

The essential **kids digital marketing guide** for toy companies

**Insights and action points for
toy companies to navigate 2021**



Kids are **no longer following** pre-pandemic digital consumption patterns

Our methodology

We conducted an online survey with a nationally representative sample of 512 children aged 4 -9 years old and 762 parents of children aged 1-9 years old, all based in the US.

The research took place between November 19 and November 23, 2020. The survey was conducted by The Insights People on behalf of SuperAwesome.

Introduction

Playing in virtual worlds might not be a new concept, but it is one that is being accelerated by the effects of Covid-19. While toys and physical play are still an important part of childhood, kids are interacting with screens more than ever before. To remain competitive, toy companies need to understand and quickly adapt to these changing play patterns.

Unlike generations of the past, today's kids have grown up with access to devices. Digital trust is inherent—it's desire that makes the difference. Brands must choose the right platforms and content to spark excitement with young audiences.

This report will guide your 2021 digital marketing strategy by assessing:

- How kids' digital consumption has evolved in the past year.
- The importance of platform and content context in the discovery process.
- How increased digital adoption (and the migration from high street to online) has changed the purchase funnel.

We've paired each insight with tactical and strategic recommendations on how toy companies can pivot in response to these changes. Reach out for more granular insight and to find out how we can help you.

What should your
2021 kids digital
marketing
strategy be?



Kids digital content consumption is **no longer weighted towards the weekend**

In 2020, kids' screen-time increased by up to 50%, as social activities, entertainment, and learning all shifted into digital environments.

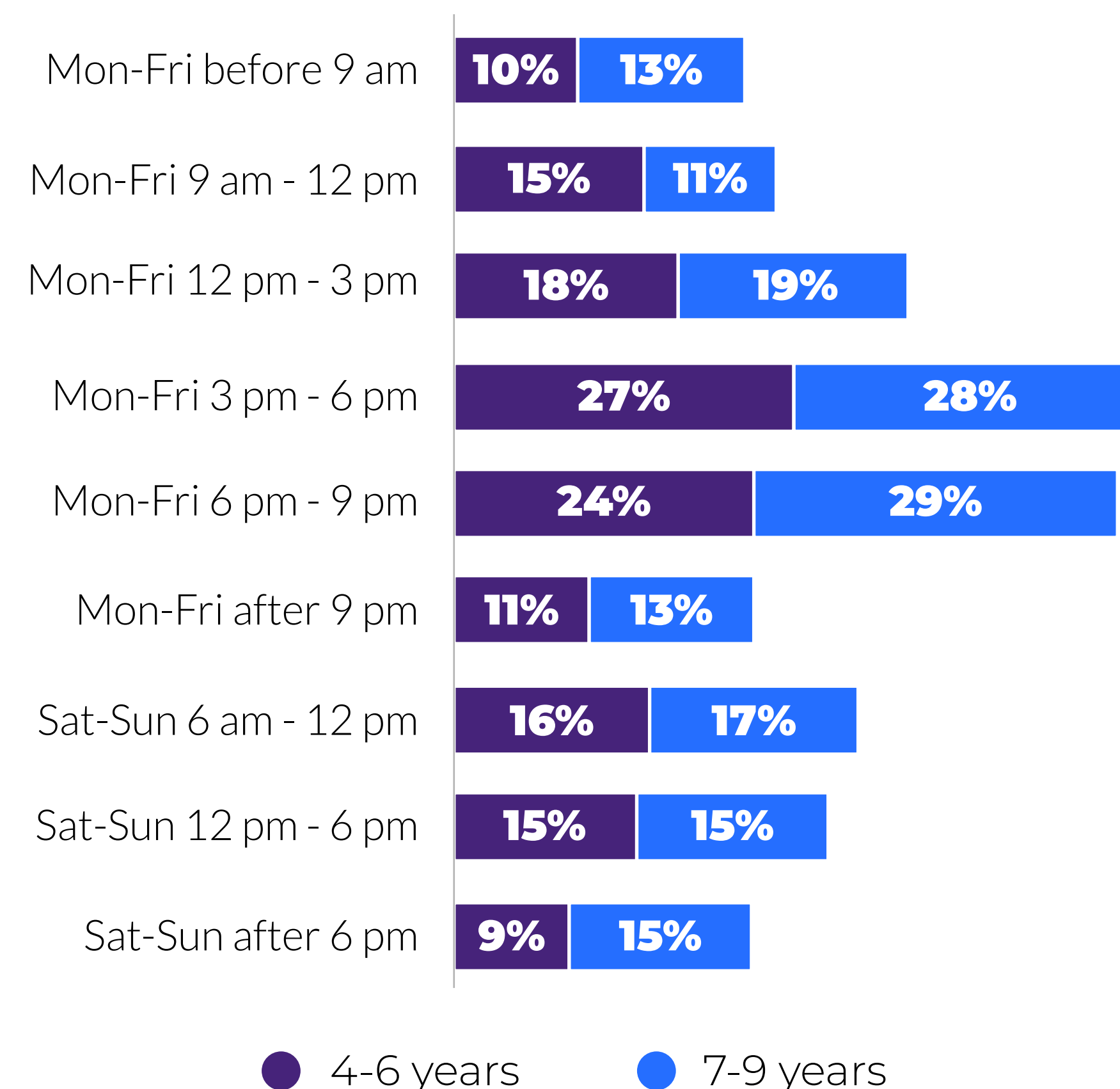
The increased time spent on screens during the week (primarily in gaming environments and on YouTube, beyond education) means that screen-time during the weekends has shifted, creating a generation of kids that no longer follows traditional digital consumption patterns.

