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See Jane 2023

How Has On-Screen Representation in Children's Television Changed from 2018 to 2022?

Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media
If she can see it, she can be it.™

Nielsen

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Executive Summary

Since 2004, the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media has advocated for greater on screen inclusion and better representation in global entertainment media through research and advocacy. To continue this effort, we analyzed two different types of children's media content for the inclusion and representation of six categories—gender, race, LGBTQIA+ identity, disability, age, and body size—and characters' intersections therein.[1] First, we looked at inclusion and representation of these identities in programming **popular** with children ages two to 11 in the U.S. according to Nielsen metrics, which includes the 10 most popular broadcast, cable, and streaming shows, inclusive of all languages, for a total of 67 episodes.[2] This gives us a sense of what children are watching. Second, we analyzed inclusion and representation in **new** children's programming, which is TV that is currently being made for children, for a total of 259 episodes.[3] This gives us a sense of what is being made for children. In this report, we look at differences in representation and inclusion within and between each type of media content from 2018 to 2022, to assess change over time.

We focus on **popular** programming because young people are frequent consumers of TV[4] and the effects of media on social, psychological, and physical development of children is profound.[5] Therefore, it is critical we understand what they're watching. We focus on **new** programming to get a sense of the entertainment industry's effort to drive more diverse children's content. The analysis of inclusion and representation in **new** programming will serve as a benchmark to track further change and progress in television media made for children.

Audiences are drawn to stories that mirror their experiences or are perceived to authentically portray their communities.[6] Audiences also want to see themselves in characters. Shows with more diverse casts attract higher audience ratings than programs with less diverse casts.[7] To meet this demand, we need more diverse storytelling and characters. This report is in service to that effort.

Key Findings

1.

Most shows that children are watching have a female lead. But female characters are about 44% of leads in new shows being made for kids.

In 2022 programming popular with children, female characters make up 51.1% of leading roles, showing that children enjoy shows with female leads. But in new programming for children, female characters make up only 44.3% of leads, similar to 2018, when 44.2% of leads were female characters. Therefore, in shows being made for kids in 2022, male characters feature more heavily in storylines that drive the narrative.

2.

Female characters are underrepresented in animation.

In 2022 programming popular with children, 57.7% of animated characters are male and 42.3% are female. In new programming for children, 56.5% of animated characters are male and 43.2% are female. For gender parity to be reached in children's shows, animated series will need to increase female representation.

3.

Characters of color occupy a record number of leading roles.

In 2022 programming popular with children (English-only shows), characters of color are 52.8% of leads—a marked increase from 2018, when only 26.1% of leads were characters of color. In new programming made for children in 2022, 56.1% of leads are characters of color, a 5-percentage-point increase since 2021 and a striking 16-point increase since 2018.

4.

LGBTQIA+ and disabled representation remains very low.

Although at least 7.2% of people in the U.S. identify as LGBTQIA+, and 1 in 4 have a disability, 1.0% of characters in 2022 programming popular with children are LGBTQIA+ and 1.9% are disabled. In new programming for children, only 2.3% of characters are LGBTQIA+ and 1.2% are disabled.

5.

Disabled representation lacks racial diversity.

In new programming for children, when disabled characters are on-screen, they are far more likely to be white than people of color, highlighting an opportunity to improve racial diversity at this intersection. There are no racial differences for disabled characters in popular programming.

6.

Fat characters are much more often male than female.

Fat representation is very low overall, but when a fat character is on screen, 3 in 4 are male in new programming for children and 4 in 5 are male in programming popular with children. This reinforces inequality in body-image expectations for child viewers of all genders.

Additionally key findings:

- **New Children's Programming from 2022**
  - Gender Representation
    - Among all roles, in 2022 new programming, male characters outnumber female and nonbinary characters (55.5% compared with 44.2% and 0.3%).
    - In 2022 new programming, minor roles produce the largest gender gap, with male characters representing 60.9% and female characters 38.9%.
    - Among leading characters, the proportion of women and girls in new shows made for kids is steady from 2018 (44.3% versus 44.2%).
  - Race/Ethnicity Representation
    - More than half of all human characters are people of color (51.3%).
    - Leads of color have outnumbered white leads since 2020 in new programming, and their share of leading roles is at an all-time high in 2022 — 56.1%. That's an increase of about 5 points since 2021 (51.3%) and about 16 points since 2018 (41.5%).
    - White characters are more likely than characters of color to be shown with a job (43.5% compared with 37.3%).
  - LGBTQIA+ Representation
    - In 2022, there is a slight decrease in LGBTQIA+ leads from 3.1% in 2021 to 2.4% in 2022. LGBTQIA+ leads were at a high of 4.9% in 2019.
    - LGBTQIA+ characters are more likely than non-LGBTQIA+ characters to be shown dating (23.5% compared with 3.9%), expressing romantic interest in another character (49.0% compared with 8.6%), and kissing (13.7% compared with 1.0%). However, romantic attachment is an indicator for identifying LGBTQIA+ characters, and therefore, it should be interpreted with this context.
  - Disability Representation
    - In 2022, there was only one disabled leading character (1.3% of all leads). From 2018 to 2021, there were no leading characters with a disability.
    - Disabled characters are more likely than nondisabled characters to be white (43.8% compared with 23.5%), which means that there is less racial diversity among disabled characters.
  - Body Size Representation
    - Fat characters make up a small percentage of leading roles. In new programming, just 2.7% of leads are fat, and they are significantly less likely to be leads than other types of roles.
    - Fat characters are three times more likely to be male than female (72.5% compared with 27.5%), which means fat women and girls are far less likely to be cast in roles than fat men and boys.

Leads of color have outnumbered white leads since 2020 in new programming, and their share of leading roles is at an all-time high in 2022 — 56.1%. That's an increase of about 5 points since 2021 (51.3%) and about 16 points since 2018 (41.5%).

- Age Representation
  - The percentage of leads ages 50 and older has fluctuated, seeing a high of 3.1% in 2019 and a low of 0.0% in 2020. In 2022, 1.1% of leads are 50 and older.
  - Characters ages 50 and older are more likely than their younger counterparts to be white (41.3% compared with 30.1%), which means racial diversity is less visible among older characters.
  - Fifty-plus characters are more likely than younger characters to be fat (16.8% compared with 5.5%) and disabled (6.1% compared with 1.1%, nondisabled), which means there is more body-type diversity and disability representation among older characters compared to younger characters.

- **Popular Programming for Children**[8]
  - Gender Representation
    - Among all characters in popular programming from 2022, male characters make up 56.9% and female characters 43.1% — down slightly from 44.6% in 2021.
    - Among lead characters, 51.1% are female, achieving gender parity, which we also saw in 2018, when 52.0% of leads were female.
    - Male characters are more likely than female characters to have jobs (41.8% compared with 29.5%).
  - Race/Ethnicity Representation
    - Among characters with an explicit race, 56.0% are Latinx, largely due to the popularity of telenovelas with young audiences.
    - Excluding non-English programming, the percentage of leads of color has steadily increased from 26.1% in 2018 to 52.8% in 2022.
    - White characters are more likely than characters of color to be shown as a leader (28.7% compared with 19.3%).
    - White characters 18 and younger are more likely than younger characters of color 18 and younger to be bullies (10.0% compared with 0.0%).
  - LGBTQIA+ Representation
    - There were no LGBTQIA+ leads in 2022, which is a decline from 1.0% of LGBTQIA+ leads in 2021.
  - Disability Representation
    - After having no disabled leads in 2021, there was a slight increase in 2022 — 1.3% of leads are disabled.
    - More than half (54.5%) of disabled characters are ages 50 and older, suggesting disabled characters are infrequently portrayed by younger adult characters or by teenage and child characters.
  - Body Size Representation
    - Among leads, just 2.1% are fat, which is a decline from 3.8% in 2021 and 5.9% in 2019.
    - Fat characters are four times more likely to be male than female (80.5% male compared with 19.5% female).
  - Age Representation
    - Characters ages 50 and older make up 4.8% of lead characters.
    - The smaller the role (e.g., supporting), the higher the percentage of 50-plus characters.
    - Fifty-plus characters are more likely than younger characters to be Latinx (57.5% compared with 35.9%), and younger characters are more likely to be white (21.8% for characters under 50, compared with 10.2% for 50-plus characters) or Asian or Pacific Islander (6.8% for characters under 50, compared with 1.1% for 50-plus characters).

- **Animation versus Live-Action**
  - Gender Representation
    - In both **new** and **popular** programming, female characters are less likely than male characters to be animated. In **new** children's programming, 56.5% of animated characters are male and 43.2% are female. This is an improvement from 2018, when 63.5% of animated characters were male.

- In **popular** programming, 57.7% of animated characters are male and 42.3% are female. This is an improvement from 2021, when 63.2% of animated characters were male and only 36.8% were female.
- Animated *human* characters achieve gender parity in **new** programming (49.9% for both male and female characters). This is a slight improvement from 2021, when 52.2% of animated human characters were male characters and 47.6% were female characters.
- Animated human characters are more likely to be male than female in **popular** programming (53.0% compared with 47.0%). This is a decline from 2021, when 50.9% were male and 49.1% were female.
- Among animated *nonhuman* characters, male characters far outnumber female characters in **new** (61.9% compared with 37.7%) and **popular** programming (61.8% compared with 38.2%). This is an improvement from 2021, when 66.5% were male and 33.1% were female in **new** programming, and 68.1% were male and 31.9% were female in **popular** programming.

◦ Race/Ethnicity Representation
- In 2022 **new** programming, 46.4% of animated characters are white, compared with 55.2% of live-action characters, which tells us that white characters are better represented in live-action shows than in animated shows. However, in 2021, white characters were more likely to be animated (56.7%) than live-action (49.6%).
- Asian and Pacific Islander characters are more often animated than live-action (17.2% animated compared with 7.7% live-action), as are Middle Eastern and North African characters (2.5% animated compared with no live-action characters). There are no statistically significant differences between animated and live-action representations of Black, Native, or Latinx characters.
- Latinx representation in animation improved in popular programming from 5.0% in 2021 to 13.2% in 2022.
- In **popular** programming, Black characters appear more often in animation than in live-action (18.9% animated compared with 4.3% live-action). This was true in 2021, when 9.2% of characters in animation were Black but only 0.4% of characters in live-action were Black. There were no statistically significant differences in animated and live-action representation for Black characters in **new** programming.
- In **new** and **popular** programming, Asian and Pacific Islander characters are more likely to be in animation than live-action (new: 17.2% animated compared with 7.7% live-action; popular: 14.6% animated compared with 1.2% live-action). In 2021, there was not a statistically significant difference (new: 10.0% animated compared with 10.2% live-action; popular: 7.6% animated compared with 8.0% live-action).

◦ LGBTQIA+ Representation
- In **new** programming, live-action characters are more likely than their animated counterparts to be LGBTQIA+ (4.0% compared with 2.0%). This was also true in 2021 (3.3% live-action compared with 1.5% animated) There were no statistically significant differences for **popular** programming.

◦ Body Size Representation
- In **popular** programming, animated characters are more likely than live-action characters to be fat (11.4% compared with 2.7%). This was true in 2021 as well (8.3% animated compared with 1.2% live-action). There were no statistically significant differences for **new** programming.

◦ Age Representation
- In **popular** programming, live-action characters are more likely than animated characters to be ages 50 and older (20.7% compared with 13.0%). This was also true in 2021 (25.5% live-action compared with 6.9% animated). There were no statistically significant differences for **new** programming.

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Data Collection and Methodology

For our data collection, we employ content analysis, a research method in which researchers operationalize complex concepts into quantifiable markers and systematically identify every occurrence of those markers in media. This process is conducted by a team of experts who have all met training standards to ensure consistent and reliable data collection. Chi-square tests were employed for data analyses to determine statistical significance, with p-values set to 0.05. This report presents findings for two types of programming: television shows that are *popular* among children (ages two to 11) and television shows that are *made* for children in the year specified.

Programming Popular with Children: This dataset includes the shows children watched in 2022. We include the 10 most popular scripted series among children ages two to 11 across the U.S. on broadcast, cable, and streaming, according to data that Nielsen provided to the Institute. Broadcast and cable data were based on audiences for the 2022-2023 season, and popular streaming video on demand data were based on gross minutes for 2022. This totaled 30 series, with a sample of two episodes each, resulting in 1,154 characters. Like the 2022 report, this dataset is not limited to English-language programming. Many of the most popular shows among children on broadcast television are Spanish-language telenovelas. Thus, in this dataset, we find high percentages of Latinx characters.

New Children's Programming: This dataset samples from every show made for children that released a new episode in 2022 and is listed on the trade database Luminate by Variety.[9] These shows were identified by searching for series tagged as "childrens," "children's animation," and "preschool" on Luminate. The search included all broadcast and cable networks, in addition to the following streaming services: Amazon Prime, Apple TV+, Disney+, HBO Max, Hulu, Netflix, Paramount+, and Peacock.[10] This yielded a dataset of 133 shows, from which we took a random sample of 99 shows. We sampled two episodes from the 2022 season for each series, for a total of 2,656 characters.

