

The Grocer

Focus On: Infant and Childcare

By Pola Lem pola.lem@thegrocer.co.uk

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As the UK comes out of the cost of living crisis, baby food is performing ahead of the category. Take-home volumes are up 2.6% in the last 12 months, according to Kantar. But despite this duo of good news for baby food, there are challenges ahead: online retail in bulk is undercutting prices and parents are making their own baby mashes. Then there's the public debate over ultra-processed foods and the ongoing controversy over levels of sugar levels in baby foods. So how can brands ensure growth? Which of them are adapting to cost and health demands most successfully? And how are they contending with online competition?

Online and bulk competitors: With discount retailers and online sales gaining market share, how do brands and retailers keep up with the competition? Among baby food brands, who is lowering costs? What are the implications?

Sugar concerns: How have worries over sugar in baby foods affected the category? Are brands reformulating their products? Has the controversy created room for new entrants to come into the category?

Baby formula: Are rising costs nudging more mothers to breastfeed? How are brands responding?

Branded vs own label: Some baby food brands, particularly those offering premium or organic products, have lost share as cost-conscious families go to own label. What's the impact of own label on leading brands?

Sustainability: Eco concerns continue to make inroads in the infant and childcare category, with parents opting for reusable nappies over disposables. Meanwhile, in baby food, pouches face recycling concerns. Last year, one brand pledged to make the majority of its pouches recyclable. How much is sustainability influencing consumer choice in this category? How are brands responding?

Innovation: What have been the biggest innovations over the past year, and what is the common factor in their success? Which brands have innovated most?

Innovations: Profile four new products or ranges, ideally ones that have not appeared in The Grocer before. We need launch date, rsp, and a hi-res picture of each.