

# New kids on the block

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In the early 1980's, Producer Maurice Starr discovered New Edition, an African American Boy Band. Starr, along with the help of business partner, Mary Alford, wanted to create the white version of New Edition.

Starr and Alford held auditions in Boston where five hundred teenage boys auditioned. 15-Year-Old Donald Edmond Wahlberg Jr impressed both Starr and Alford with his killer rapping skills and his ability to dance. Donnie became the first member of their new creation. Donnie helped recruit other members. Among them came Donnie's younger brother, Mark Wahlberg, Donnie's best friend, Daniel William Wood, Falsetto Jordan Nathaniel Marcel Knight, and Jordan's older brother, Jonathan Rashleigh Knight. As the group began to look it's best, Mark quit.

Donnie then replaced Mark with Jamie Kelly, who was dismissed for lack of discipline. Starr than began to look for a young Michael Jackson, someone who could sing high solos. Starr than found 12-Year-Old Joseph Mulrey McIntyre. Donnie and Jordan picked and teased on Joey, because he had experience on stage. After the final line up of the group was secured, they were named Nynuk. They then received a record deal from Columbia Records, who later demanded a change of name.

Donnie wrote a rap titled " New Kids on the Block", making that their official name. This is where the success beings. April 1986, Columbia Records released " New Kids On the Block" Their first single " Be My Girl" was rarely played on the radio and failed to capture nationwide attention. The New Kids' second single " Stop It Girl" was even worse. New Kids toured around New England wherever Starr could book them: Bars, school dances, and clubs.

After their self-debut album failed, from 87' to 88', The New Kids were in the recording studio, recording their second album "Hangin' Tough". Their first single on the new album, "Please Don't Go Girl", was not a very successful hit. But when a radio station out of Florida began playing it, it became a listener approval. Columbia was going to drop New Kids because of the multiple song failures, but kept them. "Please Don't Go Girl" became #10 on the Billboard's Top 100 Singles Chart, being The New Kids first hit. While "Hangin' Tough" was being released, The New Kids were making international televised appearances on Showtime at the Apollo and Soul Train.

They were the opening act for teen pop icon Tiffany. "Hangin' Tough" then produced another single named "You Got It (The Right Stuff)". When MTV took notice of the group, The New Kids' videos were played in a regular rotation. By 1989, "You Got It (The Right Stuff)" ranked #5 on the Billboard's Top 100 Singles Chart. Their next single, "I'll Be Loving You (Forever)", ranked #1. "Hangin' Tough" gave 3 more singles known as "Hangin' Tough", "Cover Girl", and a cover of The Delfonics classic hit "Didn't I (Blow Your Mind This Time)". By the end of 1989, "Hangin' Tough" climbed up to #1 on the Billboard's 200 Albums Chart and went eight-times platinum.

Massachusetts declared April 24, 1989 "New Kids on the Block Day". By the early 90's, The New Kids became the most popular acts in America. Their next album was titled "Step By Step". Their first single on the new album was "Step By Step" raced up to #1 on the Billboard's Top 100 Singles Chart, becoming their biggest selling single. Then followed "Tonight" which beat the top 10 singles chart run to 9 records. "Let's Try It Again" hit #8 on the

UK Singles Chart and “ Baby I Believe In You” went #1 on the Japanese Chart, which made them known internationally.

The album became triple platinum, selling almost 20 million copies worldwide. They performed 200 concerts a year, along with a summer tour titled “ The Magic Summer Tour” The New Kids also had merchandise: Lunch Boxes, Buttons, T-Shirts, Comic Books, Dolls, Trading Cards, and a Saturday Morning Cartoon that was developed by Pangea Corporation and animated by DIC Entertainment. By 1991, the money gained from all the merchandise was \$400, 000, 000. They had a fan club of 200, 000 members, becoming the largest fan club in the United States. 100, 000 calls per week went to the New Kids Hotline (1-900-909-5KIDS).

