App-titudes Europe

2016

An exploration of children's favorite digital games, how they
select them, and why they engage with them in France, Germany and UK

playscience

CGA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

METHODOLOGY ———————————————————————————◉

In January 2016, PlayScience conducted online surveys in three countries—France, Germany, and the United Kingdom (UK)—with parents and children between the ages of 6 and 14 years. Parents completed the first portion of the survey, and children completed the second, with parents advised to stay nearby in case children, particularly those in the younger age range, needed assistance.

Parents and children were asked a series of questions to investigate which game apps children are playing on mobile devices and the context of their playful engagement, as well as how age and gender play a role. The research explored the reasons behind parents' and children's selections of favorite apps, with a particular emphasis on the most important app features.

The same survey was administered to 1,355 parents in the United States in June 2015. Any interesting or insightful comparisons between the two rounds of research are made throughout the report, where relevant.

SAMPLE ———————————————————————————◉

FRANCE

The survey was completed by a representative sample of 1,126 parents who have children between the ages of 6 and 14 years. There were slightly more boys than girls (43% girls, 57% boys) and children were divided into three age groups (6 to 8: 30%; 9 to 11: 34%; 12 to 14: 36%). Most parents were married (85%), had a high school diploma or equivalent (30%), earned an annual income of less than 42,000 € (64%), lived in an urban area (39%), and had two children in the home (45%).

GERMANY

The survey was completed by a representative sample of 822 parents who have children between the ages of 6 and 14 years. There were slightly more boys than girls (44% girls, 56% boys) and children were divided into three age groups (6 to 8: 32%; 9 to 11: 33%; 12 to 14: 35%). Most parents were married (85%), had trade or vocational training (49%), earned an annual income of less than 70,000 € (75%), lived in either an urban (37%) or suburban (37%) area, and had two children in the home (44%).

UNITED KINGDOM

The survey was completed by a representative sample of 883 parents who have children between the ages of 6 and 14 years. There were slightly more boys than girls (46% girls, 54% boys) and children were divided into three age groups (6 to 8: 32%; 9 to 11: 36%; 12 to 14: 32%). Most parents were married (81%), had a Bachelor's Degree (24%), earned an annual income of less than £50,000 (78%), lived in a suburban area (50%), and had two children in the home (42%).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONT.)

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Children's preferences for playful games include a wide range of apps and a variety of types of engagement, especially when gender and age are taken into consideration. The feature that children most enjoy about their favorite app does vary depending on these subgroups.

- **For girls and younger children, characters are key, whether it be characters they know or ones they can create.**
- **For boys, the priority is action and excitement.**
- **Older children prefer games that challenge them and that potentially involve a social component.**

The country in which children live also plays a role in the app features and characteristics that they prioritize.

- **Girls in France and the UK want to use their imagination, while girls in Germany want to laugh.**
- **Girls in Germany also like apps that they are good at, but this is a bigger factor among boys in France and the UK.**

When children were asked to design their own app, the feature that they listed as the most important was the ability to create their own avatar. However, this feature is uncommon in many of the top apps for children, suggesting that avatar customizability is not required for a successful app, but its absence in the current marketplace also presents an opportunity for developers to incorporate a unique feature that may give them an advantage over the competition.

Any decision regarding app features should also consider the device that children are using. Although the lists of children's favorite apps for tablets and smartphones are very similar, children are more likely to play their favorite apps on tablets, likely because of higher rates of access to these devices.

Since parents are primarily the ones deciding which apps to download, it is important to understand their concerns and desires, as well as their practices regarding the decision-making process.

- **Two-thirds of children in France and Germany have a say in which apps are selected for download, while three-quarters of children in the UK play a role.**
- **Consistent across France, Germany, and the UK is parents emphasis of the importance of an app that focuses on important skills and subjects, offers multiple types of engagement, comes from a trusted brand, and that their child has prior positive experience with.**
- **The focus on academic skills is particularly prevalent for younger children.**

Once a new app is developed, the next question becomes how best to spread the word. Most children hear about new apps from their friends, followed by classmates and parents. Very few reported learning about new apps through advertisements. It seems then that apps being developed for children should target children and their peers, while still taking parents' requirements into consideration.
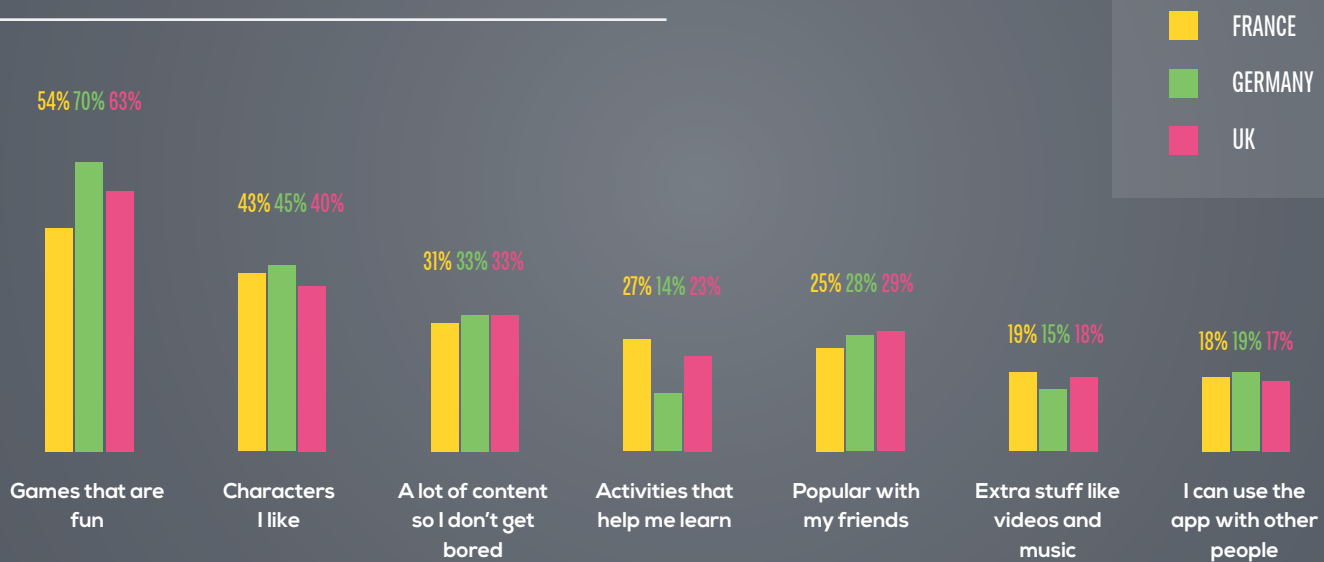
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TOP PLAYFUL APPS FOR KIDS 6-14

Across all three countries – France, Germany, and the UK – the most important criteria when children are selecting their favorite app is, not surprisingly, fun. Over half of French children and about two-thirds of children in Germany and the UK listed fun as their top app requirement, which is similar to the percentage of children in the United States rating fun as a number one priority. Children in all four countries also prioritize likeable characters and a wide variety of content to keep them entertained and engaged.