TABLE 1

Datasets for popular and new TV programming in 2022

	NEW CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING IN 2022	POPULAR CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING IN 2022 (AGES 2 TO 11)
Episodes	253	67
Total Characters	2,656	1,154
Lead Characters	376	94
Notable Supporting Characters	826	289
Supporting Characters	914	435
Minor Characters	540	336

Note: Some streaming series aired more than one season in 2022, in which case we sampled two episodes from each season. Some shows aired only one episode in 2022, in which case we included just that one episode. Popular children's programming includes programming in any language. For 2022, some shows were Spanish-language series.

We identified the prominence of every character, assigning them to one of four levels:

1. lead (which includes coleads)
2. notable supporting
3. supporting, and
4. minor.

Leads (including coleads) refer to the protagonist of the A story in the episode. Notable supporting characters are usually non-lead members of the cast and can be recurring characters and noteworthy guest stars. Supporting characters are those who appear in more than one scene but are not heavily featured. Minor characters are those who have speaking roles but appear only briefly.


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All Findings

GENDER REPRESENTATION

Prominence and Intersections

Among all characters identified in **new** and **popular** programming for children, male characters outnumber female characters. In **new** children's programming 55.5% of characters are male, while 44.2% of characters are female, a gap of 11.3 points. In **popular** programming 56.9% of all characters are male, while 43.1% of characters are female, a gap of 13.8 points. There were no nonbinary characters in programming that is **popular** with children. In English-only popular programming, 57.7%% of characters are male, while 42.3% are female, a gap of 15.4 points.

TABLE 2

Gender inclusion in new and popular programming for children (all characters) in 2022

	NEW	POPULAR	ENGLISH-ONLY POPULAR
Male	55.5%	56.9%	57.7%
Female	44.2%	43.1%	42.3%
Nonbinary	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%

"Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

Looking at gender through an intersectional lens, we see that while male characters outnumber female characters overall, when we view gender alongside race, we find that female characters outnumber male characters in nearly all racial groups.[11,12] This is because male characters are more likely to be in roles that do not have a race, such as animated animals or anthropomorphized objects. In **new** programming, more than half (53.5%) of male characters do not have a race or ethnicity, while 41.1% of female characters do not have a race or ethnicity (See Table 3).

Additionally, male characters are more likely than female characters to be fat in **new** (8.2% compared with 3.9%) and **popular** programming (10.1% compared with 3.2%). When limiting the analysis to English-only popular programming, this gap widens (13.5% compared with 4.4% – a difference of 9.1 points, compared with 6.9 for all popular programming). This difference is important to recognize because gender inequality in body-type diversity contributes to harmful double standards, with boys and men granted more latitude than girls and women in their physical stature and size. Last, male characters are more likely to be 50-plus in **popular** programming (21.1% compared with 11.6%; 15.1% compared with 7.6% English-only). The erasure of older women from film and TV is not new.[13]

TABLE 3

Gender at the intersection of other identities

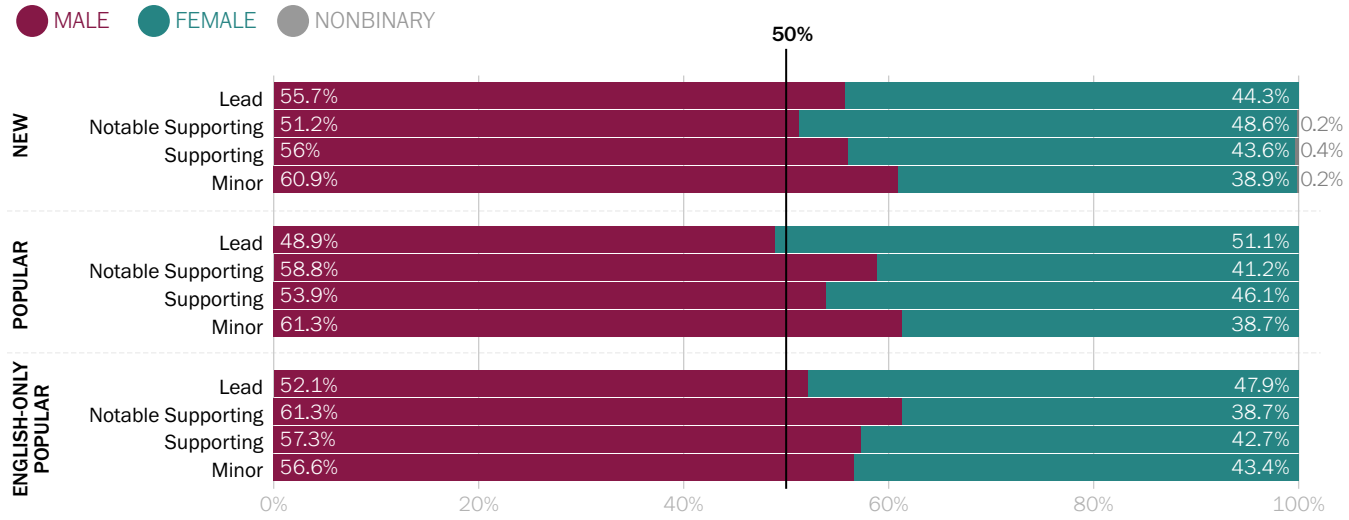
	NEW			POPULAR		ENGLISH-ONLY POPULAR	
	MALE	FEMALE	NONBINARY	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
White	23.4%	24.5%	0.0%	19.4%	18.1%	28.9%	28.4%
Person of Color	20.4%	31.1%	0.0%	43.7%	55.1%	15.5%	29.3%
Other/No Race	53.5%	41.1%	100.0%	35.7%	24.8%	53.8%	39.1%
Implied Race	2.7%	3.3%	0.0%	1.2%	2.0%	1.8%	3.2%
LGBTQIA+	2.0%	2.0%	100.0%	0.6%	1.6%	0.9%	2.2%
Disabled	0.9%	1.6%	0.0%	1.7%	2.2%	0.9%	2.5%
Fat	8.2%	3.9%	0.0%	10.1%	3.2%	13.5%	4.4%
Age 50-plus	9.8%	7.9%	0.0%	21.1%	11.6%	15.1%	7.6%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences between male and female characters, or male and nonbinary characters. There were no nonbinary characters in the Popular dataset. "Implied race" includes characters that are not explicitly racialized, but race is implied with cues other than skin tone, such as Speedy Gonzales from the Looney Tunes. "Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

But who is playing more prominent roles? Male characters outnumber female characters in all types of roles, except leading roles in **popular** programming, where 51.1% of leads are female (compared with 48.9% who are male). However, this is likely due to telenovelas, as male characters outnumber female characters when looking only at English language popular programming (52.1% male compared with 47.9% female). In **new** children's programming, male characters make up over half of leading roles (55.7% compared with 44.3% for female characters). Among supporting, notable supporting, and minor roles, male characters also outnumber female characters in **new** and **popular** programming. The gender gap is widest for minor roles, where nearly 2 in 3 characters are men in **new** and **popular** programming.

CHART 1

Gender prominence for all characters in new and popular programming for children in 2022

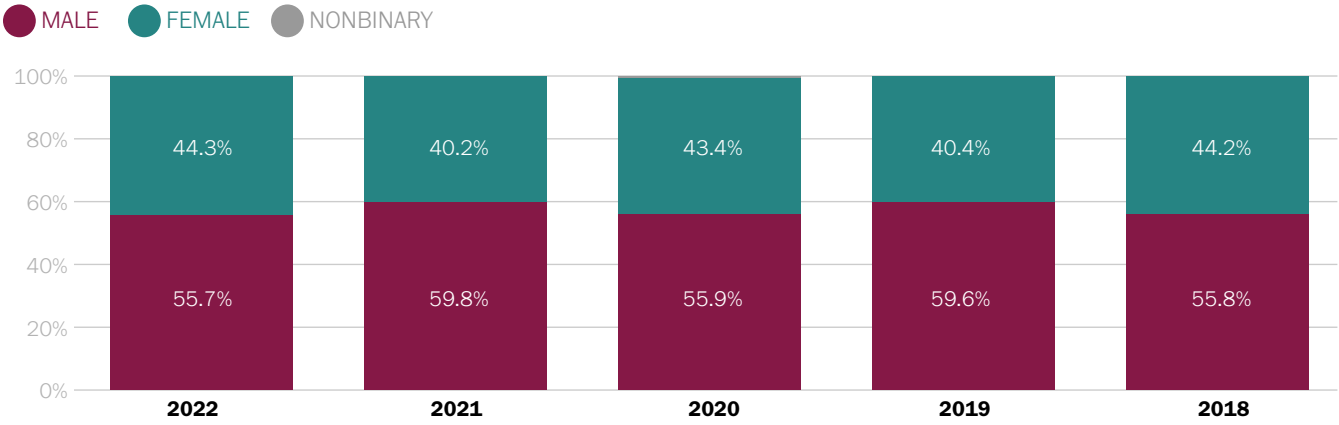


"Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

How has gender representation changed over time? In **new** programming, the proportion of female leads is at a high of 44.3% in 2022, though this is similar to their share of leads in 2018 (44.2%).

CHART 2

Leads in new programming for children by gender, 2018–2022

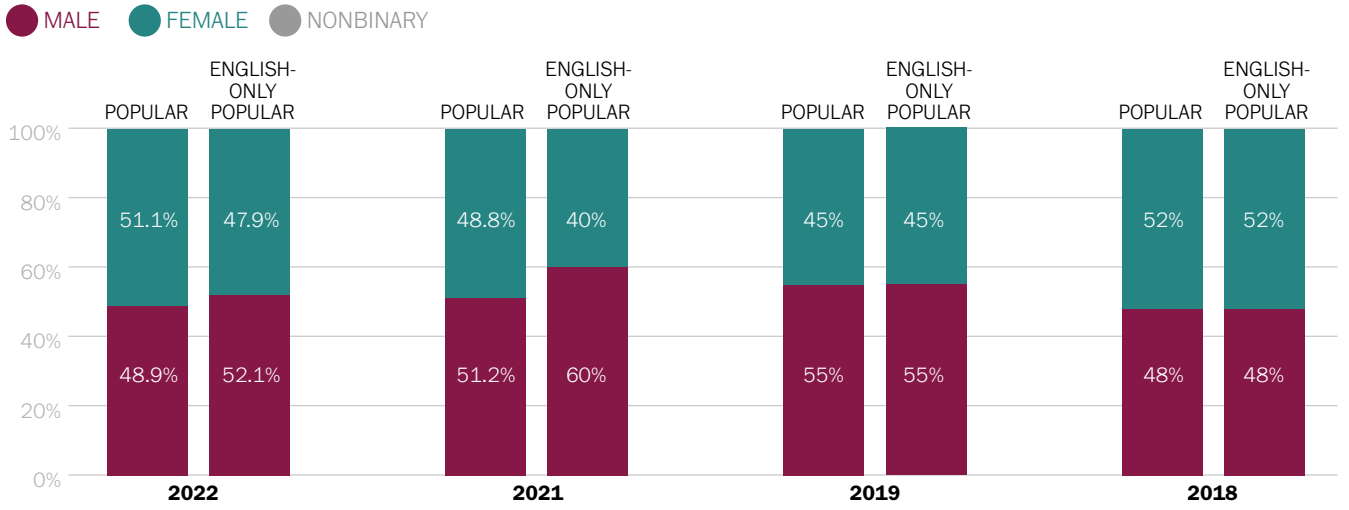


In **popular** programming, the proportion of male to female lead characters has fluctuated but remains closely balanced since 2018. In the 2022 season of **popular** programming, female characters make up 51.1% of leads — an increase from 48.8% in 2021.

In the 2022 season of popular programming, female characters make up 51.1% of leads — an increase from 48.8% in 2021.

CHART 3

Leads in popular programming for children by gender, 2018–2022



Note: Popular programming was not measured in 2020 due to the COVID-19 interruptions in programming. "Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

Romance and Sexualization

There are very few instances of objectification, revealing clothing, or romantic or sexual activity in **new** and **popular** programming. However, female characters are about six times more likely than male characters to be in revealing clothing in both **new** (4.8% female compared with 0.8% male) and **popular** programming (14.4% female compared with 2.2% male; 8.6% female compared with 0.3% male in English-only). (See Table A2 in Appendix A.)

Careers and Leadership

In **new** programming, there are no statistically significant differences between male and female characters regarding the depictions of jobs or leadership. However, in **popular** programming, a higher percentage of male characters than female characters have jobs (41.8% compared with 29.5%; 38.0% compared with 29.2% in English-only). (See Table A3 in Appendix A.)

Emotional Maturity

For portrayals of emotional growth, we looked only at characters ages 19 and under. We find no statistically significant gender differences regarding child characters who act as bullies or discuss their feelings in **new** or **popular** programming. (See Table A4 in Appendix A.)

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Race/Ethnicity Representation

PROMINENCE AND INTERSECTIONS

In 2021, we expanded our sampling of **popular** programming among children in the U.S. to include non-English-language television shows so long as they were among the most watched. Thus, the percentage of leads of color has jumped significantly in our analysis. However, we also present the findings for racial and ethnic representation for English-Only popular programming in order to compare to previous years of analysis.

