

Culture Opportunities

GENERATION ALPHA



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Defined as the cohort born between 2010 and 2024 and globally impacted by the pandemic, we examine the 8 major cultural shifts that characterize the Generation Alpha with an emphasis social, political, financial, and environmental factors that change the way this generation shops and thinks. Providing insight into growth opportunities for brands and retailers, we examine the way the Generation Alpha learns and lives.

1. Shifting Society
2. Outdoor Education
3. Reloved
4. Power of Purchase
5. Tomorrow's Heroes
6. One Size *Does Not* Fit All
7. Big Voices
8. Activism



1 SHIFTING SOCIETY

As our definitions of family shift, we embrace diversity in its many forms. In the United States, 17% of new marriages are multiracial. There are between 2 to 3.7 million children under the age of 18 that have an LGBTQ+ parent and approximately 200,000 kids are raised by same-gender couples. On a global level, countries like Nigeria are predicted to experience a baby boom while countries like the US and France are seeing birth rates declining. With this shift in demographics, brands have the opportunity to rethink their storytelling and connect with designers and artists in previously untapped markets, moving away from the traditional Euro-American centric mindset and looking at things with a fresh perspective.



Sharon McCutcheon (Photographer)

POPULOUS SHIFT

While some countries like Spain, Portugal, and Thailand are predicted to halve their population size by 2100, several countries in Africa are predicted to reach their population peak. These shifts in demographics will continue to push brands and designers to design with inclusion in mind, targeting new populations and new markets. Exploring new markets and collaborating with designers and artists in them leads to exciting new design, tapping into a new wealth of folklore and literature that can be learned from. Collaborating with authors and artists like Nigerian author Nnedi Okorafor, whose book "[Chicken in the Kitchen](#)" won the Children's Africana Best Book Award in 2018, provide new insight into diverse cultures while working with the people that inspire the new designs.



Chicken in the Kitchen by Nnedi Okorafor (Book)



Nataliya Vaitkevich (Photographer)

OUR FAMILY

The new nuclear family takes many shapes. Celebrating the new normal of multigenerational, LGBTQ+, and racially diverse families, brands offer toys that let children acknowledge and play in a world that looks like their own. My Family Builder is a wooden block set that allows children to build their own family. MyFamily! Memory Match Game highlights diverse family make-ups. Finally, Zooble offer handmade, generational dolls like grandparents.



My Family Builder (Brand)



myfamily! (Brand)



Zoobles (Brand)

2

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

After a year filled with lockdowns and confinements, Mother Nature has never felt more nurturing. Embracing our innate love for the Great Outdoors, brands create toys like Bird Bingo that encourage children to get outside to play and learn. STEM-driven toys allow kids to merge technology and nature to create and explore both our own planet and the galaxies above.



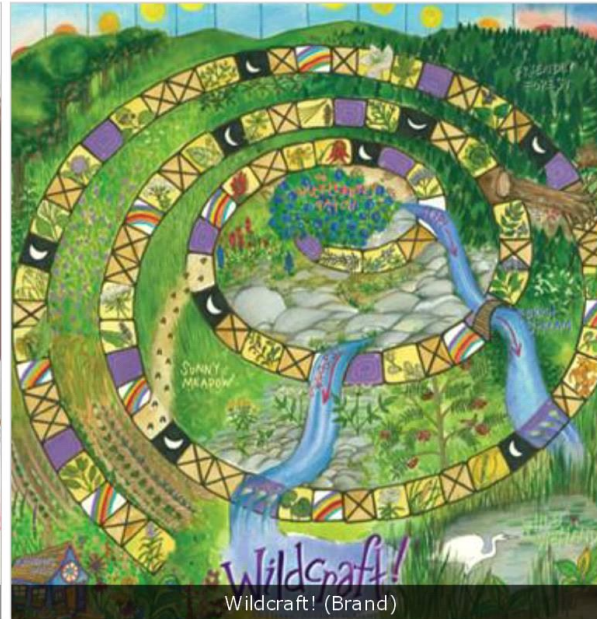
Monstera (Photographer)

NATURE DRIVE

Encouraging kids to learn from the planet, games like [Bird Bingo](#) and [Wildcraft!](#) teach children how to identify different birds or plants, including safe edible varieties. Vegetable-based finger paints by [Norman & Jules](#) offer a natural and nontoxic way for kids to express themselves while learning about the different dyes fruits and vegetables exude.



