July in order to capture both school year and summer learning.

Kids and parents evaluated a total of **347 brands** across **20 categories**. Each participant assessed up to 15 brands, providing both closed and open-ended responses.

- 347 brands
- 20 categories
- 8,292 kids & tweens ages 6-12
- 8,292 parents of 6 to 12-year-olds
- 15 brands per respondent
- More than 24,000 verbatims

Closed-ended responses included rating each brand on **30 attributes & descriptors**:

- I can make it my own/personalize it (*Customization*)
- Active/physical
- Good for me/healthy/safe
- A good value
- I can buy it with my own \$ (*Affordable*)
- Made well/good quality (*High-Quality*)
- Been around a long time (*Heritage*)
- Has great varieties/options
- Easy to use/do/make
- Has great commercials/advertisements
- Has a great website
- Has a great app
- Does good things for the environment/world
- Convenient/portable
- Exciting/adventurous
- Tastes great
- For whole family (*All-Family*)
- For kids my age
- For kids younger than me
- For kids older than me
- Good for connecting with others (*Social*)
- My mom/dad let me have/use it (*Allowed*)
- Challenges/educates me
- Gives me rewards/rewards me
- Innovative/always has new things
- Fun
- Different/unique
- Cool/trendy
- Looks good/good design
- Hard to get/find (*Elusive*)

Note that "me" is replaced with "my child" for parents

An analysis of these attributes leads to a deeper understanding of how brands perform and categories behave.

Kids and tweens also rated how **popular** they perceive a brand to be. The results aid in mapping each brand's momentum.



Key metrics

Two proprietary measures are referenced throughout the report:

K **KIDFINITY** is an aggregate measure of kids' brand **awareness**, **love** and **popularity** perceptions. Composite scores range from 0 to 1000, with most brands scoring between 400 and 900 points.

P **PARENTFINITY** is a similar, independent composite metric that factors in parents' brand **awareness** and **love**. Scores also range from 0 to 1000.

Both measures have a .86+ correlation to current and future usage, making them critical indicators of brand success.

Brands can be ranked based on their **KIDFINITY** and **PARENTFINITY** scores. Note that absolute scores are a truer indicator of YOY brand performance, since rankings can be impacted by the number of brands and the actual brands included in the study each year.



All brands referenced in report in **bold blue** are part of the 2017 **BRAND LOVE®** study.



2017

The Big Picture

If you ask kids and parents to write the headlines for 2017, they might offer funny captions like:

"2017: Put the Fidget Spinners DOWN"

"2017: I Better Not Find that Slime on the..."

"2017: 'More YouTube and Netflix, please!'"

"2017: I'm with Wonder Woman"

Or perhaps, they'd begin to lament a year where our nation—but not families—has been more divided than ever.

Indeed, 2017 has been a year of great change and big movements. A new president is now in office. Women's narratives and journeys are getting the spotlight. **Amazon** has officially changed the face of the retail landscape as well as our shopping expectations. **Netflix** has done the same for entertainment. And **YouTube** continues to invite users into

each other's worlds. Symbols are dominating everyday language. Kids are #shipping at an earlier age (relationship-ing, that is). And songs like "Despacito"—the summer anthem of the year—are taking over families' cars and tablets.

In many ways, **2017 has also been a year of paradoxes.** News has been much more black and white, red and blue, us and them. At the same time, Americans are more connected than ever—digitally and emotionally.

While AI, VR, AR and MR have catapulted technology to a place families never knew they could go, they are also unplugging, reconnecting and enjoying the basics of face-to-face interactions. **It's the year of the future and the year of the past.**

Health has become a huge priority, and the

quest for whole, natural and pure has never been greater. One day **Panera's** CEO is challenging QSR CEOs to eat their own kids' meal and make a change. The next day tweens and parents are introduced to a colorful, unicorn Frappuccino...with much delight.

It's a lot to digest.

We're not just seeing this tug-of-war in the headlines. The findings from the **BRAND LOVE®** study bear these dualities as well. We've packaged the biggest ones here.

