

CHILD & TEEN CONSUMPTION CONFERENCE

22 – 24 April 2026, King's College London

Is childhood intensifying, or eroding? This will be the guiding question of the 2026 edition of the Child & Teen Consumption conference, which will be held from 22 to 24 April at King's College London.

To get to the heart of this question, we invite researchers to re-examine what it means to be a child or a teen consumer in contexts characterised by rapid technological change, the climate crisis, geopolitical instability and conflict, economic hardship, and deepening social and ideological divides. What do children make of these circumstances, what role(s) do they play in them, and what does it mean for our notions of pre-adulthood? Likewise, how are these contexts changing how adults—parents, caregivers, relatives, educators, institutions, governments—assert authority over, protect, or attempt to shape childhood experiences?

We invite all disciplines to contribute historical and contemporary reflections on the following themes, though submissions beyond these themes are also welcome.

Agency in the digital economy – Popular gaming platforms like Roblox and Fortnite are eroding boundaries between child and adult consumer markets. Where does this leave the child as an economic agent? The blurring of boundaries also raises questions around privacy, intimacy, the circulation of data doubles in advertising markets. How is technology changing intimate relationships, not only intergenerationally and with peers, but also with corporate and governmental actors? What are the material ramifications of childhoods that are partly lived on, or within, digital platforms?

Sustainability and the climate crisis – Children and youth are increasingly vocal on the climate crisis, making consumption choices and participating in civic protests—and challenging us to reconsider our assumptions about their role in shaping sustainable futures. How do young people navigate the tensions between consumer culture and environmental responsibility? In what ways are they both constrained by and resisting dominant market forces? How are sustainability discourses shaping the ways adults conceptualize childhood and youth, whether as activists, consumers, or future citizens?

Changing institutions of childhood – Schools, families, and legal frameworks are evolving in response to shifting cultural, technological, and economic conditions. How are educational institutions, parenting norms, and child-related policies adapting to (or resisting) these changes? How do new institutional landscapes shape the marketplace experiences and expectations of children and youth? How do children and youth relate, in turn, to these institutions?

Submissions may examine a variety of topics, including but not limited to:

- Advertising, branding, and marketing to and by young people
- Children and issues of sustainability (SDG)
- Children and teens facing climate change

- Children's rights in the marketplace
- Children and teens' consumption imaginaries and consumer desires
- Children and teens involved in global migration
- Children and teens' food cultures
- Digital literacies and consumption
- Digital technologies and platforms
- Economic enculturation / socialisation
- Families and consumer culture
- Gender, race, and disability in youth consumer culture
- Historical approaches to consumption and play
- LGBTQIA2+ youth
- Methodological advances in children and consumption research
- New forms of play and fun
- Poverty, scarcity, and exclusion from consumption realms
- Policy on marketing and advertising in an AI-driven context
- Social media practices and cultures
- Youth material cultures

For more information and updates, visit the conference website: <https://ctcc-2026.kcl.ac.uk>

SUBMISSION PROCESS

Abstracts should be submitted by **22 August 2025**: <https://forms.office.com/e/BCN7SWXFwg>

Abstracts may be submitted as individual papers, as an organised panel, or as a virtual poster. This year, we also invite proposals for special sessions.

Please note that you may be asked to review a submission.

Individual paper: For an individual paper presentation of 15-20 minutes. The abstract should be max 300 words and include your theoretical and methodological approaches. You will also be asked for a short biographical statement and a short abstract of 50 words to be included in the programme.

Organised panel: A panel on a common theme/topic with 3-4 individual paper presentations of 15-20 min/each. Please include a max 200-word overview of the panel and max 150-word proposals for each presenter, including their theoretical and methodological approaches. The overview should include a brief statement about how the proposed panel aligns with the conference theme. You will be asked to provide a short biographical statement for each presenter, as well as a short abstract of 50 words to be included in the programme.

Virtual poster: Work in early stages may also be submitted as virtual posters, which will be made available to conference delegates via a dedicated website. This track also welcomes submissions by scholars who will not be able to travel to attend the conference, but wish to disseminate their work. Please submit an abstract of max 300 words, as well as a short abstract of 50 words to be included in the programme. You will also be asked for a short biographical statement. Final posters will be due in

March 2026 in either PDF or HTML format, and may also include a video or audio commentary (optional).

Special session: This year, we are also offering the opportunity to run a special session in the form of a workshop, roundtable, or other form of plenary session. Please submit a proposal of max. 300 words, as well as a 50-word summary that will be included on the programme.

CONTACT

For questions and further information, please write us at ctcc-2026@kcl.ac.uk

Conference organising committee:

Dr Astrid Van den Bossche, King's College London

Professor Rebecca O'Connell, University of Hertfordshire

Lauren Denyer, University of Hertfordshire

Dr Francesca Vaghi, Western Norway University of Applied Sciences

Dr Veena Meetoo, University College London

Dr Rosa Mendizabal, University College London

Dr Deniz Arzuk, University College London

ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION

The Child and Teen Consumption Conferences promote original research on how children and youth interact with markets and consumer society, including how they construct their identities and relationships with peers, family members, brands, and organizations. We welcome scholars and practitioners who examine a wide variety of domains, including media, technology, privacy, climate change, food and eating, social exclusion, and SDGs, from diverse disciplinary perspectives including anthropology, psychology, sociology, communication, history, education sciences, and law. Since 2004, conferences have been held every two years in countries such as France, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Spain, Scotland, and Canada. More information on the CTC community can be found here: <https://mshs.univ-poitiers.fr/childandteenconsumption/>

Scientific committee

Professor Kara Chan, Hong Kong Baptist University

Dr Natalie Coulter, York University

Professor Malene Gram, Aalborg University

Professor Inés de La Ville, University of Poitiers

Professor David Marshall, University of Edinburgh

Professor Patricia Núñez-Gómez, Complutense University of Madrid

Professor Stephanie O'Donohoe, University of Edinburgh