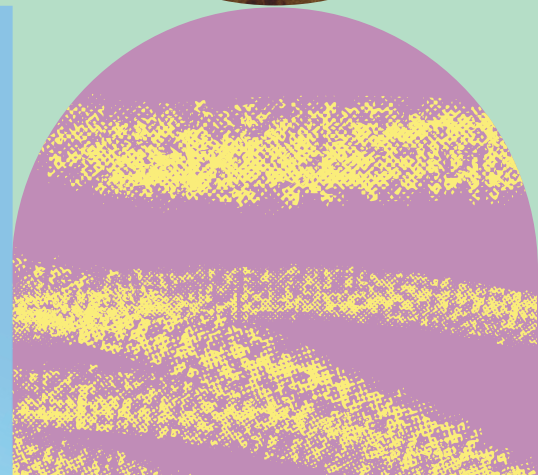
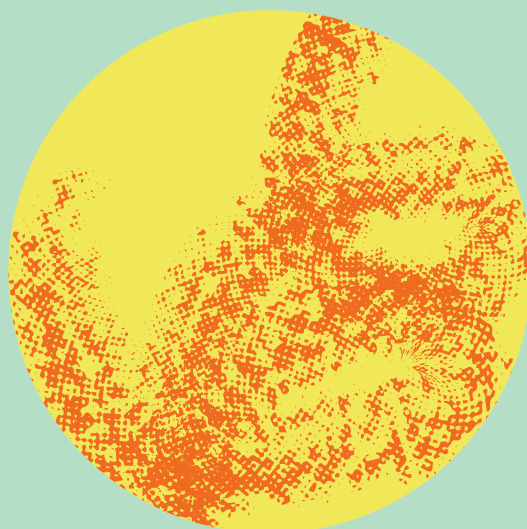


Parents' Perspectives on Australian Children's Television in the Streaming Era

Associate Professor Liam Burke,
Dr Joanna McIntyre, Dr Jessica Balanzategui,
& Dr Djoyimi Baker



ACTC Report 1: February 2022

A Snapshot of Parents' Perspectives on Australian Children's Television in the Streaming Era



1. Good "Aussie" Children's TV

- 71% of parents believe that "good" Australian children's television is "fun and engaging"
 - Value "cheeky" Australian content that doesn't take itself too seriously (a "larrikin" sensibility)
- 44% identified good Australian children's television as "relatable" and "authentic," including:
 - Australian accents, settings, and iconography
 - Recognisable depictions of family dynamics
 - Not overly sanitised like some US content
- *Bluey* factor: No. 1 show with youngest (41%) and oldest (18%) children, and their parents (60%)



2. Education Beyond the Classroom

- 35% of parents believe it is very/extremely important children's content is educational
- Australian shows celebrated for pairing learning with fun and not "talking down" to children (24%)
- "Education" is conceptualised beyond formal learning, such as positive messages that model good behaviour (17%)
- Emphasis on the importance of locally-produced shows to provide Australian everyday learning, including: water and sun safety, history and culture, Australian geography, and preparing for school
- Overseas parents described Australian children's television as providing a "window to local culture"



3. The TV Set is Still Number One

- 94% of households use TV sets to watch children's shows/content
- While most content is consumed via streaming services, the streaming services are typically accessed on TV sets
- Other top devices:
 - Tablet - 57%
 - Smartphone - 32%
 - Computer - 24%
- Lockdown viewing habits during the COVID pandemic may have impacted these results - future iterations of this study will track changes by comparison



4. Streaming Services Dominate

- Top 10 most popular "channels" are almost exclusively streaming services
- SVODs and YouTube are increasing their market share, but ABC still leads:
 - ABC - 89% (ABC iView - 65%)
 - Netflix - 77%
 - YouTube - 69%
 - Disney+ - 56%



5. Children Choose What They Watch

- Across all age bands most parents allow children to choose most/all of what they watch (54%)
- This freedom becomes particularly pronounced from age five
- Younger children tend to watch "trusted" ABC
- Older children tend to watch Netflix and YouTube



6. Child-friendly Streaming

- ABC's success is partly linked to its variety of trusted streaming options for children: iView (65%), ABC Kids (62%), ABC ME (29%)
- Streaming platforms with child-specific versions or well-demarcated "kids" sections are most used: Netflix and Netflix Kids (77%), YouTube and YouTube Kids (69%), and Disney+ (56%)
- Platforms that don't have a clearly demarcated "kids" section are not as frequently used: Amazon Prime (13%) and Apple TV+ (6%)
- Despite a public push for YouTube Kids, the main YouTube platform remains more popular: YouTube (50%), YouTube Kids (30%)
- However, YouTube Kids is more popular among children aged four and below




7. Older Children Gravitate to SVODs and YouTube, but Australian Content Hard to Find

- 80% of older children watch YouTube compared to 40% of younger children; 77% of older children watch Netflix compared to 33% of younger children
- Parents struggle to find Australian content on SVODs and YouTube, particularly for older children
- Twisted Lunchbox viewed by 3% of respondents, which is notable for a YouTube channel when ranked against entire platforms like ABC iView
- Older children have a greater variety of "most watched" shows than younger children (88 versus 59 shows)



8. Parents Would Like a Broader Range of Australian Children's Content

- A key change parents would like to see in Australian children's TV is a broader range of content, including:
 - live-action
 - fantasy
 - YouTube genres (e.g. "gaming")
- Parents would also like Australian children's content to be more accessible and visible on streaming services



9. Parents Value "Australian" Content

- Nearly one third of parents considered it very/extremely important children's TV is "Australian" but this was below "fun," "diverse representation," and "educational"
- Yet, open responses identify Australian characteristics as the highlight of Australian children's shows
- 10% of comments in open responses suggested there is a tendency to take Australian content for granted, which may explain contradictions



10. Diverse Representation Considered Important in Australian Children's Television

- 50% of parents considered it very/extremely important children's TV has "diverse representation"
- 21% identify "diverse representation" as a core strength of Australian children's television ("seeing themselves onscreen")
- Parents value existing diversity of representation, but believe there's still more needed
- Some parents noted they would like to see more Indigenous Australian representation, but existing shows with a First Nations focus were not frequently included in responses



11. Co-viewing and Movie Night

- 90% of parents watch at least some content with their children
- Co-viewing is most likely to occur on weekends, particularly in households with multiple children
- Most popular co-viewing favourites: *Bluey*, *Play School*, and movies
- Physical media (e.g. DVDs) tend to only be used on weekend afternoons, which coincides with weekend co-viewing habits
- Households often have particular movies that are "family favourites," notably Disney movies, both older and newer ones

Introduction

Australian Children's Television Cultures (ACTC) is a research group based at Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne. In partnership with the Australian Children's Television Foundation (ACTF), ACTC are undertaking a four-year project (2021–2024) to investigate the roles of Australian children's television and other children's screen entertainment in people's lives, memories, families, and education. This project's research activities include audience research, catalogue analysis, and economic and social impact studies. The findings and outcomes of this project are designed to inform the Australian children's television sector as it navigates an era of increased viewing options, policy changes, and new viewing practices.