Starting with an analysis of all characters in 2022 **popular** programming, 28.1% of characters are white, which is due in large part to a number of popular shows that were Spanish-language programming (largely telenovelas), which feature primarily Latinx characters. If we exclude non-English programming, 57.3% of characters are white, 17.1% are Black, 10.1% are API, 9.9% are Latinx, followed by MENA (2.4%), multiracial (2.9%), and Native American or Indigenous (0.3%). In **new** programming for children, less than half of characters with an explicit race are white (48.7%). Among all characters in **new** programming, 23.8% are Black, 14.8% are API, 7.4% are Latinx, followed by multiracial (2.5%), MENA (1.9%), and Native American or Indigenous (0.9%).

TABLE 4

Race inclusion in new and popular programming for children (all characters) in 2022

	NEW	POPULAR	ENGLISH-ONLY POPULAR
White	48.7%	28.1%	57.3%
All people of color	51.3%	71.9%	52.7%
Black	23.8%	8.3%	17.1%
Asian and Pacific Islander	14.8%	4.9%	10.1%
Latinx	7.4%	56.0%	9.9%
Middle Eastern and North African	1.9%	1.2%	2.4%
Native	0.9%	1.4%	0.3%
Multiracial	2.5%	1.4%	2.9%

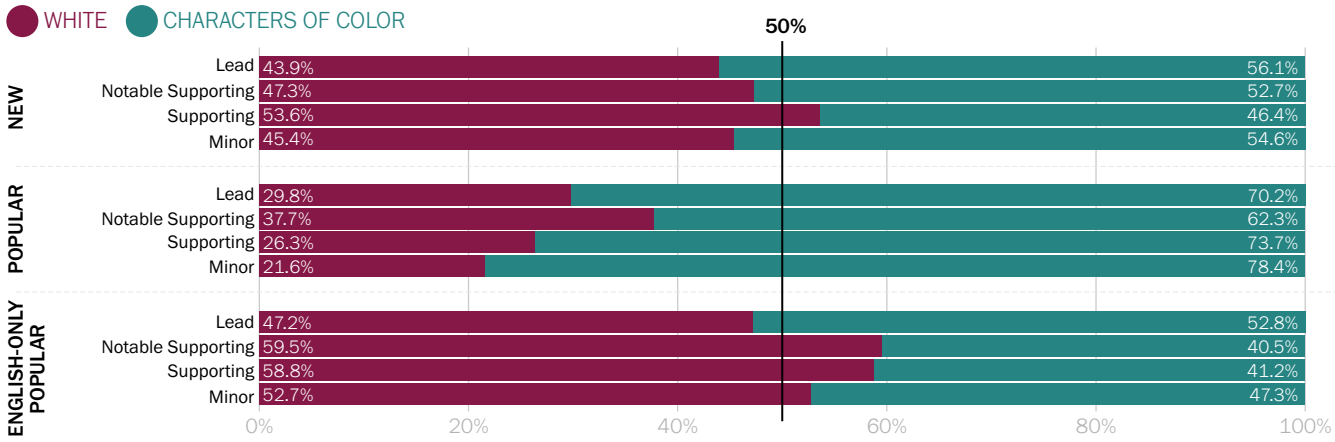
Note: Percentages are out of all characters with a discernible race. Characters without a race (e.g., animals, aliens, personified objects, and humans with atypical skin colors) are excluded. "Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

Looking at race through an intersectional lens, in **new** programming we find white characters and characters of color are disabled, fat, and 50-plus at a similar rate. However, Middle Eastern and North African characters are more likely to be LGBTQIA+ than all other characters (16.7% compared to 2.2%). (see Table 5A in Appendix A). In **popular** programming, White characters are more likely to be LGBTQIA+ than characters of other races (see Table A6 in Appendix A). Latinx characters are more likely to be 50-plus than characters of other races, however, in English-only popular programming, the difference is not statistically significant (see Table A7 in Appendix A).

When it comes to leading roles, characters of color outnumber white characters in **new** programming (56.1% compared with 43.9%). In **popular** programming, due to the high number of telenovelas, 70.2% of leads are people of color. Excluding non-English shows from **popular** programming, 52.8% of leads are people of color and 47.2% are white. Among this sample, in non-leading roles (notable supporting, supporting, and minor), white characters outnumber characters of color.

CHART 4

Race prominence in new and popular programming for children in 2022

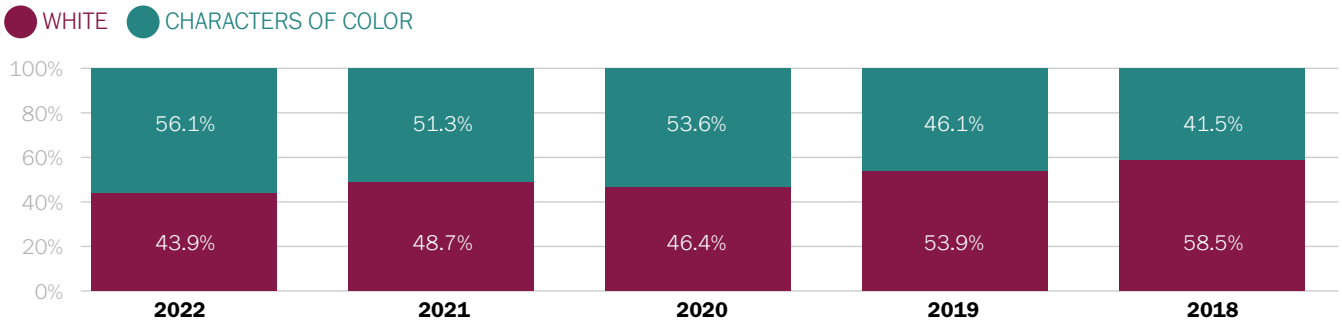


Note: Percentages exclude characters without a discernible race. Characters without races (e.g., animals, aliens, personified objects, and humans with atypical skin colors) are excluded. "Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

How has this changed over time? In **new** programming, leads of color have outnumbered white leads since 2020, and reached an all-time high in 2022 (56.1%). Since 2018, there has been a steady increase of characters of color as leads in **new** programming.

CHART 5

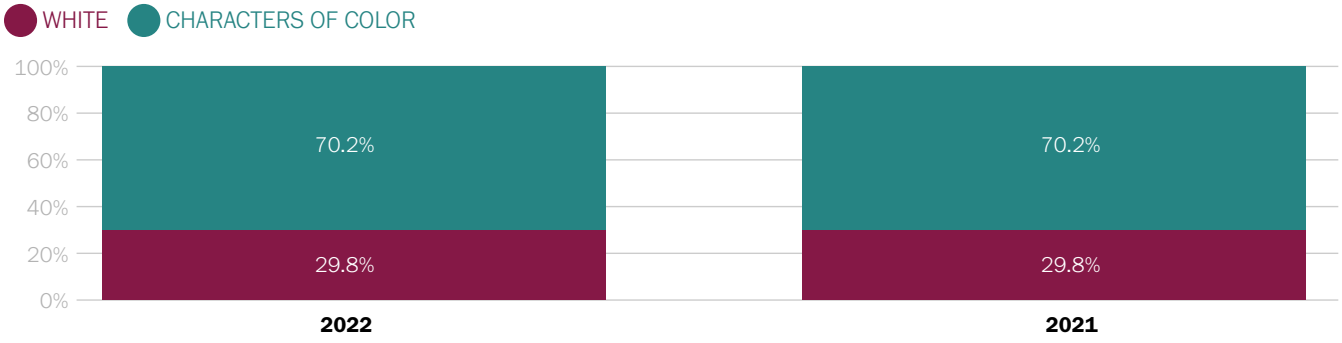
Leads in new programming for children, by race, 2018–2022



In **popular** programming, inclusive of non-English programming, the percentage of leads of color in 2022 is steady from 2021 (70.2% for both years).

CHART 6

Leads in popular programming for children, by race, 2021–2022

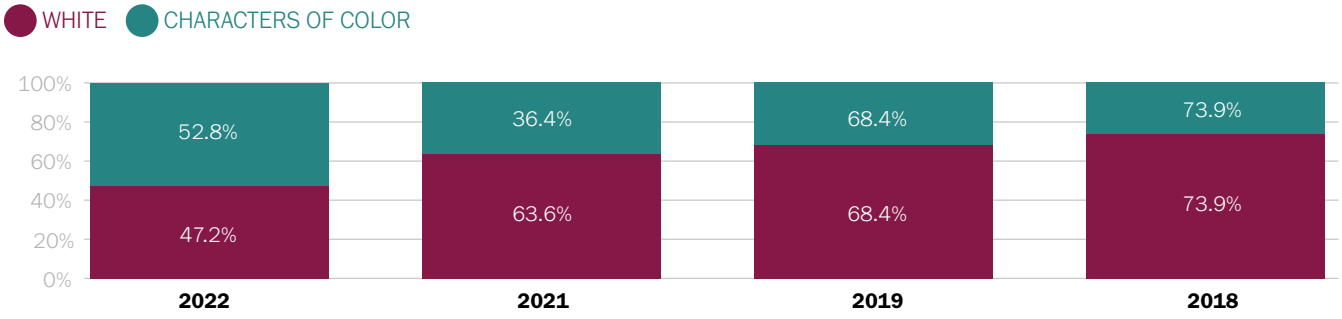


Note: For 2021 and 2022, the sample is inclusive of Spanish-language programming. Popular programming was not measured in 2020 due to the COVID-19 interruptions in programming.

In **popular** programming, excluding non-English programming, the percentage of leads of color has steadily increased — and by a large margin — from 26.1% in 2018 to 52.8% in 2022.

CHART 7

Leads in English-only popular programming for children, by race, 2018–2022



Note: Popular programming was not measured in 2020 due to the COVID-19 interruptions in programming.

In new programming, leads of color have outnumbered white leads since 2020, and reached an all-time high in 2022 (56.1%).

Romance and Sexualization

In **popular** programming, characters of color are four times more likely than white characters to be objectified (4.3% compared with 0.6%), about three times more likely to be wearing revealing clothing (11.7% compared with 4.2%), two times as likely to be in a committed relationship (18.8% compared with 9.0%), and about four times as likely to be shown kissing (9.2% compared with 2.4%). These findings are largely due to the content in telenovelas, which are typically about romantic relationships and feature primarily people of color. When looking at English-only popular programming, these differences disappear. There were no racial differences in these portrayals for **new** programming. (See Table A8 in Appendix A.)

Careers and Leadership

In **new** programming, white characters are more likely than characters of color to be shown with a job (43.5% compared with 37.3%). In **popular** children's programming, white characters are more likely than characters of color to be shown as a leader (28.7% compared with 19.3%), but this difference disappears when looking at English-only programming.

TABLE 5

Careers, STEM, and leadership by race in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	NEW		POPULAR		ENGLISH-ONLY POPULAR	
	WHITE	CHARACTERS OF COLOR	WHITE	CHARACTERS OF COLOR	WHITE	CHARACTERS OF COLOR
Has a Job	43.5%	37.3%	31.7%	37.6%	31.3%	31.7%
STEM	7.3%	4.8%	3.0%	2.5%	3.0%	4.1%
Leader	25.4%	25.3%	28.7%	19.3%	28.9%	33.3%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences between white characters and characters of color in the specified role. "Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

Emotional Maturity

For portrayals of emotional growth, we looked only at characters ages 19 and under. In both **new** and **popular** programming, white characters are more likely than characters of color to be bullies; in new programming, white characters are three times as likely (6.4% compared with 2.4%), and in popular programming (with and without non-English programming), they are 10 times as likely (10.0% compared with 0.0%). (See Tables A14, A15, and A16 in Appendix A.)

10'000 Hours/DigitalVision via Getty Images

LGBTQIA+ Representation

PROMINENCE AND INTERSECTIONS

In **new** and **popular** programming, the visibility of LGBTQIA+ characters is low. LGBTQIA+ characters are 2.3% of characters in **new** children's programming and 1.0% in **popular** programming.

TABLE 6

LGBTQIA+ inclusion in new and popular programming for children (all characters) in 2022

	NEW	POPULAR	ENGLISH-ONLY POPULAR
LGBTQIA+	2.3%	1.0%	1.5%
Not LGBTQIA+	97.7%	99.0%	98.5%

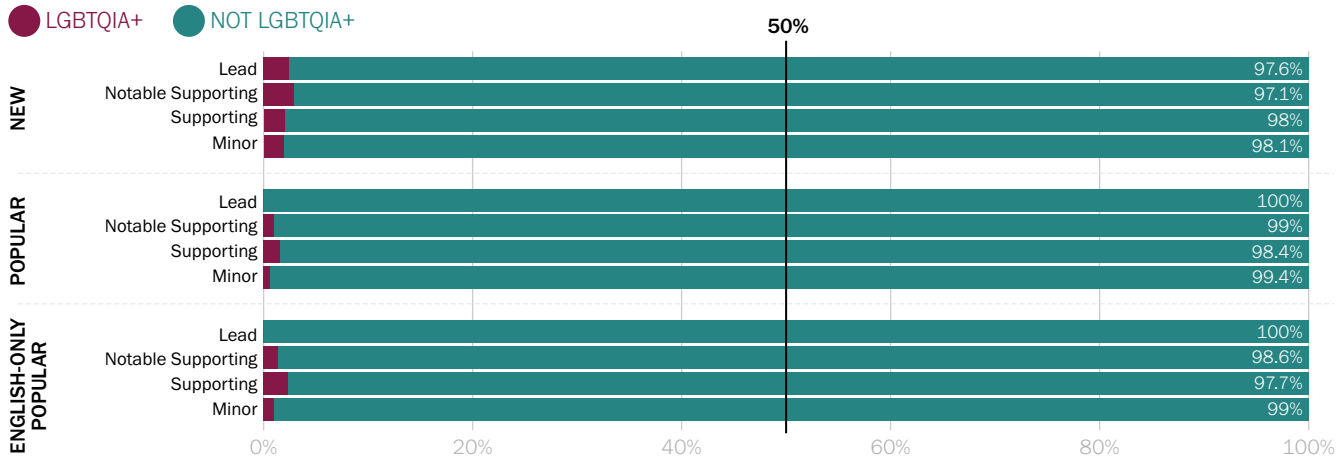
"Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

Looking at LGBTQIA+ identity through an intersectional lens, in **new** programming, LGBTQIA+ characters are more likely that non-LGBTQIA+ characters to be disabled (6.6% compared with 1.1%), but less likely to be 50-plus (0.0% compared with 9.9%) (see Table A17). In **popular** programming, LGBTQIA+ characters are more likely than non-LGBTQIA+ characters to be white (58.4% compared with 18.5%; 63.6% compared with 28.1% English-only), but less likely to be nonhuman (0.0% compared with 31.4%; 0.0% compared with 48.4% English-only). In English-only popular programming, LGBTQIA+ characters are more likely to be Latinx (27.3% compared with 4.6%) (see Table A17 in Appendix A).

