

NIQ Perspective

Holiday Shopping's New Playbook:

Value, Brand Trust, and Family Connection Drive Purchases

Here’s what industry experts are saying:

Holiday toy shoppers are approaching the season with clear priorities: trusted brands, meaningful play and smart value.

From building kits and video games to puzzles and board games, consumers are choosing products that balance entertainment, education and family engagement. At the same time, budget considerations are shaping decisions more than ever.

For brands and retailers:

- Lead with trusted brands and recognizable franchises
- Balance product value with play value
- Market to both kids and gift-givers

Understanding how shoppers evaluate toys, from wish-list requests to brand familiarity and long-term enjoyment, will be critical for brands and retailers looking to capture holiday demand.



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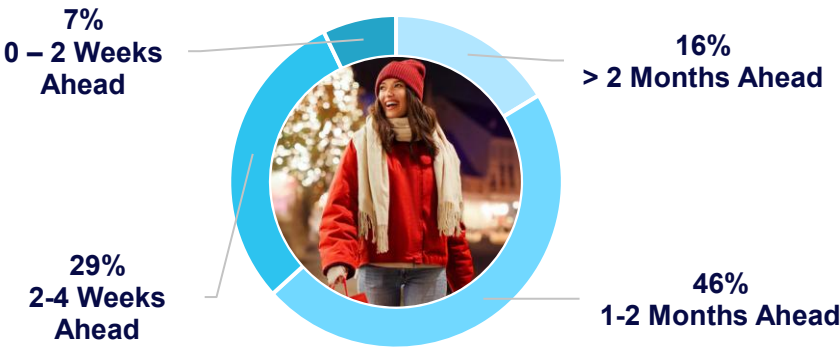
\$534

The average spend for 2026 Holiday Gift Shoppers.



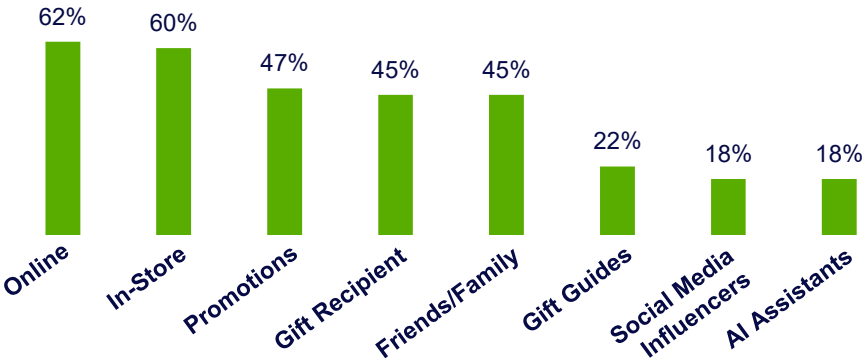
Holiday Shopping Timing

More than 80% of Holiday Shoppers expect to shop within the two months leading up to the holidays, while Millennials and Gen Z expect to make broader use of promotional events such as Black Friday or Cyber Monday.



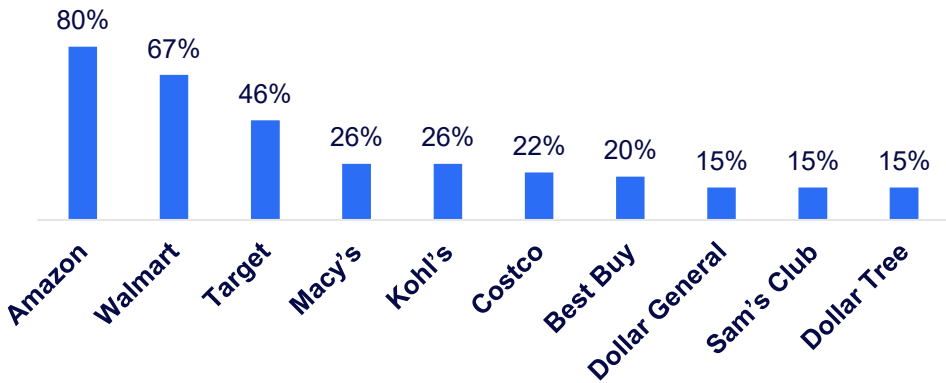
How Purchase Decisions Are Made

Holiday Shoppers expect to browse both online (62%) and in-store (60%), to decide what items to buy when holiday gift shopping this year.