This report presents findings from research that sought to better understand how Australian audiences discover, consume, and value local children's content in the streaming era. Quantitative data collected from a nationwide survey and qualitative findings from semi-structured interviews form the basis of this report.

ACTC gathered unique and robust data through an online nationwide survey that targeted parents and legal guardians of children aged 14 years and under. The survey was titled "What are Your Children Watching in 2021" and ran nationally for six weeks (23 August–3 October, 2021). A version of this study will be carried out each year of the project to enable the longitudinal tracking of Australian household viewing habits.

Survey respondents were required to be parents or legal guardians (aged 18 years and above) with at least one child aged 14 years or younger in their care who watches children's shows/content at least once a week.

Although the survey was open to both parents and legal guardians, the large majority (over 97%) of respondents were parents. Of the small number of guardians who did complete the survey (seven in total), their responses were not significantly different from those of parents and these responses have therefore been included in the broader sample.

Using snowball sampling, the survey (hereafter referred to as the "Parents Survey") was initially circulated through the research team's networks and via earned media, with respondents encouraged to share the survey among their own networks.

This Parents Survey was paired with another survey, "Children's TV Shows from Your Childhood," that focused on nostalgia and cross-generational viewing, which will be the basis of a later ACTC report. These two online surveys were carefully interlinked to increase the number of responses for each. At the end of the six weeks, the Parents Survey received 240 completions. The data collected is statistically robust enough for the authors to be confident that the conclusions made are likely to mirror the Australian parent population at large.

A dozen extended semi-structured interviews were also carried out with select survey respondents. These interviews were analysed to gain more nuanced qualitative detail to complement the quantitative and qualitative survey findings.

This report covers a range of key considerations, including perceptions of what makes "good" Australian children's television, how families use different media platforms, and the importance parents place on diverse representation. These findings are original and provide unique insights into parents' perspectives on Australian children's television in the streaming era.

About the Authors

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Liam Burke is the discipline leader of Cinema and Screen Studies at Swinburne University of Technology, Australia, where he is also a member of the Centre for Transformative Media Technologies. Liam has published widely on comic books, animation, adaptation, and media and national identity. His books include *The Comic Book Film Adaptation* (Mississippi UP, 2015), and the edited collections *Fan Phenomena Batman* (Intellect, 2012) and *The Superhero Symbol* (Rutgers UP, 2020). Prior to entering academia Liam worked at a number of arts organisations including the Irish Film & Television Academy (IFTA). Liam was also a chief investigator of the Australian Research Council funded project *Superheroes & Me*.

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This research adhered to the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and received ethics clearance from Swinburne University of Technology (Re: 20215807-6725).

This report is peer reviewed

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Djoymi Baker is Lecturer in Cinema Studies at RMIT University, and formerly worked in the Australian television industry. She has published work on children’s television history, family television in the streaming era, and intergenerational television fandom. Her other research interests include film and television genres, myth in popular culture, and the ethics of representing the non-human on screen, from animals to aliens. Djoymi is the author of *To Boldly Go: Marketing the Myth of Star Trek* (IB Tauris, 2018) and the co-author of *The Encyclopedia of Epic Films* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014). She is the co-producer and co-presenter of the *Senses of Cinema* podcast.

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1. Good "Aussie" Children's TV

When asked what makes "good Australian children's shows/content?" the most common response (seven out of 10 parents) was some variation on "fun and engaging". In response to open-ended survey questions and interviews, parents expanded on this quality by highlighting television shows that displayed a uniquely Australian, gently irreverent sense of humour (a "larrikin" sensibility). Contrasts were often made with overseas content (in particular, US content), which in comparison was deemed to be overly sanitised or lacking relevance in an Australian context.



"I hate this term, but there is a lot of 'larrikinism' in [Australian children's television], and a funny sense of humour, it doesn't take itself too seriously.

There's something a little quirky about it, even in Play School, they can't control the quirk, I guess. And that's what I love. I don't seem to find that in other shows from other countries." – Interview with Lara from QLD, three children under six years

Many parents defined "good" Australian children's television as "relatable" and "authentic," including Australian accents, locations, and iconography. Shows such as *The Wiggles*, *Play School*, and *Round the Twist* were celebrated for their unambiguously Australian stories and settings.



"I think shows like Round the Twist and Lift Off were valuable in reflecting Australian culture in important ways. You'd have your own accent, and recognisable school/suburban culture reflected back at you in ways not accessible in American/UK counterparts. These shows established a sense of familiarity and belonging that I think would be lost if we just relied on international content." – Survey response from QLD mother of one child under 15 years



Lift Off!

Despite commending shows with a recognisable “Australian identity,” parents did not rank “Australian” as highly as other qualities such as “educational” and “diverse representation” when rating “important” characteristics of children’s content. This suggests that “Australian” may not be foremost in parents’ decision making when compared with other qualities (see page 15).

Parents also identified recognisable depictions of family dynamics as contributing to the relatability of Australian children’s television. Respondents celebrated shows that depicted how chaotic family life can be with honesty and humour.



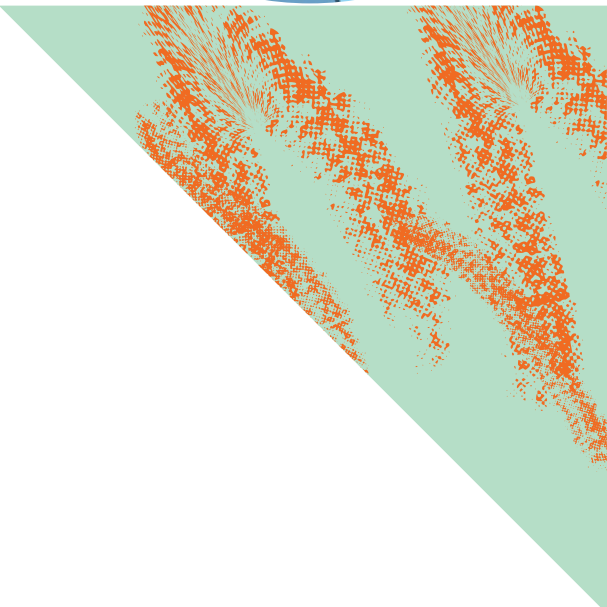
“Round the Twist and Bluey are the best because they show kids being passionate and irreverent and funny and adults handling their lives with patience, respect and humour, as well as being dorks and messing up.”
– Survey response from WA mother of two children under 15 years

Parents identified *Bluey* as the show most watched by their youngest (41%) and oldest (18%) children (see page 13), as well as the show parents are most likely to co-watch with their children (60%).



