

# Gender-Neutral Licenses Offer Double the Appeal

## Boys and Girls Agree on the Hottest Gender-Neutral Properties

by Nancy Zwierns

**H**air pulling and face-making aside, boys and girls have finally found something to agree on—the hottest gender-neutral licenses. In the KidzEyes/Funosophy 2006 License Tracker survey, conducted by kids' marketing firm Funosophy, Inc., and C&R Research, thousands of boys and girls rated the popularity of the top gender-neutral licenses—and their responses were fairly similar. Included in the License Tracker survey were the top 50 properties (gender-neutral, boys', and girls') on the market today. More than 8,000 kids ages 6–17 rated the popularity of these licenses, giving kids' marketers an inside look at each license's life cycle, age skew, and gender skew (for gender-neutral licenses). This article, exclusive to *The Toy Book*, features responses from kids ages 6–11, focused specifically on gender-neutral properties.

### Top Five

Two fantasy movies, two cartoons, and one entertainment brand filled the top five spots on kids' popularity lists. Although SpongeBob SquarePants has reigned supreme with kids 6–11 for the past 12 months, its mother brand, Nickelodeon, surpassed it in this wave to take the No. 1 popularity spot. It should be noted, however, that kids responded to words/names in this survey, not pictures.

#### TOP FIVE GENDER-NEUTRAL PROPERTIES

PERCENT OF KIDS AGE 6-11

WHO THINK THIS WILL BE "VERY POPULAR"

PROPERTY	PERCENT
NICKELODEON	70%
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS	64%
THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA	63%
HARRY POTTER	61%
FAIRLY ODDPARENTS	51%

#### SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS LIFE CYCLE ANALYSIS

PERCENT OF KIDS AGES 6-11

WHO THINK THIS WILL BE "VERY POPULAR"

##### TIMEFRAME

APRIL 2005	72%
OCTOBER 2005	65%
APRIL 2006	64%

### SpongeBob's Staying Power

Not only is Nick on the rise as a brand unto itself, but one of its premier properties, SpongeBob SquarePants, has consistently been a top gender-neutral property with both boys and girls over the past 12 months.

### Celebrate the Differences

Although boys and girls in the 6–11-year-old range agreed on four of the five top licensed properties, there were some important variances to note. Overall, boys gave much higher popularity rankings to most of the licenses surveyed than girls did. Pokémon and The Simpsons, in particular, tended to be more popular with boys than with girls. On the flip side, girls are wild for American Idol, rating the TV show a full 20 points higher than boys did.

#### BIGGEST GENDER DIFFERENCES

PERCENT OF KIDS AGES 6-11

WHO THINK THIS WILL BE "VERY POPULAR"

PROPERTY	BOYS	GIRLS
AMERICAN IDOL	41%	61%
THE SIMPSONS	33%	25%
POKÉMON	33%	16%

#### BIGGEST AGE DIFFERENCES

PERCENT OF KIDS AGES 6-11

WHO THINK THIS WILL BE "VERY POPULAR"

PROPERTY	AGES 6-8	AGES 9-11
SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS	72%	56%
SCOOBY DOO	51%	31%
AMERICAN IDOL	43%	57%

### Aging Idols?

Most of the properties included in this survey were more popular with younger kids (ages 6–8) than older kids (ages 9–11), with the exception, again, of American Idol, which scored nearly 20 points higher with older kids.

Nancy Zwierns is CEO of Funosophy, Inc., a toy industry brand-building consulting and research firm. The KidzEyes/Funosophy 2006 License Tracker survey was conducted by Funosophy and its research partner KidzEyes among a nationally representative sample of more than 8,000 boys and girls ages 6–17. For more information, email [info@funosophy.com](mailto:info@funosophy.com).