In contrast, one of the least in-demand features is an ability to use the app with other people.

FIG 1. **MOST IMPORTANT APP FEATURES, BY COUNTRY**

Legend:
- FRANCE
- GERMANY
- UK

Feature	France	Germany	UK
Games that are fun	54%	70%	63%
Characters I like	43%	45%	40%
A lot of content so I don't get bored	31%	33%	33%
Activities that help me learn	27%	14%	23%
Popular with my friends	25%	28%	29%
Extra stuff like videos and music	19%	15%	18%
I can use the app with other people	18%	19%	17%

TOP PLAYFUL APPS FOR KIDS 6-14 (CONT.)

Despite preferring similar app features, children in each of these three countries list very different apps as their favorites. The top choice in France, LEGO® Friends, is shared by less than 5% of the sample, indicating a large amount of diversity in app preference. However, while LEGO® Friends tops the list for tablets in this country, it comes in second for smartphones, just behind Clash of Clans. In Germany, Angry Birds (13.1%), Minecraft: Pocket Edition (8.2%), and FIFA 15 Ultimate Team (5.6%) stand out significantly from the rest of the top rated apps, with rankings and percentages that stay consistent across devices. In the UK, Minecraft Stop-Motion Movie Creator tops the charts for both tablets (6.0%) and smartphones (1.9%).
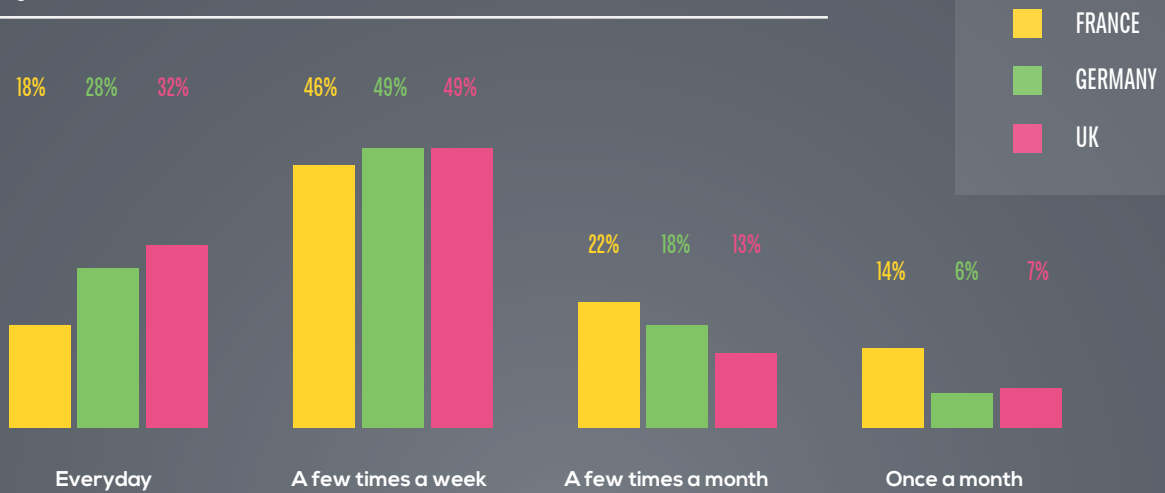
Table 1. **CHILDREN'S OVERALL FAVORITE APPS, BY COUNTRY**

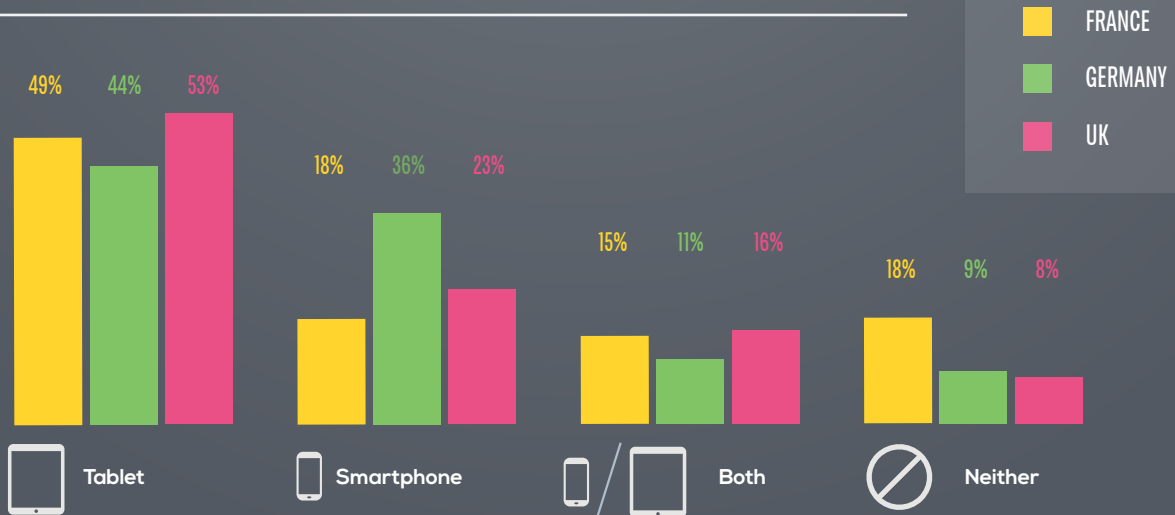|	FRANCE	GERMANY	UK
1	LEGO® (4.6%)	Angry Birds Star Wars (13.1%)	Minecraft Stop-Motion Movie Creator (10.6%)
2	Camp Pokémon (3.2%)	Minecraft: Pocket Edition (8.2%)	Animal Jam - Play Wild! (3.5%)
3	Avengers Origins: Assemble! (3.0%)	FIFA 15 Ultimate Team (5.6%)	A+ Spelling Test (2.9%)
4	Clash of Clans (2.8%)	Minecraft: Story Mode (3.8%)	YouTube (2.3%)
5	Star Wars - Heroes Path (2.7%)	Bibi & Tina: Pferdeabenteuer (3.4%)	Ben 10 Cavern Run (2.0%)
6	Avengers Origins: Hulk (2.6%)	Bibi & Tina (2.9%)	Club Penguin (1.8%)
7	Barbie® Fashionistas® (2.6%)	Barbie® Fashionistas® (2.8%)	Star Wars Journeys: Beginnings (1.8%)
8	Apprendre à lire et écrire (2.5%)	LEGO® STAR WARS (2.6%)	Barbie® Fashionistas® (1.7%)
9	Barbie Superstar! - Music Video Maker (2.0%)	Camp Pokémon (2.4%)	Minecraft (1.7%)
10	Minecraft (2.0%)	Barbie Superstar! - Music Video Maker (1.8%)	10 Minutes a Day Times Tables/ Ben 10 Game Generator 4D – Lite/ The LEGO® Movie Video Game (1.6%)

TOP PLAYFUL APPS FOR KIDS 6-14 (CONT.)