“It’s nice for children to see familiar landmarks and have issues that are current to them, as opposed to Peppa Pig and needing to explain why we don’t have snow at Christmas.” – Survey response from QLD mother of two children under 15 years, discussing *Bluey*

The qualities that parents most identified as making “good” Australian television – larrikin humour, unambiguously Australian settings, and relatable depictions of family dynamics – are all found in *Bluey*. This show’s prominence suggests that *Bluey* is not only reflective of parent preferences, but that it may now also be influencing what is considered good “Aussie” children’s television.



2. Education Beyond the Classroom

Across the surveys and interviews many parents highlighted the importance of children's content having an educational component, but "education" was often conceptualised beyond formal learning to include positive messages and life skills.



"Our whole family loves Bluey and Little Lunch. They are both entertaining, funny, Australian and have stories that kids (and adults) can learn from."

– Survey response from mother in WA with two children under 15 years

To gauge the value parents placed on some key qualities ascribed to children's television, one of the survey's questions placed "education" alongside other characteristics. This comparative approach was designed to gain more nuanced responses. One third of the parents believed it was very/extremely important children's content is "educational." This was a greater proportion than chose "Australian," "realistic," or "new" as important characteristics – but a lesser amount than identified "fun" or "diverse representation" as important.

In responses to open-ended survey questions parents celebrated Australian shows for pairing learning with fun and not "talking down" to children (24%). Parents placed an emphasis on the importance of locally produced shows to provide Australian "everyday" education, including about: water and sun safety, history and culture, Australian geography, and preparing for school.



"I found Australian stuff was definitely more [relevant], especially Play School: it was outdoor activities, and being sun smart, and those sort of things that were relevant to us, whereas a lot of the French-Canadian stuff was how to slide down snow." – Interview with Camilla from QLD, two children under 17 years, an Australian-Québécois family



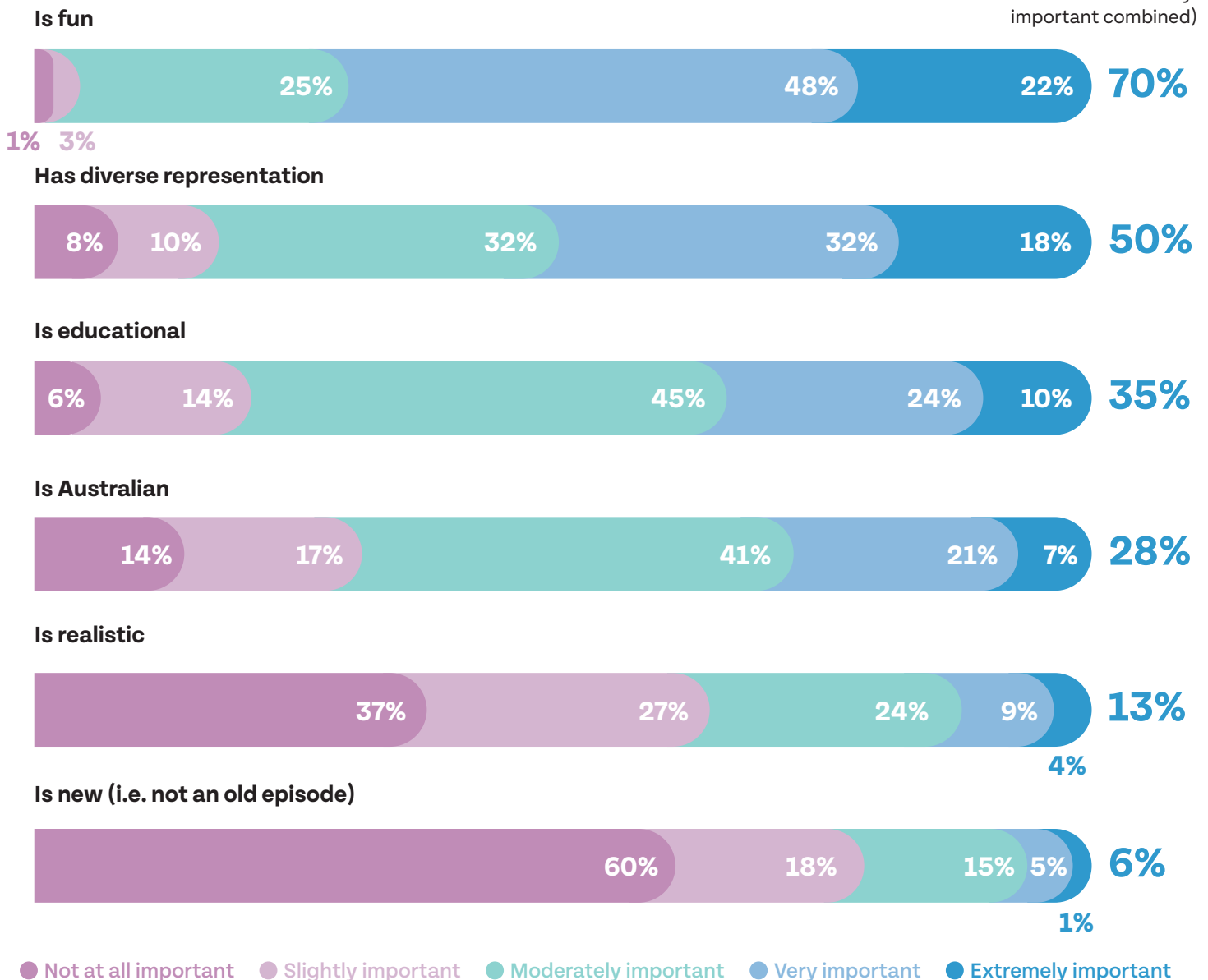
Some overseas parents described how Australian shows such as *Little Lunch* and *InBESTigators* provided a “window to local culture.”



“[Little Lunch] helps me understand the local culture better, not only Australian culture but Melbourne culture when it comes to kids, and it also helps me understand how the school system works here. We started watching that before [my son] started primary school earlier this year, and of course every country has a different system, but school seemed to be familiar when he started because we had watched that show together.”
 – Interview with César from VIC (originally from Mexico), two children under seven