This year, **THE KID AND FAMILY TRENDS REPORT reviews 21 trends in the kid and family space.** As you read, take note of pervasive themes that continue to color the landscape of families with children ages 6-12, like:

- Parent-child convergence
- Empowerment
- Gender confluence
- Hyper-personalization
- Quantification
- Simplicity
- Connection
- Fascination

...and many more.

So, dive in. Take a look at what has changed in American kids' and families' lives over the past 12 months, and—perhaps more importantly—where these phenomena are taking the youth and family market in coming years.

Happy reading!



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Welcome To My YOUniverse

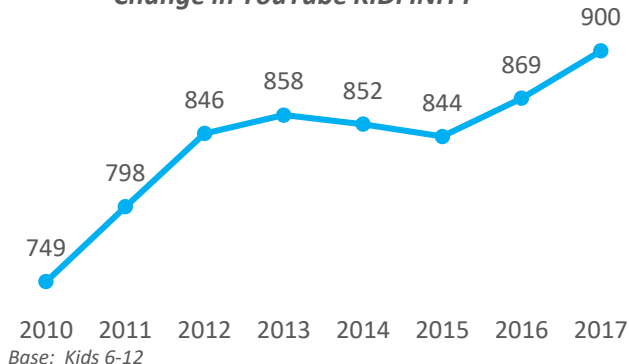


YouTube is the #1 kid brand in 2017

For the second year in a row, **YouTube** leads all 347 cross-category brands evaluated in the **BRAND LOVE®** study, solidifying its position as **the most powerful brand in kids' lives**.

The platform's ascent to the top is impressive, moving from a **KIDFINITY** score of 749 (and #86 ranking) in 2010 to the #1 brand that is disseminating trends, changing play patterns, and transforming the ways kids come of age.

Change in YouTube KIDFINITY

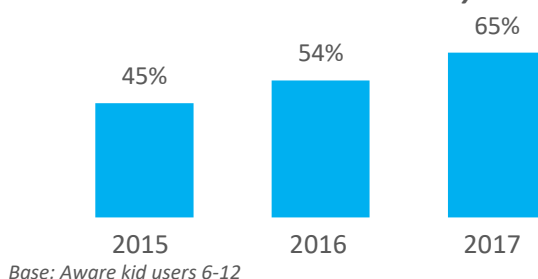


Usage is soaring

A whopping 96% of kids ages 6-12 are aware of **YouTube**, and 94% say they either *love* (71%) or *like* (24%) it! With awareness and love comes usage. In 2017, 90% of kids who know the brand say they use it, 83% of whom do so daily.

The frequency of **YouTube** engagement continues to rise. This year, 65% of kid users use the app/site several times a day—up 20 percentage points since 2015.

Change in Kid Usage of YouTube Several Times Per Day



YouTube has become kids' entertainment, inspiration, and information hub. The world is at their finger tips when they "YouTube it." From DIYs, to music videos, to life hacks, to family vlogs, **video is kids' medium of choice, and YouTube is the king of video.**

The brand wins for its short-form and UGC that spans all conceivable topics, and it's quickly becoming a major player in the long-form game.



YouTube KIDS is up and coming

Since its debut in 2015, **YouTube KIDS** has been a brand to watch. In 2017, it was added to the **BRAND LOVE®** study, shoring up an 800 **KIDFINITY** score and breaking into the Top 50 brands at #48 (and #20 among kids ages 6-8).

A full 85% of kids 6-12 are aware of the younger-skewing spin-off, but only 48% say they *love* it. An additional 33% *like* it. So it may not be surprising that **YouTube KIDS** usage is lower than **YouTube's**—at 61% (vs. 90%). Engagement is lower as well, with 71% of kid users saying they do so daily (vs. 83% for **YouTube**).

While not as popular as **YouTube** with 6 to 12-year-olds, the platform is **gaining traction with kids**. Over half (58%) of kids currently say it's popular, while 25% say it's becoming more so.



