

The Grocer

Focus On: Infant & Childcare by Lyndsey Cambridge (Lyndsey.Cambridge@thegrocer.co.uk)

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The infant & childcare market is at a difficult age. Sales have fallen 7.5% on volumes down 6.1% [Kantar 52 w/e 18 April 2021] as locked down parents have had more time at home to spend cooking from scratch. Sales of nappies, which you'd think are a non-negotiable essential item, have slumped by 15% in volume terms. Some suggest this is because parents have had more time to toilet train their kids in the past year. Now analysts are warning that spend on premium items will give way to own label. So, what is the outlook? What will it take to drive value back into the infant & childcare market?

Organic and premium products

To what extent can brands keep their heads above water by pushing premium credentials such as organic or health benefits? The past year has seen the launch of the first new born nappies endorsed by the British Skin Foundation and other players looking to cash in on the move to more 'natural' and organic products by bringing out new milk and food products. How are they doing?

Own label

Own label infant and childcare products are outperforming brands. This feature will pay close attention to why this is, exploring how retailers' own label ranges have performed over the past year and how they have developed in terms of product offerings and how they are merchandised in store.

Stockpiling

This feature will also explore the extent to which the market was impacted by parents stockpiling items such as nappies and babyfood at the start of the pandemic. Has this had a lasting impact on how shoppers buy such items, with more people buying bigger packs less often online or via subscription models?

Pricing and the economic outlook

Prices in most categories have risen over the past year as a result of the scaling back of promotions to manage demand. Not this market: average prices are down 1.4%. Why? And as consumer draw in their purse strings over coming months, are we likely to see further price deflation?

Innovation and NPD

How has the market developed in terms of NPD over the past year? This feature will also explore the latest trends, profiling some of the most interesting and innovative new launches in a separate panel. Brands should supply a high resolution and product details of new launches including launch date, rsp and stockists.