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## Sustainable, safe, smart - the themes shaping Kind + Jugend 2026



From 15 to 17 September 2026, Kind + Jugend in Cologne will bring together the international industry for high-quality baby and toddler products. The spotlight will be on developments that are currently top of mind for the market - digital solutions continue to gain traction, sustainability is becoming more measurable, parents are making more conscious purchasing decisions, safety is being viewed more holistically, and new regulatory requirements are placing greater demands on manufacturers and retailers.

“The industry is constantly changing. Amid artificial intelligence, tighter regulations and the growing expectations of parents, the demands placed on manufacturers and their products are shifting significantly. At the same time, new opportunities for innovation are emerging, along with the chance to play an active role in shaping the future of the industry with the right solutions,” explains Jörg Schmale, Director of Kind + Jugend. “Kind + Jugend gives exhibitors the ideal platform to showcase these solutions to international retailers, who come here specifically looking for new products and enhancements for their ranges.”

### Smart technologies - between convenience and responsibility

A key area for the future is “smart parenting.” Wearables that track sleep and breathing, AI-powered baby monitors and digital interactive educational toys are increasingly evolving from technical add-ons or convenience products into sought-after essentials for health monitoring and prevention.

Meanwhile, there is growing debate about issues such as data protection, cybersecurity and the impact of constant digital monitoring on the parent-child bond. As a result, regulatory pressure on manufacturers is also mounting.

### Sustainability - from trend to new standard

Across the industry, sustainability is increasingly turning from a trend into a clear market expectation. In demand are durable, reusable and resource-efficient products made from recycled or organically grown materials such as organic cotton or bamboo. A key new development is that consumers are now paying more attention to transparency, the circular economy and verifiability.

“Sustainability will become more measurable and comparable in the future. Companies will need to provide stronger evidence of how their products are made, what materials they use and how durable their solutions really are,” says Schmale.

Kind + Jugend  
15.09. - 17.09.2026  
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### **Conscious consumption with real added value**

Parents' expectations and consumer behaviour, in particular, are changing. They are placing more value on high-quality products with educational or functional benefits, and judging toys and equipment by how well they foster creativity, independence, social skills and child development.

The trend is clearly towards fewer but carefully chosen products that combine learning and play in a meaningful way.

### **Sharper focus on health and product safety**

Product safety remains another core concern for the industry. In the EU, few product categories are reported as dangerous more often than toys.

This applies not only to acute risks, but also to the potential long-term health effects of materials and ingredients that can affect the endocrine system or trigger allergic reactions. Products that are free from harmful substances and produced as close to "toxin-free" as possible are increasingly moving from a premium feature to the new standard.

Furthermore, the definition of safety is expanding. Alongside physical safety, the impact of digital toys on psychosocial health is also gaining attention.

### **New EU toy and packaging regulations**

One of the most significant regulatory developments is the new EU Toy Safety Regulation (EU 2025/2509). Although it will not come into full effect until 2030, it is already having a tangible impact on the international market. It introduces stricter rules and explicit bans on certain harmful substances (endocrine disruptors, PFAS "forever chemicals" and allergenic fragrances), a digital product passport (DPP) accessible via QR code with information on ingredients and product safety, and new provisions for connected toys. Online marketplaces and retailers are also facing more stringent requirements.

The new EU Packaging Regulation (2025/40) also introduces changes with regard to recyclability, reusability and amount of packaging. The aim is to gradually phase out single-use plastic products.

### **Kind + Jugend 2026: See the trends, shape the future**

As an international platform for business and trends, Kind + Jugend 2026 is where these developments and challenges can be experienced firsthand. It showcases the innovations manufacturers are using to address rising demands and changing needs in sustainability, safety and digitalisation, while also creating space for professional exchange on the future of the industry.

**Tickets for Kind + Jugend 2026 are available in the official [ticket shop](#). In**

addition, accreditation for journalists is now open. Further information about the event, participating exhibitors and the programme is available online at [www.kindundjugend.com](http://www.kindundjugend.com).

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#### Sources

- [European Parliament: New rules for improved toy safety](#)
- [Intertek: EU Toy Safety Regulation 2025](#)
- [SGS Institut Fresenius: New EU Toy Regulation](#)
- [Haufe Sustainability: New Toy Regulation](#)
- [Taylor Wessing: New EU Toy Regulation](#)
- [Hoffmann Liebs: The New EU Toy Regulation](#)

#### Koelnmesse - industry trade fairs for the children's first years segment:

Koelnmesse is the world's top trade fair organiser in the premium baby and toddler products segment. At the trade fair grounds in Cologne/Germany, the leading international trade fair Kind + Jugend is an established, central industry platform for the global trade and ordering business and presents an annual showcase of the latest products, trends and innovations. In addition to the event at its Cologne headquarters, Koelnmesse is expanding its portfolio internationally: Pueri Expo in São Paulo/Brazil is the largest trade fair in Latin America for premium baby and childcare products, bringing leading Brazilian and international brand manufacturers together with buyers and retailers from across the region with a carefully targeted approach.

#### The next events:

Kind + Jugend - The Trade Show for Kids' First Years, Cologne 15.09. - 17.09.2026

#### Note for editorial offices:

Kind + Jugend photos are available in our [image database](#). Press information can be found [here](#). If you reprint this document, please send us a sample copy.

You can find more information about the Kind + Jugend at [www.kindundjugend.com](http://www.kindundjugend.com), on [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

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