Next, we assess character prominence. LGBTQIA+ characters are 2.4% of all leads in **new** children's programming, but there are no LGBTQIA+ leads in **popular** programming for children.

CHART 8

LGBTQIA+ prominence in new and popular programming for children in 2022

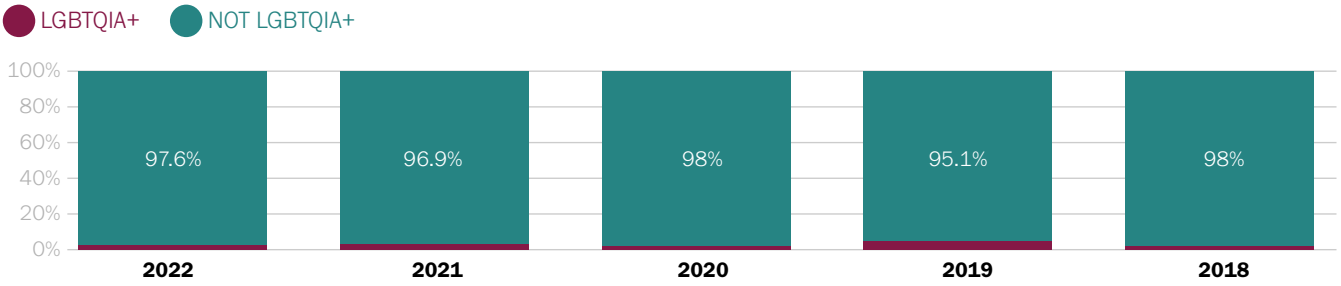


"Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

In 2022, we see a slight decrease in LGBTQIA+ leads in **new** programming for children, from 3.1% in 2021 to 2.4% in 2022. LGBTQIA+ leads were at a high of 4.9% in 2019.

CHART 9

LGBTQIA+ leads in new programming for children, 2018–2022



Although there had been a consistent increase in queer leads in **popular** programming, this fell off in 2022, when there were no queer leads.

CHART 10

LGBTQIA+ leads in popular programming for children, 2021–2022

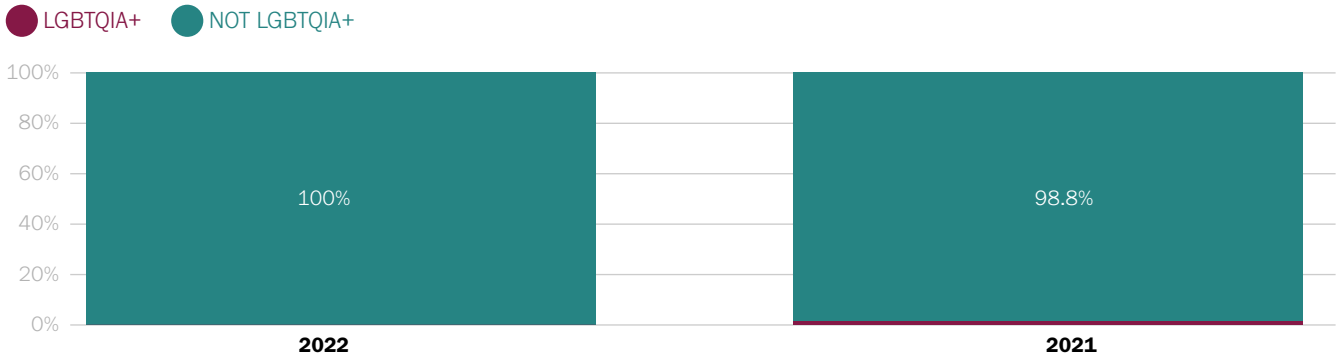


TABLE 7

LGBTQIA+ leads in English-only popular programming for children, 2018–2022

	ENGLISH-ONLY POPULAR			
	2022	2021	2019	2018
LGBTQIA+	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.2%
Not LGBTQIA+	100.0%	100.0%	99.5%	99.8%

Note: Popular programming was not measured in 2020 due to the COVID-19 interruptions in programming.

Romance and Sexualization

In **new** programming, LGBTQIA+ characters are more likely than non-LGBTQIA+ characters to be shown dating (23.5% compared with 3.9%), expressing romantic interest in another character (49.0% compared with 8.6%), and kissing (13.7% compared with 1.0%). However, romantic attachment is a key tactic for identifying LGBTQIA+ characters, and therefore, it should be interpreted with this context. (See Table A18 in Appendix A.) There are no statistically significant differences between LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+ characters' romantic behaviors in **popular** programming for children.

Careers and Leadership

There are no statistically significant differences between LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+ characters' careers or leadership behaviors in **new** or **popular** programming for children. There are no LGBTQIA+ characters in STEM. (See Table A19 in Appendix A.)

Emotional Maturity

For portrayals of emotional growth, we looked only at characters ages 19 and under. In **new** or **popular** programming, there are no statistically significant differences between LGBTQIA+ and non-LGBTQIA+ characters who are 19 or younger and are bullies or discuss their feelings. (See Table A20 in Appendix A.)


Westend61/Westend61 via Getty Images

Disability Representation

PROMINENCE AND INTERSECTIONS

In **new** and **popular** programming for children, the visibility of characters with physical, cognitive, or communication disabilities or mental health conditions is low. Less than 2 percent of all characters in **new** and **popular** programming were identified as disabled.

TABLE 8

Disability inclusion in new and popular programming for children (all characters) in 2022

	NEW	POPULAR	ENGLISH-ONLY POPULAR
Disabled	1.2%	1.9%	1.6%
Not Disabled	98.8%	98.1%	98.4%

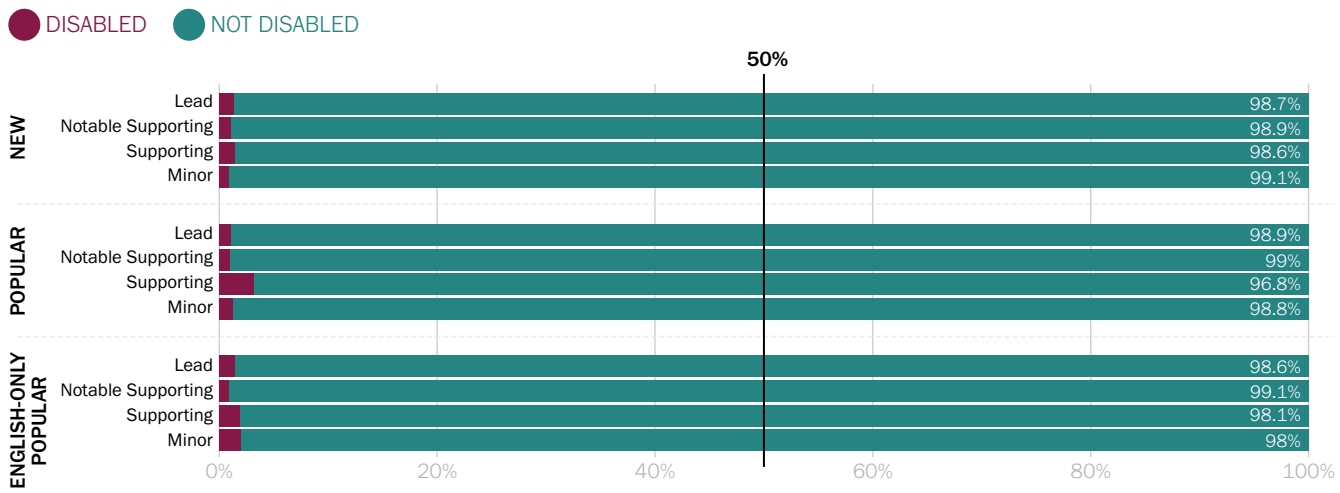
"Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

Looking at disability through an intersectional lens, in **new** programming, disabled characters are more likely than nondisabled characters to be white (43.8% compared with 23.5%). Disabled characters are less likely than nondisabled characters to be LGBTQIA+ (2.2% compared with 12.5%). (See Table A21 in Appendix A.) There are no racial differences for disabled characters in **popular** programming. For both **new** and **popular** programming, disabled characters are more likely than nondisabled characters to be 50-plus This equates disability with aging, which largely erases disability among younger people.

There are very few disabled leading characters in **new** (1.3%) and **popular** programming (1.1%). In **popular** programming, disabled characters are most visible in supporting roles, but this difference is not statistically significant (3.2%).

CHART 11

Disability prominence in new and popular programming for children in 2022

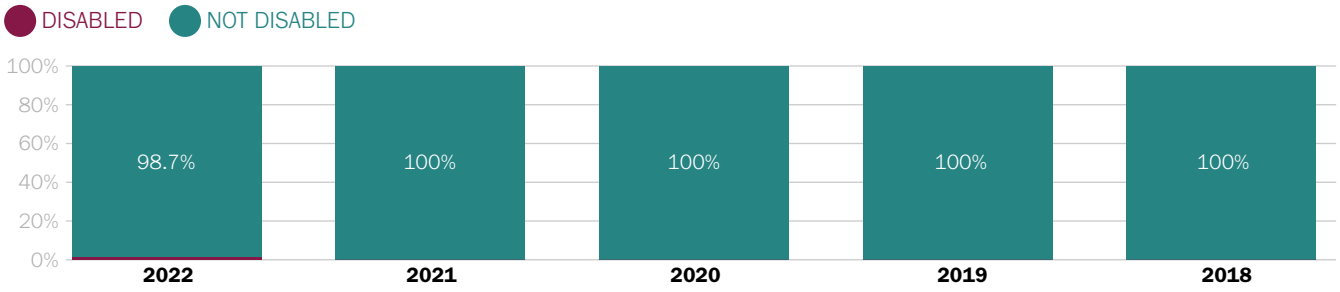


"Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

In **new** programming, 2022 is the first year since 2018 that a disabled lead was featured (1.3%).

CHART 12

Disabled leads in new programming for children, 2018–2022



In **popular** programming, there has been a slight increase of disabled leads (1.1%), up from no disabled leads in 2021.

CHART 13

Disabled leads in popular programming for children, 2018–2022

TABLE 9

Disabled leads in English-only popular programming for children, 2018–2022

	ENGLISH-ONLY POPULAR			
	2022	2021	2019	2018
Disabled	1.4%	0.0%	0.3%	0.5%
Not Disabled	98.6%	100.0%	99.7%	99.5%

Note: Popular programming was not measured in 2020 due to the COVID-19 interruptions in programming.

Romance and Sexualization

No disabled characters are shown dating, nor are they objectified, shown in revealing clothing, or engaging in sexual activities in **new** or **popular** programming. This lack of romantic behaviors among disabled characters contributes to harmful stereotypes that view disabled people as inherently asexual and/or aromantic. (See Table A22 in Appendix A.)

Careers and Leadership

We find no statistically significant findings regarding the representation of disability and careers or leadership in **new** or **popular** programming. (See Table A23 in Appendix A.)

Emotional Maturity

For portrayals of emotional growth, we looked only at characters ages 19 and under. We find no statistically significant findings regarding disability and emotional maturity in **new** or **popular** programming. There are no disabled children in **popular** programming. (See Table A24 in Appendix A.)

Ariel Skelley/DigitalVision via Getty Images

Body Size Representation

PROMINENCE AND INTERSECTIONS

The visibility of fat characters is low in **new** and **popular** programming. In **new** children's programming, 6.3% of all characters are fat, and in **popular** programming, 7.4% of all characters are fat (9.7% in English-only popular programming).