Parents saying yes

Part of the reason that kids are becoming more reliant on **YouTube** (and may bypass **YouTube KIDS**) is that parents are more likely to allow it. While 58% of kids said their parents let them watch **YouTube** in 2015; 74% now say the same. The reasons: more parents of 6-12s are Millennials (and digital natives themselves), the library of kid-friendly content on YouTube is exploding, parental controls have improved, and it's hard for parents to say no to something that kids love so much and find so indispensable.

"My Mom and Dad Let Me Watch/Use YouTube"



Base: Aware kids 6-12

YouTube delights moms and dads, too

Another big reason **YouTube** is winning with kids is that parents love it, too. Up 19 **PARENT-FINITY** points in 2017 to an 866, **YouTube is now the #10 brand of moms and dads**, topping iconic favorites like **Nike** and **Disney**.

More than 9 in 10 (94%) parents say they *love* or *like* **YouTube**, and an equal number are current users. Among parent users, 69% click or tap daily. A good share of that brand engagement likely occurs with their children; 43% of kids 6-12 say they *usually* watch **YouTube** with their parents or their whole family.



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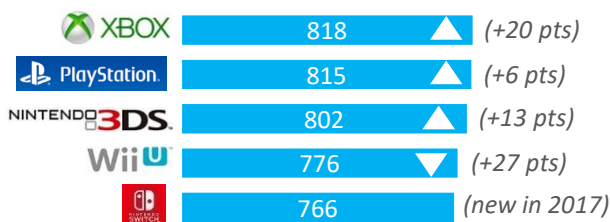
Flipping the Switch



Console makers remain resolute

For the past few years, gaming experts have opined about the future (or lack thereof) of console gaming. With the rise of mobile games, an explosion of voices predicted the death of the console. But while there have been minor peaks and valleys in console popularity over the years, **the most well-known consoles remain brand favorites of kids 6-12—and they're growing.**

2017 KIDFINITY for Select Gaming Platforms



Base: Kids 6-12

Consoles are alive and well today, but the major players have had to reinvent themselves to stay relevant in an era when gamers have more options than ever, and on a variety of devices.



Nintendo's new look & new life

Undoubtedly, the story of the year in the console world is the introduction of the **Nintendo Switch**. As seen by blockbuster sales figures and stock shortages, **Nintendo Switch's** new design represents a successful turnaround from the underwhelming **Wii U** and will likely have a big impact on the industry.

Nintendo Switch has blurred the distinction between console and mobile games—and given the number of kids who play both types of games, it may spur demand for more flexible console and game designs. As they did with the Wii in the past, Nintendo once again is jolting the industry with the addition of not just something “bigger and better,” but something new and disruptive.

Nintendo Switch is winning the hearts of kids: it already ranks among the Top 100 brands for kids this year—impressive since it was only released in March.





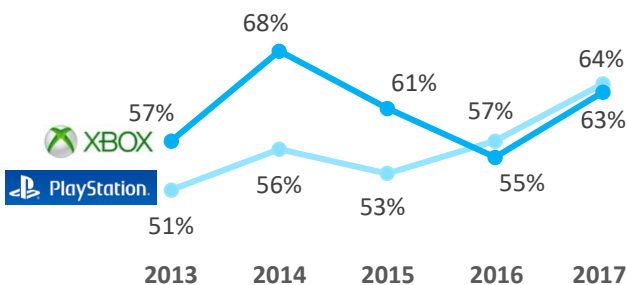
A new game plan evolves

From the powerhouse **PlayStation** and **Xbox** brands, there is a shift to a smartphone approach to introducing new products. While past consoles have been introduced in cycles of five years or more, Microsoft and Sony have picked up the pace. By the end of 2017, each will have released three new consoles in the past four years: Xbox One, One S, and One X for Microsoft; PlayStation 4, 4 Slim, and 4 Pro for Sony.

With each brand providing something for everyone—lower prices for budget-conscious gamers, powerful engines for hardcore players, or sleek design for those with a need for an aesthetic look—**PlayStation** and **Xbox** are establishing options that could help expand the current customer base.

Both companies are also placing a new emphasis on intra-brand compatibility—both backwards and forwards—opening up their historical game libraries to owners of newer consoles and building loyalty by expanding the lifespan of their gaming units.