Norman & Jules (Brand)



Wildcraft! (Brand)



Bird Bingo (Brand)

STEM START

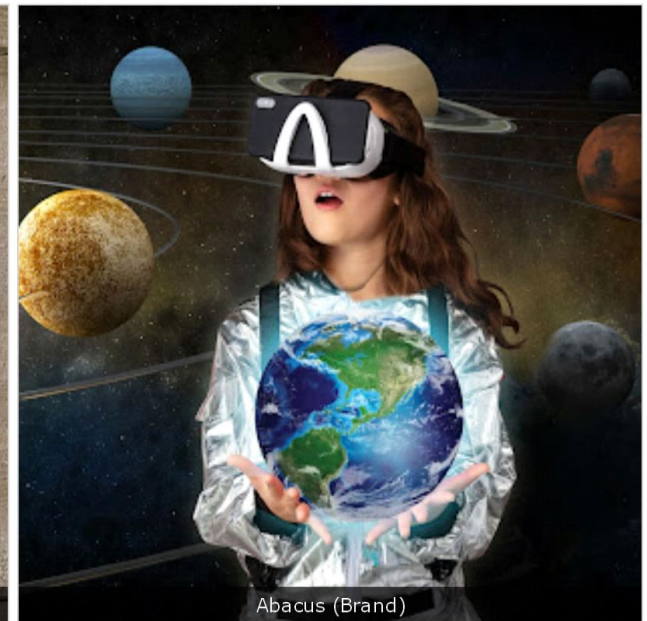
Technology's hold on the Alpha Generation continues to grow. Toys like [Orboot Augmented Reality Interactive Globe](#) and [Professor Maxwell's VR Universe](#) allow kids to supplement their education with VR and technological experiences, creating a world beyond their imaginations. For hands-on fun, [Edible Chemistry Kit by Copernicus](#) offers a safe and tasty way to experiment with science.



Orboot (Brand)



Copernicus (Brand)



Abacus (Brand)

3 RELOVED

Every year, each child in the US alone throws away 45 pounds of clothing, accounting for 2.2 billion pounds of just children's clothing per year in American landfills. With the need for more sustainable options more important than ever, brands (many of them luxury) have initiated a reselling or rental services. Spearheaded by companies like Rent The Runway, the kids' market now offers not only rental services but ones that promote a circular economy through reloved clothing and toys. These new elevated initiatives demonstrate a shift in the market as the stigma behind reused clothes dissipates.



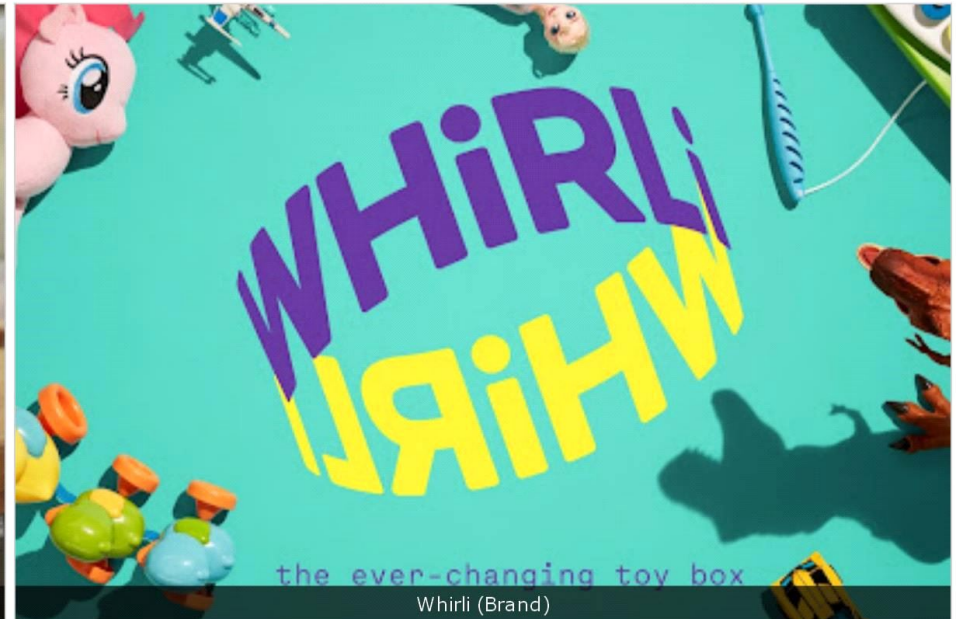
Ketut Subiyanto (Photographer)

PLAY, RECYCLE, REPEAT

The toy industry addresses sustainability with innovative solutions from Mattel's "playback" programs to subscription services like Whirli that allow children to swap or keep toys for as long as they wish.



