

LUXURY MEMO SPECIAL REPORTS

Children in luxury Luxury Memo special report

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Children of affluents have growing influence on purchases. Image credit: Maisonette

By SARAH RAMIREZ

As children's power as purchase influencers blossoms, a growing number of luxury brands are offering family-friendly experiences and goods to capitalize on affluent parents' desire to spoil their kids.

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Across sectors, including automotive, hospitality and apparel, there is untapped potential to appeal to affluents and their children, who represent future generations of luxury consumers. Through creative campaigns and activations, brands work to keep the focus on children while actively targeting parents' wallets.

"Childhood is an ideal time to capitalize on a new market and develop stronger brand advocacy and relevancy during a different life stage," said Dalia Strum, educator at [The Fashion Institute of Technology](#), New York. "The childrenswear business, in particular, allows another opportunity for brands to reconnect with their existing consumers as well as introducing their brand to potential consumers without having to focus on advertising or discounting."

Top five trends in luxury children's marketing

- **Childhood experiences**
By branching out from typical luxury events with family-friendly activities, brands have an opportunity to reach children in affluent families at an early age.
- **Kid-friendly campaigns**
When marketing children's goods, brands must strike a balance between what children want to see and catering to the parents who will eventually make purchases.
- **Family vacations**
Growing families, especially those with millennial parents who embrace experiential travel trends, represent a valuable new audience for marketers.
- **Mini-me fashions**
Through pop-ups and collaborations, more luxury labels are offering high-quality, stylish clothing tailored for

children.

- Family values

With younger affluents more likely to patronize brands with like-minded values, luxury brands are becoming more transparent about the family and children's causes they support.

Blooming generations

As millennials acquire more wealth, they are also expanding their families. These new generations represent a valuable opportunity for brands who want to both expand their services and offerings, as well as build relationships with consumers from an early age.

Fashionbi defines three prominent generations as Generation X, born between 1965 and 1980; Generation Y, better known as millennials, born between 1981 and 1995; and Generation Z, born between 1996 and 2010.

The majority of Gen Z is still under 18, making their parents, Generation X, still primarily responsible for their spending. People born after 2010 are primarily children of millennials and considered Generation Alpha ([see story](#)).



Today's children are tomorrow's luxury consumers. Image credit: Baby Dior

While children might not have the autonomy to spend, they are still gathering ideas on luxury from a young age.

Research suggests that children as young as six years can exhibit a preference for scarce over abundant goods.

Scientists from the Warwick Business School believe that scarcity preference is a trait that humans develop over time. Knowing that competition increases a sense of urgency in people is something luxury brands can apply to their marketing and selling strategies ([see story](#)).

High-end brands can host family-friendly events and children-oriented campaigns to expose kids to luxury experiences at an early, impressionable age.

For instance, when Marc Jacobs debuted its fragrance Daisy Love, the U.S. fashion label hosted a family event at Santa Monica Pier. Families had the chance to ride the Daisy Love Ferris Wheel, play games and win prizes and get their pictures taken in a photo booth ([see story](#)).

Similarly this past holiday season, German automaker Mercedes-Benz catered to drivers who are still years away from getting their license with a pop-up dealership. Dubbed the Lil' Benz Dealership, Mercedes' pop-up allowed children to test drive its toy cars, as well as receive coloring book owner manuals and customized toy driver's licenses ([see story](#)).

Mercedes-Benz's "The bestest or nothing" campaign

Other brands incorporate kid-friendly touches in more subtle ways.

Department store chain Neiman Marcus worked with the Girl Scouts of Northeast Texas and Dallas' Medical City Children's Hospital kids teaching kids program to create a new Kid's Fit Menu that was used in its in-store restaurants ([see story](#)).

Such generational understanding is key to marketers who must balance kid-friendly appeal in campaigns viewed by parents and children alike.

In a content series sponsored by Cond Nast Britain Digital, childrenswear retailer Childrensalon celebrated the art

of storytelling for all ages.

Despite a degree of simplification for younger readers, the "Fashion Fairytales" told the true stories behind three fashion designers who create children's lines. Keeping the tales age agnostic, the stories were told through illustration, similarly to a graphic novel or children's book ([see story](#)).

More recently, British department store Harrods celebrated its role in the film "Peter Rabbit" through a multichannel effort aimed at all ages. Surrounding the U.K. premiere of the movie, Harrods partnered with Sony Pictures to bring the world of Peter Rabbit to life through windows, in-store activations and retail theater ([see story](#)).



Peter Rabbit has landed at Harrods. Image credit: Harrods

Taking children's campaigns one step further, French department store chain Galeries Lafayette put the creation of last year's holiday campaign in control of children for a whimsical dream realization. The retailer challenged the children of France to come up with their own Christmas characters and stories, cultivating its finale with in-store activations and 3D animations of the children-dreamed ideas ([see story](#)).