TABLE 10

Fat inclusion in new and popular programming for children (all characters) in 2022

	NEW	POPULAR	ENGLISH-ONLY POPULAR
Fat	6.3%	7.1%	9.7%
Not Fat	93.7%	92.9%	90.3%

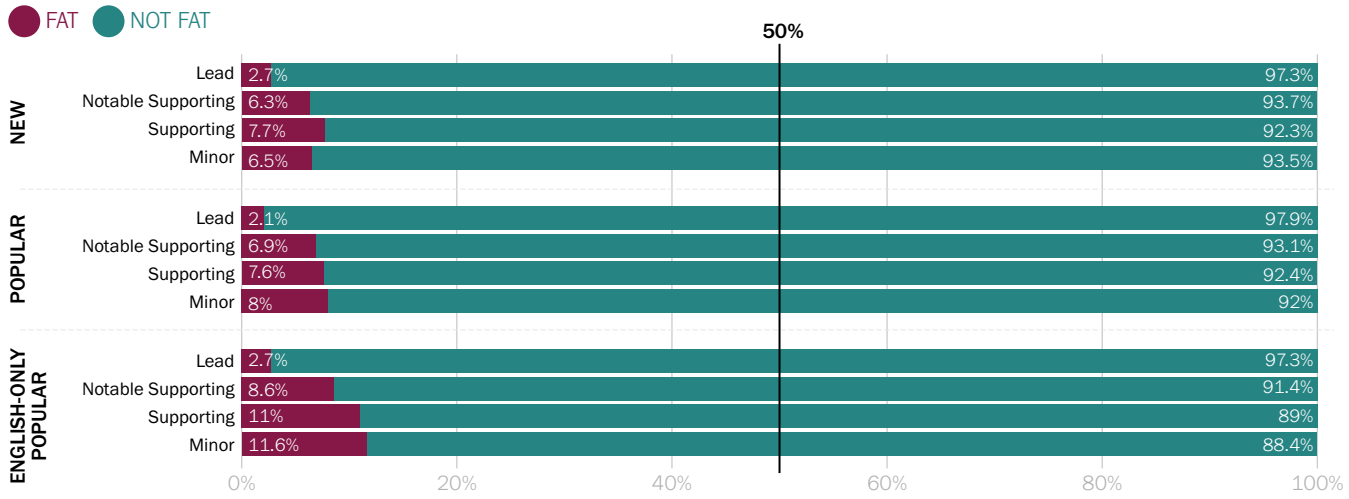
"Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

Looking at fat identity through an intersectional lens, in **new** and **popular** programming, fat characters are much more likely to be male than female (72.5% male compared with 27.5% female for **new** programming; 80.5% male compared with 19.5% female for popular programming; 80.8% compared with 55.3% for English-only popular)). In **new** children's programming, fat characters are more likely than nonfat characters to have an implied race (6.1% compared with 2.7%). In **popular** programming, fat characters are more likely than nonfat characters to not have a race (63.4% compared with 28.6%; 71.3% compared with 45.1% English-only) but are less likely to be Latinx (13.5% compared with 39.6%; this difference disappears when limiting to English-only). (See Table A25 in Appendix A.) In **new** and **popular** programming, fat characters are more likely than nonfat characters to be ages 50 and older (new: 22.9% compared with 7.9%; popular: 30.9% compared with 15.8%; 31.9% compared with 9.5% English-only). (See Table A25 in Appendix A.)

Fat characters make up a small percentage of leading roles. Just 2.7% of leads are fat in **new** programming, and they are statistically significantly less likely to be featured as leads than as other types of roles. In **popular** programming, 2.1% of leads are fat.

CHART 14

Prominence of fat characters in new and popular programming for children in 2022

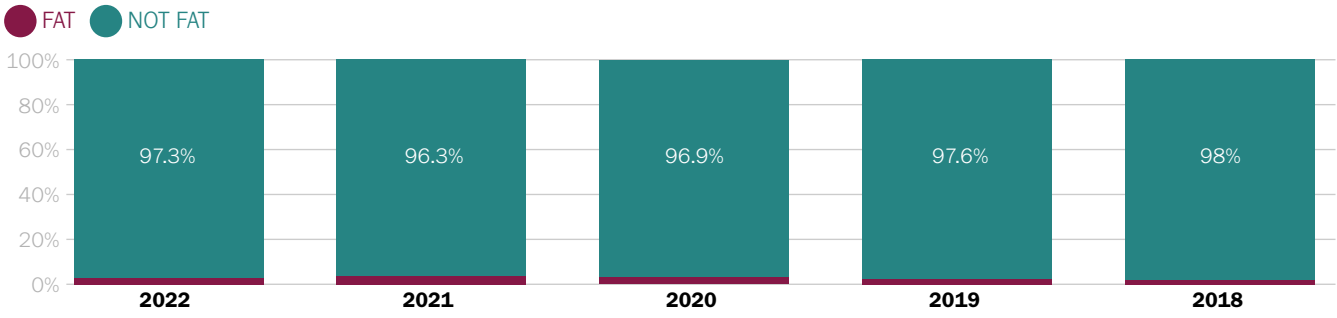


"Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

The percentage of fat leads in **new** programming has seen a slight decrease in 2022 (2.7%). This follows a gradual increase over the past few years from 2.0% in 2018 to 3.7% in 2021.

CHART 15

Fat leads/coleads in new programming for children, 2018–2022



The percentage of fat leads in **popular** programming for children continues to decline — it was 5.9% in 2019 but only 2.1% in 2022.

CHART 16

Fat leads/coleads in popular programming for children, 2019–2022

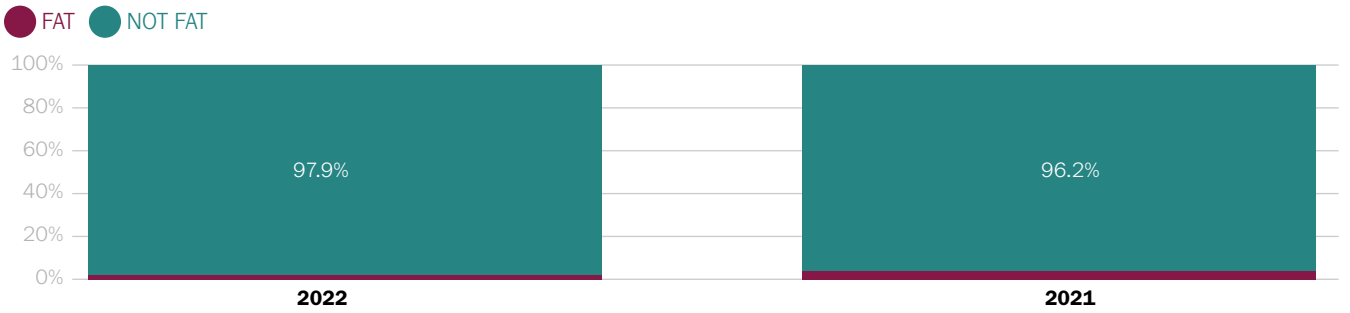


TABLE 11

Fat leads/coleads in English-only popular programming for children, 2019–2022

	ENGLISH-ONLY POPULAR		
	2022	2021	2019
Fat	2.7%	5.5%	5.9%
Not Fat	97.3%	94.5%	94.1%

Note: Popular programming was not measured in 2020 due to the COVID-19 interruptions in programming.

Romance and Sexualization

We find no statistically significant differences in romantic and sexual behaviors and experiences among fat characters in **new** and **popular** programming (see Table A26 in Appendix A.). When we limit popular programming to English-only, fat characters are more likely than characters that are not fat to be in a committed relationship.

Careers and Leadership

Fat characters are more likely than nonfat characters to be shown with a job in **popular** children's programming (58.2% compared with 34.7%; 58.0% compared with 32.0% English-only). In both **new** and **popular** programming, fat characters are more likely than nonfat characters to be leaders (31.5% compared with 22.0% for new programming; 45.5% compared with 23.7% for popular programming; 48.0% compared with 29.4% English-only). (See Table A27 in Appendix A.)

Emotional Maturity

For portrayals of emotional growth, we looked only at characters 19 and under. We find no statistically significant differences between fat and nonfat child characters regarding bullying or sharing their feelings in **new** or **popular** programming. (See Table A28 in Appendix A.)

Alison Wright/Corbis Documentary via Getty Images

Age Representation

PROMINENCE AND INTERSECTIONS

Characters who are ages 50 and older are rarely seen in **new** children's programming. However, such characters are 16.9% of all characters in **popular** programming.

TABLE 12

Age inclusion in new and popular programming for children (all characters) in 2022

	NEW	POPULAR	ENGLISH-ONLY POPULAR
50 and Older	8.8%	16.9%	11.8%
Under 50	91.2%	83.%	88.2%

"Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

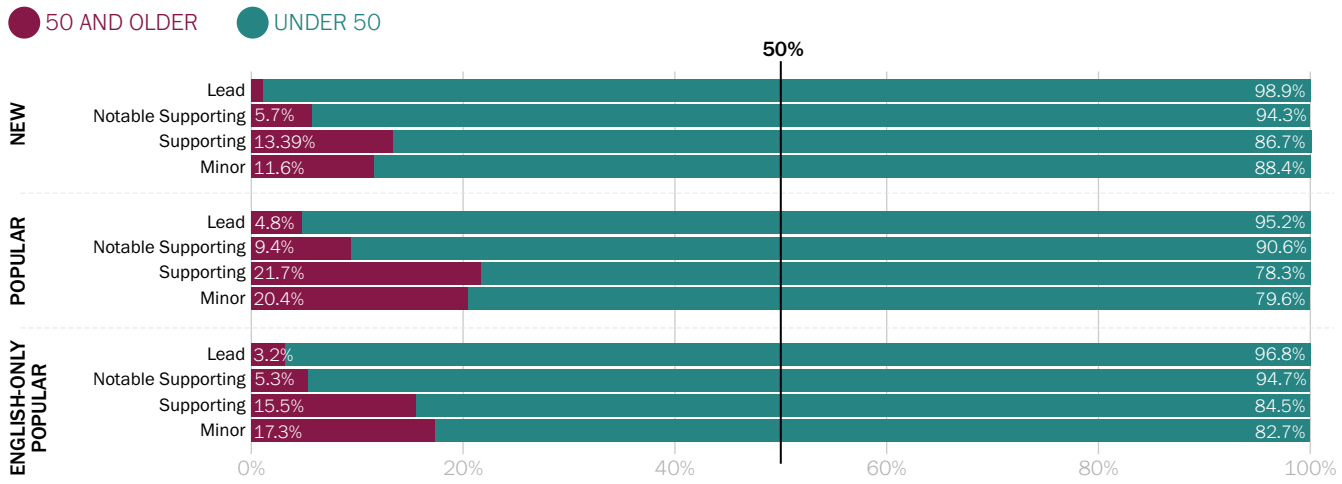
Looking at 50-plus representation through an intersectional lens, we find that in **new** programming, characters 50-plus are more likely than their younger counterparts to be white (41.3% compared with 30.1%). In **popular** programming, 50-plus characters are more likely than younger characters to be Latinx (57.5% compared with 35.9%), and younger characters are more likely to be white (21.8% for characters under 50, compared with 10.2% for 50-plus characters), but these differences are due to telenovelas, as it is no longer statistically different when looking only at English-language shows. Regardless of language, characters over 50 were less likely to be Black (1.1% of characters 50 and older compared

with 6.8% of characters under 50; 2.4% compared with 10.2% English-only). In **new** and **popular** programming, 50-plus characters are more likely than younger characters to be fat (new: 16.8% compared with 5.5%; popular: 13.4% compared with 6.1%; English-only popular: 27.7% compared with 7.9%) and disabled (new: 6.1% compared with 1.1%; popular 6.5% compared with 1.1%; English-only popular: 6.0% compared with 1.1%). (See Table A29 in Appendix A.) There are no LGBTQIA+ characters who are 50 or older.

In **new** children's programming, 1.1% of leads are 50 and older. In **popular** programming, 50-plus characters made up 4.8% of lead characters. The smaller the role, the higher the percentage of 50-plus characters. Given that this is programming for children, this isn't necessarily surprising.

CHART 17

Age prominence in new, and popular programming for children in 2022

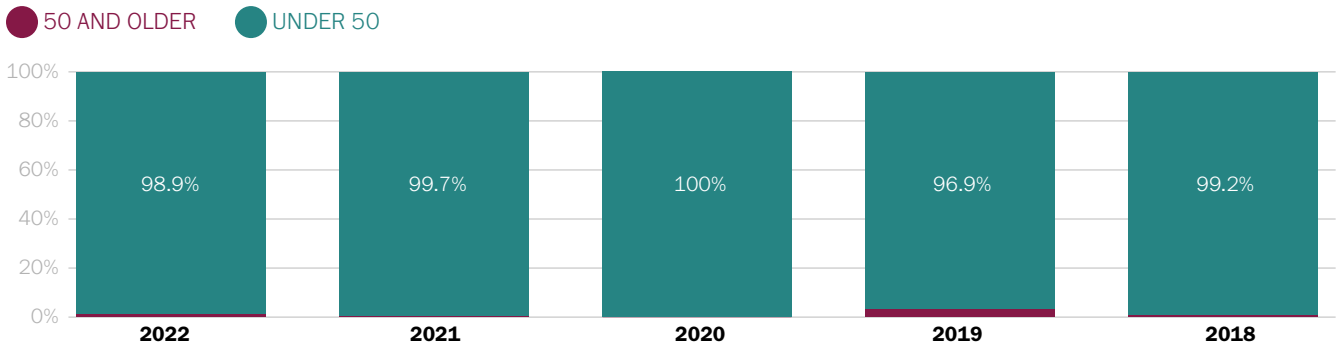


"Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

The percentage of leads 50 and older in **new** programming has fluctuated over time, from a high of 3.1% in 2019 and a low of 0.0% in 2020.