There are multiple factors feeding into this, including the loss of playground socialization, but the most significant is the “digital babysitter”. During the week, while parents are occupied, screens are called into service as distractor, entertainer, and educator. During the weekends, parents are making themselves more available for family time, and kids—who now have very few limits on their screen-time—are more enthusiastic about IRL (in real life) play.

To leverage this behavioral shift, you must:

- Prioritize day-parting in your digital marketing campaigns
- Create content that encourages physical activity during the weekend
- Highlight the importance of IRL play

When do you go on YouTube?



For kids, context is everything; it's essential to consider where your content appears

The adoption of online worlds by digitally-accelerated kids means there is no digital divide; they are just as likely to trust content they see on YouTube* as content they see on TV.

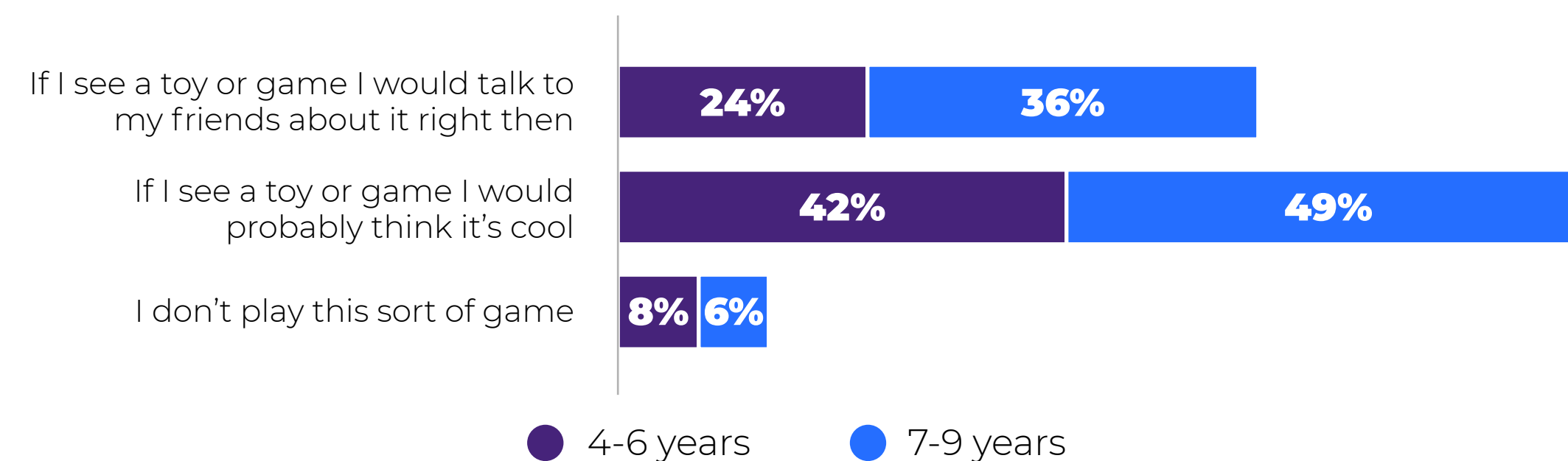
But when kids are making decisions over what toys they want to ask their parents for, desire is more important than trust –and YouTube is the most important platform when it comes to inspiring desire. YouTube is followed closely by TV, and both mobile and console gaming are gaining ground. Among older kids, mobile gaming already increases desire more than TV.

*All mentions of YouTube refer to the Main platform, not YouTube Kids.

