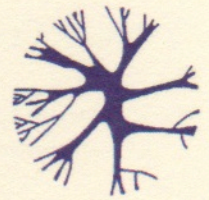


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Food Marketing to Youth

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with responses by

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Food Marketing to Youth: Pervasive, Powerful, and Pernicious

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1. Food Marketing Reaches Youth Where They Live, Study, and Play

Childhood obesity is the most pressing public health problem in the U.S. today. The prevalence of obesity has more than tripled among children in the past three decades, and now one-third of American children are overweight or obese (Ogden, Carroll, Kit, & Flegal, 2012). At no other point in history have so many children suffered from obesity-related diseases and the risk of a shorter lifespan than that of their parents. The relatively sudden onset and steep increase in childhood obesity suggests that one key cause of the problem is the rapid deterioration of the nutrition environment over the past several decades (Ogden & Carroll, 2010). Our “obesogenic” environment overwhelms people with nutrient-poor, calorie-dense foods, which are more accessible and less expensive than healthier, nutrient-dense choices, such as fruits and vegetables (Brownell & Horgen, 2004).

* * *

A key aspect of the obesogenic environment is omnipresent food marketing directed at youth (Harris, Pomeranz, Lobstein, & Brownell, 2009). In 2009, companies spent more than \$1.79 billion to promote food directly to children and teens (Federal Trade Commission, 2012). If this money were devoted to encouraging children to eat fruits and vegetables, food marketing might hold a valuable place in our society. Yet, while the food industry has made efforts to improve the quality of the products marketed to children in recent years (PR Newswire, 2012; The Associated Press, 2011) and inflation-adjusted advertising expenditures have decreased since 2006 (Federal Trade Commission, 2012), food advertising in youth-oriented media still predominantly promotes the least-healthy products one can buy: candy, soda, fast food,

and sugared cereal (Powell, Schermbeck, Szczypka, Chaloupka, & Braunschweig, 2011b).

While television advertising remains central to most marketing strategies, outlets such as the Internet, radio, video games, cell phones, social media, and word-of-mouth are increasingly used by marketers to reach children (Federal Trade Commission, 2008). The average child views 12.8 food ads per day, or roughly 4,700 a year, on television alone (Dembek, Harris, & Schwartz, 2012). A generation ago, the majority of the food advertisements children saw were viewed during a few hours on Saturday morning cartoons. Today, television designed specifically for children is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week through cable channels such as the Disney Channel, Nickelodeon, and Cartoon Network. This creates the opportunity to not only reach youth more frequently through television, but also to use the characters and television show brands to market to children. For example, characters, such as SpongeBob, Dora the Explorer, and the Disney princesses, are licensed and used for in-store packaging and promotion of food products.

The Internet provides a number of new ways to reach children with food marketing. First, the websites that are associated with the cable channels (e.g., Nickelodeon, Disney) have food banner ads and commercials embedded into most of their content (Harris, Schwartz, & Brownell, 2009, 2011; Harris, Schwartz, & Brownell, 2010b). Second, food companies themselves maintain websites that appeal to children (Harris, Schwartz, et al., 2009, 2011; Harris et al., 2010b). In 2010, McDonald's had 13 different websites, some of which (Happymeal.com, Ronald.com) are clearly targeted at very young children (Harris et al., 2010b). Cereal company websites are leaders in creating so-called “advergames,” which are interactive

games that children can play online where characters and images from the brand are integrated into the game (Harris, Schwartz, et al., 2009).

Outside of the home, children and teens are exposed to food marketing through community venues. Food-company billboards and local sponsorship events in communities familiarize children with unhealthy products. Aggressive child-directed food marketing also occurs in retail settings. Packaging and product displays in stores and restaurants are specifically designed to attract children (Harris, Schwartz, et al., 2009). Popular strategies to get children's attention include offering prizes, featuring licensed characters, and promoting entertainment tie-ins (Federal Trade Commission, 2008; Harris, Schwartz, & Brownell, 2010a). In 2009, fast food restaurants spent \$393 million on premiums, which includes toys to be included with kids' meals (Federal Trade Commission, 2012).

