



Fighting Junk Food Marketing to Kids:
a toolkit for advocates

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Introduction

Why we developed this toolkit, how you can use it



1

Introduction

Imagine, if you will, a big pile of money. Let's call it a million dollars. It's all yours to spend, any way you want. What would you buy?

Didn't take long to spend that money, did it? Well, lucky for you, an hour later you get another million to spend. Now what would you do with that money? How about if you got another million dollars an hour later – and kept it up around the clock, all year long?

Well, now imagine that deluge of money aimed right at our kids – spent convincing them to eat and drink MORE MORE MORE of the foods and beverages that are least healthy for them. That's how much money the food and beverage industry in the U.S. spends to reach our children with their messages: one million dollars an hour, every hour of every day, targeted at children and youth. It adds up to \$10 to \$12 billion dollars a year spent on youth marketing alone.

It's natural to feel overwhelmed by this amount of marketing — but in fact, there are many things that local groups can do, in their own communities, to limit marketing and counter its effect.

We developed this toolkit to help community advocates understand how food marketing affects kids' health and what they can do about it at the local level. This toolkit is designed to be used in conjunction with our video, *Fighting Junk Food Marketing to Kids*, which illustrates community-based actions to address marketing. We hope you will use this notebook and the video as community organizing tools to stimulate local advocacy for policies that limit the impact of food and beverage marketing to kids. The activities and discussion guides included here will help you use the toolkit to discuss marketing and what your community can do about it in many settings:

At community meetings

With school leadership

With youth

At neighborhood house parties

At coalition meetings

With merchants, after-school program directors, and others who have the power to limit some kinds of marketing

Why talk about policy when the problem of healthy eating and active living is ultimately an individual struggle? We believe that while individual choices about health are important, the environment is critical in shaping those choices. Behavior happens in a context. For example, we might be able to educate everyone about the value of eating fruits and vegetables daily, but if there's no place to buy reasonably priced fresh produce, then no one has the opportunity to eat it, no matter how motivated or educated they are.

Our commitment is to support advocates in shaping their environment, to make their local community a place where the healthy choice is — on all levels — the easiest choice to make.

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We thank the Public Health Law Program for helping us understand the legal implications of various strategies to combat marketing. We thank Prevention Institute and Strategic Alliance for allowing us to use some of their Rapid Response Network talking points in this toolkit.

We dedicate this toolkit to the local advocates in HEAC communities across California who are making their communities places where healthy eating and active living are the natural thing to do:

Baldwin Park
Chula Vista
Oakland
Santa Ana
Shasta
South Los Angeles

*Katie Woodruff, MPH
Berkeley Media Studies Group
Berkeley, California
www.bmsg.org
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2

Food and Beverage Marketing: Targeting our kids

Unhealthy foods are hurting our kids

Kids' purchasing power

Food ads target kids

Most food ads are for unhealthy foods

Ethnic target marketing: it's worse for communities of color

2 Food and Beverage Marketing:
Targeting our kids



2

Food and Beverage Marketing: Targeting our kids

Unhealthy foods are hurting our kids:

Since 1980, overweight rates have doubled among children and tripled among adolescents.¹ More than one out of every three U.S. children born in 2000 is expected to get diabetes in their lifetime.²

¹ CDC, National Center for Health Statistics, Prevalence of Overweight Among Children and Adolescents: United States, 1999-2002, available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/overwght99.htm>

² CDC, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Diabetes Public Health Resource, CDC Statements on Diabetes Issues, <http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/news/docs/lifetime.htm>

According to the CDC, among overweight children between 5 and 10 years of age, 60 percent already have at least one cardiovascular disease risk factor that can lead to atherosclerosis, hypertension, and diabetes in adulthood.³

This is particularly critical because, as a recent study confirmed, development of Type 2 diabetes before age 20 leads to a high risk of kidney disease and death by middle age.⁴ Today's generation of children is the first in modern history that is expected to have shorter life spans than their parents, due to the chronic diseases associated with poor nutrition, inactivity and obesity.⁵

People of color in the U.S. disproportionately suffer from obesity, overweight, and chronic illnesses such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The disparity is especially true in children:

28.2% of white children age 6-19 are overweight or at risk for overweight;

35.4% of black children are overweight or at risk;

39.9% of Mexican-American children are overweight or at risk.⁶

Consumption of foods high in calories, fat and sugars, such as sodas, fast food, packaged snack foods and desserts, accounts for much of the increase in overweight among children. Nearly 20% of caloric intake among 12-to-18 year olds comes from fast food, compared with 6.5% in the late 1970s.⁷ In 2002, soda composed 50% of the total beverage intake for kids aged 12-19, a 58.5% increase since 1977, while milk consumption decreased nearly 9% for teens and more than 20% for children aged 6-11.⁸ At the start of the twenty-first century, the average teenage boy in the U.S. consumed two cans of soda a day, and teenage girls drank a little more than one 12-ounce can of soda per day.⁹

This is a concern because children who drink more soft drinks are more likely to become overweight,¹⁰ and a recent study found that decreasing children's consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks resulted in improved Body Mass Indexes (BMIs) for those originally at a higher BMI.¹¹

³ Centers for Disease Control, "CDC's KidsMedia: Physical Activity and Youth," available at <http://www.cdc.gov/kidsmedia/background.htm>. Cited in Linn S, *Consuming Kids*, Anchor Books, New York, 2004.

⁴ Pavkov ME et al, "Effect of Youth-Onset Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus on Incidence of End-Stage Renal Disease and Mortality in Young and Middle-Aged Pima Indians," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 296:421-426, July 26, 2006.

⁵ Olshansky SJ et al, "A potential decline in life expectancy in the United States in the 21st century," *New England Journal of Medicine*, 352:1138-1145, March 17, 2005.

⁶ Hedley AA, Ogden CL, Johnson CL, Carroll MD, Curtin LR, Flegal KM, "Prevalence of overweight and obesity among US children, adolescents and adults 199-2002," *JAMA*, 2004; 291: 2847-2850.

⁷ *Out of Balance: Marketing of Soda, Candy, Snacks and Fast Foods Drowns Out Healthful Messages*. CPEHN and Consumers Union report, September 2005.

⁸ US Dept. of Agriculture, "Changes Over 25 Years in the Dietary Intakes of Children 6-19 years" (April 2005), courtesy of author Rhonda Sebastian, cited in *Out of Balance: Marketing of Soda, Candy, Snacks and Fast Foods Drowns Out Healthful Messages*. CPEHN and Consumers Union report, September 2005.

⁹ Jacobson MF. *Liquid candy: how soft drinks are harming Americans' health*. Washington, DC: Center for Science in the Public Interest; 2005. <http://www.cspinet.org/liquidcandy/>

¹⁰ Ludwig DS et al., "Relation between consumption of sugar-sweetened drinks and childhood obesity: A prospective, observational analysis," *Lancet* 357:505-508, 2001.

¹¹ Ebbeling CB, et al. Effects of decreasing sugar-sweetened beverage consumption on body weight in adolescents: a randomized, controlled pilot study. *Pediatrics*. 2006;117:673-80.

Kids are a primary market:

Marketers want to reach children not only to sell their products now but to develop customers for life. Marketing may influence children to develop positive feelings about a branded food or beverage before they even get a chance to taste it, leading to the industry's dream achievement: "cradle-to-grave brand loyalty." To make this happen, food marketers reach out to children constantly, starting when they are very young.

Corporations understand that children are a lucrative market. Kids in the U.S. have tremendous purchasing power: children between 3 and 11 years old bought or influenced the purchase of \$18 billion worth of products and entertainment in 2005.¹²

Advertising of unhealthy foods far outweighs that of healthier foods:

Food is advertised in more than half of all ads targeting children, and children see an average of one food ad for every five minutes of Saturday morning TV they watch.¹³

Advertising Age reported that \$12.38 billion was spent on "measured media" advertising alone by the food, beverage and restaurant industries in 2005.¹⁴ This includes TV, radio, magazine, newspaper, billboard and Internet ads; TV is where the majority of these advertising dollars are spent, by far.