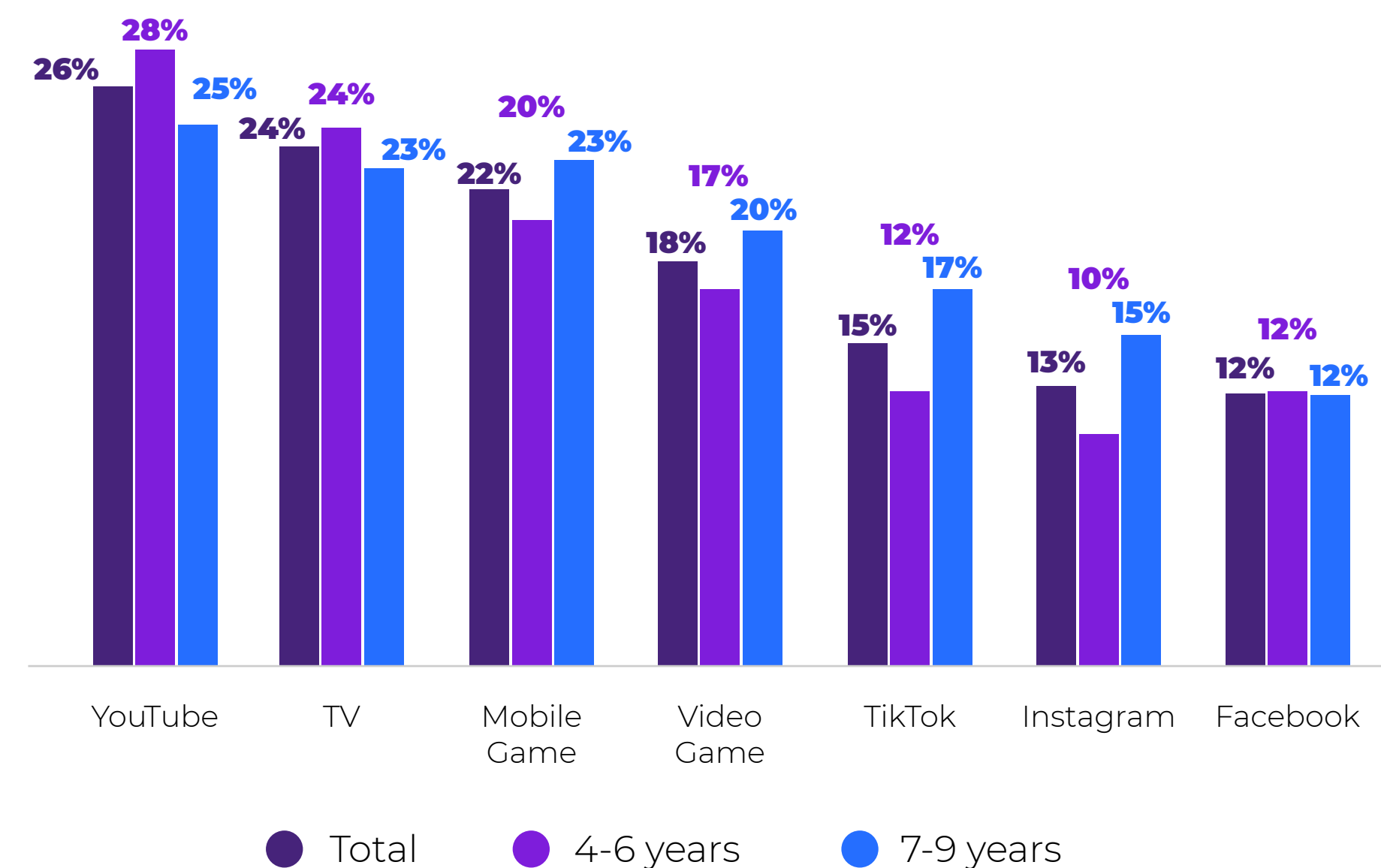
Are you:

- Tapping into the trends that are most important to your target demographic?
- Prioritizing the platforms and environments that kids like most?
- Affiliating yourself with the brands and content that makes kids the most excited?

Which of these do you agree with when you're playing a video game?



Seeing a toy or game advertised on these platforms makes you want it more:



The heightened fear of disappointment means **parents primarily buy what kids ask for**

Opportunities for reward were diminished during 2021. Families stayed home as avenues for entertainment disappeared. As a result, parents bought more toys and games for their children, and purchases behaviors shifted.