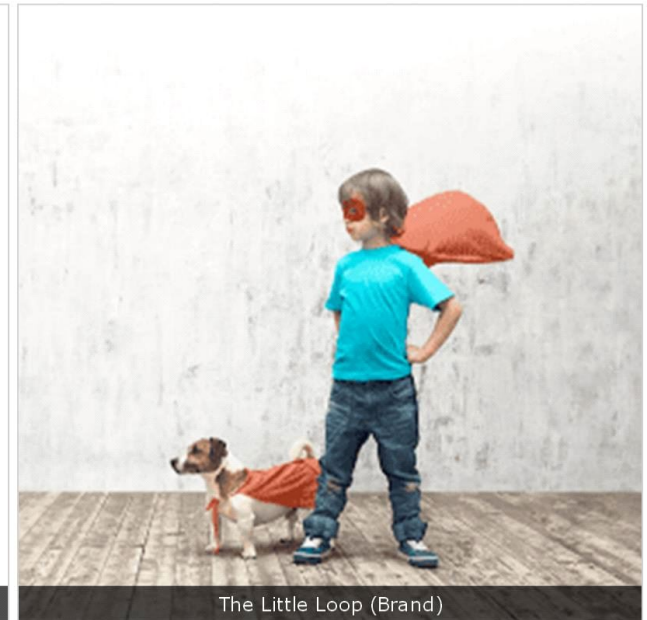
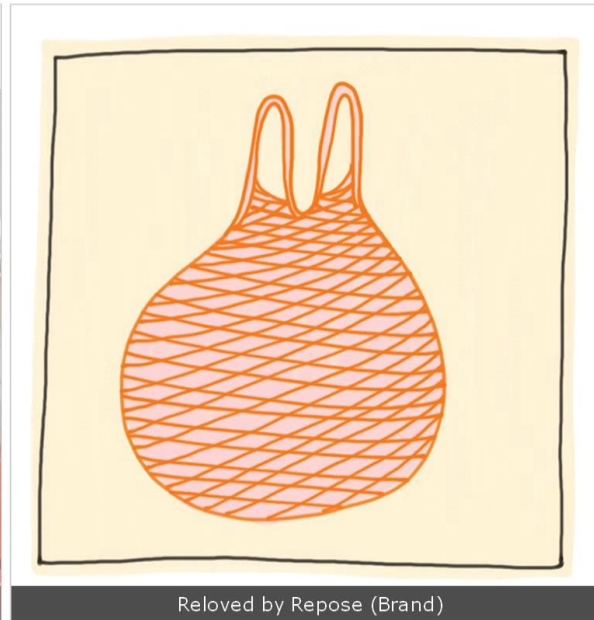
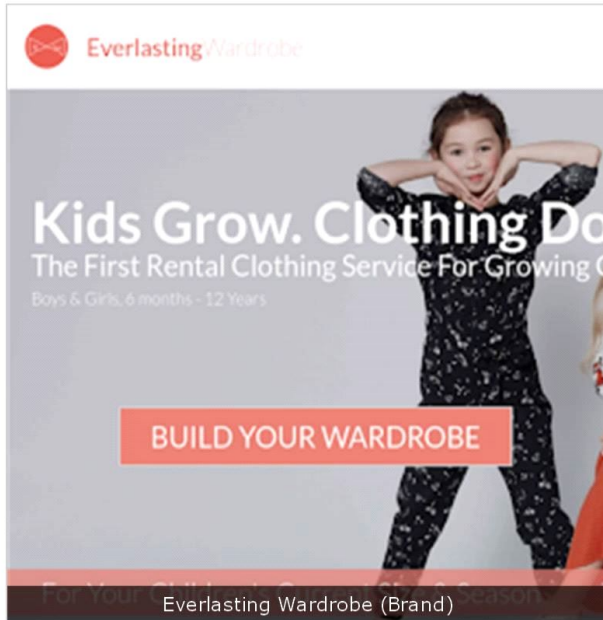
Mattel (Brand)



Whirli (Brand)

SECOND LIFE

In a push for sustainability, some brands have banded together to give clothes a second life, creating a circular model based around rentals or high-end consignment. Based in Brooklyn, Everlasting Wardrobe operates like Rent the Runway. The Little Loop is the first U.K.-based rental service for kids while Reloved was created by Amsterdam-based brand Repose to offer high-end consignment options on their site.



4

POWER *of* PURCHASE

Billions of dollars pass through the pockets of children aged 4-14, through pocket money or allowances, or through parents who are more open to including their children in their household purchases. According to a recent study, 60% of kids in the US are aware of household budgets. Kids serve as the information-gatherers, providing intel to their parents on what's cool, what they like, and what they're interested in. Around 25% of their brand preferences continue to stay with them through adulthood.