The foods advertised on television are generally not healthy. One recent study found that packaged snack foods, fast foods, and sweets accounted for 83% of foods advertised during TV shows heavily viewed by children.¹⁵

By comparison, the California Pan Ethnic Health Network and Consumers Union found that a mere \$9.55 million was spent in 2004 on communications for the federal and California "5 A Day" programs (which promote eating five fruits and vegetables a day for better health). With industry expenditures more than one thousand times greater than the 5 A Day budgets, "it is no wonder that healthful dietary messages from government, parents and others are barely audible," according to CPEHN and CU.¹⁶

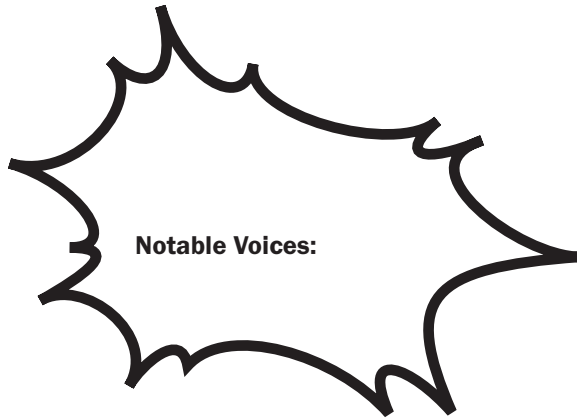
¹² Brown R and Washton R, "The Kids Market in the US," Packaged Facts, May 1, 2006. <http://www.packagedfacts.com/pub/1119536.html>

¹³ Horgan KB et al, "Television Food Advertising: Targeting children in a toxic environment," in Singer and Singer, *Handbook of Children and the Media*, Sage Publications, 2001. Cited in "Raising Media Savvy Kids: A Common Sense Toolkit," Common Sense Media, 2005.

¹⁴ Advertising Age, "100 Leading National Advertisers," June 26, 2006. www.adage.com/images/random/lna2006.pdf

¹⁵ Harrison K, Marske A, "Nutritional content of foods advertised during the television programs children watch most," *American Journal of Public Health*, 2005; 95:1568-1574.

¹⁶ *Out of Balance: Marketing of Soda, Candy, Snacks and Fast Foods Drowns Out Healthful Messages*. CPEHN and Consumers Union report, September 2005.



“Corporate America doesn’t spend \$10 billion a year on [food] advertising aimed at children on the off chance that it might be effective. No. It spends \$10 billion because that advertising works brilliantly. . . because it persuades children to demand – to the point of throwing temper tantrums, if necessary – a regular diet of candy, cookies, sugary cereal, sodas, and all manner of junk food. That’s why most of the fast-food chains market expressly to children, rolling out ad campaigns using popular cartoon characters and movie figures.”

Senator Tom Harkin,
in a speech to the
7th Annual KidScreen Summit
February 8, 2006

The evidence is in: Children’s diets are adversely affected by food marketing:

In December 2005, the Institute of Medicine released *Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity?*, an exhaustive review of the scientific evidence on food marketing to children and obesity. This report contained two key findings:

Food and beverage marketing targeted to children ages 12 and under leads them to request and consume high-calorie, low-nutrient products.¹⁷

The dominant focus of marketing to children and youth is on foods and beverages high in calories and low in nutrients, and is sharply out of balance with healthful diets.¹⁸

Practices such as using popular cartoon characters on food packaging and in ads are particularly persuasive. Even the food and beverage industry’s own Children’s Advertising Review Unit (CARU) admitted that “the mere appearance of a character with a product can significantly alter a child’s perception of the product.”¹⁹

The effect of advertising is even stronger on younger children. Children under the age of 8 do not recognize the persuasive intent of ads and tend to accept them as accurate and unbiased.²⁰

¹⁷ Direct quote from The National Academies press release, 12/6/05, “Food Marketing Aimed at Kids Influences Poor Nutritional Choices, IOM Study Finds; Broad Effort Needed to Promote Healthier Products and Diets.”

¹⁸ *Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity?* Institute of Medicine, December 2005.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Kunkel D, “Children and Television Advertising,” in Singer and Singer, *Handbook of Children and the Media*, Sage Publications, 2001.

It's even worse for communities of color:

Just as people of color in the U.S. suffer disproportionately from obesity, overweight, and chronic illnesses such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, they are also disproportionately targeted by the food industry.

Food companies and advertisers reach communities of color through targeted advertising – campaigns designed for and placed specifically in media and TV shows whose audiences are largely made up of people of color. In 2005, food, beverage, candy and restaurant companies spent nearly \$512 million to advertise in Hispanic media, outspent only by the automotive industry.²¹ Six of the top 10 advertisers on BET (Black Entertainment Television) in 1999 were food or beverage companies, which together spent \$30.5 million to pitch their goods to BET viewers that year.²²

The foods and beverages marketed to African-Americans and Latinos are often not as healthy as those marketed to general audiences. For instance, a recent survey of prime-time TV programs found that far more food commercials appear on shows with large African-American audiences than those for general audiences, and that most of these ads are for “fast food, candy, soda, or meat (e.g., sausages, cold cuts.)”²³

²¹ Advertising Age's "Hispanic Fact Pact, Annual Guide to Hispanic Advertising and Marketing," 2006 edition, page 10.

²² Williams, JD, working paper, *Advertising expenditures by firm and brand in African American-oriented electronic and print media: An analysis of 1999 competitive media reporting (CMR) data*, University of Texas at Austin advertising department, 2005. Cited in *Out of Balance: Marketing of Soda, Candy, Snacks and Fast Foods Drowns Out Healthful Messages*. CPEHN and Consumers Union report, September 2005.

²³ Henderson V, Kelly B, "Food advertising in the age of obesity: Content analysis of food advertising on general market and African American television," *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, July-August 2005; 5-85. Cited in *Out of Balance: Marketing of Soda, Candy, Snacks and Fast Foods Drowns Out Healthful Messages*. CPEHN and Consumers Union report, September 2005.

3

More than just advertising

Product

Place

Promotion

Price

3 Marketing:
More than just advertising



3

Marketing: More than just advertising

People are usually most aware of the ads that kids watch on TV, but it's important to realize that marketing is far broader and more wide-reaching than that. In fact only 20% of all food and beverage marketing in 2004 was devoted to ads on TV, radio, print, billboards or the internet.

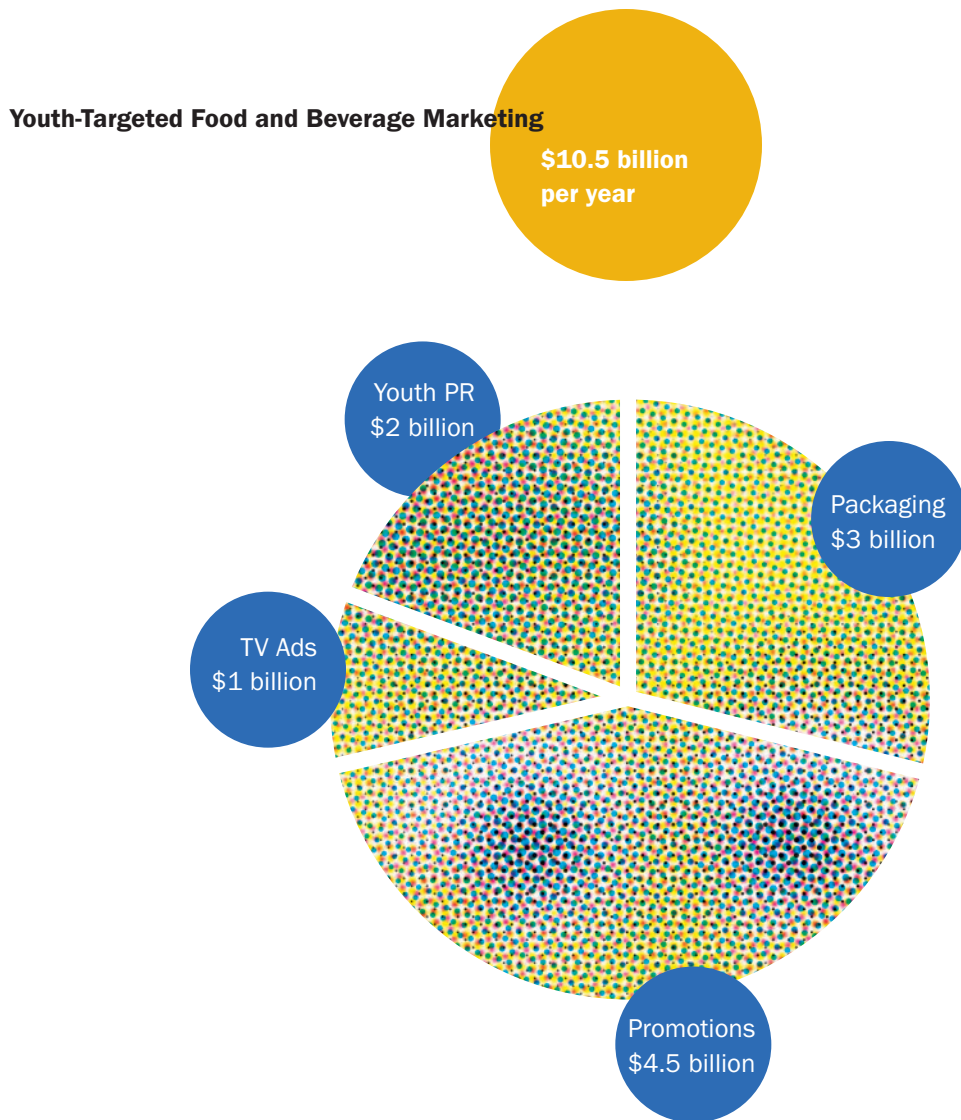
The food and beverage industry spends \$10-12 billion a year — that's one million dollars every hour of every day — just to reach children and youth. Of that:

