

# TREND TRACKER

2026 Q1

Report Preview

## ABOUT THE Q1 2026 TREND TRACKER

Kids are not one audience, and this report shows exactly where the biggest divides are shaping behavior now. The Q1 2026 KidSay Trend Tracker reveals how tweens ages 8-11 and teens ages 12-15 differ across media habits, platform use, spending power, food ordering, and AI adoption. For brands, strategists, and insights teams, this report delivers a sharper view of how kids actually live, choose, and engage right now, with the age and gender breakouts needed to plan smarter content, partnerships, products, and marketing.

### What this report reveals

- ◆ **Two media worlds are forming.** YouTube plays a very different role for tweens than it does for teens.
- ◆ **Age is the real dividing line.** Across many digital behaviors, tween-versus-teen differences matter more than boys-versus-girls.
- ◆ **Platform behavior is fragmenting fast.** There is no single center of gravity in kids' media anymore.
- ◆ **Economic independence is arriving earlier.** Kids are ordering food, using payment tools, and making more decisions with their own money.
- ◆ **AI is already part of daily life.** For many kids, AI is no longer emerging. It is already embedded in how they learn, play, and explore.

### Food Delivery

**49%**  
of teens & tweens  
say they order food  
delivery on their own

Also, explore data on kids' top delivery apps and favorite restaurant brands

### 'TV' Platforms

**34%**  
of tweens most  
often watch TV  
shows on YouTube  
vs. 15% of teens

Explore favorite YouTube channels, TV shows, movies, and viewing habits

### Kids & AI

**78%**  
of kids who  
know what AI is  
have used it

See what they use AI for most and which platforms they turn to first

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**KIDSay**

## INSIDE THE Q1 2026 TREND TRACKER

Explore **60+** data sets across the topics shaping tweens' and teens' lives today. In addition to the breadth of data, the report includes a 63-page PDF with KidSay's expert analysis in the Executive Summary with Topline summary and "So What?" implications, ethnographic Kid and Parent Profiles, trend data, and category snapshots.

- ◆ Entertainment and media habits
- ◆ Social, digital, and device behavior
- ◆ AI awareness, usage, and attitudes about the future of AI
- ◆ Spending, saving, and financial independence
- ◆ Food, drinks, restaurants, and delivery behavior
- ◆ Snack discovery, decision-making, and purchase journeys
- ◆ Toys, games, and play patterns
- ◆ Lifestyle shifts, school culture, and emerging attitudes
- ◆ Brand awareness, coolness with category-level reads

## THIS DATA HELPS YOU:

- ◆ Identify where tween and teen behaviors and interests diverge
- ◆ Understand how kids discover, choose, and influence brands
- ◆ Track shifts in platforms, habits, and everyday decision-making
- ◆ Spot early signals with implications for content, product, partnerships, and marketing strategy

## METHODOLOGY

The Q1 2026 Trend Tracker is based on a nationally representative survey of 1,200 U.S. kids ages 8-15, fielded in the first quarter of 2026. Results are reported for the total sample and key subgroups by age and gender. KidSay's school network serves as a primary recruitment source, helping deliver direct intelligence from real, age-verified kids.

**Connect with KidSay to purchase this report or learn more about enterprise subscription packages.**

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### Finances

**46%** of tweens & **65%** of teens have a financial account with **Cash App (28%)** being the most common one.

### Snacks & Screens

When kids are using screens, their top snack combos are **Doritos & Coke, popcorn & water, and chips & water.**