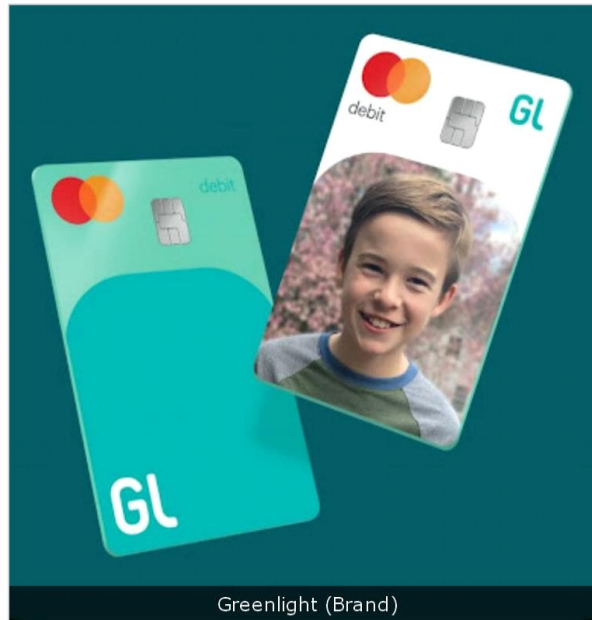


MONEY MATTERS

Games and apps encourage kids to learn about making wise financial decisions. Bankaroo, an app created by an 11 year old named Dani, lets kids learn about budgeting, savings, and accountability through a virtual bank. Real life options include Greenlight, a parent-controlled debit card that lets kids earn money through chores, and the Moonjar, which has three separate compartments that encourage kids to save, spend, and share.



Moonjar (Brand)



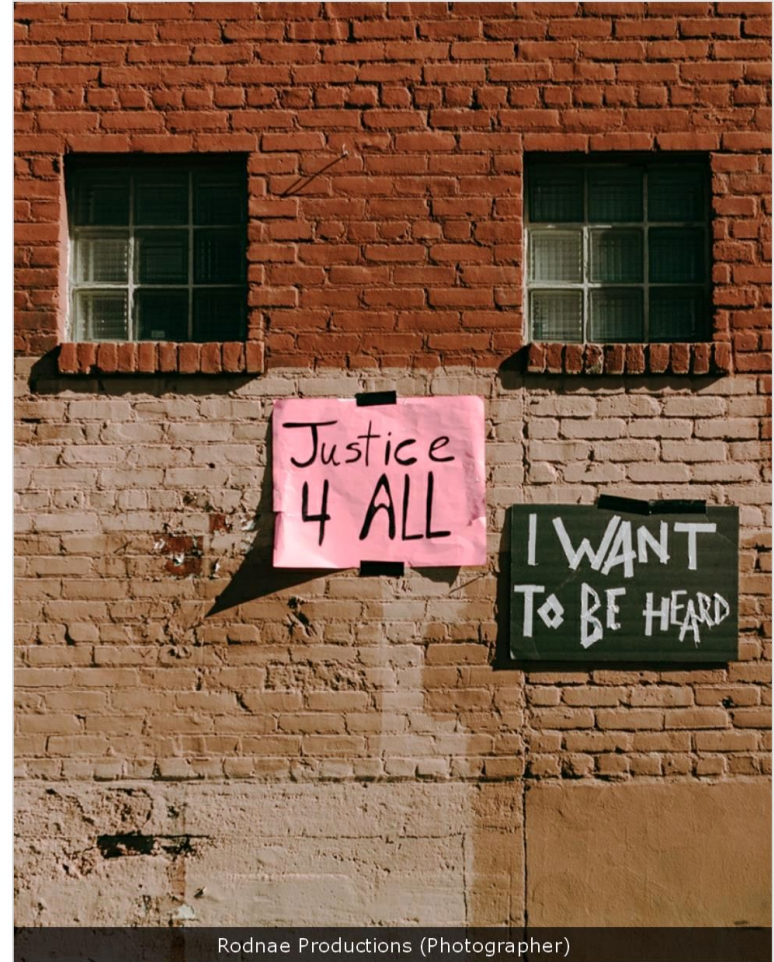
Greenlight (Brand)



Bankaroo (App)

5 TOMORROW'S HEROES

The Alpha Generation is increasingly aware of the issues facing them today and are asking more of the brands than ever before. It's no longer enough to have advertising telling people that your brand is environmentally friendly, now consumers want transparency in the process — what are the clothes made of, where are they coming from, are fair wages being paid? Children are using their voices to take a stand for equality and the environment, among other social issues.



Rodnae Productions (Photographer)

MINI MESSAGING

As the Alpha Generation focuses on inclusion and justice for all, brands and retailers give kids the opportunity to share their opinions on message tees and tops. Brands like [Free to Be Kids](#) showcase the power of positive messaging, encouraging a genderless approach to teaching kids embrace their intelligence and sensitivity. [Piccolina's Trailblazing Women](#) t-shirts highlight women throughout history that have changed and shaped our world.