The majority of children in each country play their favorite app at least a few times a week, and anywhere from one-quarter to one-third report playing every day. This frequency of play is most common among children in the UK (32%) and least prevalent among children in France (18%). Compared to children in these European countries, children in the United States are much more likely to be playing with their favorite apps, with nearly half using the app every day (44%).

FIG 2. FREQUENCY WITH WHICH CHILDREN PLAY FAVORITE APP, BY COUNTRY

FRANCE
GERMANY
UK

	Everyday	A few times a week	A few times a month	Once a month
France	18%	46%	22%	14%
Germany	28%	49%	18%	6%
UK	32%	49%	13%	7%

Most children opt for a tablet over a smartphone. This trend may be due the fact that children have greater access, and are more likely to personally own, tablets versus smartphones. Interestingly, slightly more children in Germany own smartphones than tablets and, perhaps as a result, the gap in use of the two devices is smaller than in France or the UK. This is an indication that easy device access does play a role. However, the fact that the tablet is still more highly preferred overall speaks to the potential for the trend to be due to the unique, desirable features of the device.

Fig 3. DEVICE WITH WHICH CHILDREN PREFER TO PLAY FAVORITE APP, BY COUNTRY

FRANCE
GERMANY
UK

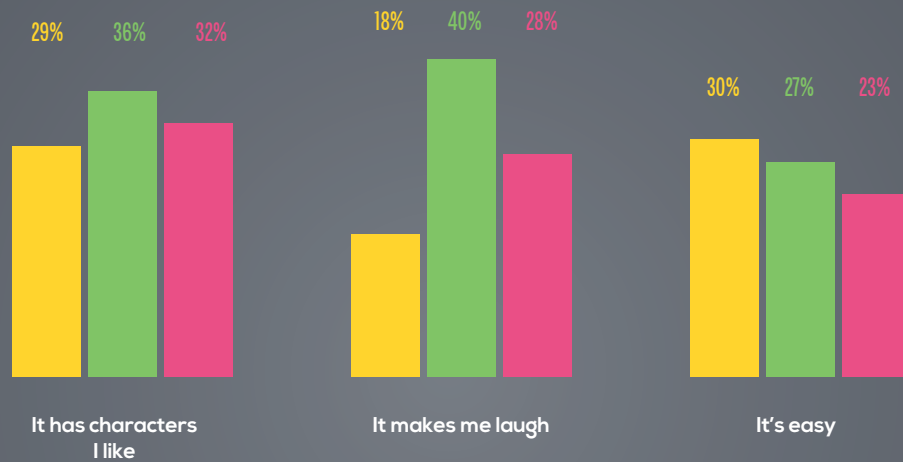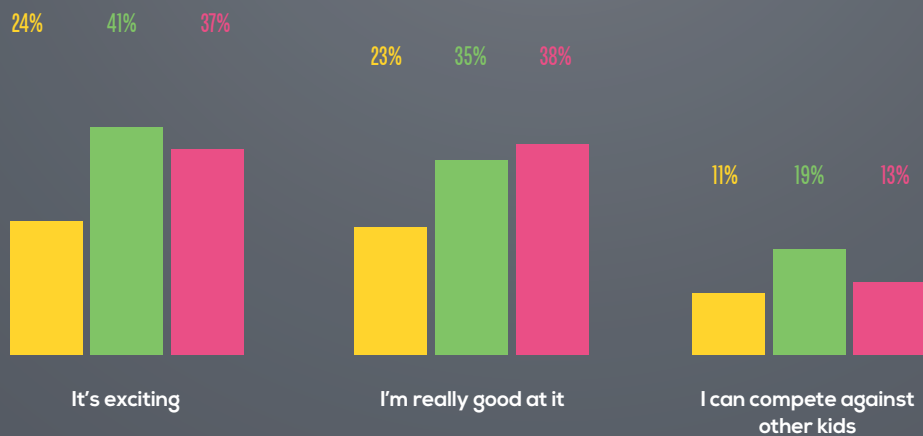|	Tablet	Smartphone	Both	Neither
France	49%	18%	15%	18%
Germany	44%	36%	11%	9%
UK	53%	23%	16%	8%

TOP PLAYFUL APPS FOR KIDS 6-14 (CONT.)

GENDER DIFFERENCES

Major trends occurring across all three countries are girls' affinity for an app with likeable, familiar, and/or cute and fun characters, the ability to create a personal story, features that make them laugh, and an app that is easy to use. For boys, it is imperative that an app have action games, exciting and challenging components, features that make them feel like they are really good at the game, and the ability to create an avatar. In general, girls seem to favor opportunities for creativity and self-expression, while boys prioritize action and gameplay.

Fig 4. REASONS FOR GIRL'S SELECTIONS OF FAVORITE APPS, BY COUNTRY

	It has characters I like	It makes me laugh	It's easy
France	29%	18%	30%
Germany	36%	40%	27%
UK	32%	28%	23%

Fig 5. REASONS FOR BOY'S SELECTIONS OF FAVORITE APPS, BY COUNTRY

	It's exciting	I'm really good at it	I can compete against other kids
France	24%	23%	11%
Germany	41%	35%	19%
UK	37%	38%	13%

FRANCE   GERMANY   UK

4

There are some country-specific preferences, however. In France and the UK, girls prioritize an app that allows them to use their imagination, while girls in Germany are more concerned with apps that make them laugh. Apps that are exciting and challenging are key for boys in Germany and the UK. Girls in Germany also want an app that they are good at, but this is more likely to be a feature of interest for boys in the other two countries. In contrast, in the United States, both boys and girls say that the main reason behind their selection of their favorite app is that they are good at it, suggesting that the value placed on feeling competent may be more gender-based in European countries.