In 91’, they topped Forbes list of highest paid entertainers, beating Michael Jackson, Madonna, Prince, and Bill Cosby. They then released their 4th album, “ No More Games/The Remix Album”. That album produced their biggest hits and two new songs that became singles. Those two songs were “ Call It What You Want”, which was #12 in the UK and “ Games”, which was #4 in the UK. Donnie and Danny helped former New Kid and brother, Mark Wahlberg with his debut album for his group “ Marky Mark and the Funky Bunch” In 1992, “ If You Go Away”, the stand-alone single ranked #16 in the US and #9 in the UK.

The group was accused of Lip-Syncing by George McPherson, a music teacher who was listed as an associate producer. George said that Starr sang the vocals while The New Kids lip-synced to recordings during live shows. There was a Breach of Contract and Creative Infringement Lawsuit against

Starr. The group dropped the Australia section of their tour, headed back to Los Angeles, and performed live on The Arsenio Hall Show. The group admitted to singing with a backing track in live performances and that Starr sang the harmony on some vocals.

February 10th, 1992, a Defamation Lawsuit was filed by The New Kids towards George, regarding his allegations. George dropped his allegations and the lawsuit against Starr in April of 92'. The group then experienced a backlash, they were dismissed by people for attempts to be promoted as an urban act. The record sales began to drop due to the musical tastes to Gangsta Rap and Grunge Music. In 1993, having had split from Starr, the group shortened their name to NKOTB.

1994, they released " Face The Music", becoming their first album in 4 years. " Dirty Dawg", their first single on the new album, ranked #66 on the Charts. " Never Let You Go", didn't chart in the US, but did chart #42 in the UK and #18 in the Canadian charts. NKOTB went on tour in small venues such as clubs and theaters. Jonathan had experienced panic attacks and anxiety, he left the band shortly afterward.

Jordan, Joey, Danny, and Donnie then decided to leave. After NKOTB separated, Jonathan became a Real Estate Agent. Jordan released his self-titled solo album to Interscope Records. Joey played as Matt Hucklebee in The Fantasticks. He released a solo album titled " Stay The Same" on Columbia Records. He also performed on The Broadway Musical, " Wicked.

" He was a contender on Dancing With The Stars. Danny started a Boston-Based Record Label. He produced and performed, but remained hidden from  
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the spotlight. He released an album titled “ Room Full Of Smoke” He is a Sales Executive for a Private Jet Travel Company called Halcyon. Donnie started an acting career.

He starred in movies such as Ransom, Southie, The Sixth Sense, Dreamcatcher, and the Saw Film Series. After the group split, many of the group members started families. MTV tried to reunite the group to perform at the VMAs in 1999. Jordan, Donnie, Joey, and Danny all said yes, but Jonathan said no. In 2004, AmeriCeeba hosted Bands Reunited on VH1. Jonathan agreed to this, but the others said no.

Donnie and Danny declined on-camera interviews. Joey said that the only way he would perform with the group was if they reunited permanently. April 2008, after months of speculation, Donnie confirmed on CNN that NKOTB had reunited, plans to record new material, and a tour coming. In May, NKOTB released “ Summertime”, their first single after reuniting. They re-lengthened their name back to New Kids On The Block. August 12, 2008, they released their second single “ Single”, featuring singer/songwriter Ne-Yo.

After fourteen years, NKOTB released “ The Block”, which debuted #1 on the Billboard Top Pop Albums Chart. The groups reunion tour titled “ New Kids On The Block: Live” started in Canada on September 18, 2008. They toured with Natasha Bedingfield and Lady Gaga in the US. They had a concert cruise, in which departed from Miami, Florida and sailed to The Bahamas. They had another tour in 2009 titled “ Full Service Tour” featuring Jesse McCartney and Season 1 winners from America’s Best Dance Crew, The

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Jabbawockeez. They had another cruise in 2010 that sailed from Miami, Florida to Nassau and Half Moon Cay, Bahamas.

An unofficial announcement said that NKOTB and The Backstreet Boys, another boy band, will be touring together in 2011. Brian Littrell, member of the Backstreet Boys, said there was a 78% chance they would tour together. On November 3, 2010, an official announcement was made and that they will be touring the summer of 2011. The tour would be called NKOTBSB, and would feature singers Jordin Sparks and Ashlyne Huff. In May of 2011, Matthew Morrison from the hit show Glee confirmed he would be joining the tour.

The New Kids and The Backstreet Boys are currently over seas in Europe