

Ensure junk food marketing practices “Don't sell us short™” by encouraging unhealthy eating in the next generation

From the moment children in [STATE] board the school bus to the moment they're dropped off at home, kids are bombarded by advertisements and other marketing, most of which encourage our children to consume soda pop, candy, and other junk food while they're at school...away from their parents.

That worries parents and community leaders. With childhood unhealthy weight gain a major concern for families and communities across [STATE], we must do more to protect children from the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages in our schools. **Kids' health and wellness is at stake, and right now, kids, as well as their parents and communities, are being sold short by unhealthy food and beverage marketing in schools.**

But something can be done, and you're in a unique position to help. You can limit what and how foods are marketed to children in our local schools. Need convincing? Here are the facts:

- Rates of overweight and obese children have tripled since 1980, and now, nearly one in three children are heavier than they should be¹. This puts our kids at risk for serious health problems.
- The thing is, children are actually strong consumers, and companies know that. Children spend more than \$180 billion a year and influence their parents' spending to the tune of another \$200 billion a year.²
- One of the key ways marketers reach children is on school property, when parents have less oversight and are not there to guide their children's food choices. Food and beverage companies spent at least \$149 million marketing to children in the school environment in 2009, according to the Federal Trade Commission.³
- Food and beverage companies use many different strategies to target children in school, including advertising and marketing on school property through television, radio, posters, print advertising, scoreboards, and on buses; exclusive agreements to sell products from a particular manufacturer (e.g., exclusive soft drink contracts); sponsorship of school programs and events; branded educational materials; company-sponsored fundraising programs; and free samples and coupon giveaways.⁴
- While not all parents know their kids are being targeted by junk food advertising, the ones that do said they were as concerned about junk food marketing to kids as they were about alcohol and tobacco in the media.⁵

We're all looking to ensure a good future for our children—because we know they *are* the future of our community. They deserve to learn and grow in safe schools—that includes being free from the harmful influence of unhealthy food and beverage advertising and marketing. You can help to make sure that's the case. Please support legislation that eliminates junk food marketing in schools and sets children on a path to a lifetime of healthy living. **Together with one voice, let's ensure that junk food marketing practices “Don't sell us short™!”**



Food and beverage companies spent at least \$149 million marketing to children in the school environment in 2009, according to the Federal Trade Commission.

SOURCES

¹ Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Curtin LR, et al. 2010. "Prevalence of High Body Mass Index in US Children and Adolescents, 2007–2008." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 3: 242–249.

² Quart A, *Branded: The Buying and Selling of Teenagers*. Cambridge, MA. Perseus. 2003.

³ Federal Trade Commission [FTC] (2008, July). *Marketing food to children and adolescents: A review of industry expenditures, activities, and self-regulation*. A report to Congress.

⁴ Molnar A, Boninger F, Wilkinson G, Fogarty J, and Geary S. *Effectively Embedded: Schools and the Machinery of Modern Marketing – The Thirteenth Annual Report on Schoolhouse Commercializing Trends: 2009-2010*. Commercialism in Education Research Unit, National Education Policy Center, 2010. P. 2–6.

⁵ Harris, Jennifer L., Frances Fleming Milici, Vishnudas Sarda, and Marlene B. Schwartz. *Food Marketing to Children and Adolescents: What Do Parents Think?* Rep. Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity, Oct. 2012. Web. 26 Nov. 2013.