



Toys for the future

Photo by Guillaume-de-Germain on Unsplash

One in four kids aged 3–9 worldwide list climate change as their top social concern. In its regular column for ToyNews, The Insights Family considers the factors that are shaping the greenest generation yet, and what brands need to do to establish trust

The next generation of consumers are incredibly connected via social platforms, making them more switched on to social issues than any generation before them. Influenced by idols their own age, such as Greta Thunberg and Isra Hirsi, kids are hyper-aware of current environmental issues and how the issue of global climate change threatens to affect their lives.

In the last six months, 1 in 4 kids aged 3–9 worldwide listed climate change as their top social concern. Sustainability is at the forefront of kids' minds; last year, 55 per cent of the same demographic said that they often consider the impact of their actions on the environment. Increasingly, sustainability is being taken very seriously within the global toy industry, with many manufacturers and brands making pledges to rethink their impact on the environment.

For toy brands, much of the emphasis has been around reducing the use of plastic as much as possible. In recent years, we have seen the rise of plastic-free packaging, more use of renewable materials in products whenever possible

and global leaders committing themselves to becoming carbon-neutral. Mattel, for example, has pledged to achieve 100 per cent recycled, recyclable or bio-based plastic materials by 2030. Similarly, Hasbro has reissued environmentally friendly versions of iconic toys including Mr Potato Head and NERF guns. This highlights the opportunity for brands to embrace sustainability, take up the challenge to innovate and improve both their product design and business operations, and to act as leaders in the toys and games sector.

When we look at the impact of toys on the environment, we can consider the life cycle of a toy. In a rather unique way, toys are one of the few consumer goods that can be reused, passed on or stored away because of their emotional and sentimental value. One of the main

barriers to passing on toys may be that families do not know how to pass them on safely, highlighting the opportunity for toy brands and manufacturers to partner with kids' charities that could manage donations. Supermarkets and recycling points could also offer easy drop-off points, making it easier for parents to act environmentally.

The environment is also a top concern amongst parents, ranking as the fifth biggest concern amongst parents across the world. According to Parents Insights data, it ranked as the fourth biggest concern amongst parents surveyed in the UK over the last six months. With parents being the primary source of money for kids aged 3–9, it is key for brands to mirror the values of parents when planning their marketing and product strategies. By adapting to fit

“ 1 in 2 kids aged 6–12 in the UK said they would spend more on something that is environmentally friendly and sustainable – an increase of 8% over the last 12 months ”

the changing priorities of families across the UK, toy brands and manufacturers will not only benefit by earning the support of today's parents but they will also gain the loyalty of future consumers.

Key takeaways

Kids and parents value sustainability and are increasingly looking to make environmentally conscious purchases. By acting within these values, brands will appeal to the family audience and make their audience feel that they are empowered to be the change and make a difference.

Sustainability is more than just packaging. Brands must be sure to place genuine importance on the environment throughout all business operations, including advertising, content, licensing, marketing and sales strategies.

Products that are reusable and durable will earn the support of kids and parents who prioritise sustainability. Toy brands have the opportunity to use this to their advantage by building toy worlds with collectable, additional components that will engage repeat custom.

Influences

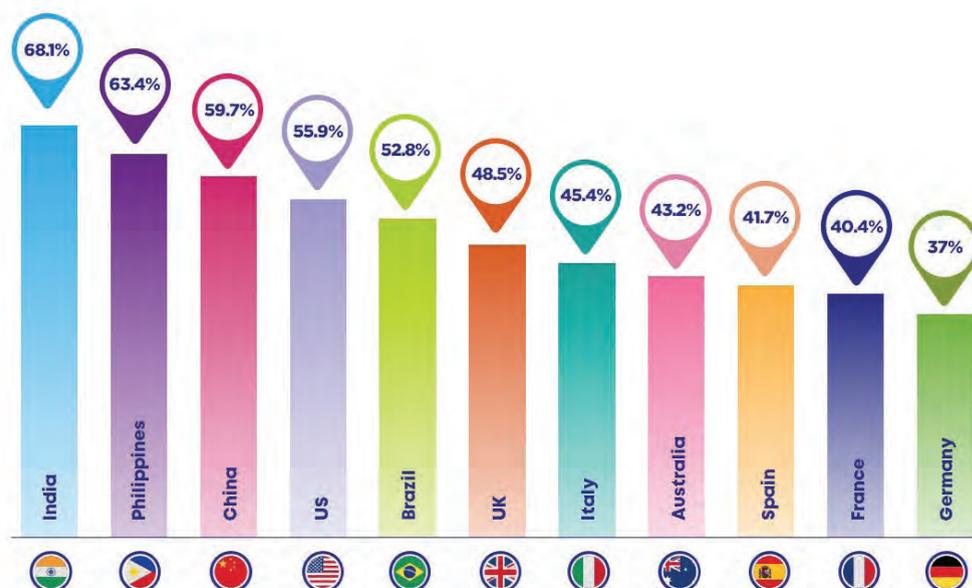
Different factors shape the attitudes of kids and are ensuring that sustainable practices will become the norm. Brands can look to reach their target audience by moving into these spaces and reflecting the values of young consumers.