\$1 billion is spent on advertising to kids (primarily on TV);

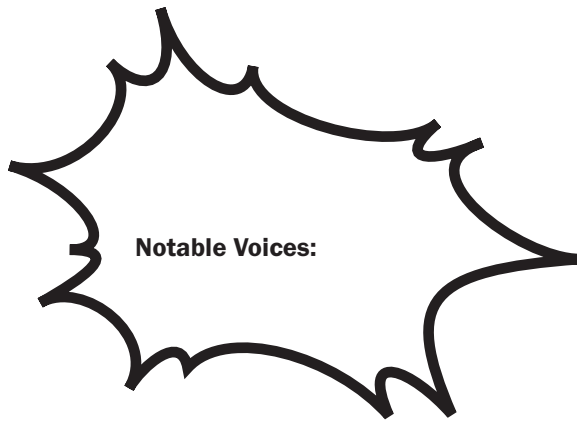
\$4.5 billion goes to youth-targeted promotions such as premiums, coupons, sweepstakes and contests;

\$2 billion is spent on youth-targeted public relations, such as efforts to place articles about the product in youth media;

\$3 billion goes to packaging designed for children.²⁴



²⁴ IOM Fact Sheet "Advertising, Marketing and the Media: Improving Messages," September 2004. Drawn from *Preventing Childhood Obesity: Health in the Balance*, 2005.



"It is important to recognize that young children are [already] being manipulated rather effectively by television ads that are not interactive and not tailored to the individual child. As there is more tailoring and more interactive capability, advertising is going to be more powerful than ever before. I think that's what underscores the need for more regulatory intervention."

Dale Kunkel, PhD
Professor of Communication
University of Arizona²⁵

²⁵ Quoted in Children Now's Policy Brief, "Interactive Advertising and Children: Issues and Implications," Summer 2005. http://www.childrennow.org/assets/pdf/issues_media_iadbrieff_2005.pdf

Marketing's classic Four P's:

In order to combat the effects of marketing, we must understand how it is designed to work. In the 1950s, marketing guru Philip Kotler developed the concept of the Four P's of Marketing:²⁶

Product,
Place,
Promotion, and
Price.

Marketers adjust each of these components to arrive at a mix that will influence the customer to choose their products over the competitor's.

This framework provides a useful way to explore how marketing works. Food and beverage marketers reach our kids at every one of these marketing points:

Product:

Product refers to the full bundle of goods and services offered to the customer, including any packaging it comes in and the “non-tangibles” — benefits — the customer perceives to come along with the product.

The industry tries to convince children that they need special “fun” foods designed just for them. There has been a dramatic increase in new food products developed for and targeted to U.S. children and youth in the last 10 years. (See chart, next page.)

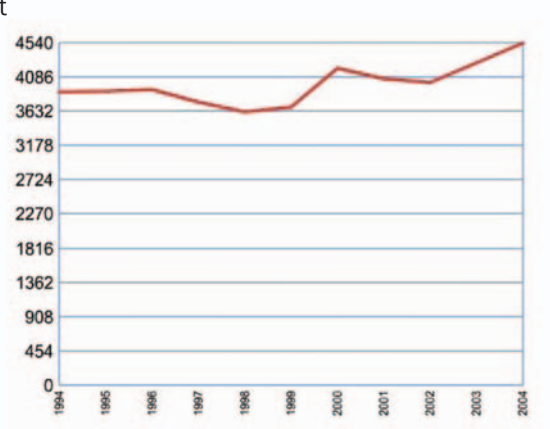
Of course, a healthy diet for kids is very similar to that for adults, and children don't need any special foods. Products such as chicken nuggets, fruit leather, colored ketchup, sugared cereals and other foods “just for kids” are created to make money for the food companies, not to meet children's special dietary needs.

The way products are packaged plays a big role in their appeal to children. Popular cartoon characters such as SpongeBob SquarePants and Dora the Explorer appear on everything from Honeycomb cereal and Teddy Grahams crackers to frozen meals and Cheezit's. Interestingly, Kraft's own voluntary policies about marketing to kids, adopted in 2005, dictate that they don't advertise on TV with these characters, but as of 2006 they are still used on packaging for Kraft Macaroni and Cheese and other kid-oriented Kraft products.

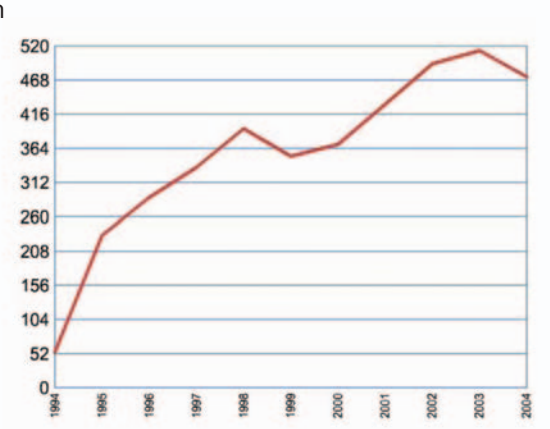
²⁶ Philip Kotler, 1950s marketing guru, cited in *HBS Week*, May 6, 2002

**Significant Growth in
New Food Products Targeted to
U.S. Children and Youth
1994 to 2004**

new products targeted
to total market



new products targeted
to children & youth



source: Williams J. 2005b. *Product Proliferation Analysis for New Food and Beverage Products Targeted to Children 1994–2004*. University of Texas at Austin Working Paper.

The way foods are packaged can also promote over-consumption (bags of chips that most people perceive to be a single serving; Big Gulps packing enough soda for 8 servings) or can encourage moderation (Kraft is bringing out a line of Oreos packaged two to a packet, to delineate the serving size).

Toys and other give-aways packaged with food products are another way marketers reach children. You can get a McDonald's Happy Meal with "baby safe" toys for toddlers under 3 years old (including toys from the baby-targeted TV show *Teletubbies* in a 2000 promotion).

Place:

Place refers to where and how the product is distributed and sold. The marketers' objective is to make their products accessible in as many places as possible — making it seem normal for our cars, cafes and bookstores, libraries, schools, sports arenas, movie theaters, and as many other places as possible to be considered appropriate places to eat.

For food and beverages aimed at kids, the following “place” considerations all have impact:

- locations of stores selling both healthy and unhealthy food, including convenience stores and grocery stores, farmers markets, etc.

- location and proliferation of fast food outlets

- food and beverage sales opportunities at schools and in after-school programs

- within stores: positioning on shelves, in special displays or at checkout (Food companies often pay grocery stores to display their products in special high-visibility locations such as at the ends of aisles.)

Food marketers try to reach out to children everywhere they spend time. There is a good deal of documentation of the problem of unhealthy foods and sodas sold at **school**. For those communities who would like to tackle this problem head on, we highly recommend California Project LEAN's toolkit, *Captive Kids: Selling Obesity at Schools*. This action guide to stop the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages in school is available at <http://www.californiaprojectlean.org>.