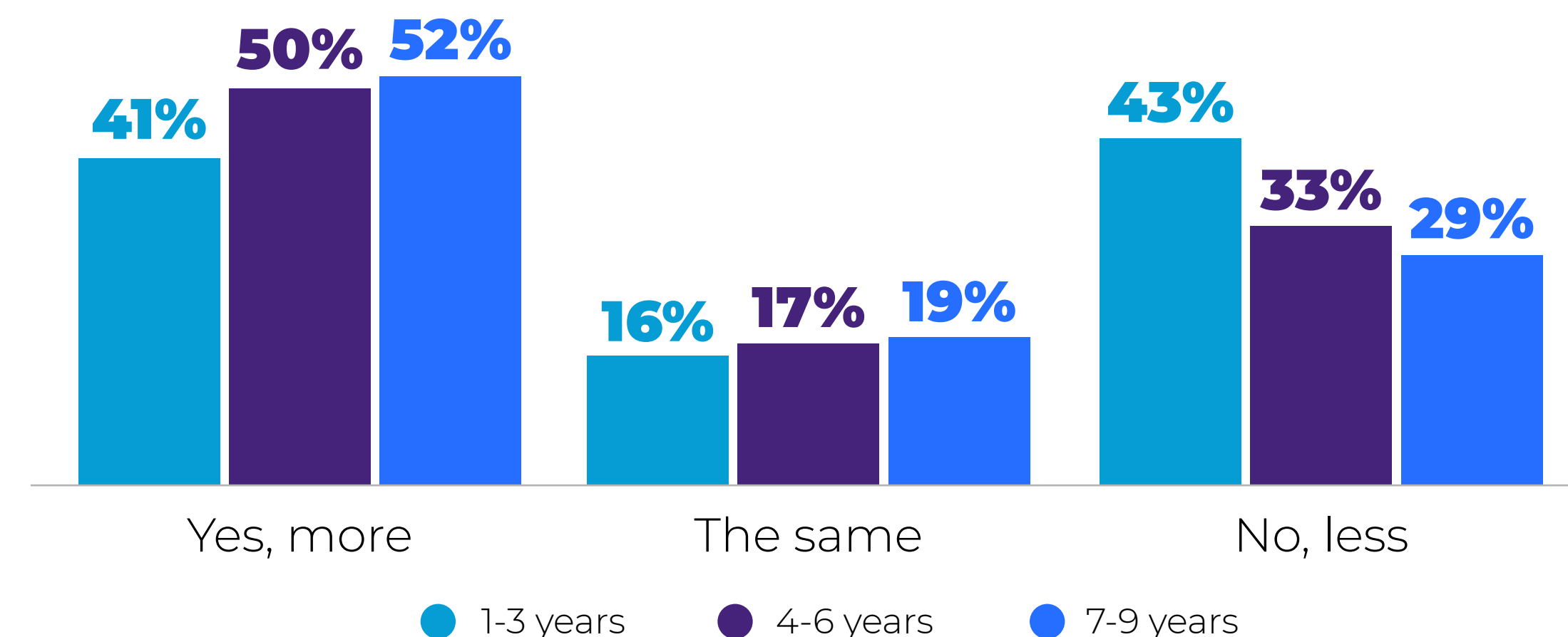
Where before parents might have made their own decisions on what to buy for their children (often motivated by in-store displays), they now prioritize the explicit desire of the child. While price-point is still a clear motivating factor, the increasing digital sophistication of kids (at times above and beyond their own parents') means they can be trusted to discover and choose their own gifts.

The New Digital Purchase Funnel

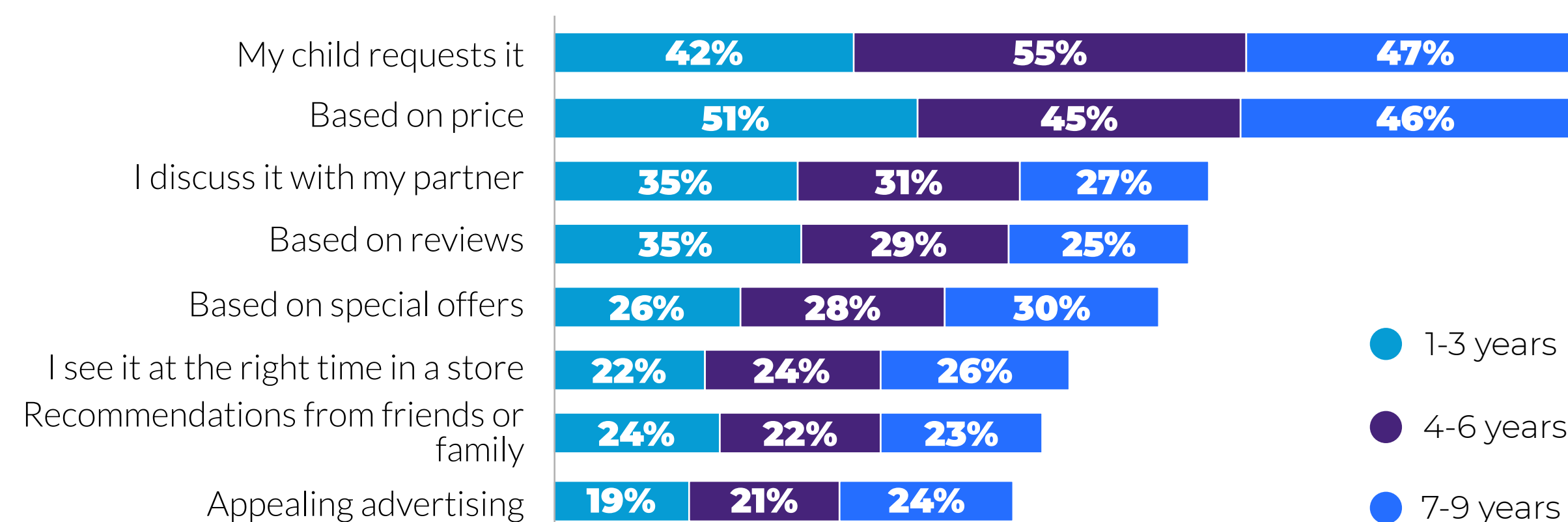
1. **Kids** see products in their favorite online environments
2. **Kids** ask their parents for the product
3. **Parents** make the purchase

There is a **high risk of wasted marketing spend** when parents are targeted in place of kids.