Even when luxury brands are marketing children's products, they still retain their positioning.

Collections and corresponding campaigns from Baby Dior have a more whimsical twist than those geared towards adults, but retain the focus on heritage and fashion.

In an effort to combine content that kids can enjoy and find appealing while also catering to the parents who will make that purchase, Baby Dior often uses many of the familiar trappings of modern fashion video campaigns but with children rather than adults. This is the case in "Paris, je t'aime," which depicted a boy and a girl wandering the streets of Paris in immaculate clothing ([see story](#)).

"The desire for a person's child to wear something similar or even the same as their outfit is an emotional purchase, which are typically impulsive with higher price tags," Ms. Strum said.

Family-friendly travel

With the number of luxury travelers only expected to grow, hospitality brands need to strategize how to best appeal to these customers' evolving habits, including their focus on family.

Millennial consumers with children are a significant \$39.2 billion portion of the travel market, and they plan to up their vacation spending by 12 percent in the coming year. About a third of all vacations taken in the last year included children, and minors are having a heavy influence on family travel plans, making both parents and their progeny a target for travel marketing ([see story](#)).

"Happy kids are critical to the success of a family vacation," said Amy Rectenwald, luxury travel advisor at [Largay Travel](#), a Virtuoso agency, Conneaut Lake, PA.

"Everyone seems to realize that the parents and older adults are happiest when they see the younger members of their families having the time of their lives," she said. "Not only does their happiness bring joy, but it lets them relax and enjoy their vacation in a guilt-free way."



Rosewood's Lego package was part of the 12 Days of Rosewood holiday promotion. Image courtesy of Rosewood

For guest with families, Rosewood London in High Holborn worked with Lego for an interactive experience, including a suite decorated with Lego versions of British landmarks, a trip to Legoland via private helicopter and a personalized Lego sculpture ([see story](#)).

Other hotel groups offer children's programming with an educational focus. Entertaining alternatives to sight-seeing can enable parents with young children to travel and still participate in experiences geared towards adults.

This summer, Hilton's Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts partnered with British toy company Hamleys to create a unique treat for children at three of its properties across China. Waldorf Astoria also offered parents the option to bring their children to the Kids Edutainment Club, an installation that combined fun and games with opportunities for learning ([see story](#)).

The Ritz-Carlton's long-running program, Ritz Kids, introduces children ages four to 12 to environmental adventures. The initiative is guided by four pillars: water, land, environmental responsibility and culture, which are broad enough to let each property take a fresh approach to the programming.

A look at Ritz Kids programming in the Asia-Pacific region

Since all the brand's properties are embedded in unique locations, the programming inevitably varies from place to place. Partnerships include environmentalist Jean-Michel Cousteau's Ocean Futures Society and a Tesla Experience with energy challenges at Lake Tahoe ([see story](#)).

"Innovative and authentic ways for children and families to wholly enjoy the cultures of the destinations they are visiting has become of increasing importance to our guests and an integral part of the luxury hospitality experience," said Lisa Holladay, global brand leader for **The Ritz-Carlton**, Bethesda, MD. "It is no longer enough to simply offer kids clubs, but rather families are seeking experiential programming which provides a deeper look into the surrounding environment and the many aspects which make it so special.

"Programming will only continue to get more creative and engaging in order to captivate families as they create shared memories to carry with them forever," she said.

High-end hospitality brands also offer experiences geared towards the older children in affluent families, in a continuation of building consumer relationships before young affluents leave the nest.

With many wealthy parents sending their children off to summer camp, private aviator NetJets tapped into the desire for parents to visit by operating day-trip flights from the Hamptons to 25 different campgrounds along the East Coast ([see story](#)).

For families with children looking at colleges and beginning the application process, XOJet and Mandarin Oriental worked with an elite college counselor to help ease the process. A special college tour package allowed families to fly private to multiple destinations to visit colleges while staying at Mandarin Oriental suites ([see story](#)).

Pint-sized products

Luxury labels and retailers are also expanding their product offerings as they appeal to affluents with growing families.

Childrenswear is a growing category that is already worth \$300 billion. From 2012 to 2017, growth in the sector surpassed men and women's fashions to account for 12 percent of the overall apparel category, according to a

report from Fashionbi ([see story](#)).

While some brands introduce new, miniature pieces inspired by their collections, others partner with retailers that exclusively cater to the childrenswear market. These high-end collections geared towards the youngest consumers are a clever tactic to attracting affluent parents.



