

# Move over kids, ‘kidults’ are the new demographic shopping the toy aisle

Article

Everyone knows the expression “like a kid on Christmas morning.” But what if we told you that it’s not just children who are hoping for the season’s hottest toys?

Enter the “**kidult**.” The NPD Group defines this demographic as consumers ages 12 and older, and is the **biggest driver of growth for the toy industry** this year, according to the firm.

- The group represented 60% of the dollar growth in the industry in the last 12 months ending in September, despite accounting for a quarter of sales (totaling about \$9 billion in sales annually).
- **Consumers ages 18 and older represented** 14% of US toy industry sales in the 12 months ending in September, growing 19% year over year.
- In the first half of the year, toy sales growth among adults without children was higher than households with children, per The NPD Group.

**According to the Toy Association**, over half (58%) of adults bought toys and games for themselves last year. Top favorites included board games (purchased by 65%), arts, crafts, and building sets (61%), collectibles (53%), and video games (52%).

**You don't have to look far to see how adults are influencing the toy industry.**

**Lego leans in:** **The percentage of Lego's sales from adults** has increased fourfold over less than 10 years, according to Tormod Askildsen, Lego Group's head of adult fan of Lego engagement.

- **This increase in adult customers** led Lego to create more sets geared toward adults and to launch its **Adults Welcome** section on its website, which not only lists its 18+ sets but also gift guides, behind-the-scenes info, and recommendations.
- **"The pandemic certainly served as a catalyst** for this trend as adults found themselves stuck at home with nothing else to do with a lot of time in their hands," Genevieve Cruz, senior director at Lego, told The Washington Post. "But we do believe that the trend goes beyond the pandemic."

**Disney has its fans:** Dubbed "Disney Adults," there's a huge number of consumers who are obsessed with all things Disney.

- But it's not just about Mickey and Minnie; The Walt Disney Co. is cashing in on more adult-friendly franchises like "Star Wars" and "Marvel," which were named the fifth- and eighth-**best-performing media properties**, respectively, in 2021 by License Global.
- If Disney creates an Amazon Prime-like membership program (which it **is reportedly considering**), this could be a way to strengthen its adult consumer base by linking its retail, media, and park properties.

**More companies get in on the craze:**

- **Greta Gerwig's "Barbie" movie** is giving a new life to the famously ill-proportioned doll, which is sure to spur a Barbie renaissance (Though can it be called a renaissance when Barbie was named by The NPD Group as the **global top toy property** of 2021?).
- Or, if you're looking for dolls of a different nature, **Mattel's American Girl Cafe** has added more "adult" meal offerings and cocktails, which has grabbed the attention of **certain social media influencers**.
- In the realm of soft and squishy, Gen Z's devotion has turned **Squishmallows** into one of the most in-demand gifts of the season.
- And if you're feeling like getting wild (but not too wild), Build-a-Bear has got you covered. The **Bear Cave**, its site for consumers ages 18 and older, features adult-themed teddy bears and media property crossovers.

**Why it matters:** We forecast toys and hobby sales will grow 2.7% in 2023 to reach \$205.27 billion. Though that will only account for less than 3% of total retail sales, there's a massive opportunity for growth among teens and adults. Because the truth is, everyone deserves a shiny new toy every once in a while.

*This was originally featured in the Retail Daily newsletter. For more retail insights, statistics, and trends, [subscribe here](#).*