Have you bought more toys and games for your child this year? (Parents)



How do you decide which toys and games to buy? (Parents)



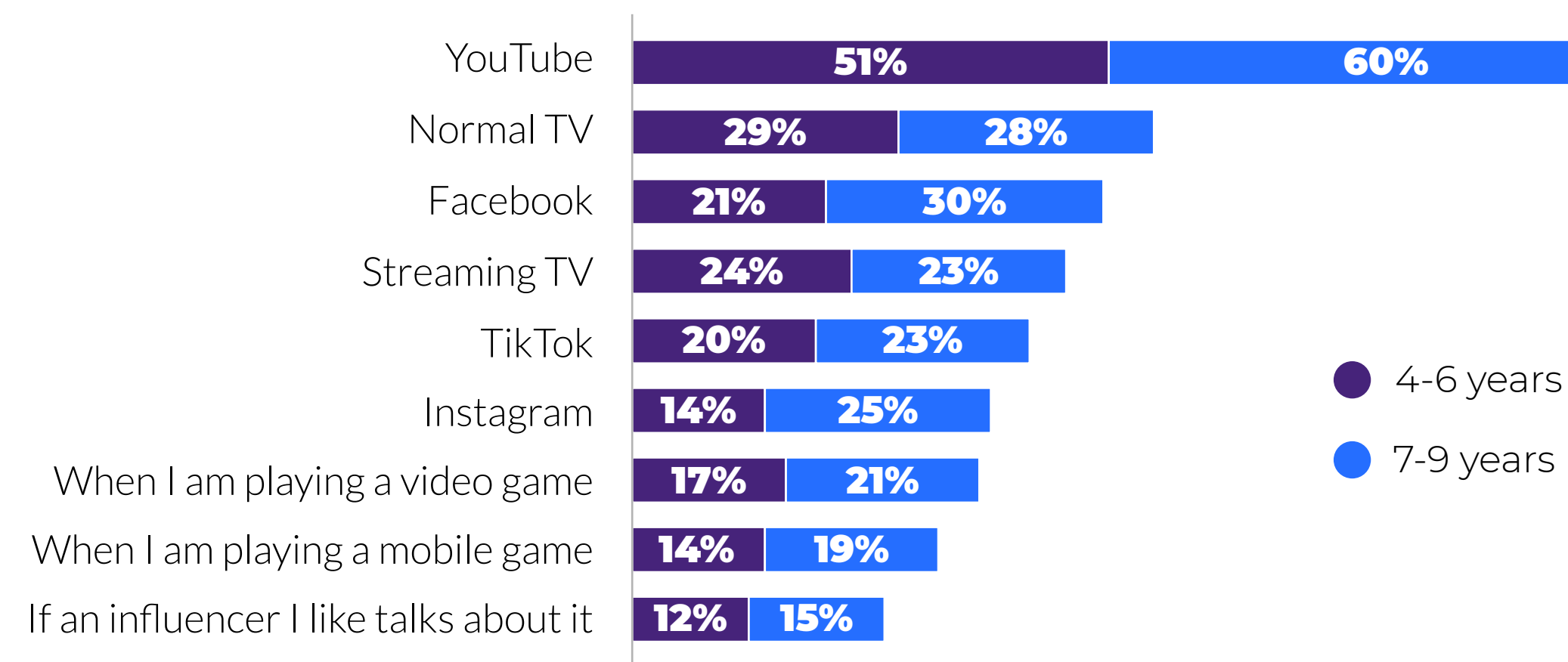
Kids treat advertising the same way they treat content: **familiarity is essential**

Kids consume content differently from adults: they watch, rewatch, and enjoy gaining familiarity with their favorite content. Repetition of a format, whether that be a song or a movie, only heightens their enjoyment and connection with the experience.