CHART 18

Age inclusion for leads in new programming for children, 2018–2022



The percentage of leads 50 and older in **popular** programming has increased to 4.8% in 2022, up from 2.5% in 2021.

CHART 19

Age inclusion for leads in popular programming for children, 2019–2022

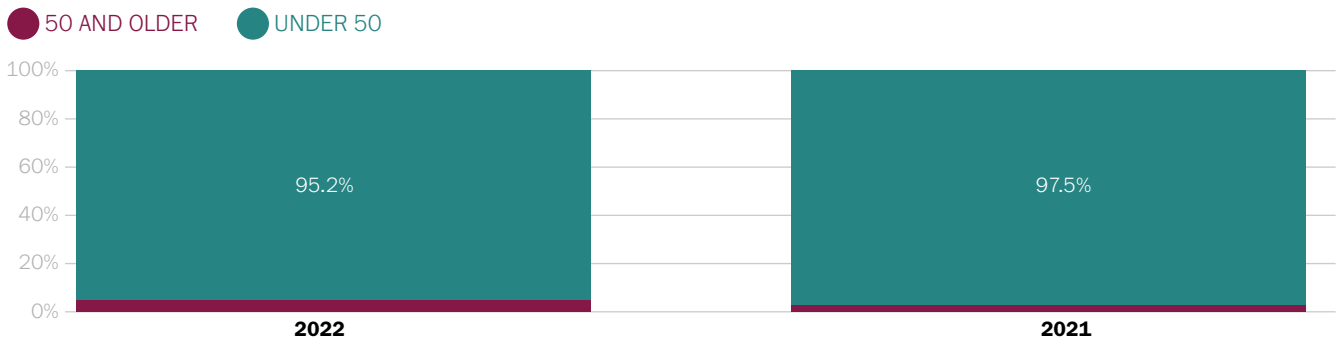


TABLE 13

Age inclusion for leads in English-only popular programming for children, 2019–2022

	ENGLISH-ONLY POPULAR		
	2022	2021	2019
50 and Older	3.2%	0.0%	1.0%
Under 50	96.8%	100.0%	99.0%

Note: Popular programming was not measured in 2020 due to the COVID-19 interruptions in programming.

Romance and Sexualization

In **popular** programming, characters ages 50 and older are more likely than those under 50 to be married or in a committed partnership (22.0% compared with 12.1%), but this difference only exists when including non-English programming. We find no statistically significant differences regarding romance and sexualization among 50-plus characters in **new** programming. (See Table A30 in Appendix A.)

Careers and Leadership

In **new** and **popular** programming, characters ages 50 and older are more likely than younger characters to be shown with a job (new: 53.4% compared with 34.1%; popular: 48.0% compared with 35.7%; English-only popular 64.7% compared with 33.0%). (See Table A31 in Appendix A.)


FG Trade/E+ via Getty Images

Animation versus Live-Action

Given the dominance of animation in children's programming, it is important that we evaluate the diversity and inclusion within it. By making the distinction between representations in animated and live-action characters, we can have a better sense of where scripted TV shows are making progress and where that progress might be stalled.

DEMOGRAPHICS

In both **new** and **popular** programming, female characters are less likely than male characters to be animated. In **new** children's programming, 56.5% of animated characters are male and 43.2% are female. In **popular** programming (regardless of language), 57.7% of animated characters are male and 42.3% are female. However, these differences occur mostly in a specific subset of the data: nonhuman characters. Among all **new** programming, live-action male and female characters achieve parity (51.0% female compared with 49.0% male). In **popular** programming, live-action characters approach gender parity (56.1% male compared with 43.9% female), but the gap widens when looking at English-only programming (58.1% male compared with 41.9% female).

TABLE 14
Gender representation for animated and live-action characters in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	NEW		POPULAR		ENGLISH-ONLY POPULAR	
	ANIMATED	LIVE-ACTION	ANIMATED	LIVE-ACTION	ANIMATED	LIVE-ACTION
Male	56.5%	49.0%	57.7%	56.1%	57.7%	58.1%
Female	43.2%	51.0%	42.3%	43.9%	42.3%	41.9%
Nonbinary	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences between male and female characters as animated versus live-action characters. "Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

In **new** programming, animated characters have become increasingly more gender-balanced over the past five years, from only 36.5% female in 2018 to 43.2% female in 2022. Live-action characters have had fairly steady gender parity, from perfect parity in 2018 to 51.0% female and 49.0% male in 2022.

TABLE 15
Gender representation for animated and live-action characters in new programming for children, 2018–2022

	NEW									
	ANIMATED					LIVE-ACTION				
	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Male	56.5%	58.1%	59.3%	60.6%	63.5%	49.0%	54.0%	51.5%	47.6%	50.0%
Female	43.2%	41.5%	40.6%	39.2%	36.5%	51.0%	46.0%	48.5%	52.4%	50.0%
Nonbinary	0.3%	0.4%	.01%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Animated *human* characters achieve gender parity in **new** programming (49.9% male and 49.9% female, with 0.2% nonbinary) and approach it in **popular** programming (53.0% male compared with 47.0% female). The larger disparities exist among animated nonhuman characters, where male characters far outnumber female characters in **new** (61.9% compared with 37.7%) and **popular** programming (61.8% compared with 38.2%). This may be due to creators making more deliberate choices about gender representation when the characters are human than when they are nonhuman. It may also be related to the gender breakdown among voice actors on the show, as those already on the show may provide additional voices for smaller characters.

TABLE 16
Gender representation for animated and live-action characters in new programming for children, 2018–2022

	NEW		POPULAR	
	ANIMATED HUMAN	ANIMATED NONHUMAN	ANIMATED HUMAN	ANIMATED NONHUMAN
Male	49.9%	61.9%	53.0%	61.8%
Female	49.9%	37.7%	47.0%	38.2%
Nonbinary	0.2%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences between male and female characters in human versus nonhuman portrayals. "Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English.

In **new** programming, 46.4% of animated characters are white, compared with 55.2% of live-action characters. Asian and Pacific Islander characters are better represented among animated characters than live-action characters (17.2% compared with 7.7%), as are Middle Eastern and North African characters (2.5% compared with 0.0%). Multiracial characters are better represented among live-action than animated characters (4.9% compared with 1.7%). Black, Latinx, and Native characters are represented similarly among animated and live-action characters. (see Table 12).

In **popular** programming, the racial differences between animated and live-action characters is much more pronounced due to the popularity of telenovelas, where Latinx characters make up 72.2% of live-action characters and 13.2% of animated characters. Black, white, and Asian and Pacific Islanders are better represented among animated than live-action characters (see Table 17). After filtering out non-English programming, the differences between animated and live-action characters become more pronounced. Live-action characters are much more likely to be white (69.3% compared with 48.1%) or multiracial (6.1% compared with 0.5%). Animated characters are more likely to be Asian and Pacific Islander (14.6% compared with 4.3%), Latinx (13.2% compared with 5.5%) or Middle Eastern and North African (4.2% compared with 0.0%).

TABLE 17
Race/ethnicity representation for animated and live-action characters in new and popular programming in 2022

	NEW		POPULAR		ENGLISH-ONLY POPULAR	
	ANIMATED	LIVE-ACTION	ANIMATED	LIVE-ACTION	ANIMATED	LIVE-ACTION
White	46.4%	55.2%	48.1%	20.5%	48.1%	69.3%
Black	22.8%	27.0%	18.9%	4.3%	18.9%	14.7%
Asian and Pacific Islander	17.2%	7.7%	14.6%	1.2%	14.6%	4.3%
Latinx	8.2%	5.2%	13.2%	72.2%	13.2%	5.5%
Native	1.2%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%
Middle Eastern and North African	2.5%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%
Multiracial	1.7%	4.9%	0.5%	1.8%	0.5%	6.1%

Note: Percentages exclude characters without a discernible race (e.g., animals, aliens, personified objects, and humans with atypical skin colors). Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences between animated versus live-action inclusion. "Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

In **new** programming, LGBTQIA+ characters are better represented in live-action than animation characters (4.0% compared with 2.0%). In **popular** programming, fat characters are better represented among animated than live-action characters (11.4% compared with 2.7%; 11.4% compared with 3.6% in English-only). Among all **popular** programming, 50-plus characters are better represented in live-action than animation characters (20.7% compared with 13.0% of characters), but this difference disappears when only looking at English language programming (8.0% live-action compared with 13.0% animated).

TABLE 18
Representation of animated and live-action characters by identity groups in new and popular programming in 2022

	NEW		POPULAR		ENGLISH-ONLY POPULAR	
	ANIMATED	LIVE-ACTION	ANIMATED	LIVE-ACTION	ANIMATED	LIVE-ACTION
LGBTQIA+	2.0%	4.0%	1.0%	1.1%	1.0%	3.0%
Disabled	1.2%	1.1%	1.4%	2.5%	1.4%	2.4%
Fat	6.4%	5.4%	11.4%	2.7%	11.4%	3.6%
Age 50 and older	9.4%	6.1%	13.0%	20.7%	13.0%	8.0%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences between each group and their inclusion as animated compared versus live-action characters."Popular" programming includes shows in English and non-English. "English-Only Popular" excludes non-English programming.

IMPLIED RACE

Given the prevalence of nonhuman characters (e.g., animals and aliens) in children's programming, a noteworthy proportion of characters did not have an explicitly identified race. But while many characters did not have an explicit race, plenty had characteristics or traits that *implied* a race. A character's race is implied when they are styled, written, and/or performed with racialized affectations, or when cultural cues are suggestive of individual races or ethnicities. For example, a character may be suggested to be German by wearing lederhosen or Chinese by practicing martial arts and making bao. While race can certainly be implied with stereotypical portrayals or reductive cultural cues, it is not inherently harmful to show nonhuman characters embodying different racial, ethnic, or cultural norms. Many creators give their characters racial and ethnic cues to expand the representation of those groups. We refer to characters who have no implicit or explicit racial cues as "non-raced" characters.

These characters are especially common in animated content. In **new** children's programming, just under half of the characters are nonhuman (48.3%), but only about one-quarter of characters in **popular** programming are nonhuman (27.0%). Some nonhumans, such as ghosts, gods, or mermaids, still have a race that can be determined. However, some human characters do not, such as those with atypical skin tones, like yellow, green, or blue. Half of characters in **new** children's programming (51.1%) do not have an explicit race, much higher than the rate in **popular** programming (32.5%).

In **new** children's programming, 5.8% of characters without an explicit race have an implied race, compared with 4.8% in **popular** programming.

In **new** children's programming, the most common implied race is Black (38.8%), followed by Latinx (21.2%) and Asian and Pacific Islander (20.0%). In **popular** programming, characters are implied to be white and Black at the highest and same rate (27.8%).

TABLE 19
Implied races of animated characters without explicit races in new and popular programming in 2022

	NEW	POPULAR
White	11.2%	27.8%
Black	38.8%	27.8%
Asian and Pacific Islander	20.0%	5.6%
Latinx	21.2%	11.1%
Native	1.2%	0.0%
Middle Eastern and North African	3.8%	11.1%
Multiracial	0.0%	0.0%
Other	3.8%	16.7%

Note: All non-English popular programming is live-action. Thus, there are no differences in percentages of animated characters with implied races after filtering out non-English programming.

FG Trade/E+ via Getty Images

Recommendations for Improving the On-Screen Representation of Marginalized Identities

Based on these findings about representation and portrayals in children's programming, we make the following recommendations:

1.

Hire more girls, women and nonbinary people to voice nonhuman characters, like ghosts, aliens, monsters, and talking objects.

Animated characters, especially those who are nonhuman, are mostly voiced by male actors. Adding more gender diversity to these nonhuman animated characters will provide audiences with more dynamic portrayals of female characters, and create more gender equality in children's programming. Because it is common practice for one actor to voice many animated characters in one show, it is important to strive for behind-the-scenes parity. Bringing in more female and nonbinary voice actors can drastically increase the proportion of female and nonbinary characters.

2.

Cast girls and women in minor roles, too.

This report finds steady representation of female characters in leading roles, which is helping to drive positive change toward gender parity on-screen. But girls/women still lag behind boys/men overall, and this is due in part to male characters occupying nearly 2 out of 3 minor roles. To reach gender parity, we need to see female characters in roles at all levels, including supporting roles, minor roles, and extras. There's no reason fictional stories shouldn't accurately reflect the real-world population — which is particularly true for the shows children watch.

3.

Increase the visibility of diverse queer characters.

Queer characters (especially nonbinary characters) are more likely to be white and young. Historically, the intersection of racism with homophobia and transphobia has led to the erasure of LGBTQIA+ people of color in entertainment media, which can limit the perception of queer diversity and the acceptance of queerness in communities of color. Furthermore, the fallacy that only young people are LGBTQIA+ contributes to narratives that queerness is a "fad" that people may "grow out of." Cast queer characters of all races and ages to better reflect queer identity in the real world.

4.

Increase the representation of disabled young people on-screen.

About 4% of young people under 18 in the U.S. have a developmental disability, and nearly 20% have mental health issues, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. However, disabled representation is rare in children's programming, and when it is shown, it's more likely to be a disabled adult on-screen. Bring more diverse disability portrayals to the screen by casting more young people with disabilities, such as limb differences or hearing or vision impairments, and by telling more stories about disabled characters of all ages. Seeing yourself on-screen can be powerful, especially for disabled children.