As many schools have started to limit unhealthy food and beverage products and marketing, marketers have made incursions into other areas where kids are, including targeting **after-school programs**. For example, Taco Bell has built kitchens in community centers to train youth to work in fast food; Altria (owner of Kraft Foods as well as Philip Morris tobacco companies) provides curriculum kits on decision-making skills to after-school programs such as Boys and Girls Clubs; and other marketers provide new product taste tests, food giveaways, and other promotional activities to after-school programs. The industry claims these activities are fun for the kids, and a money-saver for the program — but in fact the company gets to use the kids as a free focus group for developing their new products — without the parents' knowledge or permission. Of course, the food and beverage products promoted are usually not healthy. For more on how you can combat these marketing practices in after-school programs, see Sections 4 and 5 of this toolkit.

Promotion:

Promotion refers to the advertisements and other techniques marketers use to make customers aware of the product and eager to seek it out. This includes traditional advertising on TV, radio and in print, but also many other forms of promotion, including a booming trend of interactive promotions via the Internet and other digital media.

In an age of increasing digital media, corporations are pursuing many new opportunities to get their desired customers to “engage” with their brands. A July 2006 study from the Kaiser Family Foundation found that 85% of the leading food brands that target children on TV also have **websites** with online content that is targeted to children.²⁷ Most contain “advergaming” — interactive games in which a company’s product or brand characters are featured, functioning as a game and an advertisement in one. These are “designed to draw attention to the brand in a playful way, and for an extended period of time.”²⁸

These food and beverage product websites are aimed at keeping the child engaged with the brand for as long as possible, while bombarding them with messages about the product. For instance, at <http://www.cheetos.com>, kids can “hang out” with “Chester Cheetah,” an animated Latino-accented cheetah character, who leads children on interactive games and tours of his funhouse while pitching Cheetos brand snacks.

Similarly, the Oreo website contains interactive games, a “personality test” (“Are you an Oreo dunker, twister, or licker?”), and animated cartoons of milk and Oreo hanging out together — as well as TV ads clearly aimed at kids under 12. Kraft’s own internal guidelines for advertising say they will no longer target young children with TV ads for their less healthy products — yet these ads are still shown on their website.

²⁷ Moore, ES., “It’s Child’s Play: Advergaming and the Online Marketing of Food to Children.” The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, Menlo Park, CA, 2006. Available at: <http://profile.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia071906pkg.cfm>

²⁸ “Child’s Play” executive summary, *ibid.*, pg. 6.

These and other food and beverage websites offer children product coupons and incentives for product purchase. Many of them provide “viral marketing” opportunities, where kids can send their friends messages about the website and the product. After all, marketers know that nothing promotes a product like peer-to-peer word of mouth. And many of the sites solicit personal information, product preferences and other valuable marketing data from their child visitors.

Beyond their online presence, food and beverage marketers pursue other promotional activities to target children and youth, including:

Promotional tie-ins with kids’ movies.

For example, McDonald’s and M-n-Ms both had summer 2006 promotions linked to Disney’s “Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest.”

Sponsorship of cultural or community events:

Burger King sponsored the Vibe (hip hop magazine) Music Fest in June 2005 (during Black Music Month), featuring artists such as Kayne West, Sean Combs, Keyshia Cole, Ludacris, and more.²⁹

Mobile phone and email ads:

Companies are increasingly using text messaging and email to connect with their young customers. Teens provide their cell phone number or email address when signing up for a membership on a food or beverage website (for example, registering to receive Mountain Dew’s “Dewsletter”). Parental permission is not required for youth over age 13.

²⁹ <http://musicfest.vibe.com/>

Price:

This final “P” deals with how much is charged for the product. Marketers have a great deal of discretion over their product pricing. They can choose to package and price items to encourage customers to consume more of some products.

For example, less nutritious foods are often priced more cheaply than healthier ones. This is because they are often cheaper to produce, cheaper to ship, cheaper to store, and longer lasting — therefore companies can charge less for them. The fact that a 20-ounce soda is cheaper than a 20-ounce bottle of milk, for instance, may encourage greater soda consumption and discourage milk consumption.

One widely practiced pricing strategy in the food and beverage industry is volume discounts. Fast food restaurants offer two burgers for a dollar; corner markets trumpet a 64-ounce “Big Gulp” soda for just pennies more than a more moderate serving. These practices appeal to customers, especially young people, who have fewer disposable dollars and are in search of bargains. However, they can also encourage customers to buy and consume more than they otherwise would have, which can contribute to overweight and health problems.

4

Solutions: What can local communities do?

Product

Place

Promotion

Price

4 Solutions What can local communities do?



4

Solutions:

What can local communities do to limit marketing to kids?

Because advertising and marketing programs are produced centrally in major multi-national corporations, and because the First Amendment protects commercial speech in advertisements, many local communities feel their hands are tied to do anything about the marketing deluging their children.

Fortunately, however, there are a variety of legal and potentially effective routes that local communities can use to intervene in the four Ps of classic marketing. We present only a sampling here; you may come up with other strategies that could make a difference as well.

Product:

- Ban products outright if they are health or safety threats: e.g., ban the sale of sodas on school grounds.
- Regulate a product directly, including what, when, where and how products are sold: e.g., a community could require that candy or other products be sold only after certain hours or outside of a X feet radius from a school.
- Impose product standards: e.g., foods sold as a complete “meal” must not exceed predetermined limits for unhealthy characteristics such as calories, salt, fat, etc.
- Impose product labeling requirements: e.g., require chain restaurants to provide nutrition info on their menus or menu boards.

Place:

(Some of these are land use strategies that could have a spillover effect on marketing.)

- Communities can map the location of different kinds of marketing in their community, as an assessment of the marketing environment. (See Activities, next section.)
- Ask grocers to designate a “Candy-Free Check Out Aisle” to give parents an opportunity to dodge the “pester factor” in the check-out line.
- Pass a sidewalk encroachment ordinance saying small groceries may use sidewalk space outside the store for selling goods, but only for produce.
- Use vacant lot parcels (donated by the city) for community gardens to supply farmers’ markets.
- Use the conditional use permit (CUP) process to put a moratorium on new fast food or junk food outlets in a community.
- A land use law could 1) prevent fast food outlets from opening within 500 feet of schools; 2) prevent fast food outlets from opening within 500 feet of another fast food outlet; and 3) limit the number of fast food outlets in a community to one per every X residents.
- Ask retailers (grocery stores etc) to put healthier items within eye’s sight of children and lower nutrient items on the higher shelves, or to arrange cereal boxes with the nutrition labels out rather than the cartoon-character-laden fronts out.
- Pass local legislation to require that candy, for instance, be placed behind the counter so that the customer must ask to purchase the product. Similar to the restrictions that commonly eliminate self-service for tobacco products, such limits are intended to discourage impulse purchases, and also reduce the threat of shoplifting.³⁰
- Add language banning marketing and promotion of unhealthy foods to the school district’s Local Wellness Policy.
- Ask after-school programs not to allow food and beverage marketers to provide activities or curricula to the program.
- Eliminate drive-through service at restaurants selling unhealthy foods.

³⁰ Ashe M, Public Health Law Program, personal communications, April 2006.

Promotion:

- Ask retailers not to display any in-store promotions that feature cartoon characters selling unhealthy foods (or that target people of color).
- Pass an ordinance banning giveaways of toys or other promotional items (e.g. “Happy Meal” toys) in connection with unhealthy fast food.³¹
- Ask your city council to pass a resolution to request specified federal, state, and local officials and private industries to take actions concerning foods and beverages marketed to children.³²
- Support proposed federal restrictions on food advertising during kids’ TV programming and on the use of cartoon characters to sell unhealthy products.³³

Price:

- Make certain snack foods and/or sodas more expensive by taxing them. (Unlike with alcohol and tobacco taxes, however, “junk food” taxes have not been found to reduce consumption.)
- Levy regulatory fees (an additional business license fee) on retailers who sell products that have been demonstrated to increase obesity, for instance sweetened beverages and restaurant meals. Fees raised must be earmarked for specific public health promotion programs.

³¹ “The logic is that giving away toys encourages unhealthy eating; note that restricting toys is not restricting speech.” Ibid.