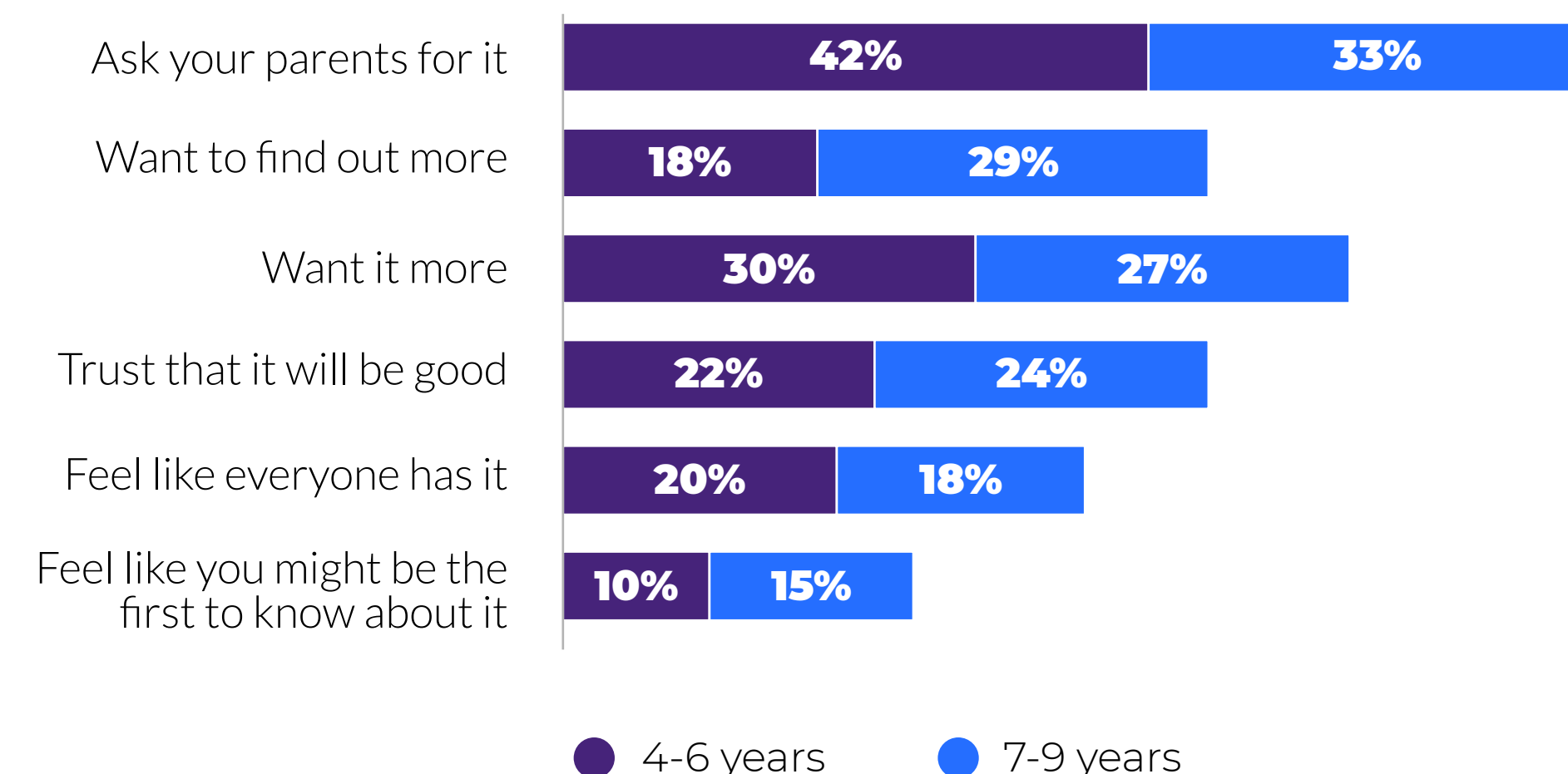
The same consumption behaviors can be applied to branded content. While the digital advertising industry in general often calls attention to frequency capping, content directed at kids should double down on repetition. Kids are much more likely to ask their parents for a product they have seen across multiple platforms. This is good news for brands, since kids are known to be digitally divided, spending their online time in different environments depending on their age and interests.

Omnichannel campaigns reinforce trust and desire in kids, who are better able to connect with (and recall) products they see in multiple places.

Where would you see an ad for a toy or game that would make you really want it?



If you saw an ad for a toy or game in lots of those places at different times, would it make you:



Active, collaborative, physical toys are the hero of the offline world

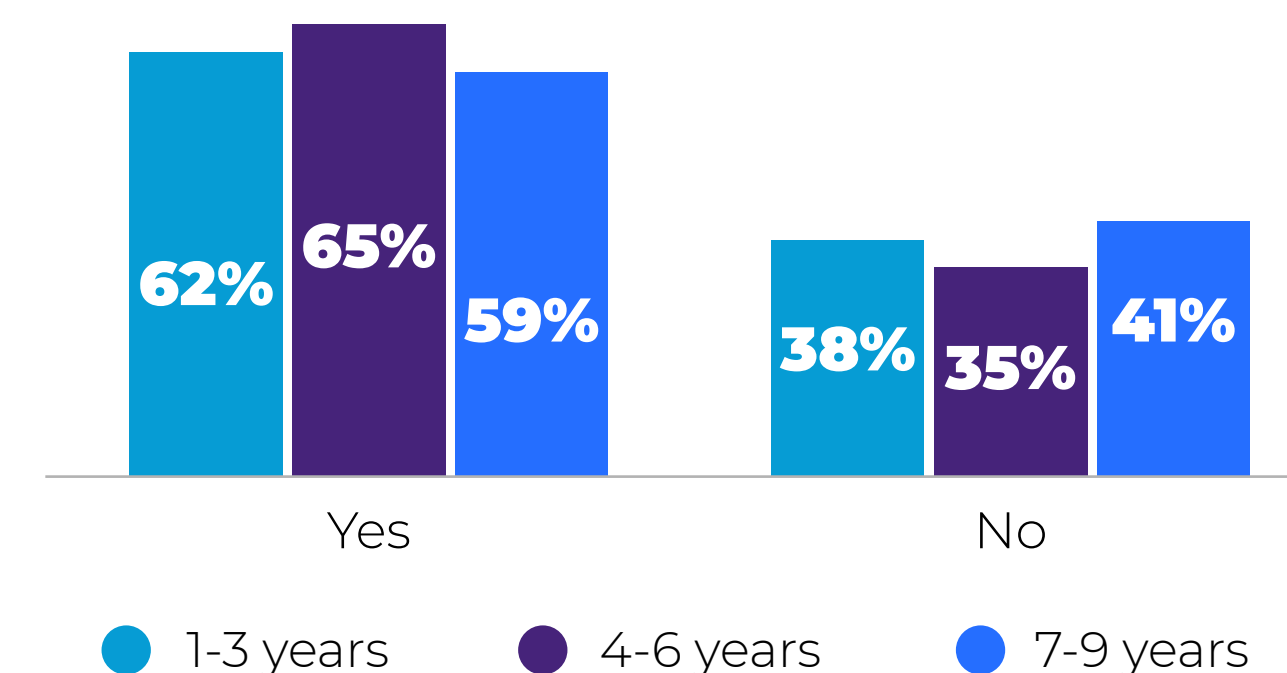
Screen-time is no longer a reward for good behavior—it's the default, necessitated by the pandemic. With digital playing the role of babysitter, educator, and entertainer, kids are increasingly self-policing their own screen-time in a way they've never done before. They get bored of time spent on a screen, and they react with acceptance when screen-time ends.