Change in Kids' Current Usage of Select Consoles



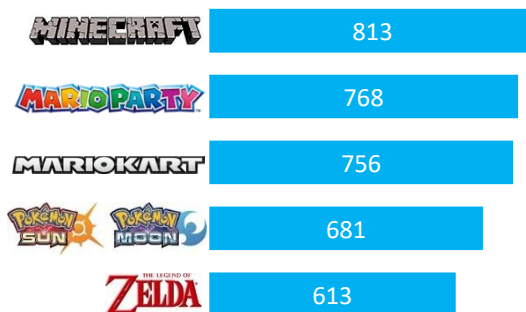
Base: Kids 6-12

A warm welcome for old favorites

It's not just the tried-and-true consoles that continue to garner attention from kids—**established game franchises are maintaining a strong position within their hearts as well.**

More than five years after launch, **Minecraft** continues to rise in **KIDFINITY** every year, and for the fourth year in a row is one of the Top 100 brands. Parents say that it's one game they don't feel guilty about letting their kids play, and it's one of a few franchises that wins with girls and boys alike.

2017 KIDFINITY for Established Game Franchises



Base: Kids 6-12

The legendary **Mario Kart** and **Mario Party** titles make a bold entry into the **KIDFINITY** rankings in 2017, both landing in the Top 100 brands. They are likely to stay there, given the launch of **Switch** and the fact that Millennial and Gen X parents share a love for Mario with their kids.

Game developers are wise to refresh and expand established gaming franchises. Because kids have so many options, it can be challenging to create game titles that stay in the spotlight for long. Apps are particularly vulnerable to this. They show the wildest swings in annual **KIDFINITY** change—from a 2016-17 jump of 68 points (for **Subway Surfers**), to an analogous drop of 88 points (for **Dumb Ways to Die**). Kids may fall in love fast, but they easily let go of IPs in which they've invested very little.

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Hungry for Fun

Sugar Factory



Is it Insta-worthy?

Whether checking out a friend's Snap-story or scrolling through **Instagram**, the recent craze of whimsical food fads is hard to miss. Gen X'ers and Millennials are obsessively documenting Insta-worthy dining experiences, and restaurants are capitalizing on the opportunity to make their food as unique (and photogenic) as possible. In fact, it's now normal for adults to visit a restaurant to order a specific item they've seen on social media—even if it's not always clear it will taste as good as it looks.

Kids, too, are flocking to food and beverage brands and dining experiences that offer fun and share-worthy moments. And their “feeds” are driving their desires and expectations.



Playing with your food

Families come from all over the world to visit places like 10Below in New York City, where they can watch Thai rolled ice-cream being poured in liquid form onto a freezing griddle before it is scraped into cute roll-ups and covered in toppings. **Kids also love the “wow” factor of hotspots like Creamistry**, where “creamologists” use liquid nitrogen to hand-craft ice-cream—with great visual effect.



Kids love ordering rainbow sliders at Sugar Factory and will wait in line for hours at DŌ for cookie dough served with toppings in cones.

Why choose an ordinary treat when there are social media-worthy choices that provide a unique experience?



Beyond the play structure

It's not just the unique, eye-catching treats that are gaining love and going viral; eateries that offer an experience beyond the taste buds are feeling the love, too. And families are seeking them out together.

While most QSRs focus primarily on speed, convenience, and value, **Chick-fil-A** differentiates itself by providing an experience to its customers. In addition to training employees to take customer service to a different level, the chain has created events across the country to cater to kids and parents.

Cow Appreciation Day, for example, encourages families to dress up like a cow, come to their closest **Chick-fil-A**, and receive a free entrée.



On its calendar of events, **Chick-fil-A** also lists things like Daddy Daughter Date Night and Touch a Truck, each of which are centered around making families happy and creating memorable moments.