When designing their own app, girls in France, Germany, and the UK rank having cute and fun characters as the most important feature, much more so than do boys. Boys do want to create avatars, and in fact this feature is the number one criterion for boys in France, but action and excitement are "must haves" for boys across all three countries. Girls in France and Germany also want to be able to develop their own stories. Interestingly, although children in general do not have much interest in apps with social interaction or connectedness, boys in Germany rank the ability to talk or play with others as the third most important feature of their ideal app. Both genders agree that advancing levels, points and rewards systems, and sound effects/music are important.

FRANCE

Girls' choices for favorite apps are topped by Barbie® Fashionistas® and Barbie Superstar! - Music Video Maker. The only apps favored by both girls and boys are Apprendre à lire et écrire (ranked third by girls and tenth by boys) and LEGO® (ranked sixth by girls and first by boys). Unlike boys, girls also list Monster High™, Equestria Girls, Barbie® Comic Maker, as well as a few less highly rated apps. The majority of girls play by themselves.

LEGO® Friends, which was ranked third for girls, comes in as number one for boys, followed by Avengers Origins: Assemble! and Camp Pokémon. Unlike girls, boys also list Star Wars – Heroes Path, Avengers Origins: Hulk, Minecraft, Cars 2 World Grand Prix Read and Race, Akinator Kids, Star Wars Journeys: The Phantom Menace, and GulliMax : Des dessins animés, des séries, des jeux et des activités pour enfants!. As with girls, the majority of boys primarily play their favorite app by themselves.

Table 2. **GIRL'S FAVORITE APPS, BY COUNTRY**

	FRANCE	GERMANY	UK
1	Barbie® Fashionistas® (5.5%)	Angry Birds Star Wars (8.3%)	Minecraft Stop-Motion Movie Creator (9.6%)
2	Barbie Superstar! - Music Video Maker (3.9%)	Bibi & Tina: Pferdeabenteuer (7.5%)	Animal Jam - Play Wild! (4.2%)
3	Apprendre à lire et écrire (3.1%)	Minecraft: Pocket Edition (6.7%)	A+ Spelling Test (3.5%)

TOP PLAYFUL APPS FOR KIDS 6-14 (CONT.)

Table 3. BOY'S FAVORITE APPS, BY COUNTRY

	FRANCE	GERMANY	UK
1	LEGO® (5.9%)	Angry Birds Star Wars (16.9%)	Minecraft Stop-Motion Movie Creator (11.5%)
2	Avengers Origins: Assemble! (4.9%)	Minecraft: Pocket Edition (9.3%)	Ben 10 Cavern Run (3.1%)
3	Camp Pokémon (4.4%)	FIFA 15 Ultimate Team (8.4%)	Animal Jam - Play Wild! (2.9%)

GERMANY

Girls' favorite app choices largely mirror the overall list, with some variation in the ranking of each app. In Germany, the top app overall, for girls and for boys, is Angry Birds, but for girls this app is very closely followed by Bibi & Tina: Pferdeabenteuer and then Minecraft: Pocket Edition. In contrast to the overall list, the girls list also includes Frozen Free Fall, Candy Crush Saga, and WhatsApp.

Boys' favorite app, as with girls, is Angry Birds, followed by Minecraft: Pocket Edition, FIFA 15 Ultimate Team, and Minecraft: Story Mode. Although the first half of boys' list strongly resembles the overall list, the second half has more variation, including Clash of Clans, Aliens Like Milk for Kids, Bad Piggies, and LEGO® Star Wars™ Yoda ll.

UNITED KINGDOM

Minecraft Stop-Motion Movie Creator ranks as the number one favorite app for both boys and girls in the UK. For girls, this app is followed by Animal Jam – Play Wild! and A+ Spelling Test. For boys, Ben 10 Cavern Run is second and Animal Jam – Play Wild! comes in third.

Unlike boys, girls' favorite choices also include Barbie® Fashionistas®, Frozen: Storybook Deluxe, Club Penguin, Monster High, and 10 Minutes a Day Times Tables. Favorite apps unique to the boys' list include Star Wars Journeys: Beginnings, Ben 10 Game Generator 4D – Lite, and The LEGO® Movie Video Game.

AGE DIFFERENCES

Some general age trends occur across all three countries. Young children's focus on a character-driven gaming experience may help to explain why they are less interested in a social component to gaming. Not only are younger children the most likely age group to report playing their favorite game by themselves, but they also rank features such as an ability to use an app with other people or communicate with other players in the app much lower than do older children. It seems that 6- to 8-year-olds are looking for a game that is self-contained, tablet-friendly, and centers on fun and entertaining characters, while 9- to 14-year-olds would prefer a gaming experience that is challenging, customizable, and potentially includes the opportunity to play and talk with others.