This has created a huge opportunity for physical toys, particularly ones that involve time spent with family and time spent outside. These once-standard types of play are now less frequent, inverting the reward ratio. Leveraging this trends requires an understanding of the role of the physical in digital as a reward vector.

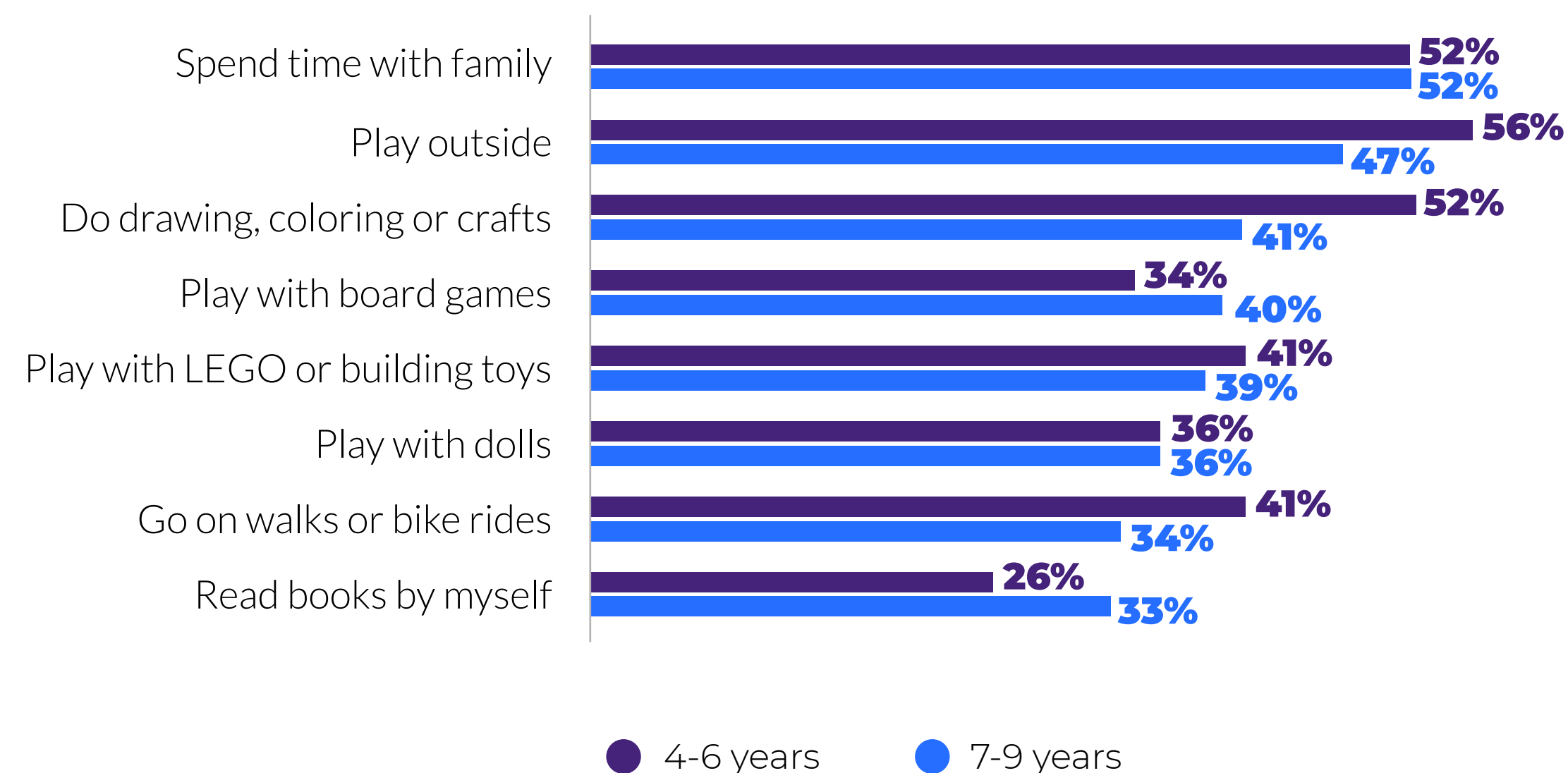
Connecting the physical with the digital

- Physical toys with digital tie-ins span both worlds.
- Content that emphasises the important of physical connection will appeal to screen-saturated kids.