What’s Important in Children’s TV

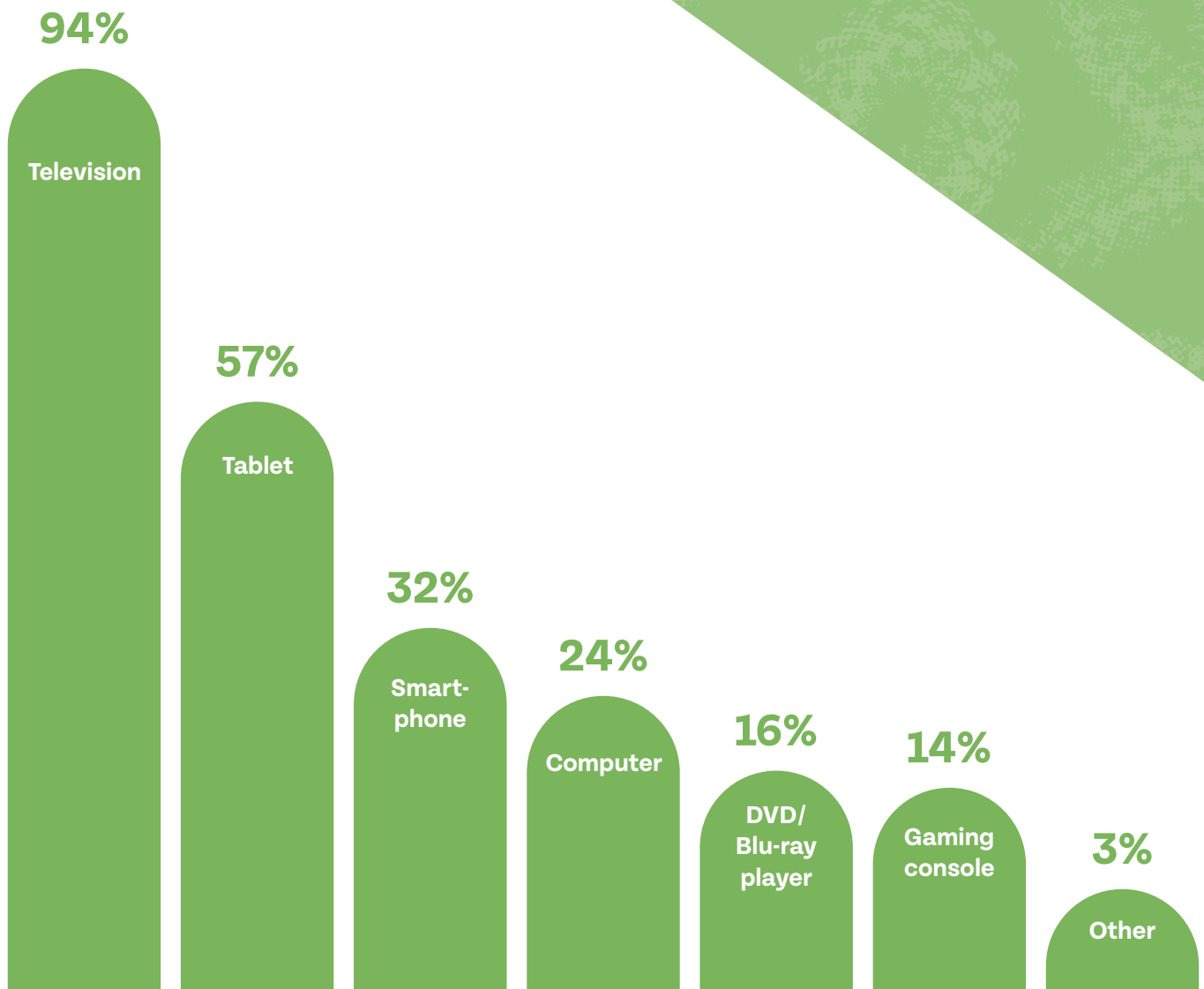
Top 2 Box Score
 (very important & extremely important combined)



3. The TV Set is Still Number One

Despite the availability of an expanding number of platforms, 94% of households in this study still used television sets to watch children's shows/content, ahead of other top devices such as tablets (57%), smartphones (32%), and computers (24%). This may be partly linked to lockdown viewing habits during the COVID pandemic. When this study is repeated in 2022–2024, it will identify impacts of lockdowns on device use and viewing habits.

Devices Used to Watch Content



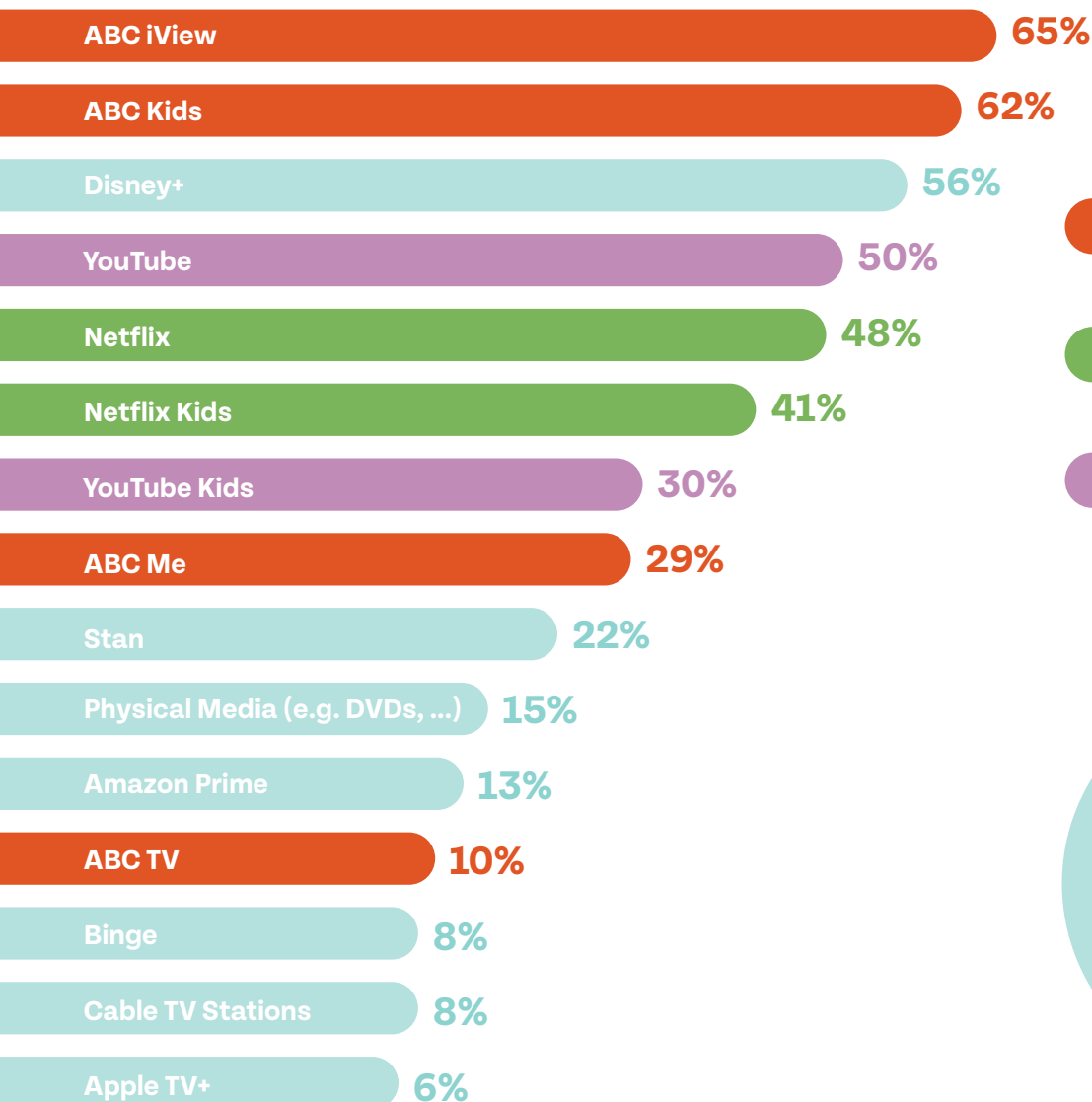
4. Streaming Services Dominate

Although the television set is still the dominant device, the top 10 most popular “channels” are almost exclusively streaming services. The ABC is a trusted source of children’s television: nine out of 10 parents identified that they use at least one of the ABC’s services, with 65% of parents selecting iView in particular. Other highly ranked services included Netflix (77%), YouTube (69%), and Disney+ (56%). Australian households using smart televisions to access mostly SVODs and BVODs demonstrates that the use of television sets is no longer tied to broadcast television.