³² Model resolution language is available from Center for Science in the Public Interest at http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/modelcity_marketingresolution.pdf

³³ These proposed restrictions (such as Sen. Tom Harkin’s HeLP America Act) haven’t gone far yet, but according to the IOM’s December 2005 report, if two years of industry voluntary efforts do not make a dent in the problem, stricter regulation and legislation on advertising should be pursued. See also CSPI report Guidelines for Responsible Food Marketing to Children at <http://www.cspinet.org/marketingguidelines.pdf>

5

Discussion Guide, Activities, and Worksheets

Video Discussion Guide

Including questions on the problem and possible solutions, for advocates, parents and youth

Activities

Brainstorming

Mapping

Framing

Strategizing

Worksheets

Talking about food and beverage marketing that targets kids

Developing strategy
worksheet

Sample letter to a
merchant

Sample letter to an
after-school program



5

Discussion Guides, Activities, and Worksheets

Video Viewing and Discussion Guide: *Fighting Junk Food Marketing to Kids*

The video *Fighting Junk Food Marketing to Kids* is organized into five chapters: Introduction, The Problem, What Exactly Is Marketing?, What Local Groups Can Do, and The Future. You can play it straight through (it lasts about 14 minutes) or stop it after “What Is Marketing” and “What Local Groups Can Do” to discuss.

These open-ended questions are designed to stimulate discussion, share learning, and begin to consider community-based responses to the problem of food and beverage marketing that targets kids.

The Problem

- What new marketing tactics did you learn about in the video?
- What surprised you?
- What do you think motivates the food and beverage industries to target children and youth?
- What examples of child- or youth-targeted marketing have you seen lately?
- What examples of ethnic-aimed target marketing can you think of?
- How do you feel about this?

For parents:

- Which of these types of marketing do you think your children are exposed to?
- How do you feel about the industry's marketing practices?
- Is it appropriate for the industry to use marketing designed specifically for children to see but for parents *not* to see (for instance, websites and cell-phone ads)?

For youth:

- What kinds of new ads or other marketing have you noticed lately?
- Think of a specific food or beverage ad you have seen recently. What message do you think the marketer is trying to convey about their product?
- What tactics do marketers use to make their products seem cool or appealing to your peers?
- Can you think of a way in which your food choices have been influenced by marketing? What about your friends' choices?

The Solution

- Should there be rules about marketing foods and beverages to kids? What should they be?
- If you could make one change in food and beverage marketing, what would it be?
- What did you think of the possible solutions profiled in the video?
- Have any of these changes been tried in your community? What was the response?
- What changes would you like to see happen around junk food marketing in your community?
- Do you know of policy makers or other influential people in your community or social network who support these changes?
- What arguments or considerations do you think would help convince the leadership in your community to act on this issue?

Activities

On the following pages are some activities you can do with a group after watching and discussing the video. They are designed to work well for groups of youth, parents, professionals, or a mix. For each one, we describe the objective of the activity, what you will need to carry out the activity, and instructions for the group and for processing the activity.

- 1: **Prioritizing:** Brainstorm solutions on butcher paper, then prioritize among them.
- 2: **Tracking:** Map all kinds of marketing in your community; youth scavenger hunt.
- 3: **Framing:** Practice answering hard questions about marketing.
- 4: **Strategizing:** Plan concrete next steps to change your community's marketing environment.

Activity

Prioritizing: Solutions Brainstorm

Objective:

This activity will help your group brainstorm possible actions you can take at the local level to address marketing that targets kids, and to prioritize among those possible actions. The activity moves quickly, generating lots of ideas and energy in a short time.

What you will need:

Large sheets of butcher paper — 8 to 16 sheets

Markers — at least 4

Tape to hang butcher paper around the room

Time keeping device and whistle (optional)

Small circle or star stickers — 5 for each participant

To conduct the activity:

Hang 4 to 8 sheets of butcher paper around the room — leaving enough space between each sheet for a small group to stand and work at each sheet. Label the top of each paper with one of the 4Ps of marketing: “Place,” “Product/Packaging,” “Promotions,” and “Price.” (If you have a large group, you may want to have two sets of sheets with the same four labels.)

Divide the group into 4 to 8 groups (each small group should have no more than four or five people in it). Position one small group in front of each paper, and give each group one marker.

Give instructions to the group:

“This is a brainstorming activity. The point is to generate as many ideas as possible about what policies we might implement in this community that would help limit food marketing to youth. Work with your small group to come up with as many policies as you can think of in each of these 4P categories. It’s OK to repeat policies you may have heard about in the video or during our earlier discussions. No idea is too outrageous! Write as many ideas as you can — you have only two minutes at each paper. When I blow this whistle, stop working on your sheet and move your entire group to the next one to your right; take a few seconds to read the ideas already on the paper and then start brainstorming more ideas for that category. This way every group will contribute to every category, in a short time. Any questions?”

Start the groups working and watch the time. After three or four minutes, blow the whistle and get each group to move to the next paper, read what's already been written, and add any new ideas they have. After another four minutes, blow the whistle again. Continue until every group has worked on each of the four topic areas.

Next steps:

Have everyone sit down and read through all the papers, discussing all the options listed and clarifying anything that isn't clear. Ask the group to discuss pros and cons of the various ideas listed.

Finally, hand out five stickers to each participant. *Instructions to the group:* "Now I want you to review all the ideas here and think carefully about what you think would work best and make the biggest impact in your community. Use these stickers to vote for the policy ideas that you think the coalition should work on first. You may put your stickers on five different ideas, or you may put all five on one idea that you really feel strongly about. This will give us an idea of where the group's priorities lie, and where we should think about focusing our effort. Any questions? Go ahead and get up now and put your stickers on the papers."

When everyone has voted, see which two or three ideas got the most votes. Ask whether there is agreement about pursuing some or all of these ideas.

Activity

Tracking: Map the Marketing in Your Community

Objective:

In order to focus your change efforts, it's important to know what kinds of marketing are most prevalent in your town or neighborhood. This activity will help you assess the marketing in your community in a systematic way. The youth version (scavenger hunt) will help make youth aware of the different kinds of junk food marketing that targets them in their community.

What you will need:

An enlarged map of your neighborhood or town

A list of types of marketing to look for

Clipboards and pens

For youth version:

Cell phone cameras or digital cameras if possible — one per group

The scavenger hunt list (reverse side), one copy for each group

To conduct the activity:

Walk around your neighborhood in small groups and mark each type of marketing on your map in code. (See reverse side for categories.)

For youth:

Do a marketing scavenger hunt! Divide into teams of up to 6 youth and send the teams out into the community with a list of marketing examples to find in one hour (or more, if you like). You can take pictures of each example with digital cameras or cell phone cameras, or just make notes about where you found each item. (Be sure to ask permission to take pictures in a store! Tell the cashier or manager what organization you are from and that you are doing a youth group project on healthy eating and marketing.)

Not all of these types of marketing will be in every neighborhood — but look and see what you find! Make note of where you find each item.

The team that finds the most examples of food and beverage marketing within the time limit wins.

Types of food and beverage marketing to look for:

On the street:

Signs for movie tie-in promotions at a fast food restaurant (for instance, “Star Wars” posters at Burger King)

“Happy Meal” type promotion — free toy with fast food kid’s meal

Signs in fast food restaurant windows — what kinds of foods are they promoting? Are they healthy or not so healthy?

Food or beverage billboard or ad aimed at children

Food or beverage billboard or ad aimed at teens

Food or beverage logos on vending machines

Food or beverage billboard near a playground or school

Kids’ menus/coloring sheets that use food or beverage logos

Posters or billboards for community cultural events sponsored by food or beverage companies

At home or the library:

Food or beverage website targeting teens

Food or beverage website targeting younger children

In corner stores or grocery stores:

Food or beverage promotions (displays, signs, etc.) aimed at kids

Cartoon characters on food packaging

Posters showing junk food snacks for sale

Candy, chips, etc. displayed in check-out aisles

At school:

Logos on vending machines

Food or beverage logos on scoreboards

Food or beverage logos on food service equipment: coolers, bottle bins, refrigeration units

Food or beverage logos on napkins and cups

Food or beverage sponsored signs, ads and posters

Food or beverage sponsored classroom materials

Activity

Framing: Answer Hard Questions About Marketing

Objective:

This activity will help you anticipate and practice answering some of the challenging questions you may get asked as you pursue policy change around food marketing to young people. You will feel more comfortable debating these issues with policy makers or others if you have a chance to practice good answers in advance.