PARENTS: Does your child ever get bored or fed up of screen time?



KIDS: What's your favorite thing to do that's not on a screen?





SuperAwesome, part of Epic Games, builds a safer internet for the next generation. Every month our kidtech platform enables over 12 billion transactions across thousands of apps and digital services.

Our tools include:

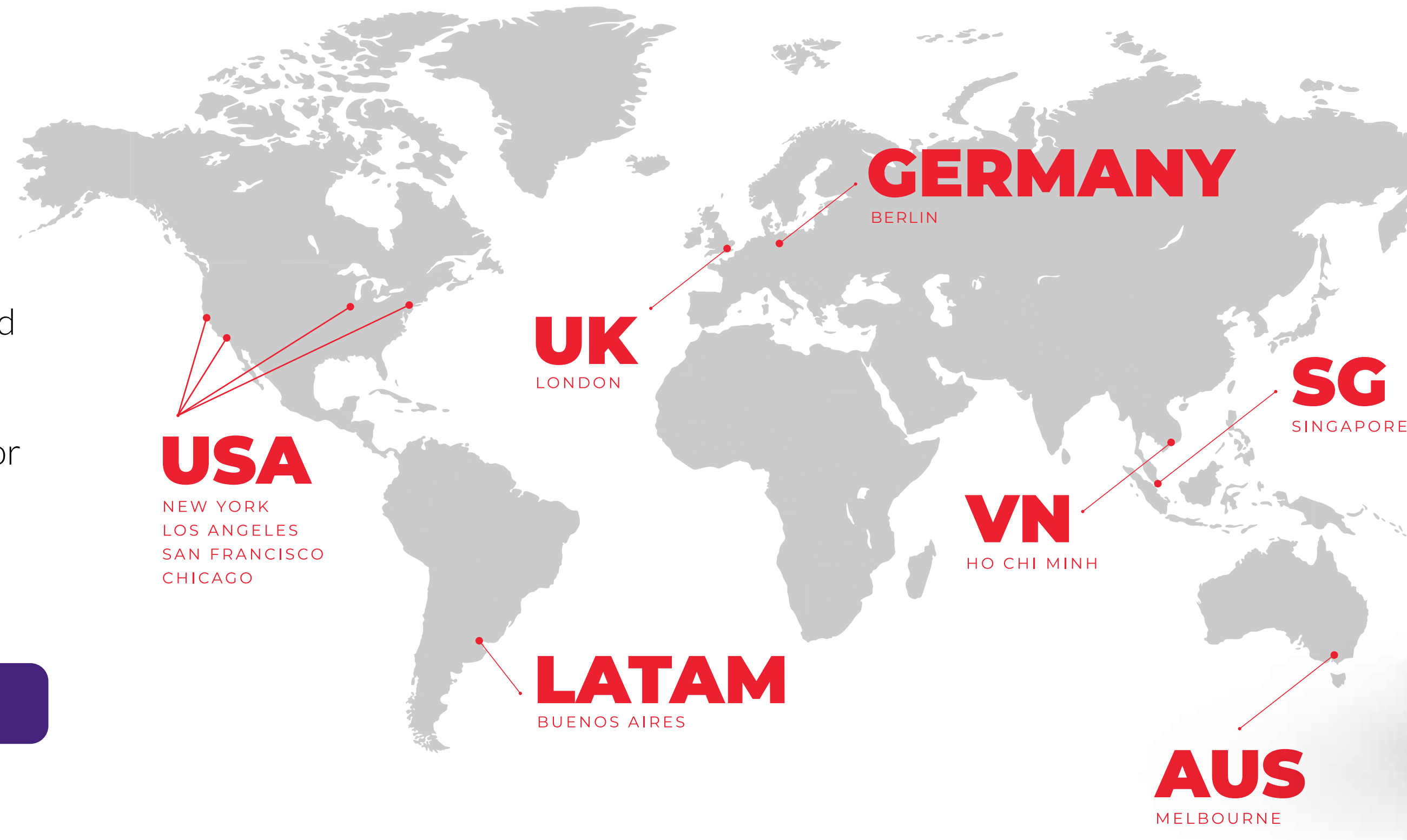
Kid-Safe Advertising - contextual advertising across YouTube, OTT, mobile, and desktop.

Safe Social - kid-safe community engagement and influencer marketing.

Parental Consent - verifiable parental consent for digital experiences.

[Learn more at www.superawesome.com](https://www.superawesome.com)

Contact us at enquiries@SuperAwesome.com



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