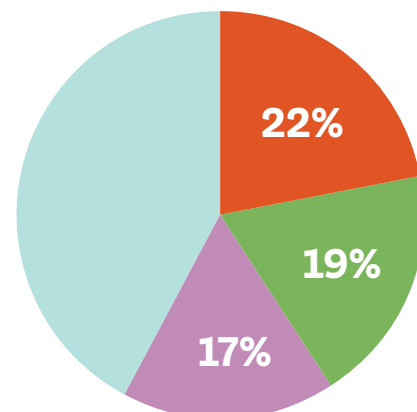
“I never actually just watch normal TV. We only ever use the apps and then watch Bluey ... I don’t know actually which [channel] it is. I just use the voice thing and just say ‘Bluey’, and then it comes up.”
 – Interview with Adam from VIC, one child under four years

Services & Channels Used



- All ABC channels/ services NET 89%
- All Netflix channels/ services NET 77%
- All YouTube channels/ services NET 69%

Approx. Market Share



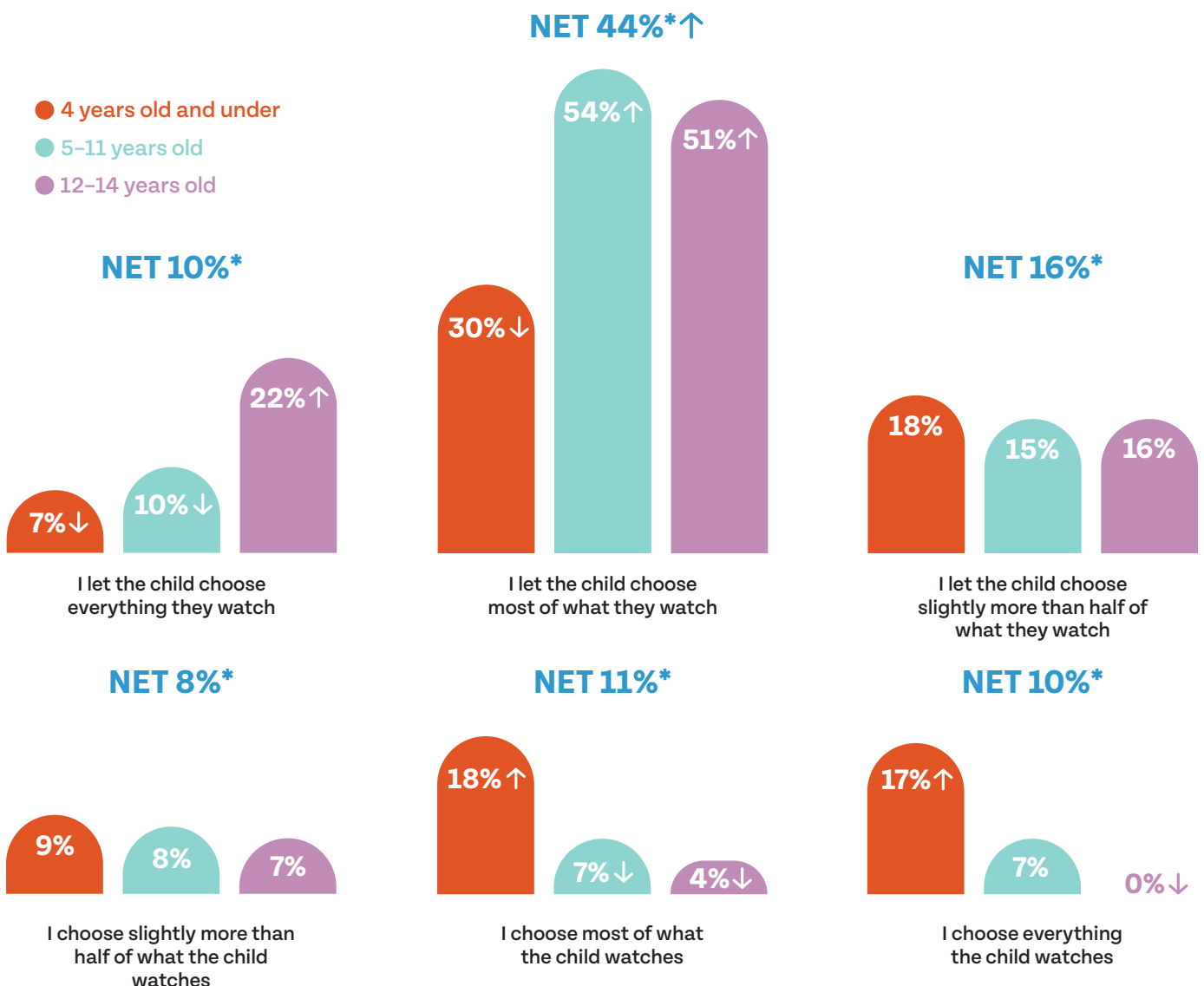
5. Children Choose What They Watch

Most parents let their children choose all/most of what they watched:

- 12-14 years (73%)
- 5-11 years (64%)
- 4 years and under (37%)

The child's freedom of choice becomes particularly pronounced from age five. Younger children tend to watch the "trusted" ABC, while older children more often watch Netflix and YouTube (see page 12).

Services/Channels Used



*METHODOLOGY NOTE: This data has been flattened to fit 100% as parents with multiple children completed the question twice.

6. "Child-friendly" Streaming

This study found that in the current fragmented media landscape, parents favour streaming services that have "child-friendly" apps and platforms. The ABC's success is partly linked to its variety of trusted streaming options for children, with parents selecting iView (65%), ABC Kids (62%), and ABC ME (29%) among the top services their child regularly uses.



"Humour, weirdness, gentleness, culture of acceptance [make good Australian children's television]. ABC Kids' carefully curated programming always delivers this

– my kids aren't allowed to watch commercial free-to-air TV." – Survey response from VIC mother of three children under 15 years

Parents trust streaming services that have a focus on child viewers, and which have clearly demarcated "kids' sections"; these services are more frequently used than those without clearly organised or promoted kids' sections. Notably, Disney+, a child-centric streaming service, has claimed a major audience share since launching in 2019.

Streaming services without clear and well-organised kids' sections – such as Amazon Prime and Apple TV+ – were not used as often to view children's content.