Schools, where children are a captive audience, are replete with food advertising (Institute of Medicine, 2006). In 2009, the food industry spent \$149 million to promote products in schools (Federal Trade Commission, 2012). A national survey found that two out of three schools have on-site advertising for at least one company marketing calorie-rich, nutrient-poor foods, reaching up to 30 million students every day (Molnar, Garcia, Boninger, & Merrill, 2008).

Some companies, such as Krispy Kreme donuts, have fundraising kits that make it easy for parents to sell their product on school grounds. Other companies create branded incentive programs for scholastic

achievement, providing teachers with "reward" coupons for free or discounted food products such as candy or pizza to give to students in class. One of the most controversial school-based marketing strategies is the "pouring rights contract" that the large soft drink companies have created for schools (Brownell & Horgen, 2004). In exchange for a percentage of sales revenue, all the beverages sold on school grounds must be from one beverage company. These contracts may also include branded "gifts" such as sports equipment, scoreboards, and corporate-sponsored curricula (Government Accountability Office (US), 2005; Institute of Medicine, 2006; Molnar et al., 2008).

In sum, across all media outlets and environments, nutrient-poor, calorie-dense products predominate in food marketing targeted at children (Harris, Pomeranz, et al., 2009; Institute of Medicine, 2006; Powell, Schermbeck, Szczypka, Chaloupka, & Braunschweig, 2011a; Powell, Szczypka, Chaloupka, & Braunschweig, 2007). In contrast, healthy food items are almost never advertised to children. In many cases, food marketers promote products high in sugar, fat, and sodium to children more often than they do to adults (Harris, Schwartz, et al., 2009, 2011; Harris et al., 2010b). Young children especially have an inherent vulnerability to commercials as they are unable to recognize the persuasive intent of advertising (Harris & Graff, 2011). Thus, it is not surprising that child-targeted advertising is highly effective at influencing young people's food choices, which ultimately contributes to the obesity crisis.

2. Effects of Food Advertising on Children

One way to analyze the impact of food advertising on children is to distinguish the intended from unintended effects of exposure. For example, a cereal ad may have the intended effect of generating product purchase requests and increasing product sales, but it may also contribute to unintended outcomes such as misperceptions about proper nutritional habits, parent-child conflict when purchase requests by youngsters are rejected, or weight gain and ultimately obesity if unhealthy products are consumed in abundance. We use this framework to help organize our survey of the evidence regarding the effects of food marketing on children.

A. Intended effects

Advertisers are interested in outcomes such as viewers' recall of the product, their attitude toward the product, and—depending upon the age of the child—either purchase-influence attempts or actual purchase of the product. Although some commercial campaigns certainly are more successful than others, studies have documented the general effectiveness of food advertising across all of these areas.

Extensive research shows that more than half of the children in most studies recall products they have seen advertised quite readily following viewing (Kunkel & Castonguay, 2012). For example, one

experiment demonstrated that more than half of four to six year olds had unaided recall of a fictional cereal product they had never heard of after watching a short television commercial for it. When participants were shown the cereal box featured in the ad, as might occur at the supermarket, recall increased to 80% of the children in the study (Macklin, 1994). Recall of ads is typically enhanced when advertisers employ certain tactics such as the use of licensed characters that are well-known and liked by children.

Similarly, research clearly establishes that food advertising is highly effective at persuading children to like, prefer, and request the advertised product. Typical of studies in this area, researchers at Stanford University assigned children to one of two treatment groups as part of a television-viewing project. The first group watched two cartoons separated by 2.5 minutes of short, educational messages, while the second group watched the same two cartoons separated by 2.5 minutes of advertising. After viewing, children in the second group preferred the advertised brand to a comparable product with similar packaging, even when the advertised brand (in this case, a donut) was unfamiliar and the alternative was a local favorite (Borzekowski & Robinson, 2001). Another study showed similar effects for both a fictional cereal (Sprinkle Spangles) and a product unfamiliar to most children, Tang (an orange juice drink powder) (Chernin, 2008).

Survey research with parents also documents the power of child-targeted food marketing. In one study, mothers of 250 children aged 3 to 11 kept detailed diaries for four weeks tracking the amount of television their child watched, and also recorded their child's requests for specific food products. The researchers found a significant relationship between the time spent watching TV and the number of requests for both cereal and candy (Isler, Popper, & Ward, 1987).