5.

Diversify live-action characters.

In this study, we find more racial diversity among animated characters than live-action characters. While we celebrate this diversity in animation, it is important to make improvements in live-action television as well. Adding more live-action characters of color increases the number of opportunities for actors of color and increases the number of characters for young children of color to relate to.

6.

Allow characters of different backgrounds to express themselves and talk about their feelings.

Very few young characters were shown talking about their feelings. Given that the majority of these shows are made for children, we would hope to see more emotional maturity modeled for young viewers. Show characters of all backgrounds modeling this behavior, thus challenging stereotypes that frame the expression of feelings as weak or reserved for only certain groups of people, like children or women.

Appendix A: Tables

Table A1. Gender intersections in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New			Popular		English-Only Popular	
	Male	Female	Nonbinary	Male	Female	Male	Female
White	23.4%	24.5%	0.0%	19.4%	18.1%	28.9%	28.4%
Black	10.8%	12.8%	0.0%	4.9%	6.5%	7.3%	10.2%
Asian and Pacific Islander	5.5%	9.5%	0.0%	2.3%	4.8%	3.4%	7.3%
Latinx	2.2%	5.4%	0.0%	35.2%	41.2%	3.0%	7.7%
Native	0.4%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.3%
Middle Eastern and North African	0.7%	1.2%	0.0%	0.5%	1.2%	0.7%	1.9%
Multiracial	0.8%	1.7%	0.0%	0.8%	1.2%	1.1%	1.9%
Other/No Race	53.5%	41.1%	100.0%	35.7%	24.8%	53.8%	39.1%
Implied Race	2.7%	3.3%	0.0%	1.2%	2.0%	1.8%	3.2%
LGBTQIA+	2.0%	2.0%	100.0%	0.6%	1.6%	0.9%	2.2%
Disabled	0.9%	1.6%	0.0%	1.7%	2.2%	0.9%	2.5%
Fat	8.2%	3.9%	0.0%	10.1%	3.2%	13.5%	4.4%
Age 50 and Older	9.8%	7.9%	0.0%	21.1%	11.6%	15.1%	7.6%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences. Popular programming is inclusive of shows in any language. There were no nonbinary characters in the Popular dataset.

Table A2. Romantic attachments and sexualization by gender in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New			Popular		English-Only Popular	
	Male	Female	Nonbinary	Male	Female	Male	Female
Objectified	0.5%	1.4%	0.0%	0.9%	4.1%	0.3%	1.7%
Revealing Clothing	0.8%	4.8%	0.0%	2.2%	14.4%	0.3%	8.6%
In a Relationship/Dating	3.9%	4.9%	0.0%	8.2%	12.0%	7.1%	8.2%
Married/Committed Partnership	4.5%	5.8%	0.0%	11.7%	14.4%	6.4%	8.2%
Romantic Interest	8.4%	11.0%	16.7%	16.7%	21.5%	14.7%	17.6%
Kissing	1.1%	1.6%	0.0%	4.5%	6.0%	1.8%	2.1%
Has Sex	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.9%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A3. Careers, STEM, and leadership by gender in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New			Popular		English-Only Popular	
	Male	Female	Nonbinary	Male	Female	Male	Female
Has a Job	39.1%	35.8%	0.0%	41.8%	29.5%	38.0%	29.2%
STEM	4.5%	6.2%	0.0%	6.1%	3.8%	7.1%	6.0^
Leader	21.3%	24.2%	0.0%	24.7%	25.8%	29.4%	33.5%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A4. Emotional maturity among child characters by gender in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New			Popular		English-Only Popular	
	Male	Female	Nonbinary	Male	Female	Male	Female
Bullies Others	4.4%	3.7%	0.0%	3.0%	6.3%	3.3%	6.7%
Discusses Feelings	16.1%	13.7%	0.0%	9.8%	11.9%	8.9%	10.0%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A5. Race intersections in new children's programming in 2022

	New								
	White	Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Latinx	Native	Middle Eastern and North African	Multiracial	Other/No Race	Implied Race
Male	54.4%	51.3%	42.4%	34.4%	50.0%	41.7%	37.5%	61.7%	50.0%
Female	45.6%	48.7%	57.6%	65.6%	50.0%	58.3%	62.5%	37.8%	50.0%
Nonbinary	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%
LGBTQIA+	2.1%	2.3%	3.7%	5.2%	0.0%	16.7%	6.2%	1.8%	0.0%
Disabled	2.2%	1.0%	2.6%	1.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%
Fat	7.1%	3.9%	6.3%	2.1%	0.0%	8.3%	0.0%	6.4%	12.8%
Age 50 and Older	11.8%	6.2%	10.5%	12.5%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	7.3%	5.3%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A6. Race intersections in popular programming for children in 2022

	Popular								
	White	Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Latinx	Native	Middle Eastern and North African	Multiracial	Other/No Race	Implied Race
Male	59.0%	50.0%	39.5%	53.3%	0.0%	33.3%	45.5%	65.7%	44.4%
Female	41.0%	50.0%	60.5%	46.7%	100.0%	66.7%	54.5%	34.3%	55.6%
LGBTQIA+	3.2%	1.6%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Disabled	1.4%	1.6%	5.3%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%
Fat	6.0%	1.6%	5.3%	2.5%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	14.6%	11.1%
Age 50 and Older	8.8%	3.1%	10.5%	24.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	17.5%	5.6%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A7. Race intersections in English-only popular programming for children in 2022

	English-Only Popular								
	White	Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Latinx	Native	Middle Eastern and North African	Multiracial	Other/No Race	Implied Race
Male	58.6%	50.0%	39.5%	35.1%	0.0%	33.3%	45.5%	65.7%	44.4%
Female	41.4%	50.0%	60.5%	64.9%	100.0%	66.7%	54.5%	34.3%	55.6%
LGBTQIA+	3.3%	1.6%	0.0%	8.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Disabled	1.4%	1.6%	5.3%	5.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%
Fat	6.0%	1.6%	5.3%	5.4%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	14.6%	11.1%
Age 50 and Older	8.8%	3.1%	10.5%	10.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	17.5%	5.6%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A8. Romantic attachments and sexualization by race in new programming for children in 2022

	New						
	White	Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Latinx	Native	Middle Eastern and North African	Multiracial
Objectified	2.2%	0.8%	2.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Revealing Clothing	3.7%	4.6%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%
In a Relationship/Dating	5.9%	6.2%	11.9%	4.2%	0.0%	25.0%	7.1%
Married/Committed Partnership	5.9%	10.4%	3.3%	8.5%	16.7%	0.0%	7.1%
Romantic Interest	14.7%	14.1%	17.9%	7.0%	0.0%	25.0%	28.6%
Kissing	1.6%	1.2%	2.6%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%
Has Sex	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A9. Romantic attachments and sexualization by race in popular programming for children in 2022

	Popular						
	White	Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Latinx	Native	Middle Eastern and North African	Multiracial
Objectified	0.6%	0.0%	7.4%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Revealing Clothing	4.2%	0.0%	7.4%	14.1%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%
In a Relationship/Dating	13.2%	2.0%	11.1%	14.1%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%
Married/Committed Partnership	9.0%	6.1%	3.7%	23.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Romantic Interest	24.6%	8.2%	22.2%	24.2%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%
Kissing	2.4%	2.0%	11.1%	10.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Has Sex	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A10. Romantic attachments and sexualization by race in English-only popular programming for children in 2022

	English-Only Popular						
	White	Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Latinx	Native	Middle Eastern and North African	Multiracial
Objectified	0.6%	0.0%	7.4%	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Revealing Clothing	4.2%	0.0%	7.4%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%
In a Relationship/Dating	13.3%	2.0%	11.1%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%
Married/Committed Partnership	9.0%	6.1%	3.7%	10.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Romantic Interest	24.7%	8.2%	22.2%	17.9%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%
Kissing	2.4%	2.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Has Sex	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A11. Careers, STEM, and leadership by race in new programming for children in 2022

	New						
	White	Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Latinx	Native	Middle Eastern and North African	Multiracial
Has a Job	43.5%	44.8%	27.8%	39.4%	33.3%	31.2%	25.0%
STEM	7.3%	7.9%	0.7%	6.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Leader	25.4%	32.9%	16.7%	11.1%	0.0%	43.8%	42.9%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A12. Careers, STEM, and leadership by race in popular programming for children in 2022

	Popular						
	White	Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Latinx	Native	Middle Eastern and North African	Multiracial
Has a Job	31.7%	28.6%	33.3%	38.1%	0.0%	16.7%	81.8%
STEM	3.0%	0.0%	7.4%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%
Leader	28.7%	36.7%	37.0%	13.8%	0.0%	0.0%	63.6%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A13. Careers, STEM, and leadership by race in English-only popular programming for children in 2022

	English-Only Popular						
	White	Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Latinx	Native	Middle Eastern and North African	Multiracial
Has a Job	31.1%	28.6%	33.3%	17.9%	0.0%	16.7%	81.8%
STEM	3.0%	0.0%	7.4%	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%
Leader							

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A14. Emotional maturity among child characters by race in new programming for children in 2022

	New						
	White	Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Latinx	Native	Middle Eastern and North African	Multiracial
Bullies Others	6.4%	2.4%	1.2%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Discusses Feelings	17.5%	18.3%	18.6%	11.1%	0.0%	16.7%	42.1%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A15. Emotional maturity among child characters by race in popular programming for children in 2022

	Popular						
	White	Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Latinx	Native	Middle Eastern and North African	Multiracial
Bullies Others	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Discusses Feelings	8.8%	3.3%	23.1%	15.2%	0.0%	0.0%	45.5%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A16. Emotional maturity among child characters by race in English-only popular programming for children in 2022