The focus on characters among 6- to 8-year-olds is found in all three countries, where these young children rank likeable, familiar, and cute and fun characters as top motivations behind the selection of their favorite apps. Children in Germany also look for humor and excitement, children in France want the app to feel age-appropriate and be easy to play, and children in the UK appreciate a sense of competence and the ability to use their imagination. Young children in France and the UK also want to be able to create avatars and their own stories. Perhaps because children in this age group are most likely to play their favorite app alone or with parents, they place less importance on apps that allow them to create a profile or communicate with others.
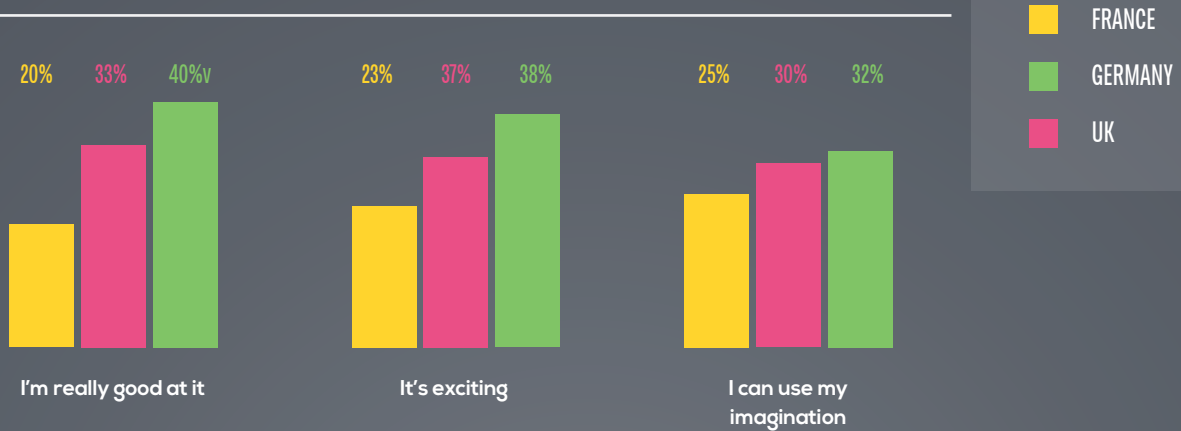
Fig 6. REASONS FOR 6- TO 8-YEAR -OLD'S SELECTION OF FAVORITE APPS, BY COUNTRY
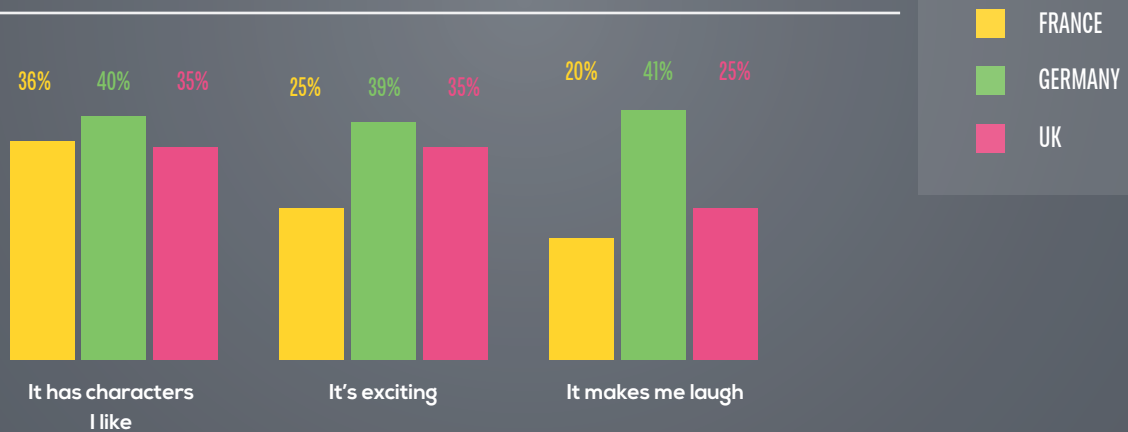
Interest in various app features seems to differ more by country among 9- to 11-year-olds. Tweens in France look for an app that facilitates creative expression and personalization, tweens in Germany look for apps with competition and communication, and tweens in the UK want to feel competent and excited. All three countries, however, demonstrate a downward trend in the importance of characters among this age group. Instead, 9- to 11-year-olds are starting to be interested in apps that offer action and sociability. These tweens still primarily play their favorite app alone, but they are beginning to spend more time playing with friends.
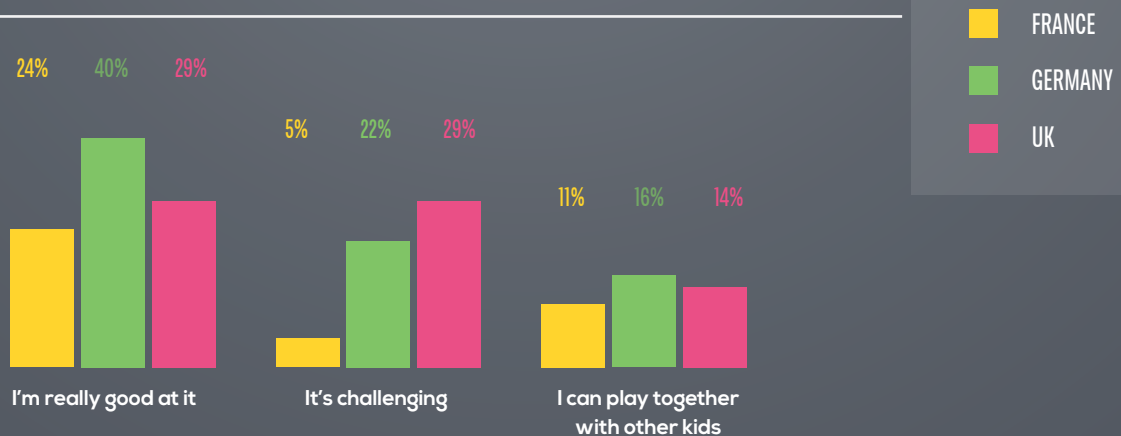
TOP PLAYFUL APPS FOR KIDS 6-14 (CONT.)

Fig 7. REASONS FOR 9- TO 11-YEAR-OLD'S SELECTIONS OF FAVORITE APPS, BY COUNTRY

FRANCE
GERMANY
UK

	I'm really good at it	It's exciting	I can use my imagination
France	20%	23%	25%
UK	33%	37%	30%
Germany	40%v	38%	32%

The oldest age group is most likely to prioritize connectedness and deemphasize characters, a trend that is found across all three countries. Teens also want to be challenged, with 12- to 14-year-olds in every country rank levels of advancing difficulty highly. In addition, teens in France and the UK value the ability to use their imaginations, while those in Germany are concerned with obtaining a sense of competence. Although most 12- to 14-year-olds in France and Germany still play their favorite app by themselves, they do so less often than younger children and spend more time playing with friends. In contrast, teens in the UK spend just as much time playing alone and less time playing with friends than do 9- to 11-year-olds in that country. However, across all three countries, almost no teens play with their parents.

Fig 8. REASONS FOR 12- TO 14-YEAR-OLD'S SELECTIONS OF FAVORITE APPS, BY COUNTRY

FRANCE
GERMANY
UK

	I'm really good at it	It's challenging	I can play together with other kids
France	24%	5%	11%
Germany	40%	22%	16%
UK	29%	29%	14%

FRANCE

As with the overall favorite apps, LEGO® topped the list for 6- to 11-year-old children. However, 6- to 8-year-olds also included Cars 2 World Grand Prix Read and Race, GulliMax: Des dessins animés, des séries, des jeux et des activités pour enfants!, Barbie® Comic Maker, and Monster High™ on their list of favorites, while 9- to 11-year-olds included Akinator Kids and Albert. Unlike these two younger age groups, Clash of Clans topped the list for 12- to 14-year-olds. Their list also included AB Math - fun games for kids and the family: addition, subtraction, multiplication, times tables, numbers, Crazy Gears, and Star Wars Journeys: The Phantom Menace. LEGO®, the top app among younger children in France, fell to ninth for this oldest age group.