What you will need:

A list of challenging questions on the policy goal you are pursuing (see ours on the next page and add your own!)

Index cards and pens

Noisemakers such as bells, whistles, or clickers — one for each group of 5 participants

To conduct the activity:

Ask the group to think about one audience that needs to be convinced of the importance of this issue and your solution. It might be business owners, city council members, parents, or others. Ask each person to come up with one hard question that this audience might ask about the proposed solution. Write that question down on an index card and hand it in.

Divide the group into several teams (at least three teams) of no more than five people each. *Give instructions to the group:* “In this activity, your small group becomes a team competing to come up with the best answer to a hard question. Your team wants to ring in first with your answer after the question is posed.

The ‘host’ will ask a question. After you’ve heard the question, confer with your group to quickly come up with an answer. The answer is considered ‘good’ if it the opposing teams or audience applauds. The team that rings in first with a good answer gets 1 point, 2 points if the answer includes a policy solution. Any team can challenge and offer a better answer, which will be decided by ‘applause meter.’ If no team rings in after 60 seconds, the round is forfeited. The team with the most points at the end wins a prize.”

Ask a question from the index cards or from your pre-generated list of hard questions. Make sure that the groups discuss possible answers amongst themselves before ringing in with their answer — the best answers are those generated by a whole team, not an individual.

(If possible, it is great to have someone taking notes on all the answers that come up during the game, for distribution back to the group at a later date.)

Some Hard Questions on Marketing Junk Food to Kids (Add your own!)

Why is this problem something we as a community should pay attention to right now?

Don't companies have the right to advertise their products to consumers? It's not like these are illegal products for kids to consume.

Doesn't the problem of obesity and poor diets really start at home? Why do we need policies to fix what is a problem of poor parenting?

Isn't the obesity problem really about a lack of physical activity?

What do you think is the most important thing that should be done about marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to children and youth?

Activity

Strategizing: Plan Next Steps to Address Marketing

Objective:

After doing the brainstorming activity described earlier, you may have identified several policy areas to work on in your community. This activity will help you take your planning process to the next level by focusing on concrete next steps.

What you will need:

Pens

Copies of the developing strategy worksheet (in the next section)

To conduct the activity:

Divide into small groups and assign each group one policy to develop further. Have the groups work for half an hour to discuss and answer the questions on the developing strategy worksheet.

Have each group share their policy goal, target, supporters and next steps at the end of the time. Discuss any implications for the whole coalition.

Worksheets

These worksheets are designed to help formulate your thoughts on some key approaches you might take to limiting marketing in your community. Feel free to adapt the language here for your own purposes, of course.

- 1: Talking about food and beverage marketing targeting kids
- 2: Developing strategy worksheet
- 3: Sample letter to a merchant
- 4: Sample letter to an after-school program

Worksheet

When you get involved in an advocacy issue like limiting marketing to kids, you will want to talk about the issue with friends, neighbors, policymakers and many other people. Use this worksheet to organize your thoughts and identify your unique perspective on the issue. Use this as raw material for writing a letter to the editor, for speaking at a city council meeting, or just for talking to your friends about the issue. You can help convince others to get involved!

Talking About Food and Beverage Marketing That Targets Kids

When I saw the video “Fighting Junk Food Marketing to Kids,” I felt

because _____

I have a unique perspective on this problem because

What many people don’t realize about food industry marketing to kids is

One thing that could really make a difference to prevent obesity and make our community healthier is

I’m part of a coalition that is working to

Would you like to learn more about how you can get involved too?

Worksheet

This worksheet can help you and other coalition members focus your efforts and plan next steps for limiting marketing. Work together in a small group to discuss and answer the following strategy questions – the more specific you can be, the more useful this activity will be for you!

Developing Strategy

1. The Problem:

What aspect of food and beverage marketing to kids are we most concerned about in this community? *Try to narrow the overall problem of marketing to kids down to one or two concrete areas you can address locally – whether marketing at schools, proliferation of fast food outlets, or logos on vending machines on public property.*

2. The Solution:

What concrete policy change or changes would we like to see implemented to address this problem? *Remember, policy can be legislative or regulatory – such as a local ordinance limiting fast food outlets or a school district policy banning food and beverage marketing on campus – or voluntary, such as a merchant agreeing not to display promotions that use cartoon characters to sell unhealthy foods.*

3. The Target:

What person or body has the power to make the necessary change? *This may be an elected official, a school board, or the owner of a market.*

4. The Supporters:

Who can be mobilized to apply pressure for change? *Think about all the potential supporters in the community who could be convinced to get involved – parents, health care providers, teachers, youth, and more.*

5. The Next Steps:

What do we need to do next to move forward on this goal? *Next steps might involve doing more research on the policy goal (developing model language, etc.), approaching the target to gauge their response, or doing more community organizing to build your base of supporters.*

5a. Identify next steps that youth, parents, and community leaders can engage in:

Youth:

Parents:

Other community leaders:

6. The Outcome:

How will we know when we have succeeded? *Describe what will look different in your community as a result of your successful efforts in this area.*

6a. What evidence will you need to track in order to measure the change?

Worksheet

You can use this worksheet to ask a store owner or manager to commit to changing the store's food marketing practices. Customize for your own needs.

Sample Letter to a Merchant

Merchant's name

Store name

Address

City, ST Zip

Dear [name]:

We are part of a community coalition working to prevent illness and early death related to obesity, poor nutrition, and inactivity. We are working with [name of your organization or coalition leader] and represent [number of members] active, concerned residents. Many of us are regular customers at your store.

Did you know that X% of children in our community are overweight or at risk for overweight? The life-time toll of diabetes, heart disease and other illnesses for these children will be dire — unless we work together to reverse the trend.

That's why our coalition is working hard to change the local environment that makes it too easy for people to be unhealthy. In order to prevent disease and promote healthy living, we must make all our environments as healthy as possible.

We are particularly concerned about _____ [the prevalence of candy, the use of cartoon characters to sell unhealthy foods to children, the lack of fresh produce available locally, etc.].

As a major supplier of foods to the community, your store can take a leadership position on this issue.

We are asking you to please consider _____ [creating a candy-free check-out aisle, refraining from displaying promotions that feature cartoon characters on unhealthy foods, adding more fresh produce to your store, etc.].

This would help parents focus on providing the healthy options for their families, and would help address the crucial health problems in our community.

We will follow up with you in person on _____ [date] to discuss this further. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your name, organization, address, phone number, etc.

Worksheet

You can use this worksheet to ask your local Boys and Girls' Club, YMCA, or other after-school program to refuse to allow activities sponsored by food and beverage companies. Customize for your own needs, of course.

Sample Letter to an After-School Program

Director's name
Program/Facility name
Address
City, ST Zip

Dear [name]:

We are part of a community coalition working to make our community a place where our children can grow up with healthy food and safe places to be physically active. We are working with [name of your organization or coalition leader] and represent [number of members] active, concerned residents, many of whom have children in your program.

Did you know that X% of children in our community are overweight or at risk for overweight? These children are more likely to develop diabetes, heart disease and other illnesses — unless we work together to make changes.

Our coalition is particularly concerned about food and beverage marketing activities that target our children. These go way beyond flashy TV ads and try to reach kids everywhere they are — including in after-school programs.

We were very upset to learn about a recent trend of food and beverage companies coming to after-school programs to conduct new product taste tests, food giveaways, and other promotional activities. The industry claims these activities are fun for the kids, and a money-saver for the program — but in fact the company gets to use the kids as a free focus group for developing their new products — without the parents' knowledge or permission. Of course, the food and beverage products promoted are usually not healthy.

As a major provider of after-school care in our community, your program can take a leadership position on this issue.

We are asking you to please commit to rejecting all such activities suggested to you or sponsored by food and beverage companies.

This would support parents in helping their kids resist marketing efforts, and contribute to making our community a healthy place.

We will follow up with you in person on _____ {date} to discuss this further. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your name, organization, address, phone number, etc.