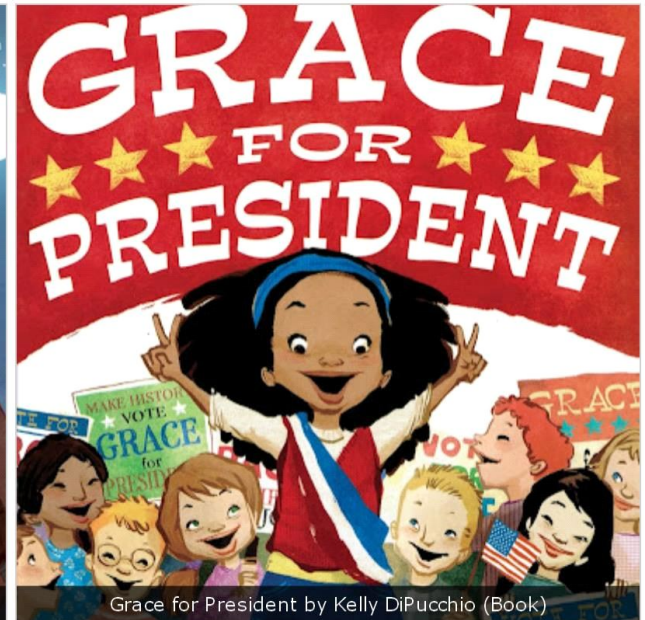
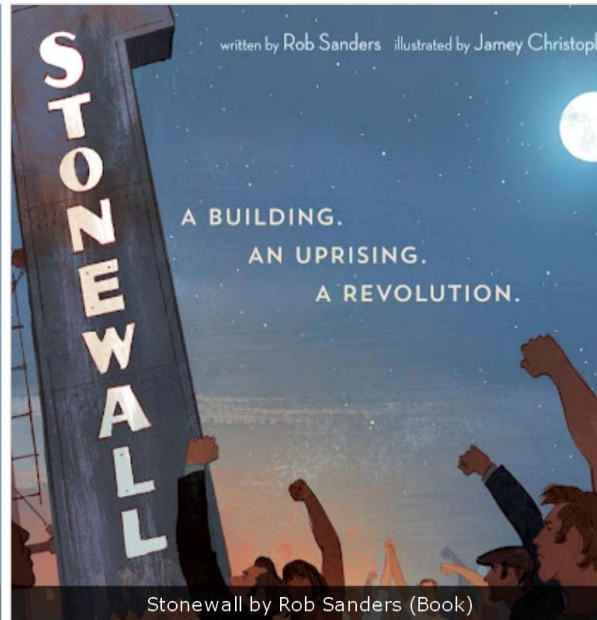
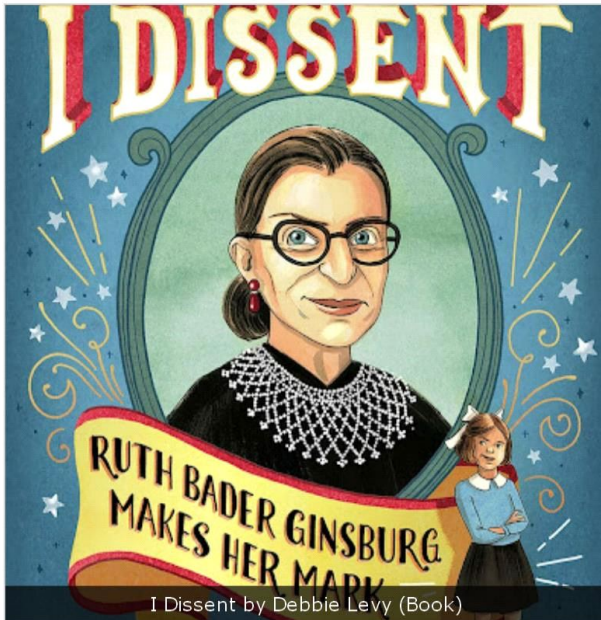
Piccolina (Brand)



Free To Be Kids (Brand)

LITERARY LIBERATION

Using the power of the written word, books like “[I Dissent](#)” by Debbie Levy, “[Stonewall](#)” by Rob Sanders, and “[Grace for President](#)” by Kelly DiPucchio teach children about changemakers and important historical events while encouraging them to dream big to enact the change they want to see in the world.



6
ONE SIZE *does*
not **FIT ALL**

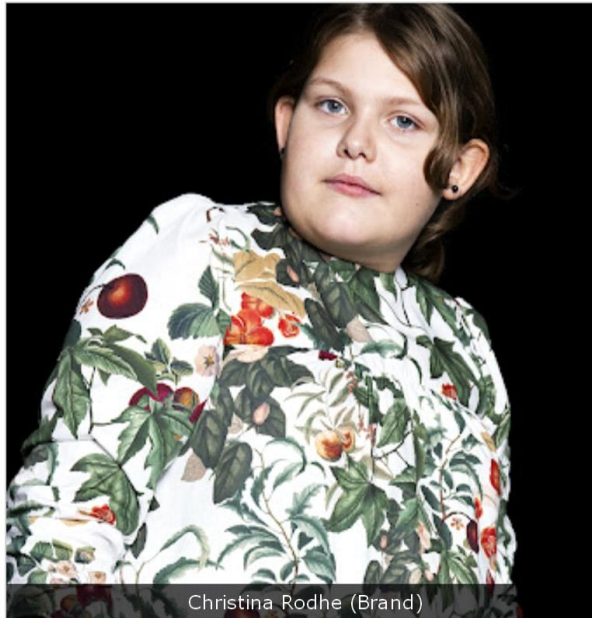
Millennials and Baby Boomers are far more likely than Generation Alpha to group into different viewpoints across gender. Just two-thirds (66%) of Millennial and Baby Boomer men say that it's very important for boys and girls to be treated fairly, compared to over 80% of their female counterparts. Among Generation Alpha though, the difference between genders is much smaller — 79% for Generation Alpha boys to 86% for girls. Such gender balance can also be seen in how “Dad” is appearing as what kids want to be when they grow up among Generation Alpha, compared to zero responses for this from Millennial and Baby Boomers”.