GERMANY

Angry Birds Star Wars comes in as the number one favorite app for children ages 6 to 14, in accordance with the overall favorite apps list. In contrast to the overall favorites, however, the list for 6- to 8-year-olds also included Frozen Free Fall and LEGO® Ninjago Tournament, the list for 9- to 11-year-olds included Clash of Clans, and the list for 12- to 14-year-olds included WhatsApp.

UNITED KINGDOM

Across all three age groups, Minecraft Stop-Motion Movie Creator ranks as the top favorite app. For 6- to 8-year-olds, this app is followed by Barbie® Fashionistas® and A+ Spelling Test, for 9- to 11-year-olds, this app is followed by Animal Jam – Play Wild! and Minecraft, and for 12- to 14-year-olds, A+ Spelling Test and Animal Jam – Play Wild! follow. In comparison to the overall favorites list, 6- to 8-year-olds also enjoy Frozen: Storybook Deluxe, AB Math - fun games for kids and the family: addition, subtraction, multiplication, times tables, numbers, and Big Hero 6: Baymax Blast. Children ages 9 to 11 list Clash of Clans, LEGO® Friends, Go CBBC, and LEGO® Ninjago Tournament. Children ages 12 to 14 include Adventure Time Game Wizard - Draw Your Own Adventure Time Games, AJ Jump: Animal Jam Kangavv

TOP PLAYFUL APPS FOR KIDS 6-14 (CONT.)

Table 4. 6- TO 8-YEAR-OLD'S FAVORITE APPS, BY COUNTRY

	FRANCE	GERMANY	UK
1	LEGO® (5.5%)	Angry Birds Star Wars (9.7%)	Minecraft Stop-Motion Movie Creator (8.5%)
2	Barbie® Fashionistas® (5.2%)	Bibi & Tina: Pferdeabenteuer (5.4%)	Barbie® Fashionistas® (3.6%)
3	Camp Pokémon (4.6%)	Barbie® Fashionistas® (4.6%)	A+ Spelling Test (3.2%)

Table 5. 9- TO 11-YEAR-OLD'S FAVORITE APPS, BY COUNTRY

	FRANCE	GERMANY	UK
1	LEGO® (9.1%)	Angry Birds Star Wars (16.3%)	Minecraft Stop-Motion Movie Creator (13.6%)
2	Avengers Origins: Assemble! (6.6%)	Minecraft: Pocket Edition (8.5%)	Animal Jam - Play Wild! (4.4%)
3	Star Wars - Heroes Path (5.2%)	Bibi & Tina: Pferdeabenteuer (4.1%)	Minecraft (2.8%)

Table 6. 12- TO 14-YEAR-OLD'S FAVORITE APPS, BY COUNTRY

	FRANCE	GERMANY	UK
1	Clash of Clans (3.6%)	Angry Birds Star Wars (13.3%)	Minecraft Stop-Motion Movie Creator (9.4%)
2	Avengers Origins: Hulk (3.1%)	Minecraft: Pocket Edition (11.6%)	A+ Spelling Test (3.5%)
3	Minecraft (2.7%)	FIFA 15 Ultimate Team (9.2%)	Animal Jam - Play Wild! (3.1%)

CHOOSING AN APP

In France, Germany, and the UK, over half of children hear about new apps from friends, followed by classmates and parents. Classmates are particularly useful sources in Germany, but word-of-mouth is clearly the preferred and/or most effective method of spreading this news across all three countries, as much fewer children report learning of new apps from advertisements on television, the computer, or while playing another game.
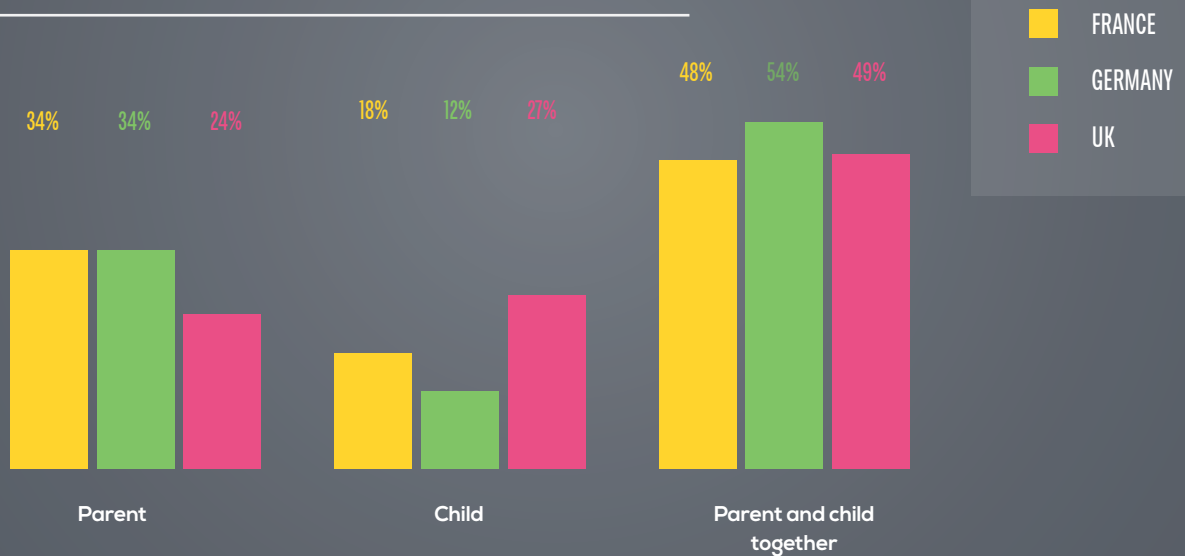
Fig 9. **HOW CHILDREN HEAR ABOUT NEW APPS, BY COUNTRY**