B. The power of branding

"Branding" of products is an important element of the advertising process that assists children's recall and enhances persuasive effects (Harris, Brownell, & Bargh, 2009). The use of jingles, logos, slogans, and spokes-characters such as Tony the Tiger or Chester Cheeto reinforce the branded product every time an ad is viewed. This helps to explain why the amount of television a child watches is positively associated with their ability to identify product brands (Valkenburg & Buijzen, 2005) and their consumption of advertised brand food products (Buijzen, Schuurman, & Bomhof, 2008).

A clever study offers a powerful demonstration of branding effects. Researchers provided identical foods to children three to five years old, but half of the participants received the item in McDonald's packaging while the other half were served the food in plain wrappers (Robinson, Borzekowski, Matheson, & Kraemer, 2007). For all food items tested, including carrots, which McDonalds does not even offer, the children preferred the taste and liked the product better when it was presented to them as branded than when it was not.

In recent years, children's use of media technologies has diversified beyond television and now encompasses "surfing" on the Internet and playing interactive games online at very young ages. As this migration has occurred, food marketers have followed closely behind and today employ a wide range of innovative advertising approaches in the online environment.

One of the most common tactics is for a food marketer to establish a website "just for kids" that features interactive games (or so-called *advergames*) that immerse children in a product-oriented environment. An early version of such a game was "Slam Dunk Oreos," a basketball simulation where players shoot cookies through a hoop, while a more recent example involves a treasure hunt game in which players search for The Golden Pouch as part of Capri Sun's multimedia marketing campaign known as "Respect the Pouch," which promotes its sugared beverage products served in disposable pouch containers.

Recent research shows that these new tactics are at least as effective at persuading children as television commercials, and perhaps even more so given the extended amounts of time many young people spend visiting online game sites. One large-scale study of five- to eight-year old children (N=295) compared children who played a Fruit Loops *advergame* with a control group that had no such exposure. The researchers found that *advergame* playing led children to prefer Fruit Loops over other cereal choices and also to prefer cereal to other food categories (Mallinckrodt & Mizerski, 2007).

Similarly, another recent experiment compared snacking behavior following time spent playing *advergames* for Oreo cookies, Pop Tarts, or Dole fruits and vegetables. Children who played the Pop Tarts and Oreos *advergames* ate 56% more snack foods than the children playing the Dole games. While the children playing the Dole games increased their fruit and vegetable consumption, they did not decrease their unhealthy snacking. The effects were

consistent across the entire age range of children studied, from 7 to 12 years old (Harris, Speers, Schwartz, & Brownell, 2011).

In sum, scientific research has established quite firmly the clear if unremarkable conclusion that food advertising directed to children works exactly as intended. That finding, coupled with the evidence that most foods promoted to children are unhealthy when consumed on a regular basis (U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010) provides the foundational explanation about how and why food marketing contributes to the childhood obesity crisis.

C. Unintended effects

Most of the research reported above examines the effects of individual advertising messages. Yet given children's extensive time spent with media (over three hours per day for ages 8 and under and over seven hours per day for 8 to 18 year olds) (Common Sense Media, 2011; Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010), we know that there are also cumulative effects that occur as the result of exposure to thousands of marketing messages on an annual basis. Over time, children's frequent exposure to advertisements for high-calorie, low-nutrient food products seems to play a role in normalizing the perception that such foods are an appropriate part of a basic diet, undercutting lessons about proper nutrition.

Numerous studies show that heavy exposure to televised food advertising is associated with nutritional misperceptions; that is, the greater the exposure to food advertising, the greater the likelihood that unhealthy items will be judged as healthy and nutritious (Prevention Institute, 2008a; Signorielli & Staples, 1997; Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, 2012). This finding is particularly problematic because eating habits formed during childhood often persist throughout life (Birch & Anzman, 2010).

The more pernicious effect of children's exposure to food marketing messages is its role in fueling the obesity epidemic. More than 100 studies have examined the linkage between TV viewing and obesity since a seminal report by Dietz and Gortmaker in 1985 entitled "*Do We Fatten our Children at the TV Set?*" The finding that time spent watching television is highly correlated with overweight and obesity was initially thought to be explained by the "couch potato" hypothesis; that is, children who are heavy TV viewers must devote insufficient time to exercise because their eyes are too often glued to the screen.