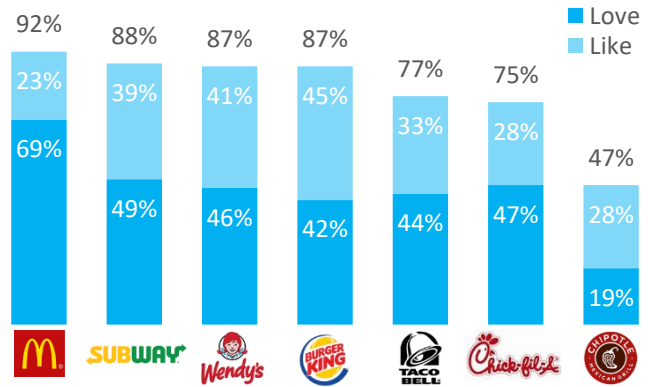
It's no wonder the brand has experienced three consecutive years of growth among kids, moving up to #64 with 779 **KIDFINITY** points among 6-12s this year. And parents love it even more, giving it a score of 809, a 19-point increase from last year. Compared to other QSRs, **Chick-fil-A** leads on the *different/unique* attribute for both kids and parents, which

shows that its family-centric, experiential approach is standing out.

QSRs still winning with families

This increased interest in experiential dining does not mean that classic quick service restaurants are losing steam. Kids still love a cheeseburger from **McDonald's** or a Cheesy Gordita Crunch from **Taco Bell**. It just means that QSRs will need to continue to evolve to remain winners with kids and parents. The food game has been upped.

2017 Kid Appeal for Select QSRs



Base: Kids 6-12

"I love Wendy's chicken fingers with ranch."
— 9-year-old boy

"McDonald's has the best burgers."
— 11 year-old boy

It's a win-win

As social media continues to be a driving force in kids' and families' lives, brands that provide novel, shareable experiences—along with great products and services—will be showcased most. These **Facebook** and **Instagram**-worthy moments are mutually beneficial. Parents and kids get to take part in fun activities and do a little digital bragging, while the brand gets social media exposure and free publicity. **If all goes as planned, it's a win-win.**

Appendix



Kids' Top 50 Brands

YouTube wins with kids ages 6-12 for the second year in a row. Long-form SVOD leader **Netflix** posts healthy gains, up to #5. **Additive Fidget Spinners**, the brand that gave rise to the 2017 trend of the year, makes its debut at #8! **iPad** and **McDonald's** become Top 10 brands (again) while **Disney Channel**, **Cheetos** and **Lay's** drop to the Top 20.

1 You Tube 1	11 LEGO 21	21 KRAFT macaroni & CHEESE 41	31 iPhone 51	41 NERF 48
2 OREO 2	12 KitKat 13	22 Starburst! 14	32 CN CARTOON NETWORK 68	42 pop-tarts 27
3 m&m's 3	13 Chips Ahoy! 12	23 Nike 45	33 XBOX 38	43 Kellogg's FROOT LOOPS 37
4 HERSHEY'S 5	14 Skittles 25	24 CAPRISUN 17	34 EA GOLF 58	44 halos 56
5 NETFLIX 11	15 Cheetos 8	25 Reese's 15	35 TWIX 43	45 KoolAid 40
6 Doritos 4	16 Crayola 18	26 Lunchables 28	36 PlayStation 32	46 DQ 44
7 Toys R Us 7	17 McGill-Blaylock Popsicle 24	27 nick 23	37 MINECRAFT 50	47 NINTENDO 3DS 49
8 ADDITIVE FIDGET SPINNERS —	18 Lay's 10	28 Pringles 20	38 Eggo 46	48 YouTube KIDS —
9 iPad 16	19 Roll-Ups 22	29 Goldfish 26	39 Pizza Hut 31	49 SNICKERS 34
10 McDonald's 19	20 Disney Channel 9	30 AIR WEARDS 39	40 SOUR PATCH Kids 29	50 JOLLY rancher 55

Base: Kids ages 6-12

Subscript numbers indicate 2016 ranking

Thank You!



SMARTY PANTS® is an award-winning, CASRO-certified research and consulting firm. The woman-owned firm provides best-in-class qualitative, quantitative and strategic consulting services to corporations, agencies and not-for-profit organizations around the globe. The Smarty Pants team of research and strategy executives excels at gathering youth and family insights and helping clients translate those insights into smarter products, programs and communications.

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