Category	France	Germany	UK
Friends	56%	56%	60%
Classmates	34%	43%	30%
Parents	32%	33%	30%
Ads on TV or computer	22%	23%	16%
Ads during another game	19%	16%	17%
Siblings	18%	13%	13%
Other family members	10%	7%	10%
Teacher	3%	4%	7%
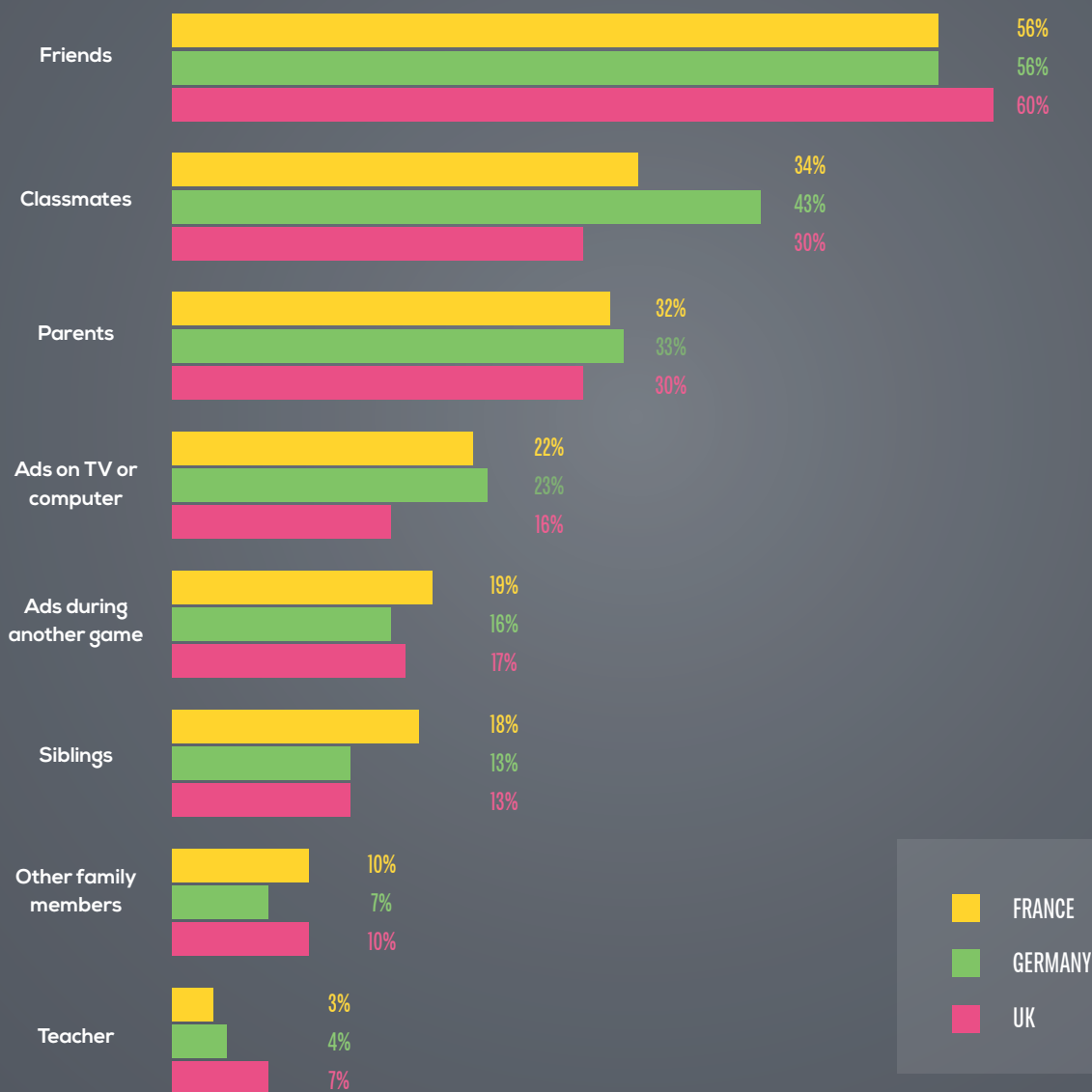
FRANCE
GERMANY
UK

CHOOSING AN APP (CONT.)

It is important to note how children hear about new apps, since they play a large role in the decision of which games to download, whether on their own or with the guidance of a parent. Indeed, two-thirds of children in France and Germany have a say, and three-quarters of children in the UK are involved in the decision-making process. Gender does not appear to have much impact on parents' practices regarding downloading decisions, though parents in Germany are slightly more inclined to decide for their sons and make joint decisions with their daughters. Interestingly, parents in the United States show an opposite trend, allowing their sons to choose apps on their own, compared to their daughters, potentially suggesting a gender difference in trust and safety concerns between countries. Not surprisingly, parents in all four locations are more likely to let older children decide on their own which apps to download.

Fig 10. **WHO DECIDES WHICH APPS TO DOWNLOAD, BY COUNTRY**

Legend: FRANCE, GERMANY, UK

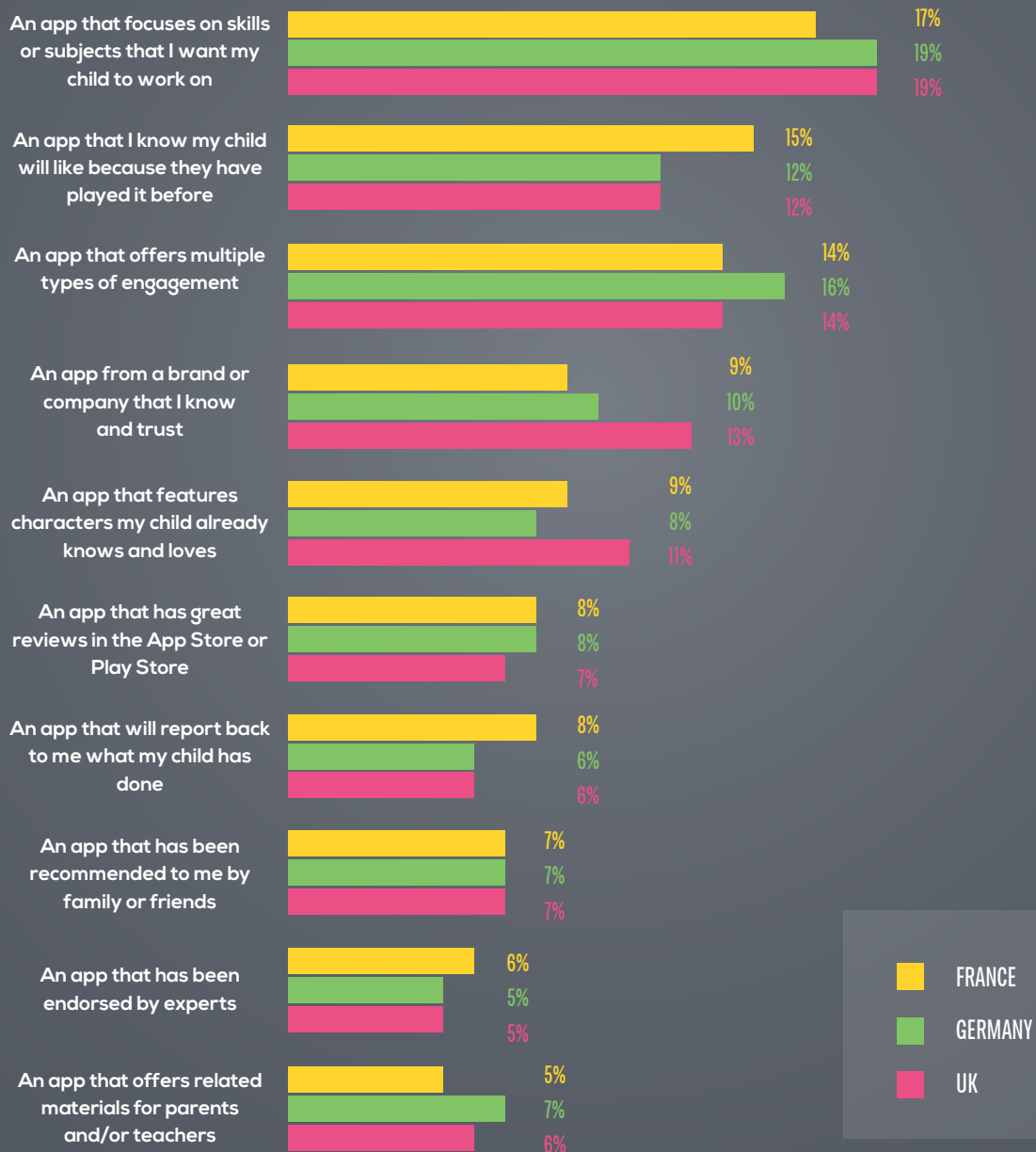|	Parent	Child	Parent and child together
FRANCE	34%	18%	48%
GERMANY	34%	12%	54%
UK	24%	27%	49%