While overall decreasing levels of physical activity among youth is undoubtedly a contributing factor to the obesity crisis, more recent evidence increasingly points toward food advertising as the primary causal factor that accounts for the positive relationship between television watching and obesity rates. For example, many studies find no significant difference in physical activity levels for high and low TV users, suggesting that screen time is not typically displacing time devoted to exercise. In addition, other studies that control statistically for amount of physical activity in examining the relationship between screen time and obesity still find a significant correlation (Hingle & Kunkel, in press).

Perhaps the most telling evidence is provided by a study that separates time spent watching television into two categories, one with and one without commercial advertisements included (Zimmerman & Bell, 2010). The findings were clear: Time spent viewing commercial television was significantly correlated with children's Body Mass Index (BMI), while time watching non-commercial television was not. This outcome clearly supports the theory that it is children's exposure to food commercials that accounts for the relationship between TV use and weight status.

D. Can't parents just say no?

In an ideal world, parents would refuse children's requests to purchase unhealthy foods, negating much of the impact of advertising. In practice, however, parents have a high rate of yielding to children's requests (O'Dougherty, Story, & Stang, 2006; Wilson & Wood, 2004), perhaps in part because of their sheer volume. Another reason why parents may agree to purchase obesogenic foods their children request is because the companies are vigorously promoting these foods as healthy, with many products marketed to children including health claims on the packaging. Sugared cereals are labeled "whole grain" and fruit flavored drinks that contain nothing but sugar, water, and vitamin supplements as "provides 100% Vitamin C." A recent study of parents found that most misinterpret these nutrition-related claims and believe products are healthier than they are (Harris, Thompson, Schwartz, & Brownell, 2011).

In addition, research is beginning to reveal how food marketing can undermine parents' efforts at promoting healthy diets in their children. In one novel study, three- to eight-year old children watched a cartoon program with a McDonald's ad embedded in it. Half of the children saw an ad for a relatively healthy

food item (Apple Dippers), while the other half saw an ad for an unhealthy product (French fries). After viewing, each child was offered a coupon for one of these two items. In a unique twist, the researchers assigned parents a script in which they prompted their child to select the healthier food choice, just as the coupon offer was made. The researchers found that the commercial the child viewed was twice as powerful as the parental intervention in influencing the child's product selection (Ferguson, Munoz, & Medrano, 2011).

While more research is needed to fully understand the deleterious effects of food marketing on parents' efforts to have their children eat healthfully, the impressive influence that food marketing has on youth is clear. Furthermore, food marketing viewed during childhood can exert long-term impacts on children's preferences and diets into adulthood (Harris & Bargh, 2009), underscoring the importance of limiting children's exposure to unhealthy food advertising from as early an age as possible.

One of the best tactics parents can use to counteract the influence of food marketing is to restrict how much television their children watch. Removing television sets from children's bedrooms can be especially impactful as children with televisions in their rooms see an average of 4.6 more hours per week of television than children who do not (Dennison, Erb, & Jenkins, 2002).

E. Summary of the research

The most definitive analysis of research in this realm was conducted by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies of Science (Institute of Medicine, 2006). The IOM conducted a systematic review of all existing evidence on the impact of food marketing on children, with a panel of 16 scientific experts evaluating the strength of the methods and findings from each of a total of 123 empirical studies. Among the key conclusions of the IOM report were that (a) there is strong evidence that advertising influences the short-term food consumption of children 2 to 11 years of age; (b) there is moderate evidence that advertising influences the regular diet of children 2 to 5 years and weak evidence (i.e., more studies are needed) that it influences children 6 to 11 years of age; and (c) there is strong evidence that exposure to advertising is associated with adiposity in children 2 to 11 years and teens 12 to 18 years of age.

While acknowledging that food marketing is only one of multiple factors that contribute to childhood obesity, the report concluded that "food and beverage marketing practices geared to children and youth are out of balance with healthful diets, and contribute to an environment that puts their health at risk" (Institute of Medicine, 2006). Given the clear threat to child health posed by unhealthy food marketing messages, there is an urgent need to pursue steps to address this problem.

3. Reversing the Tide: Policies to Combat Unhealthy Food Marketing to Children

In response to the growth of evidence indicating the role that food marketing plays in the childhood obesity crisis, public health advocates have called for reform. The food industry has responded with an effort to self-regulate its food marketing practices, known as the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI), created in 2006 by the Better Business Bureau.