Alexandra Klever (Photographer)

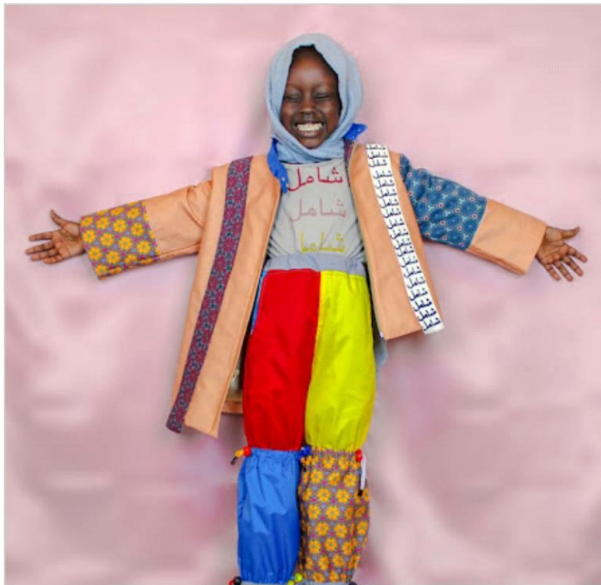
SIZE INCLUSIVITY

As we continue to question and redefine the “new normal,” it becomes imperative to fill the gap for plus-size kid assortments. A recent report from [Heart of Leadership](#) shows that by the age of 13, 53% of girls express dissatisfaction with their body, and up to 50% of girls in grades K through 8 are concerned about their weight. The heightened sense of isolation and body image issues makes it more important than ever for the kidswear industry to expand their current offerings and not create specialty or separate collections that look aesthetically different, causing further isolation for these children.



NON-GENDERED KIDSWEAR

A recent graduate of FIT, [Hawwaa Ibrahim](#) uses their identity as a non-binary, Black Muslim to inform their design process in creating a childrenswear collection for children. They believe in broader conversations about gender beginning at a younger age.



Hawwaa Ibrahim (Designer)



Hawwaa Ibrahim (Designer)



Hawwaa Ibrahim (Designer)

HE, SHE, THEY

Raised by Millennials, the Alpha Generation is being raised in a less gendered environment since birth. Constantly questioning gender stereotypes and breaking boundaries, these children are demanding change and slowly seeing companies respond and adapt, as well as the creation of new relevant product. Mr. Potato head recently dropped the "Mr." to be more inclusive while children's books like "Jack Not Jackie" by Erica Silverman speak to gender identity and expression.



Potato Head (Brand)



Jack Not Jackie by Erica Silverman (Book)

HOUSE OF CARDS

Why is the Queen worth less than the King? An innocent question posed by a then-13-year-old Mayan Segal, led to the creation of a multi-ethnic deck of cards where the male and female cards hold equal value. Called Queeng Playing Cards (mix of Queen and King), the popularity of the product highlights the rise in young people questioning and changing age-old institutions. Playing with Pronouns uses play to dismantle stereotypes, interrupt assumptions, acknowledge the pressure of gender conformity, embrace difference, include everybody.



Queeng Playing Cards (Brand)



Playing with Pronouns (Brand)