Education

Sustainability is being woven into the school curriculum and is taught to children from an increasingly young age.

Content

Entertainment platforms, video games and TV shows are promoting sustainability and shaping the narrative on climate change action, meaning kids are exposed to it throughout their ecosystem.



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Kids Insights Global | 6-12s | August 2021 - February 2022

Above: Graph shows the percentage of children aged 6-12 who said that they would spend more on something that is environmentally friendly and sustainable

Social media

For the digital native generation, it is easier than ever for eco-inspiration to come from someone their own age. Greta Thunberg, 19, has 11 million followers on Instagram and Isra Hirsi, also aged 19, has 210 thousand followers on Twitter.

children to think about their impact on the environment. Older parents tend to be more concerned about the environment than younger generations.

Retailers

Across the world, eco-conscious teens over-index on strongly agreeing that they would spend more money on something that is environmentally friendly or sustainable (+28 per cent). As retailers consider their stock, cost should not outweigh the importance of promoting sustainability.

Government

Governments can bring in legislation in order to encourage citizens to change their purchase attitudes and behaviours. Funding lifestyle alternatives, such as refill stations, would help to make sustainability more accessible.

Responsibility for change

Brands

Transparency is a key priority for maintaining trust with this constantly connected generation. Brands should evaluate how they can build their sustainability appeal. Brands already utilising sustainable practices should consider how they can push this environmental impact to the forefront of marketing campaigns.

Parents

Sixty-three per cent of parents across all generations agree they encourage



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The Insights Family is the global leader in kids, parents, and family market intelligence, providing real-time data on their attitudes, behaviour and consumption patterns. Kids Insights surveys 7,780 children every week aged 3-18. Parents Insights surveys more than 3,800 parents of children between the ages of 1 and 16 every week. Both services operate in 22 countries across six continents and in total survey more than 469,040 kids and 228,800 parents a year. This means that the company interviews a new family member somewhere in the world every 45 seconds.

LEGO is a key example of a brand that has committed itself to making a positive impact by building a sustainable future. It has stated that it aims to make all core LEGO products and packaging from sustainable materials by 2030. Additionally, one of its schemes, called LEGO Replay, promotes a circular, zero-waste economy by giving consumers the chance to pass their bricks on to children in need of play, promoting reusing and recycling. Kids aged 3-9 who say that the environment is their biggest concern are 15 per cent more likely to name LEGO as their favourite toy. This suggests that the popularity of the bricks is tied to how they represent the values of their audience.

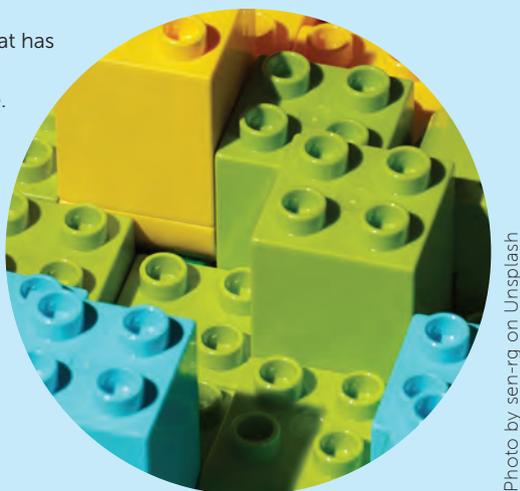


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