This is notable in the case of Amazon Prime, which heavily invested in children's programming to attract young families and build lifetime brand loyalties (see Johnson 2018). However, this strategy does not seem to have resonated with Australian parents, as this research found parents seek out trusted, child-friendly "walled garden" platform designs in which their children can stream content.



"I literally just turn [ABC Kids] on and whatever program is on at that time, I know will be suitable for [my daughter] to watch ... we only actually watch Sesame Street on Netflix." – Interview with Dallas from QLD, one child under two years

This research found YouTube remains popular with parents and their children. YouTube has experienced high-profile controversies regarding inappropriate children's content appearing on the platform since 2017, and the US Federal Trade Commission imposed an historic fine on YouTube in 2019. Subsequently, sweeping changes were made to the way the platform engages users under 13 years (see Balanzategui 2019).

In response, YouTube embarked on a global push of its child-friendly version, YouTube Kids. Yet, this research found that the main YouTube platform is still more frequently used (50%) than YouTube Kids (30%). Nevertheless, the younger the child, the more likely they are to use YouTube Kids, which is more popular with children under four years (35%) than those five–11 years (30%) and 12–14 years (23%).

"Child-friendly" Streaming	SVODs Without Prominently Placed Kids' Sections
Netflix and Netflix Kids (77%)	Apple TV+ (6%)
YouTube and YouTube Kids (69%)	Binge (8%)
Disney+ (56%)	Amazon Prime (13%)

7. Older Children Gravitate to SVODs and YouTube, but Australian Content Hard to Find

Parents reported that older children move away from free-to-air options (and their associated streaming services) towards SVODs and YouTube. Eight out of 10 older children (12 and over) watched YouTube, and 77% watched Netflix. By comparison, only 40% of younger children (four and under) watched YouTube and 33% watched Netflix. This finding is consistent with research conducted in Europe, the UK, and the US, which found that children favour linear television until they become teens (Tuchow 2022).

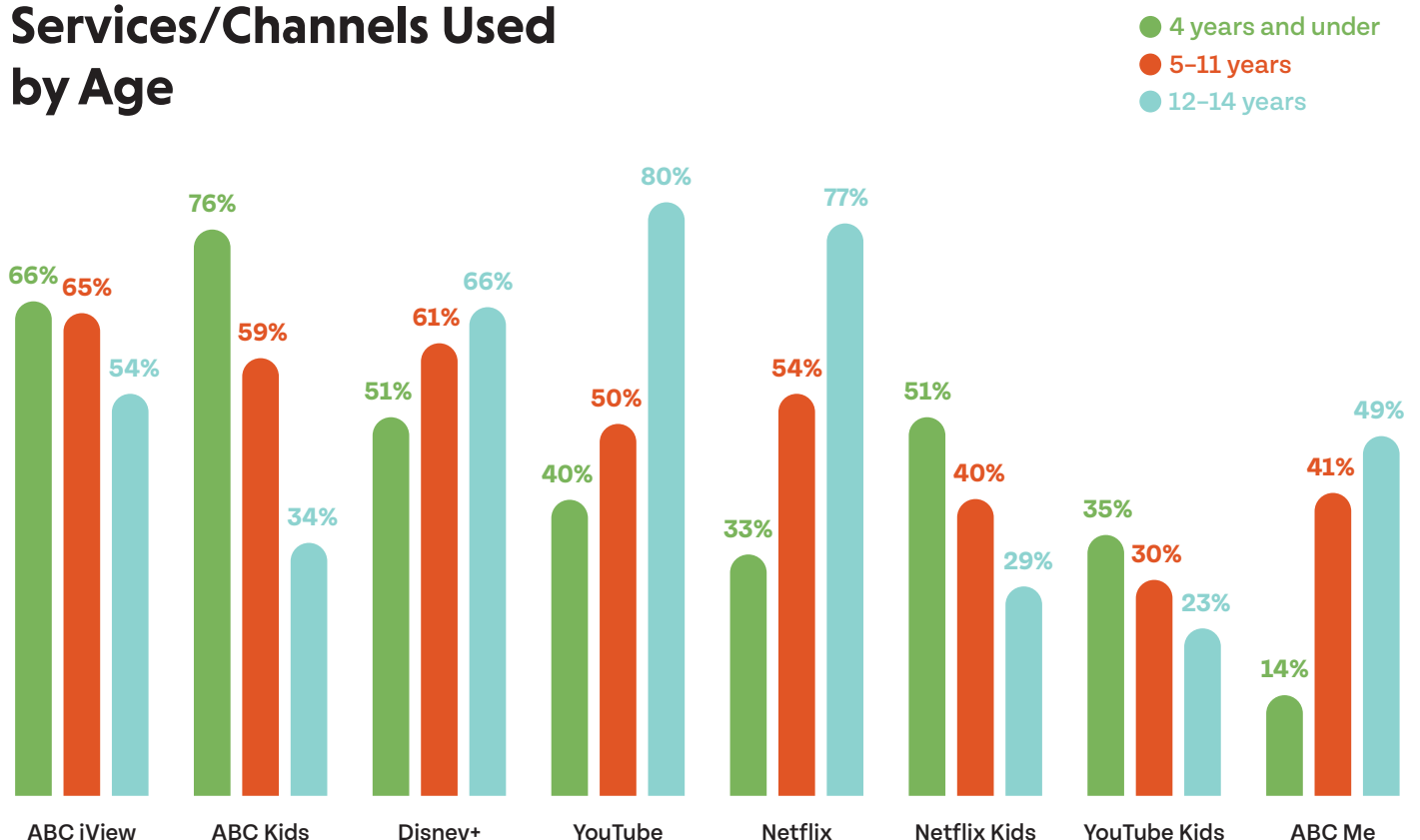
Older children have a greater variety of “most watched” shows than younger children; parents in the survey identified 88 different shows in relation to their oldest

child’s favourite, compared to 59 different favourite shows for their youngest child. This greater variety may be reflective of the wider array of content available on streaming, most popular with older children, as opposed to traditional broadcasters, which are most watched by younger children.



“Certainly, a lot of the content that they watch now is social media themed, TikTok, YouTube, vlogging that often is about, from the content providers’ side, getting a market share of your children’s time. A lot of that content I find very annoying.” – Interview with Rob from TAS, four children aged between nine and 17

Services/Channels Used by Age



Although streaming services are popular with older Australian children, some parents noted that Australian content is often difficult to find on these platforms.



"I would much rather them watch Australian content, but there is so little of it on the streaming services. Especially for nine–14 year old kids." – Survey response from VIC father of two children under 15 years

The ACTF’s dedicated YouTube channel, Twisted Lunchbox, was viewed by 3% of the survey’s respondents. This percentage is notable given this single YouTube channel was ranked against entire platforms like ABC iView. This data suggests that a potential priority could be making Australian content for older children available on platforms such as SVODs and YouTube where they are more likely to access it.