"Mini-me" outfits are a popular trend in luxury children's wear. Image credit: Maisonette

"There has been a total resurgence of mommy-and-me looks, with an increasing number of children's brands committing to producing a coordinating adult look," said Sylvana Ward-Durrett, cofounder/CEO of [Maisonette](#), New York.

Founded in 2017, Maisonette is positioned as a lifestyle destination for ages zero to 12, with selections of apparel, accessories, furniture and home dcor. Alongside products aggregated from independent baby boutiques worldwide, Maisonette sells some labels directly to customers ([see story](#)).

French couture house Christian Dior was at the forefront of luxury apparel for young children and opened the first Baby Dior store in 1967.

The most recent Baby Dior campaign film features tiny but refined travelers, appealing to parents who want the best quality experiences and clothing for their children. While the collection itself is not minimalist, the whimsical vignette does present a simpler view of childhood that should resonate with adults looking to dress their children in the designer clothing ([see story](#)).

Baby Dior's spring/summer 2019 campaign features a playful train ride

After a collaboration with Gwyneth Paltrow's Goop for a baby shoe, French footwear label Christian Louboutin decided to take its red bottoms to a smaller size.

The limited-edition collection, consisting of three booties in two prints or red silk, was only available on Louboutin's Web site. Each pair was priced at \$250 with only 600 in production. ([see story](#)).

Childrenswear collaborations are a common way for luxury brands to experiment with pint-sized collections, reaching new consumers while minimizing risk.

"With luxury, it's important to note that fabric quality, craftsmanship and attention to detail are evident," Maisonette's Ms. Ward-Durrett said. "Parents respond to that, especially when it comes to an item that will get a lot of use, such as a winter coat or a special occasion dress."

This past fall, Italian fashion label Fendi released a special capsule collection, Fendi Special Edition for Childrensalon. The limited-edition collection for the luxury children's ecommerce retailer was based on Fendi's ready-to-wear line, featuring its past FF logo, in contrast with white, navy blue or bubblegum pink for girls and varsity green for boys ([see story](#)).

After dabbling in childrenswear through partnerships with individual brands, online retailer Net-A-Porter made another investment in the market with exclusive capsule collections for children ages one to 12. Its Kids Collective concept debuted in January with offerings from six labels for boys and girls.

Nordstrom gives back during the back-to-school shopping season. Image credit: Nordstrom

For its most recent biannual Fashionable Fundraiser, retailer Bloomingdale's partnered with the Kind Campaign, an organization that works to end girl-on-girl bullying. In addition to a kindness-inspired capsule collection, each Bloomingdale's location featured photo and art installations appealing to younger female shoppers ([see story](#)).

This winter, outerwear label Moncler linked with children's charity UNICEF to help young residents in cold climates keep warm. The Warmly Moncler for UNICEF project gives babies, children and their families resources such as medicine, newborn kits and blankets to aid them during the winter months ([see story](#)).

Other brands support families through more hands-on efforts and company policies.

For instance, retail group Yoox Net-A-Porter Group has participated in Code.org's Hour of Code initiative by teaching coding classes in primary and secondary schools. As of 2017, YNAP has educated more than 1,400 youth in digital subjects as it works to ensure the next generation has necessary skills and give greater access to training ([see story](#)).

In a show of support for its employees and their families, beauty group Esté Lauder Companies extended paid parental leave to 20 weeks and offers enhanced flexibility to new parents just returning to work ([see story](#)).

"It's important for luxury brands to be transparent about which causes they support because that's part of their brand DNA and where they plan to allocate resources and support," FIT's Ms. Strum said. "Consumers have become more conscientious towards donating and investing as long as it aligns with their interests and beliefs."

Best-practice tips for children's marketing

- Sylvana Ward-Durrett, Maisonette
 - "It's so important to build trust, as we make a commitment to our customers to provide them with the best possible assortment there is. We have become the style authority in the market by keeping our standards high. Our customer knows she can look to us to solve her problem: finding a quick, easy and beautiful way to shop for her children."
- Lisa Holladay, The Ritz-Carlton
 - "Authenticity is critical in marketing. We always strive to create truly engaging experiences for families staying at our luxury hotels and resorts, which is translated through all of our marketing efforts in order to resonate with both existing guests and those who may choose to stay with us in the future."
- Amy Rectenwald, Largay Travel, a Virtuoso agency
 - "It's all in the details. Present all of the possibilities in each category of travel you are promoting."
 - "Let [clients] know through photographs and videos how you can customize each itinerary to match the specific wish list of each family or family member."
- Dalia Strum, The Fashion Institute of Technology
 - "During the past few years, we're seeing an influx of pregnant women and new moms across the runway, [as well as] bloggers and celebrities, so it's quite timely and effective to reach this new wave of moms combined with an assortment of influencers who each have amazing style."