Shopping Location

Mass online and in-store retailers drive expected shopping location while discount and value retailers see strong engagement.

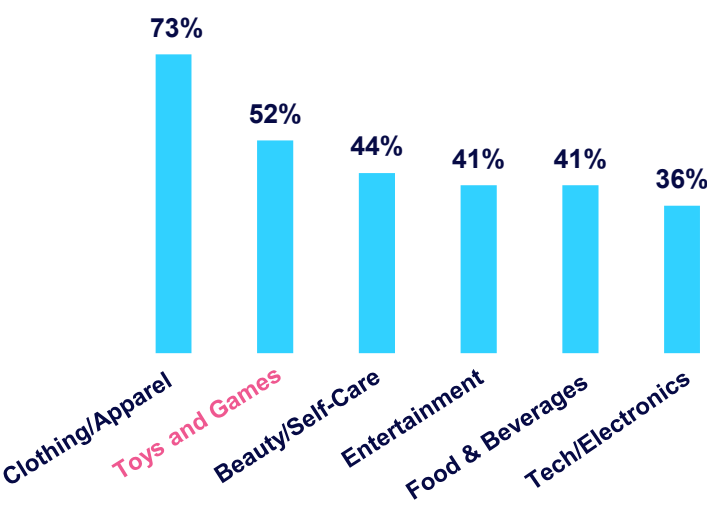


Toy Standouts

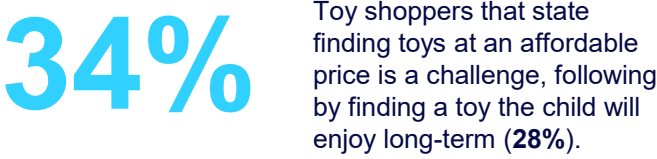
From building blocks to board games, which toys Are filling up holiday carts?



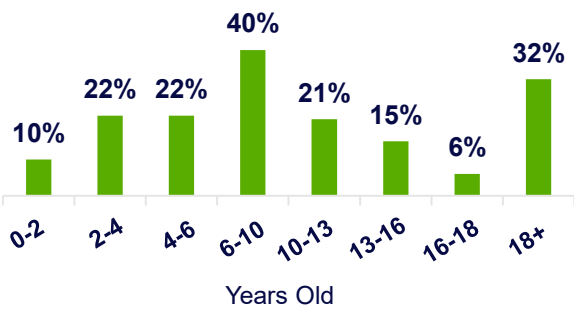
Which Items are on your shopping/gifting list?



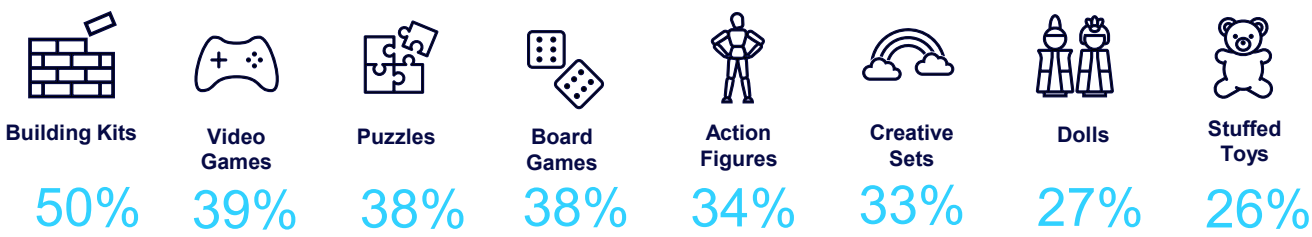
Challenges faced by holiday toy shoppers



How old are toy gift recipients?



Which Toy items are on your gifting list?



Which Toy brands are on your gifting list?

51% of toy holiday shoppers plan to purchase items that the gift recipient specifically asked for, followed by toys that encourage family time at 41%.