6

Talking Points and Q&A



6

Talking Points and Q&A

Food Marketing to Children Deemed Threat to Public Health by Institute of Medicine

On Tuesday December 6th the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies released their latest report, *Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity?* The final report is the “most comprehensive review ever undertaken on the influence of food marketing on the diets of children” according to committee chair J Michael McGinnis. The Strategic Alliance believes that the advertising of unhealthy foods and beverages to children should be eliminated entirely. We urge each of you to continuously monitor and respond to local media coverage that addresses children’s food and beverage advertising. The talking points below have been prepared for general guidance and can be used in several ways:

- As ideas when talking to reporters
- One or more of the talking points can be the basis of a letter to the editor or op-ed in response to your local coverage

We welcome you to share any letters or op-eds that get published with the rest of the Strategic Alliance membership by sending them to sana@preventioninstitute.org

Talking points in response to food marketing to children

- **Advertising has an impact on children’s food choices.** The IOM report concluded that there is “strong evidence that TV advertising of foods and beverages has a direct influence on what children choose to eat.”
- **Children’s advertising promotes unhealthy products.** The IOM determined the “the dominant focus of food and beverage advertising to children and youth is for products high in calories and low in nutrients and this is *sharply out of balance* with healthful diets”
- **Industry and government must act to turn around the diet-related health of children and youth.** Arresting the current trends in children’s diets and marketing require strong and active leadership and cooperation from *both* the public and private sectors. According to the IOM, “Industry resources and creativity must be harnessed on behalf of healthier diets for children”

- **The food and beverage industry should take the following concrete actions to demonstrate their commitment to children’s health:**
 1. Stop opposing policy aimed at restricting or eliminating unhealthy foods and beverages in schools
 2. Support a special tax on unhealthy foods and beverages so resources can be directed to improving children’s health
- **Industry self-regulation is not enough.** Marketing approaches have become too sophisticated for self-regulation to work — if it ever did. Despite the industry-supported Children’s Advertising Review Unit, “when you have a system where the judge is hired and paid for by the judged, you have a system that’s more self-preservation than self-regulation.”¹
- **Government should assess and, where necessary, regulate food and beverage advertising to children.** The Federal Trade Commission should accept responsibility for maintaining a watch on the food and beverage industry’s effect on children’s health. The FTC should institute strict and mandatory guidelines for products that can be marketed to children. Government also can offer industry incentives (i.e. tax breaks) to develop healthy products.

¹ *'Self-Regulation' of Food Marketing is More Like Self-Preservation, Says CSPI.* Statement of CSPI Nutrition Policy Director Margo G. Wootan. Available on <http://www.cspinet.org/new/200507141.html>

Rapid Response talking points in response to attacks on school soda bans

Recent articles in the Los Angeles Times have been critical of the successful efforts to ban soda sales in all California schools. Strategic Alliance firmly believes that soda bans in schools are a critical step in the right direction to battle the growing health problems associated with poor nutrition and physical activity. We urge you to write letters in response to the columns below and have prepared Talking Points to assist your efforts.

http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/california/la-me-parsons5feb05_0,1911300.column?coll=la-headlines-pe-california

http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/opinion/la-oe-olson2feb02_1,1574352.story

Sodas and schools don't mix

Soda simply doesn't belong in schools. Sodas have only become synonymous with schools through the marketing savvy of beverage companies. Schools are supposed to teach children life skills. If children are being taught about health in school, and then being sold things that aren't healthy there, it is not only a mixed message but also not in line with the mission of schools.

A school soda ban is not about taking away children's "choice"

School soda ban critics argue that teenagers in particular should be free to choose what they want to drink. And with soda bans they still can exercise this choice, only they are going to have to do outside of school. Children can only respond to the environments that we, as adults, create for them. Every student deserves to grow up in a world where the healthy choice is the easiest choice, both in school and in the neighborhoods they live in.

There are health implications associated with drinking soda

Critics argue that soda is not as dangerous as tobacco and thus should be allowed in schools. But there are documented health consequences attributed to the over-consumption of soda, including obesity, diabetes, osteoporosis (due to decreased calcium intake that has mirrored increased soda consumption) and cavities.

Rapid Response talking points— School Soda: Myths and Facts

These talking points were created by the Strategic Alliance to help students who want to create healthier school environments explain why they support the ban on selling sodas on school grounds. For more information, contact Sana Chehimi: sana@preventioninstitute.org, (510) 444-7738.

Some students complain about the soda ban because of freedom of choice and loss of revenue. But they don't understand the full impact of the issue. We support the ban. Here's why:

Schools should serve the interests of students, not of soda companies.

Soda simply doesn't belong in schools. Sodas have only become synonymous with schools through the aggressive marketing of beverage companies. Students can only respond to the environments that surround them. Every student deserves to grow up in a world where the healthy choice is the easiest choice, especially in our schools.

Selling soda sends a mixed message.

Schools are supposed to teach us life skills. If students are being taught about health in school, and then being sold things that aren't healthy there, it is not only a mixed message but also not in line with the mission of schools. Soda companies are turning the budget shortfalls faced by many schools into corporate marketing opportunities. That's not right, and that's why we support the law.

Sure, schools need money, but not from soda,

No one knows better than us that our schools need more money. But in our society we don't expect students to pay for their own education. That's what happens with vending machines. The money pumped into vending machines comes out of our pockets. We deserve more respect, not an education system that relies on the pennies from our pockets.

Drinking sugared soda simply isn't good for you.

The over-consumption of soda is associated with obesity, diabetes, osteoporosis (due to decreased calcium intake that has mirrored increased soda consumption), and cavities. There is no reason it should be available in schools. We should fuel students' school achievement with nourishing food and drink that strengthens and prepares our minds and bodies for learning, not with empty calories that harm our health.

We choose health.

Growing up healthy is challenging enough without having to fend off intrusive marketing for unhealthy products everywhere we turn. There are plenty of opportunities outside of

school to buy soda. Let's preserve at least one place where health matters and we mean what we say.

Concerns about loss of revenue are not well founded.

There are a number of myths about the profitability of selling soda and junk food in schools:

- **Vending contracts are not as lucrative as they may appear.** There aren't very many schools with million dollar vending contracts. On a per-student basis, school vending contracts typically raise just \$10 to \$20 per student per year. There are plenty of other ways to raise that money. Visit the ENACT School Environment Section on www.eatbettermovemore.org for a list of creative fundraising ideas.
- **Schools can raise funds by selling healthy foods.** The same companies that sell sodas and other junk foods also sell beverages that are allowed under the recently passed legislation. Many schools have reported either an increase or no change in revenue as a result of selling healthier items.
- **Soda companies are not giving money to schools.** The money pumped into vending machines comes out of the pockets of kids and their parents – and the companies take a cut of that money back to corporate headquarters.

On Wednesday August 17th the American Beverage Association announced a voluntary school beverage policy (http://www.ameribev.org/schools/vending_policy.asp). The Strategic Alliance believes that this policy is little more than a publicity stunt and urges each of you to monitor and respond to your local media coverage by writing a letter to the editor, op-ed or calling a local reporter. The talking points below have been prepared for general guidance and can be used in several ways:

- As ideas when talking to reporters
- One or more of the talking points can be the basis of a letter to the editor or op-ed in response to your local coverage

We welcome you to share any letters or op-eds that get published with the rest of the Strategic Alliance membership by sending them to sana@preventioninstitute.org.