	English-Only Popular						
	White	Black	Asian and Pacific Islander	Latinx	Native	Middle Eastern and North African	Multiracial
Bullies Others	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Discusses Feelings	8.8%	3.3%	23.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	45.5%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A17. LGBTQIA+ intersections in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New		Popular		English-Only Popular	
	LGBTQIA+	Not LGBTQIA+	LGBTQIA+	Not LGBTQIA+	LGBTQIA+	Not LGBTQIA+
Male	49.2%	55.6%	33.3%	57.1%	36.4%	58.1%
Female	39.3%	44.4%	66.7%	42.9%	63.6%	41.9%
Nonbinary	11.5%	0.0%	-%	-%	-%	-%
White	21.2%	23.8%	58.4%	18.5%	63.6%	28.1%
Black	11.5%	11.6%	8.3%	5.5%	9.1%	8.6%
Asian and Pacific Islander	11.5%	7.1%	0.0%	3.3%	0.0%	5.1%
Latinx	8.2%	3.5%	33.3%	37.8%	27.3%	4.6%
Native	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Middle Eastern and North African	6.6%	0.8%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	1.2%
Multiracial	3.3%	1.2%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	1.5%
Other/No Race	37.7%	48.5%	0.0%	31.4%	0.0%	48.4%
Implied Race	0.0%	3.0%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	2.4%
Disabled	6.6%	1.1%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	1.6%
Fat	4.9%	6.3%	16.7%	7.0%	18.2%	9.5%
Age 50 and Older	0.0%	9.1%	0.0%	17.1%	0.0%	12.0%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A18. Romantic attachments and sexualization by queerness in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New		Popular		English-Only Popular	
	LGBTQIA+	Not LGBTQIA+	LGBTQIA+	Not LGBTQIA+	LGBTQIA+	Not LGBTQIA+
Objectified	2.0%	0.9%	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	0.9%
Revealing Clothing	5.9%	2.5%	0.0%	7.7%	0.0%	3.8%
In a Relationship/Dating	23.5%	3.9%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	7.6%
Married/Committed Partnership	11.8%	4.9%	10.0%	12.9%	11.1%	7.1%
Romantic Interest	49.0%	8.6%	10.0%	18.9%	11.1%	16.0%
Kissing	13.7%	1.0%	0.0%	5.2%	0.0%	2.0%
Has Sex	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A19. Careers, STEM, and leadership by queerness in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New		Popular		English-Only Popular	
	LGBTQIA+	Not LGBTQIA+	LGBTQIA+	Not LGBTQIA+	LGBTQIA+	Not LGBTQIA+
Has a Job	29.4%	37.6%	20.0%	36.5%	22.2%	34.5%
STEM	0.0%	5.4%	0.0%	5.1%	0.0%	6.7%
Leader	25.5%	22.5%	30.0%	25.1%	33.3%	31.0%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A20. Emotional maturity among children by queerness in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New		Popular		English-Only Popular	
	LGBTQIA+	Not LGBTQIA+	LGBTQIA+	Not LGBTQIA+	LGBTQIA+	Not LGBTQIA+
Bullies Others	0.0%	4.1%	0.0%	4.7%	0.0%	5.0%
Discusses Feelings	22.7%	14.6%	0.0%	11.0%	0.0%	9.7%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A21. Disability intersections in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New		Popular		English-Only Popular	
	Disabled	Not Disabled	Disabled	Not Disabled	Disabled	Not Disabled
Male	55.6%	40.6%	50.0%	57.0%	33.3%	58.1%
Female	44.1%	59.4%	50.0%	43.0%	66.7%	41.9%
Nonbinary	0.3%	0.0%	-%	-%	-%	-%
White	43.8%	23.5%	13.7%	19.0%	25.0%	28.7%
Black	9.4%	11.7%	4.5%	5.6%	8.3%	8.6%
Asian and Pacific Islander	15.6%	7.1%	9.1%	3.2%	16.7%	4.9%
Latinx	3.1%	3.6%	54.5%	37.4%	16.7%	4.7%
Native	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Middle Eastern and North African	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	1.2%
Multiracial	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	1.5%
Other/No Race	28.1%	48.5%	18.2%	31.3%	33.3%	47.9%
Implied Race	0.0%	3.0%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	2.4%
LGBTQIA+	2.2%	12.5%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	1.5%
Fat	12.5%	6.2%	9.1%	7.1%	8.3%	9.7%
Age 50 and Older	35.5%	8.4%	54.5%	16.2%	41.7%	11.3%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A22. Romantic attachments and sexualization by disability status in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New		Popular		English-Only Popular	
	Disabled	Not Disabled	Disabled	Not Disabled	Disabled	Not Disabled
Objectified	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	0.9%
Revealing Clothing	0.0%	2.6%	5.6%	7.6%	0.0%	3.8%
In a Relationship/Dating	0.0%	4.4%	0.0%	10.1%	0.0%	7.6%
Married/Committed Partnership	14.8%	4.9%	16.7%	12.8%	25.0%	6.9%
Romantic Interest	22.2%	9.4%	11.1%	18.9%	25.0%	15.8%
Kissing	7.4%	1.2%	0.0%	5.3%	0.0%	2.0%
Has Sex	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A23. Careers, STEM, and leadership by disability status in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New		Popular		English-Only Popular	
	Disabled	Not Disabled	Disabled	Not Disabled	Disabled	Not Disabled
Has a Job	22.2%	37.6%	22.2%	36.6%	25.0%	34.4%
STEM	7.4%	5.2%	0.0%	5.2%	0.0%	6.7%
Leader	15.4%	22.6%	22.2%	25.2%	37.5%	31.0%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A24. Emotional maturity among children by disability status in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New		Popular		English-Only Popular	
	Disabled	Not Disabled	Disabled	Not Disabled	Disabled	Not Disabled
Bullies Others	0.0%	4.1%	0.0%	4.7%	0.0%	5.0%
Discusses Feelings	16.7%	14.8%	0.0%	10.9%	0.0%	9.5%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A25. Body-type intersections in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New		Popular		English-Only Popular	
	Fat	Not Fat	Fat	Not Fat	Fat	Not Fat
Male	72.5%	54.3%	80.5%	55.1%	80.8%	55.3%
Female	27.5%	45.4%	19.5%	44.9%	19.2%	44.7%
Nonbinary	0.0%	0.3%	-%	-%	-%	-%
White	27.2%	23.6%	15.9%	19.1%	17.8%	29.8%
Black	7.3%	11.9%	1.2%	5.9%	1.4%	9.3%
Asian and Pacific Islander	7.3%	7.2%	2.4%	3.4%	2.7%	5.3%
Latinx	1.2%	3.8%	13.5%	39.6%	2.7%	5.2%
Native	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Middle Eastern and North African	1.2%	0.9%	1.2%	0.8%	1.4%	1.2%
Multiracial	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	1.6%
Other/No Race	49.7%	48.1%	63.4%	28.6%	71.3%	45.1%
Implied Race	6.1%	2.7%	2.4%	1.5%	2.7%	2.4%
LGBTQIA+	1.8%	2.3%	2.4%	0.9%	2.7%	1.3%
Disabled	2.4%	1.1%	2.4%	1.9%	1.4%	1.6%
Age 50 and Older	22.9%	7.9%	30.9%	15.8%	31.9%	9.5%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A26. Romantic attachments and sexualization by body type in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New		Popular		English-Only Popular	
	Fat	Not Fat	Fat	Not Fat	Fat	Not Fat
Objectified	2.3%	0.9%	0.0%	2.4%	0.0%	1.0%
Revealing Clothing	2.3%	2.6%	1.8%	8.0%	2.0%	3.9%
In a Relationship/Dating	3.8%	4.4%	9.1%	9.9%	10.0%	7.3%
Married/Committed Partnership	6.8%	4.9%	18.2%	12.5%	16.0%	6.3%
Romantic Interest	10.6%	9.5%	23.6%	18.4%	26.0%	14.9%
Kissing	3.0%	1.2%	3.6%	5.3%	4.0%	1.8%
Has Sex	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A27. Careers, STEM, and leadership by body type in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New		Popular		English-Only Popular	
	Fat	Not Fat	Fat	Not Fat	Fat	Not Fat
Has a Job	44.7%	36.9%	58.2%	34.7%	58.0%	32.0%
STEM	3.0%	5.4%	7.3%	4.9%	8.0%	6.5%
Leader	31.5%	22.0%	45.5%	23.7%	48.0%	29.4%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A28. Emotional maturity among children by body type in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New		Popular		English-Only Popular	
	Fat	Not Fat	Fat	Not Fat	Fat	Not Fat
Bullies Others	2.9%	4.1%	8.3%	4.5%	8.3%	4.8%
Discusses Feelings	14.3%	14.9%	8.3%	10.9%	8.3%	9.5%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A29. Age intersections in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New		Popular		English-Only Popular	
	50 and Older	Under 50	50 and Older	Under 50	50 and Older	Under 50
Male	57.0%	50.9%	69.9%	53.3%	72.3%	54.5%
Female	43.0%	48.9%	30.1%	46.7%	27.7%	45.5%
Nonbinary	0.0%	0.2%	-%	-%	-%	-%
White	41.3%	30.1%	10.2%	21.8%	22.9%	32.0%
Black	10.6%	15.7%	1.1%	6.8%	2.4%	10.2%
Asian and Pacific Islander	11.2%	9.2%	2.2%	3.8%	4.8%	5.6%
Latinx	6.7%	4.6%	57.5%	35.9%	4.8%	5.4%
Native	0.6%	0.6%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%
Middle Eastern and North African	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	1.0%	0.0%	1.5%
Multiracial	0.0%	1.7%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	1.8%
Other/No Race	27.9%	34.4%	28.5%	27.5%	63.9%	40.6%
Implied Race	1.7%	2.9%	0.5%	1.9%	1.2%	2.7%
LGBTQIA+	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%	1.3%	0.0%	1.8%
Fat	16.8%	5.5%	13.4%	6.1%	27.7%	7.9%
Disabled	6.1%	1.1%	6.5%	1.1%	6.0%	1.1%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A30. Romantic attachments and sexualization by age in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New		Popular		English-Only Popular	
	50 and Older	Under 50	50 and Older	Under 50	50 and Older	Under 50
Objectified	0.8%	1.2%	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%	1.1%
Revealing Clothing	0.8%	3.4%	3.3%	8.9%	0.0%	4.6%
In a Relationship/Dating	8.4%	4.7%	5.7%	10.2%	7.8%	6.5%
Married/Committed Partnership	7.6%	5.9%	22.0%	12.1%	13.7%	7.2%
Romantic Interest	15.3%	11.3%	13.8%	19.8%	21.6%	15.2%
Kissing	3.8%	1.3%	6.5%	5.3%	3.9%	2.0%
Has Sex	0.8%	0.1%	1.6%	1.1%	0.0%	0.0%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Table A31. Careers, STEM, and leadership by age in new and popular programming for children in 2022

	New		Popular		Popular	
	50 and Older	Under 50	50 and Older	Under 50	50 and Older	Under 50
Has a Job	53.4%	34.1%	48.0%	35.7%	64.7%	33.0%
STEM	7.6%	4.0%	5.7%	4.7%	6.3%	7.8%
Leader	31.5%	24.4%	26.8%	25.3%	30.6%	47.1%

Note: Shaded cells denote statistically significant differences.

Appendix B: Variables

IDENTITIES

All variables are tested for reliability among our human expert coders, who undergo a rigorous training process and then run pilot tests on data outside of the sample. All variables included in the report have met standards of interrater reliability.

Gender: Character gender is determined by identification, attire, hairstyle, pronouns, and other context cues. This report assesses differences between men, women, boys, girls, and nonbinary people.

- Nonbinary: Characters are categorized as nonbinary only when confirmed through openly identifying as such, pronouns, or through canonically verifiable character information online.
- Trans: Trans characters are coded as their appropriate gender (e.g., a trans woman would be coded as female). All trans and nonbinary characters are also coded as LGBTQIA+.

Race/Ethnicity: Character race can be determined from skin color, maxillofacial features, and context markers within the show (e.g., the race of the character's family or cultural cues). Characters are coded as multiracial only when explicitly confirmed.

- Implicit Race: A character's race is implied when they are styled, written, and/or performed with racialized affectations, or when cultural cues are suggestive of individual races or ethnicities.
- Non-Raced: Characters are categorized as non-raced when they are not human and/or do not have human skin tones and also have no implied race.

LGBTQIA+: LGBTQIA+ characters are identified through context clues such as romantic attachments, styling, props, and dialogue, or through canonically verifiable character information online. Characters in drag are coded as queer. Includes: gay, lesbian, queer/ambiguous, bisexual, transgender, nonbinary, intersex, and asexual.

- Characters who are implied to be LGBTQIA+ but are not explicitly stated as such are evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Disability: This research is inclusive of physical, cognitive, and communication disabilities. Disabilities that are not visible were coded only when confirmed through dialogue or visual contexts (e.g., a character visiting a support group).

Age: A character's age is estimated by facial features, maturity, and context clues. This report assesses differences between characters ages 50 and older and those under 50.

Fat: We prefer to use the term "fat" as a value-neutral descriptor that is not rooted in harmful medical practices (such as "obese" or "overweight"), nor is it suggestive of being outside of some sort of "norm" or "average" (such as "plus size" or "bigger").

PROMINENCE

We identify the prominence of every character, assigning them to one of four levels: lead/colead, notable supporting, supporting, and minor.

Leads and coleads: The protagonist(s) of the "A" story in the episode is designated as the lead/colead.

Notable supporting: Characters are categorized as "notable supporting" if they make significant contributions to the story and/or are prominently featured but are not the lead. In television, notable supporting actors are usually non-lead members of the cast, recurring characters, and noteworthy guest stars.

Supporting: Supporting characters are those who appear in more than one scene but are not heavily featured.

Minor: Minor characters are those who have speaking roles but appear only briefly.

Characters are not included for analysis if they appear in only one scene and visibly speak one word of dialogue or fewer.

ENDNOTES

1. We prefer to use the term "fat" as a value-neutral descriptor that is not rooted in harmful medical practices (such as "obese" or "overweight"), nor is it suggestive of being outside of some sort of "norm" or "average" (such as "plus size" or "bigger").
2. In the 2019 and 2020 "See Jane" reports, non-English programming and streaming platforms were excluded. In 2022 (and 2021), we included all shows that are popular with kids two to 11, in any language, and in 2022 several popular shows on broadcast were Spanish-language shows.
3. These shows were identified by searching for series tagged as "childrens," "children's animation," and "preschool" on the trade database Luminate by Variety. The search included all broadcast and cable networks, in addition to the following streaming services: Amazon Prime, Apple TV+, Disney+, HBO Max, Hulu, Netflix, Paramount+, and Peacock.
4. Richtel, M. (January 16, 2021). "Children's Screen Time Has Soared in the Pandemic, Alarming Parents and Researchers." New York Times. See also Kaiser Family Foundation. 2010. "Daily Media Use Among Children and Teems Up Dramatically From Five Years Ago." January 20. Available at https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/press-release/daily-media-use-among-children-and-teens-up-dramatically-from-five-years-ago/
5. Strasberger, Victor C., Amy B. Jordan, and Ed Donnerstein. 2010. "Health Effects of Media on Children and Adolescents." Pediatrics 125 (4): 756-67.
6. E.g., Nielsen. 2023. Hispanic Audiences in Focus: Trust in Media - The Key Factor Driving Shift to Streaming. Available at https://www.nielsen.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/09/hispanic-report-2023.pdf
7. Nielsen. 2020. Being Seen On Screen: Diverse Representation and Inclusion on TV.
8. Among shows popular with children ages two to 11 in the U.S. are shows that are in languages other than English.
9. For programming on broadcast and cable, this refers to the 2021–2022 season. On streaming services, this refers to the 2021 calendar year.
10. AMC+ and BET+ were included in the search but did not yield results for children's programming.
11. White characters in popular programming are the exception: Male characters slightly outnumber female characters (19.4% compared with 18.1%).
12. In both new and popular programming, the difference between male and female characters is statistically significant for Asian and Pacific Islander characters and Latinx characters.
13. (2021). "Women over 50: The right to be seen on screen." The Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media. Available at https://seejane.org/wp-content/uploads/GDIGM-Next50-WomenOver50-Study.pdf

About the Geena Davis Institute

Since 2004, the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media has worked to mitigate unconscious bias while creating equality, fostering inclusion, and reducing negative stereotyping in entertainment and media. As a global research-based organization, the Institute provides research, direct guidance, and thought leadership aimed at increasing representation of marginalized groups within six identities: gender, race/ethnicity, LGBTQIA+, disability, age, and body type. Because of its unique history and position, the Institute can help achieve true on-screen equity in a way that few organizations can. Learn more at seejane.org.

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