7 BIG VOICES

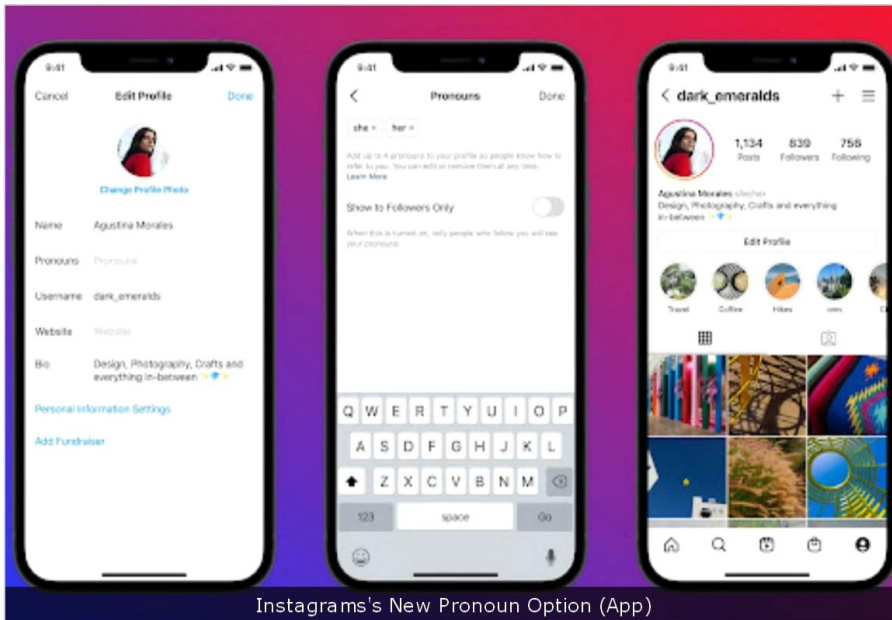
In light of the recent pushback from local lawmakers to prevent Facebook from creating an Instagram for kids under 13, we're seeing yet again the scrutiny of social media's effects on children. In a letter to Mark Zuckerberg, the bipartisan group of AGs cited news reports and research findings that social media and Instagram, in particular, had a negative effect on kids' mental well-being, including lower self-esteem and suicidal ideation. Other children-specific products like YouTube for Kids has faced harsh criticism and in 2019 reached a \$170 million settlement with the FTC and New York attorney general over claims it illegally earned money from collecting personal data on kids without parental consent.



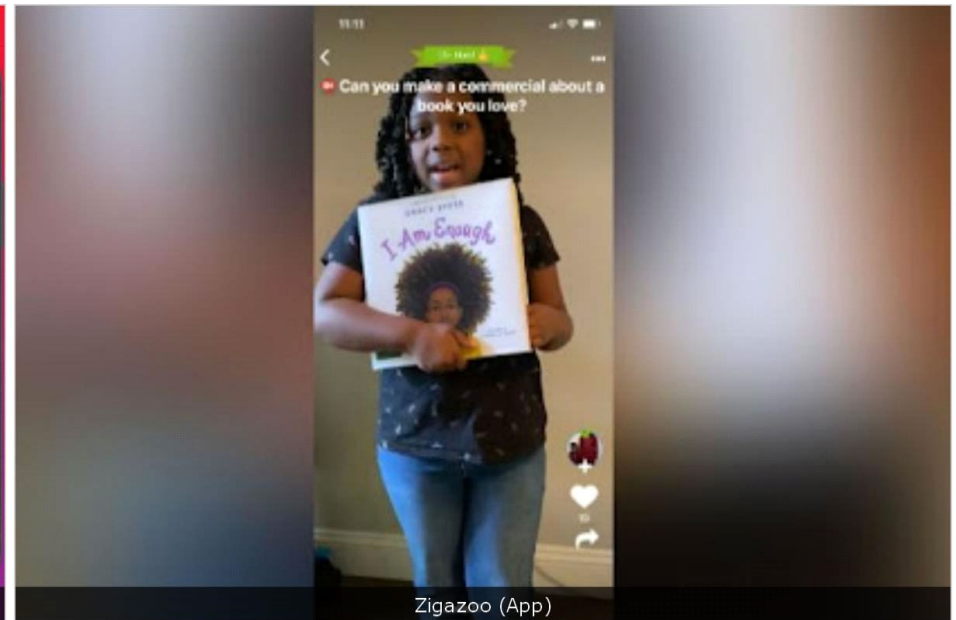
Katerina Holmes (Photographer)

SOCIAL CHANGE

As social media addresses the concerns of an upcoming generation of new users, updates to features and innovative features speak to growing concerns of privacy and the Alpha Generations demand for equality. Popular apps like Instagram introduce options for showcasing gender identity while apps like Zigazoo offer a kid-friendly version of Tiktok challenges.



Instagram's New Pronoun Option (App)



Zigazoo (App)