With participation from more than a dozen of the nation's leading food conglomerates, the CFBAI is a pledge program whereby each company offers a commitment to advertise to children only foods that meet its own unique nutritional criteria for defining healthful products. Over the last few years, the CFBAI has encouraged more companies to participate, and has made progress in improving the strength of the compa-

nies' pledges to limit marketing of unhealthy foods to children under 12 years old.

At its inception, CFBAI allowed each company to define its own "better for you" nutritional standards. As a result, many companies wrote their standards in such a way that the majority of their existing child-directed products would be allowed, including those of relatively poor nutritional value. The CFBAI has addressed this problem, creating a uniform set of nutrition criteria for all of the companies that will go into effect in 2014. Similar progress has occurred in the way CFBAI members have strengthened the criteria used to define the media venues to which self-regulation will apply. Now, in addition to television advertising on children's programs, self-regulation will encompass traditional, digital, and social media that attract

substantial child audiences, as well as product placement in movies geared toward children under 12 (Better Business Bureau Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative, 2011a).

Because food marketing is so pervasive, however, the CFBAI standards miss a lot of marketing tactics, most notably product packaging and point-of-sale promotions (Better Business Bureau Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative, 2011b). The definition of child-directed television also poses problems because the CFBAI does not cover general-audience advertising on family shows. For example, the Charlie Brown Christmas Special is not covered by CFBAI pledges even though over 100,000 children watch it (Harris & Graff, 2011). Similarly, child-directed websites are defined so narrowly that even the website Happymeal.com is not covered (Harris, Speers, et al., 2011). Finally, while CFBAI covers marketing in elementary schools, major components of marketing are exempt, including food and beverage displays, charitable fundraising activities, charitable donations, and public service messaging sponsored by food companies (Better Business Bureau Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative, 2011b).

Despite the merits of industry self-regulation, research demonstrates that the nutritional quality of foods advertised to children has not improved significantly since the CFBAI standards went into effect (Kunkel, McKinley, & Wright, 2009; Powell et al., 2011a). Thus, in 2011, a federal government Interagency Working Group (IWG) proposed voluntary nutrition and marketing standards to serve as a benchmark for the industry to follow (Interagency Working Group, 2011). These proposed standards are more rigorous than those of the CFBAI in three important ways. First, the IWG recommends that the food industry include older children and adolescents ages 12 to 17 in all applicable protections. Second, the IWG expands CFBAI's definitions of "marketing to children" so that more avenues used for promotion of unhealthy foods are covered (Interagency Working Group, 2011). And finally, the IWG recommends stricter nutrition standards than those set by the CFBAI. IWG recommends the presence of "food groups to encourage" and only products meeting strict requirements for sodium, saturated fat, and sugar would be allowed in advertising to children (Interagency Working Group, 2011).

The industry response to the IWG proposals has been quite critical (Better Business Bureau Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative, 2011b). One

concern is that broadening the definition of child-directed marketing to include more television shows and websites would interfere with advertisers' efforts to reach adults. This argument illustrates that, to some extent, how effectively we are able to create a safe environment for our children depends on how much our society is willing to limit commercial marketing to adults. A second industry objection is that the nutrition standards are too strict and thus product taste would be compromised. An obvious solution to that concern, however, is for the food companies to keep the products the same, but simply to stop marketing them to children. Due to strong industry opposition, it appears doubtful that the federal IWG guidelines will be adopted as proposed (U.S. Library of Congress, 2012).

A. Local policies to limit food marketing to children

Given the lack of efforts by federal policy-makers to curtail unhealthy food marketing to children, public health advocates have increasingly focused instead on state and local policies. In-school marketing regulations can be implemented at the state, county, city, and school-district level (United States General Accounting Office, 2000).

San Francisco's Commercial-Free Schools Act is an example of a school-district level policy. It prohibits exclusive agreements with food companies, bans branded teaching materials, and requires all corporate sponsorships to be approved by the Board of Education ("San Francisco Commercial-Free Schools Act (as amended), prohibiting exclusive vendor contracts, brand names, and tobacco subsidiary food products," 1999). Seattle Public Schools similarly prohibit logos on all school-district property including vending machines and playing fields (California Project LEAN, 2007).