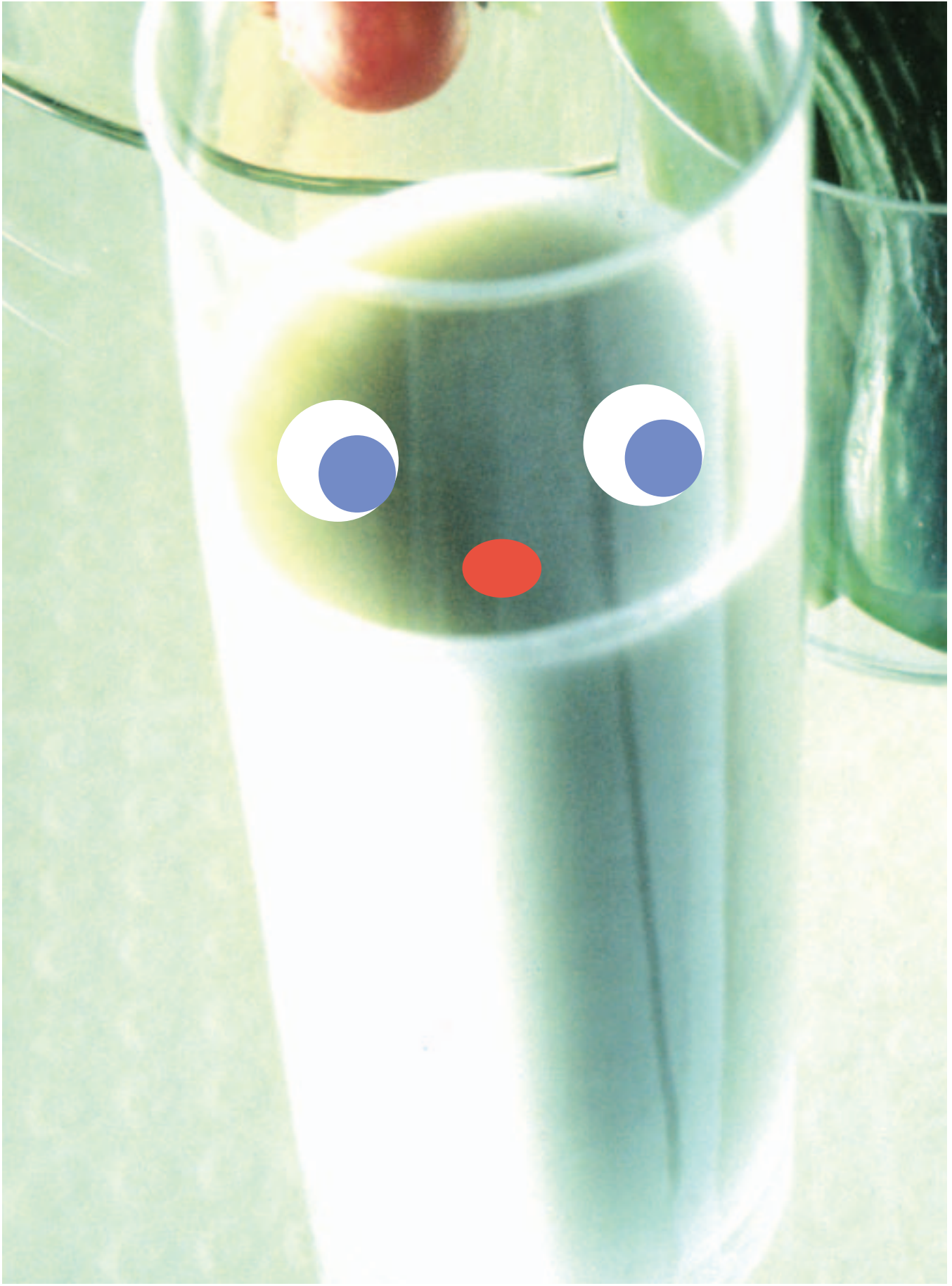
Talking points in response to the American Beverage Industry's announcement of their voluntary school beverage guideline

- **These guidelines are about PR, not students' health.** The industry has announced its new guidelines as political cover from much deserved criticism for their role in promoting unhealthy products. A growing movement of parents, school administrators and teachers are demanding that only healthy drinks be sold in schools. This is a threat to the soda industry.
- **These guidelines are weak.** Many school districts and state level polices, including California's SB677, are much more stringent and have been successfully implemented in many schools. San Francisco and Los Angeles school districts, for example, have banned all soda and other highly sweetened beverages.
- **These guidelines will have no effect on school beverage offerings.** They call for the elimination of soda sales in elementary schools, but elementary schools rarely have vending machines, making this a moot point. They only apply to vending machines, ignoring the many other places where beverages are sold in schools.
- **These guidelines are unenforceable.** The American Beverage Association, which authored the voluntary guidelines, is a trade association and does not directly sell beverages to schools. There is no enforcement or accountability mechanism in the new voluntary guidelines.

- **These guidelines are a distraction.** Schools are supposed to teach children life skills. If children are being taught about health in school, and then being sold things that aren't healthy there, it is not only a mixed message but also not in line with the mission of schools.

7

Resources



7

Resources

Strategic Alliance's Rapid Response Media Network

In partnership with Berkeley Media Studies Group, the Strategic Alliance designed the Rapid Response Media Network to help California advocates influence public discussion on nutrition, physical activity, and related chronic diseases. The Network provides the news analysis that advocates need to frame the events of the day to support effective local and statewide nutrition and physical activity policy efforts. Media coverage shapes not only the public's opinion but also that of policy makers; the Rapid Response Media Network offers an exciting opportunity to engage with local media and insert the environmental and policy perspective on nutrition and physical activity promotion into the public discourse. In addition to working with individual Rapid Response members, Strategic Alliance generates and distributes talking points and framing analysis to guide responses to major news stories and industry actions. To join, contact sana@preventioninstitute.org.

It's Child's Play: Advergaming and the Online Marketing of Food to Children

Kaiser J. Family Foundation

July 2006

The Kaiser Family Foundation released the first comprehensive analysis of the nature and scope of online food advertising to children to help inform policymakers, advocates and industry experts. The report, *It's Child's Play: Advergaming and the Online Marketing of Food to Children*, found that more than eight out of ten (85%) of the top food brands that target children through TV advertising also use branded websites to market to children online.

This report was released at a forum on Wednesday, July 19, 2006, in Washington, D.C., that included a roundtable discussion featuring food industry leaders, government health officials and consumer advocates. Download the report from <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/entmedia071906pkg.cfm>

Captive Kids: Selling Obesity at Schools
An Action Guide to Stop the Marketing of Unhealthy Foods and Beverages at School
California Project LEAN, 2006

This tool kit addresses the issue of marketing unhealthy foods and beverages on California school campuses. While geared toward California health advocates, this tool kit may also be useful to health advocates outside of California. *Captive Kids* includes information on:

- marketing to children and youth through schools;
- key steps to develop policy that addresses marketing at schools;
- answers to legal questions; and
- talking points, case studies, fact sheets, additional resources and more.

You can download the toolkit from <http://www.californiaprojectlean.org/>
or call California Project LEAN at 916-552-9107.

Raising Media Savvy Kids: A Common Sense Toolkit
Common Sense Media, 2005

This parent education and engagement toolkit provides suggestions and templates for engaging communities in media and kids' issues, including everything you need to facilitate a one-hour, interactive parent education workshop. Materials include:

- ideas on how to plan, promote, and evaluate a workshop;
- a workshop script with step-by-step instructions;
- PowerPoint slides;
- an educational DVD;
- handouts and magnets.

Two toolkits are available; one for parents of children 5 years old and younger, and the other for parents of elementary- and middle school-age children. Each toolkit is available for \$50, not including sales tax (for California residents only) and shipping and handling. For more information, see: http://www.common sense media .org/resources/community_toolkits/kids.php

Out of Balance

Consumers Union and CPEHN (California Pan-Ethnic Health Network)

September 2005

This report documents how money spent to advertise foods including soda, candy, snacks and fast foods dwarfs the dollars spent to promote the California and Federal “5 A Day” programs to encourage eating vegetables and fruits. The report, written by Consumers Union, the nonprofit publisher of *Consumer Reports*, and CPEHN, concludes that this imbalance is one of the key factors contributing to unhealthy dietary trends in the United States that have led to the obesity crisis. Download the report from <http://www.cpehn.org/policybriefs.php>

***Appetite for Profit* by Michelle Simon, Nation Books**

forthcoming in October 2006

The major food companies are currently engaged in a massive public relations campaign. These companies, including McDonald’s, Coca-Cola, Kraft, and General Mills, are on the defensive for contributing to America’s growing epidemic related to poor nutrition, especially among children. In response, they are taking a public stance of being “part of the solution” in numerous ways, all the while lobbying against sound nutrition policies. The book explains how to fight back by offering reliable resources. Readers will learn how to spot the PR, how to not be fooled, and how to organize, for example, to improve school food.

for more information on
Fighting Junk Food Marketing to Kids
contact:



www.bmsg.org

Berkeley Media Studies Group
2140 Shattuck Ave, Suite 804
Berkeley CA 94704
510.204.9700



Food and beverage companies spend billions of dollars each year to aggressively market unhealthy foods to children.

This video shows what marketing is, how the food industry targets kids, and what local communities can do to fight back.

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