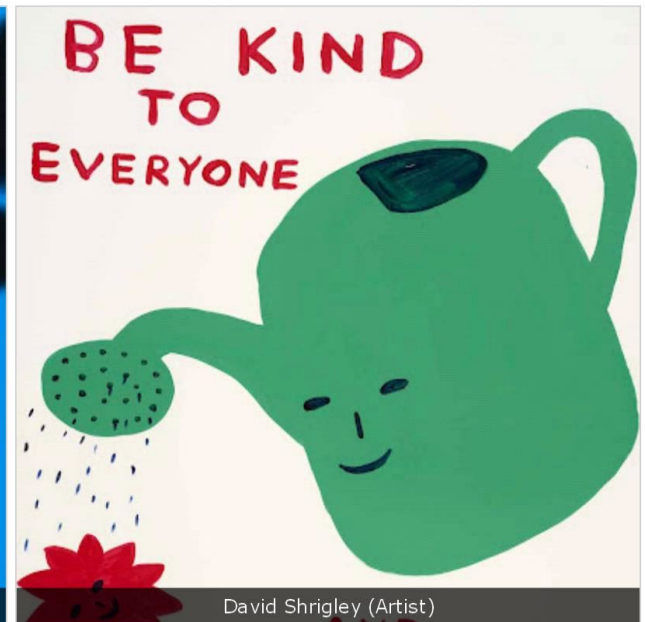
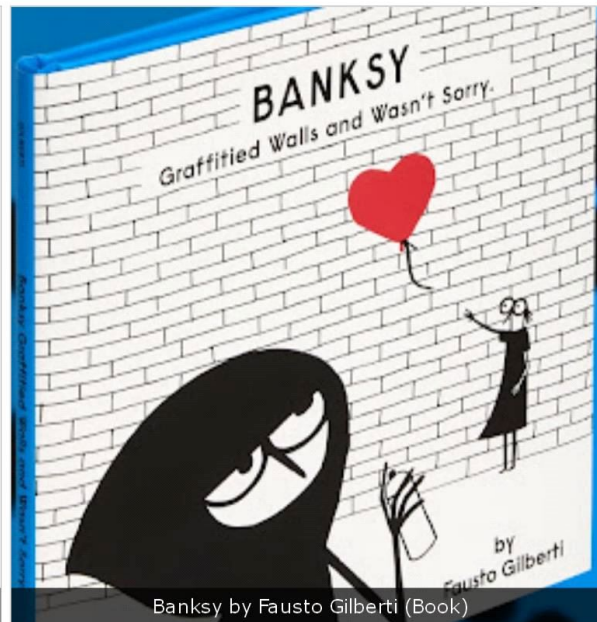
8 ARTIVISM

As art becomes increasingly accessible to everyone through online platforms like [theVOV](#), a UK-based initiative to create immersive online gallery experiences, children learn from new and diverse artists. Playful posters provide pithy guidelines and insights into life while books encourage kids to break boundaries and right wrongs with protest art and signs.



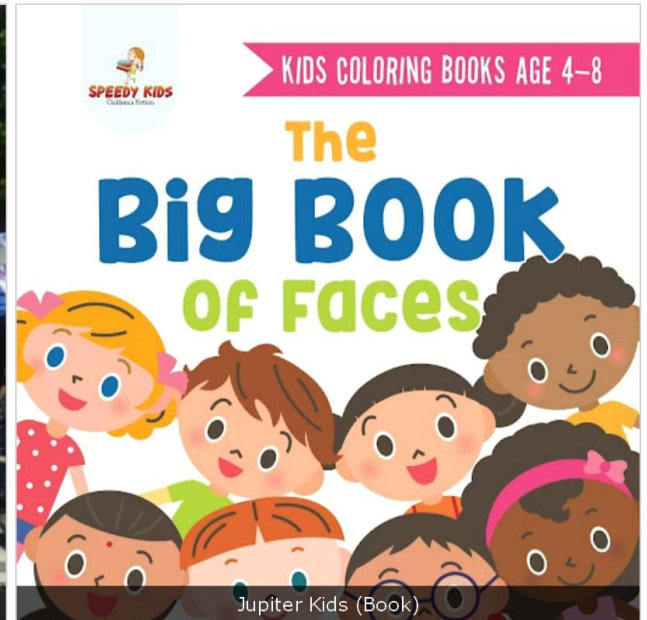
ATTITUDE ART

Renown artists create digestible works of art that fit in the nursery while remaining aesthetically beautiful. Posters by artists like [Ikki Kobayashi](#) and [David Shrigley](#) encourage positive attitudes while [Fausto Gilberti's book on Banksy](#) provides kid-friendly insight into artistic political activism.



CREATING CHANGE

Allowing kids to express themselves and the world around them, studios like [Kids Create Change](#) use art to promote social awareness and inspire collective social action in their communities. “[The Big Book of Faces](#)” by Jupiter Kids allows kids to learn about diversity as they color while [Crayola’s Multicultural Crayons](#) lets kids embrace their individuality.





Cottonbro (Photographer)

PROVOCATIONS

What does a population boom or bust mean for the childrenswear market in 5, 10, 15, 20 years from now? How will these specific countries affect your local economy and business?

Brand loyalty begins at childhood. How do you create quality products and services that will inspire the next generation to reach for them at the shop?

Rethink what sustainability means for your brand and go beyond sourcing organic materials. Consider a more circular structure like clothing rentals and consignment options.

This generation of kids is increasingly aware of societal issues and wants to put their money where their mouths are. How can you ensure your brand is actively and openly demonstrating your commitment to these causes repeatedly and not just when it's a trending topic?

Inclusive product is expected at an equal price point, convenience and design aesthetic. Expand your current offerings vs. creating "specialty" collections that only create further division.

Be aware of the ever-changing expectations, uses and innovations of social media and use them to effectively reach your target audience of parents and children.