CHOOSING AN APP (CONT.)

For parents in all three countries, the most important consideration when choosing an app for their child is whether or not it focuses on skills or subjects that they want their child to work on. Parents in all three countries also want to know that that their child will enjoy the app based on prior experience and that the app offers multiple types of engagement, though the order of importance of these features varies by location.

Fig 11. MOST IMPORTANT CRITERIA FOR PARENTS WHEN CHOOSING APP, BY COUNTRY

Criteria	France	Germany	UK
An app that focuses on skills or subjects that I want my child to work on	17%	19%	19%
An app that I know my child will like because they have played it before	15%	12%	12%
An app that offers multiple types of engagement	14%	16%	14%
An app from a brand or company that I know and trust	9%	10%	13%
An app that features characters my child already knows and loves	9%	8%	11%
An app that has great reviews in the App Store or Play Store	8%	8%	7%
An app that will report back to me what my child has done	8%	6%	6%
An app that has been recommended to me by family or friends	7%	7%	7%
An app that has been endorsed by experts	6%	5%	5%
An app that offers related materials for parents and/or teachers	5%	7%	6%

Legend:
- FRANCE
- GERMANY
- UK

CHOOSING AN APP (CONT.)

Fig 12. **TYPE OF APP PARENTS ARE WILLING TO DOWNLOAD, BY COUNTRY**

FRANCE

GERMANY

UK

65%   54%   53%

35%   46%   47%

Free   Paid
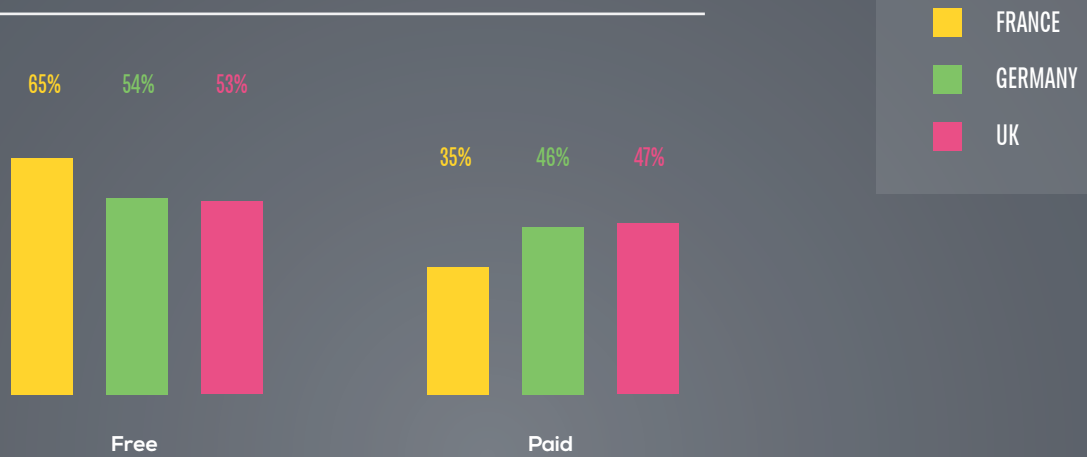
Less than half of parents in every country are willing to spend money on apps, but parents in the UK and Germany are the most willing to pay, especially those with sons and older children. In contrast, parents in the United States tend to spend more on apps for younger children. Parents in France are the least willing to spend money, an attitude that is consistent regardless of child gender or age.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

For those developing playful game apps for children, this report holds many important insights for how best to create for and appeal to this population, as well as its various subgroups. The top takeaways include:

DIVERSIFY GAMEPLAY
Children's top apps represented a variety of forms of gaming, including strategy, narrative, action, and trivia. Similarly, parents place great value on apps that offer multiple types of engagement and teach a variety of useful skills.

INCLUDE LIKEABLE CHARACTERS
This is particularly true if you are trying to reach girls or younger children. These subgroups enjoy seeing characters they know or fun and entertaining characters that they could learn to love.

MAKE IT ACTION-PACKED AND CHALLENGING
This is particularly true if you are trying to reach boys or older children. These subgroups want a gaming experience that is exciting and that pushes them through reward systems and increasingly difficult levels.

ALLOW CHILDREN TO CUSTOMIZE
When children were asked to design their own app, the feature that they listed as the most important was the ability to create their own avatar. Yet few of the top playful games offer this unique feature, suggesting a great opportunity for developers.

CONSIDER THE DEVICE
The large screens of tablets and the mobile nature of smartphones make them ideal for different types of play, and children's device-specific app preferences suggest that they do in fact make this distinction.

BUT ALSO CONSIDER ACCESS
Although the device on which children choose to play games does vary, most children opt for a tablet over a smartphone, likely because children have greater access to, and are more likely to personally own, tablets versus smartphones.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT AUDIENCE
Most children hear about new apps from their friends, though many also rely on their parents' recommendations, suggesting that strategies should target children and their preferences while still keeping parents' requirements in mind.