Top 3 Shows Watched

Youngest Child

	1st Favourite	2nd Favourite	3rd Favourite
1	Bluey 41%	Play School 8%	Bluey 12%
2	Paw Patrol 3%	Bluey 7%	The Wiggles 5%
3	The Wiggles 3%	Peppa Pig 7%	Peppa Pig 4%
4	Cocomelon 3%	The InBESTigators 5%	Play School 4%
5	Little Lunch 3%	The Wiggles 3%	Ben & Holly’s Little Kingdom 3%
	Total Shows Listed: 59	Total Shows Listed: 86	Total Shows Listed: 85

Oldest Child

	1st Favourite	2nd Favourite	3rd Favourite
1	Bluey 18%	Bluey 10%	Bluey 13%
2	Odd Squad 4%	Play School 4%	The InBESTigators 3%
3	YouTube 4%	Gabby’s Dollhouse 3%	Pokemon 2%
4	Miraculous 3%	Little Lunch 3%	Shaun The Sheep 2%
5	Little Lunch 3%	Odd Squad 3%	Andy’s Adventure 2%
	Total Shows Listed: 88	Total Shows Listed: 93	Total Shows Listed: 91

8. Parents Would Like to See a Broader Range of Australian Children's Content

This research identified several changes parents would like to see in Australian children's television. Aggregating key terms across the hundreds of survey responses revealed recurring themes.

The most common desired change in local children's television was a broader range of content (18%). Responses in this theme included requests for a wider range of content from genres such as gaming, live-action, fantasy, and science programming.

Gaming is now a genre that is hugely popular on YouTube, including with child audiences.



"My kids tend to watch YouTube more than anything else lately. If I were to ask them to name a current Australian kids show, I doubt they'd know any yet could list the names of kids' YouTube streamers." – Survey response from NSW father of three children under 15 years



"They watch a lot of YouTube about gaming, the people they follow are English mostly, some American, so most of this is not produced in Australia." – Survey response from NSW mother of two children under 15 years

Such responses suggest Australian-produced content could appear on YouTube and successfully attract youth audiences, especially older children (see page 12); likewise, aspects of popular YouTube genres, such as gaming, could be incorporated into Australian children's shows that are made for other services/platforms to widen their appeal.

Some parents also advocated for more live-action Australian children's programming.



"[Australian children's television] is becoming less and less Australian-minded. There are a few shows that are and are great, but most of them are now animations which makes them harder to view as relatable ... Australian live-drama shows seem to be disappearing." – Survey response from NSW mother of one child under 15 years

Since 2006, to fill their Australian content quotas, Australia's commercial broadcasters have increasingly turned from live-action children's drama to modestly budgeted animations, many of which were transnational co-productions. It is predicted that the production of Australian children's animation will decline after the Federal Government removed commercial broadcasters' quotas for Australian-made children's content in 2021 (Lotz et al. 2021).

Despite these realities, this report demonstrates that Australian families want, and believe there is value in, locally produced live-action scripted content for children. Parents also conveyed they wanted more diverse representation in children's television (17%) (see page 16) as well as Australian content, especially across the various streaming services (14%) (see pages 12 and 15).


9. Parents Value "Australian" Content

This research revealed some interesting inconsistencies in the way parents think about *Australian* children's television. Nearly one third of parents considered it either *very important* or *extremely important* for children's television to be Australian.

In the survey question that asked parents what they deem to be important in children's television, the answer "Australian" was embedded among a range of options to ensure more nuanced responses. The outcome was that "fun" (70%), "educational" (50%), and "diverse representation" (35%) were all rated higher in importance than "Australian" (28%).

Overall, 69% of parents felt that children's content being specifically Australian was either moderately, very, or extremely important. This suggests "Australian-ness" is valued, but it is not necessarily a determining factor in parents' decision making when compared with other qualities.

Indeed, 10% of comments in open responses suggested there is a tendency to take Australian content for granted.

 ***"They watch a lot of Aussie shows in general so, wouldn't rate this as an 'important' aspect of their viewing as it's already occurring."*** – Survey response from VIC mother of two children under 15 years

Nevertheless, local Australian characteristics were consistently identified as being key reasons parents like specific television shows. This trend also emerged in subsequent interviews with parents (see page 4).

When asked in interviews to reflect upon their favourite children's television shows, parents placed importance on Australian children's local experiences appearing onscreen. However, the importance of "Australian-ness" was not necessarily always front of mind:

 ***"I don't care where the TV show comes from, really ... I don't avoid things because they're from a certain country either, but the American stuff can be a little bit cheesy, I guess ... And not really relatable as much as the Australian stuff."*** – Interview with Adam from VIC, one child under four years

Combining survey and interview data this research revealed Australian parents have a complex relationship with Australian children's content. Parents ultimately value Australian children's programming, even though "Australian-ness" is not necessarily something they are always conscious of when evaluating children's content.



10. Diverse Representation Considered Important in Australian Children's Television

Nine out of 10 parents deem diverse representation to be an important element of children's television. In fact, approximately half of the survey's respondents identified diversity as a very or extremely important aspect of children's television.



"Diversity on screen helps children learn about people with different upbringings from their own, expanding their empathy for and curiosity about other people."

– Survey response VIC father of one child under 15 years

Furthermore, in responses to the question of what constitutes good Australian children's television, diversity was the third most common theme (21%) – a theme even more commonly discussed than positive messaging (17%) and relatable family dynamics (16%).

The theme of diverse representation here referred to children's shows depicting a range of people in relation to factors including gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, culture, and/or ability.



"I love the way that children's television is getting better at representing diverse cultures and experiences." – Survey response from VIC mother of two children under 15 years



"In all the ABC Kids shows, boys and girls are equally represented and do the same things (e.g. girls get to do everything boys do, and vice versa)." – Survey response from VIC mother of two children under 15 years

This research found that diversity is understood as important in relation to:

- children engaging with representations of a wide variety of people from a range of places;
- diverse child audiences being able to see themselves and their own lives reflected in shows they watch.

Nevertheless, 17% of parents surveyed believe that a greater level of diversity would make Australian children's shows more relevant and appealing.



"Not all content demonstrates our diversity – and places beyond our cities." – Survey response from QLD father of one child under 15 years

In particular, some parents observed that Australian children's television should feature Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures more prominently.



"I would love to see more teaching and learning in a really positive framework around the themes of reconciliation and First Nations peoples." – Interview with Frances from NSW, two children under five years

Specific contemporary children's shows that prioritise representations of First Nations Australians – such as *Thalu*, *Red Dirt Riders*, and *Big J & Little Cuz* – were not mentioned in the survey's open responses as frequently as shows without a First Nations focus.

Overall, this report clarifies that Australian parents place high importance on diverse representation in Australian children's television and are keen to see it continue to advance and improve.