All school districts that participate in federal food programs, such as the National School Lunch Program, must have a written School Wellness Policy (Schwartz et al., 2009) and must include parents in the policy-writing process. Well-written policies can be effective at eliminating or preventing marketing in schools. These policies have the power to prohibit: (a) the sale and advertisement of brand-name foods on school property, including curricula, food containers, vending machines, sports gear, and venues; (b) the sale of branded items, such as Sonic's Limeades for Learning or General Mills' Box Tops for Education, at fundraisers; (c) incentive programs, such as Pizza Hut

BOOK IT!, which rewards reading with pizza; and (d) direct advertising on bus radio, in-school TV, and school websites (Berkeley Media Studies Group, 2006; Center for Science in the Public Interest, 2012; Harris & Graff, 2011).

At the community level, there are strategies to limit children's exposure to marketing. Detroit, Palm Desert, and San Francisco restrict how close certain food establishments and vendors can operate to areas where children often spend time, such as playgrounds and schools (Prevention Institute, 2008a, 2008b, 2011). A proposed bill in Mississippi would prohibit the outdoor advertising of foods and beverages sold at fast food restaurants near certain places, including underperforming schools (Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, 2012). There are a number of other strategies that can be used at the community level, including forcing stores and restaurants to place only healthy foods at children's eye level, restricting the types of foods that can be marketed in retail establishments, and storing unhealthy products, such as candy, behind the counter (Berkeley Media Studies Group, 2006). Federal, state, and local governments consider new policies every year, and the Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity maintains a current online legislative database that can be used to track bills related to food marketing (Yale University Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, 2012).

B. International efforts to address the problem

The epidemic of childhood obesity is being experienced not only in the U.S., but also in many developed countries around the world (OECD, 2013). In 2004, the World Health Organization (WHO) called on governments to act to reduce children's exposure to marketing messages for unhealthy foods (Hawkes, 2004). In a related development, an international group of over 200 public health and marketing experts developed the "Sydney Principles" to help guide government and industry in efforts to limit junk food marketing to children (Swinburn et al., 2008). A more detailed set of recommendations were subsequently devised by a task force of the International Association for the Study of Obesity, in collaboration with Consumers International, a global federation of consumer advocacy groups with members in 115 countries (International Association for the Study of Obesity & Consumers International, 2008). Both of these efforts help to provide a template for policymaking to limit junk food advertising to youth. Among the challenges in this realm is effective line-

drawing between healthy and unhealthy food items, as well as avoiding unreasonable restrictions on food marketing targeted at adult audiences.

A survey of the global regulatory environment reveals a growing number of efforts to limit food marketing to children. As of 2006, 39 countries maintained some form of government restriction or industry self-regulation of food marketing to youth (Hawkes, 2007). For example, the Canadian province of Quebec and the country of Sweden have long banned all forms of advertising to children under age 12–13, while the United Kingdom recently prohibited commercials for unhealthy foods high in fats, salt, and sugar on television programs with a significant proportion of child-viewers in the audience (Harris, Brownell, & Bargh, 2009). It is too soon to evaluate the efficacy of efforts such as the UK regulation, and it remains to be seen whether it might serve as a model for the U.S. and other countries to follow (Darwin, 2009).

In sum, food marketing directed at children is ubiquitous and effective, and hence is a significant contributor to childhood obesity both in the U.S. and other countries. Parents and community leaders must become educated about the harmful effects of food marketing on children and the pervasiveness of such marketing in the current environment. At present, state and local policies are the most promising avenues for enacting meaningful change in the U.S. Self-regulatory efforts by the food industry to date have been insufficient to achieve meaningful reform, and the likelihood of future federal action to regulate child-directed advertising remains uncertain. Interested parents can advocate for and influence the content of district wellness policies to improve the school environment by restricting food marketing permitted in schools and on school buses. Local governments can help parents by limiting where food products may be advertised outdoors. Parents are already tasked with teaching their children healthy eating habits and can take some steps to improve the home food environment. But it will be difficult to succeed in stemming the epidemic of childhood obesity if the food industry is allowed to continue to aggressively promote unhealthy products to youth, which undermines the efforts of parents and is a corrosive factor jeopardizing public health.

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