Little J and Cuz



First Day

11. Co-Viewing and Movie Night

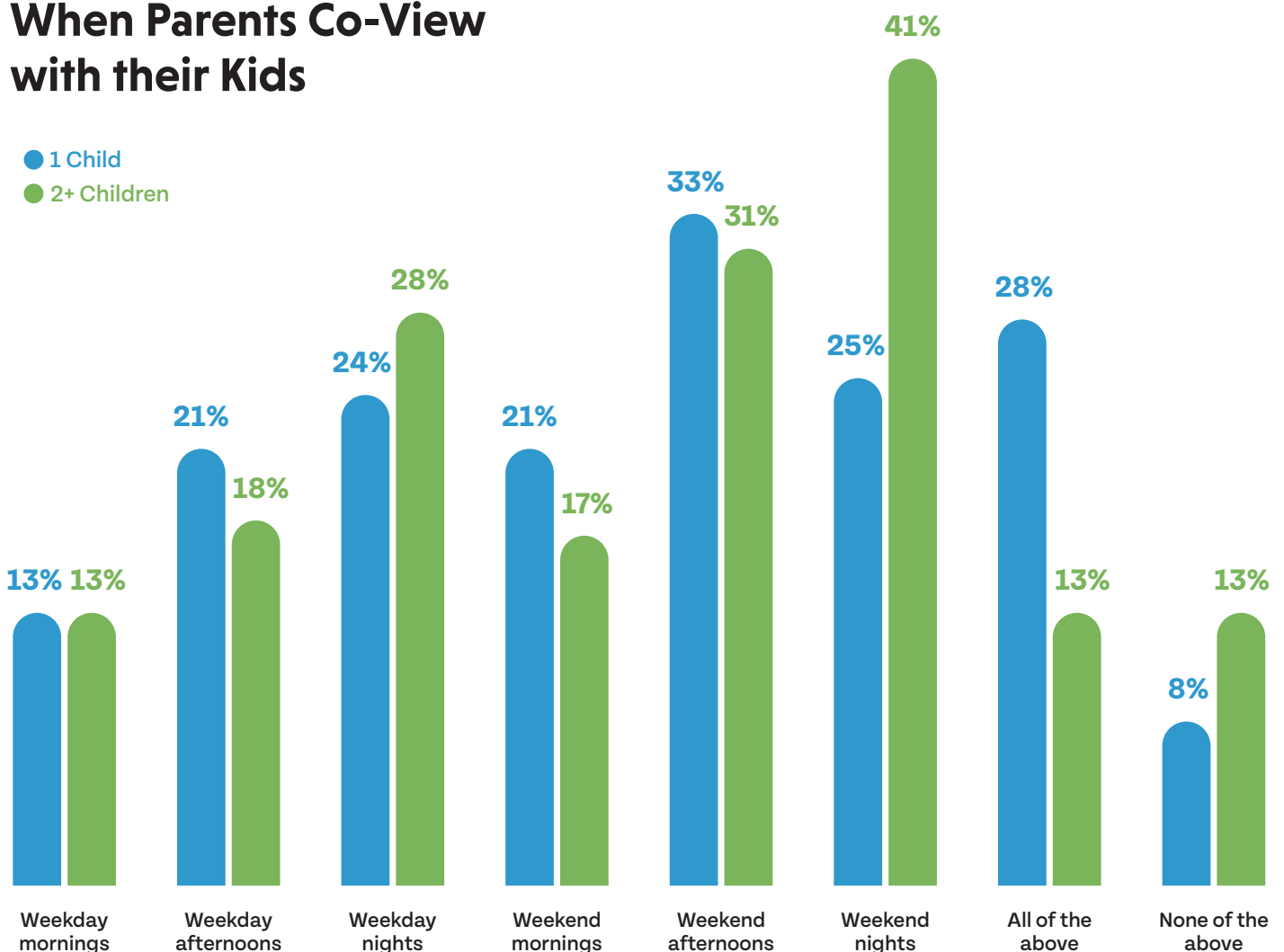
Families watching children's content together is a regular and popular household activity in Australia. In fact, nine out of 10 of parents watch at least some content with their children each week.

Australian shows that were noted as being co-viewing favourites include *Bluey* and *Play School*. Family movies were also a popular co-viewing choice.

This research identified that parents are most likely to watch content with their children on weekends.

When Parents Co-View with their Kids

- 1 Child
- 2+ Children



Co-viewing on weekends at night is significantly more common in households with multiple children; 41% of households with two or more children watch together at these times versus 21% of single-child households.

This could suggest that parents with multiple children have less time to watch content during the week with their children, and so make up for it on weekend nights with the whole family.

Co-viewing provides opportunities to bring everyone in the household together.



"We don't do TV through the week for them ... we generally will have a movie night on Friday or Saturday night, where we all have popcorn and sit on the couch together." – Interview with Matt from QLD, seven-year-old twins

The vast majority of content is now accessed via streaming services. For example, 77% of households watch Netflix. Comparably, only 15% use physical media such as DVDs or Blu-rays; of this percentage, two-thirds use physical media to watch content on weekend afternoons.

When it comes to movies, households often have certain "family favourites." Disney movies feature prominently among these – both newer ones and older titles – which are nostalgic for parents. These movies are accessed via Disney+ or physical media.

This research highlights the continuing relevance of cross-generational co-viewing, and the key role that streaming services play in the shared viewing habits of Australian families.

Report Summary

This audience research provides evidence-based insights and understandings of how contemporary Australian families consume children's television and other audio-visual entertainment. It illuminates viewing preferences and patterns and provides new details about what parents most value about local content. It also highlights the demand for easily discoverable local content, especially on SVODs and on YouTube. These findings show how important it is that policy settings prioritise Australian children's content in the streaming era.

This research:

- 1.** Demonstrates that Australian audiences value children's television with specifically Australian characteristics.
- 2.** Substantiates audience demand for more Australian children's content on SVODs.
- 3.** Evidences that it is currently difficult for many parents to locate/discover Australian children's content across the multiple platforms that are available.
- 4.** Demonstrates that SVOD catalogues need to present Australian children's content in visible and discoverable ways.
- 5.** Verifies that older child audiences are inclined to consume content via a few key streaming platforms, in particular YouTube and Netflix.
- 6.** Aligns with international studies that find pre-teens still tend to favour linear channels and BVODs. Thus, despite the opportunities presented by new streaming platforms, content still needs to be created for and distributed via linear channels, especially for younger audiences.
- 7.** Clarifies the importance Australian parents place on diverse representation in Australian children's television.
- 8.** Evidences the popularity of weekend co-viewing traditions among Australian families, particularly movie nights.
- 9.** Identifies that cross-generational co-viewing within families remains popular in the streaming era.

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Authors and Institutions



**AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S
TELEVISION CULTURES**

This report is authored by the chief investigators of the Australian Children's Television Cultures research group, Associate Professor Liam Burke, Dr Joanna McIntyre, Dr Jessica Balanzategui, and Dr Djoyimi Baker

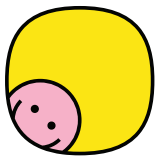


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The **Human Project.**

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Find out more about the Australian
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research project

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