



Submission to the Review of the AANA Code for Advertising to Children, November 2007

Young Media Australia welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to this review.

This submission has been prepared for Young Media Australia by Associate Prof. Elizabeth Handsley (Vice President) and Barbara Biggins OAM (Hon CEO) on behalf of the Board of the Australian Council on Children and the Media (trading as Young Media Australia (YMA)). For further information, please contact Barbara Biggins at above address.

Elizabeth Handsley is a specialist in media law as it relates to children, and Barbara Biggins is CEO of YMA, and a former member of the Children's Program Committee of the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal, with 9 years of experience in using the CTS in the assessment of programs for the C and P quotas.

This submission is also supported by the national community organisation Kf2bK: Kids Free to Be Kids.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Young Media Australia (YMA) is the trading name of the Australian Council on Children and the Media (ACCM). The ACCM is a not-for-profit national community organisation structured as a company limited by guarantee. The ACCM has a national Board of Directors representing the states and territories of Australia, and has a national membership of organisations and individuals who support the aims of the organisation, viz to stimulate and maintain public interest in the provision of suitable films and television programs for children.
2. The ACCM has a comprehensive organisational membership which includes ECA (Early Childhood Australia (formerly AECA Australian Early Childhood Association)), ACSSO (Australian Council of State Schools Organisations), AHISA (Association of Heads of Independent Schools of Australia), AEU (Australian Education Union), SAPPA (South Australian Primary Principals Association), Federation of NSW P&C (Parents & Citizens), and the Mothers' Union in Australia. Our members have a special interest and/ or expertise in media issues and children.
3. Young Media Australia's mission is to promote a quality media environment for Australian children and to raise community awareness of children's needs in relation to the media.

4. YMA's core activities include the collection of research and information about the impact of media on children's development, and advocacy for the needs and interests of children in relation to the media.
5. Young Media Australia's core services include
 - a 24/7 freecall helpline 1800 700 357,
 - a website www.youngmedia.org.au containing a wealth of media-related information (attracting over 1000 visits per day),
 - a popular child-friendly movie review service (*Know before you go*),
 - the development of parent media awareness materials, and
 - making submissions, and participating in media interviews, related to media regulation.

B. THE BASIS FOR YMA's SUBMISSION

Young Media Australia bases its submission on the following principles:

1. *The International Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 17*, viz

"Parties recognise the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. To this end, States Parties shall: ...

(e) Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being, bearing in mind the provisions of Article 13 and 18."

Article 13, paraphrased, supports the rights of children to seek and receive information and ideas of all kinds, subject to restrictions to protect public health .

Article 18, paraphrased, supports parents in their primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of their children, but that institutions will support parents in this role,

2. *Objectives b), h), i) and j) from the Broadcasting Services Act, s 3*

- (b) to provide a regulatory environment that will facilitate the development of a broadcasting industry in Australia that is efficient, competitive and responsive to audience needs; and
- (h) to encourage providers of broadcasting services to respect community standards in the provision of program material; and
- (i) to encourage the provision of means for addressing complaints about broadcasting services; and
- (j) to ensure that providers of broadcasting services place a high priority on the protection of children from exposure to program material which may be harmful to them ...

While these objectives, in the Act, are not binding on the AANA, YMA considers it essential that the regulatory system as a whole be as seamless and harmonious as possible. This is not only to ensure its effective operation, but to minimise the likelihood of consumers becoming confused. All aspects of advertising regulation for the protection of children, governmental and self-regulatory alike, rely heavily on the general public to identify and complain about breaches. Therefore the system as a whole needs to be one that makes

sense to consumers, and does not have differences and distinctions buried in the sub-text, as might be the case if there were contrasting objectives. For these reasons YMA supports the development of the AANA Code in harmony with the objectives of the government regulations.

3. *The Policy Guidelines on Children's Television developed by the Australian Council for Children and the Media.*

4. *YMA's ongoing collection and review of the research literature*

In the preparation of this submission, YMA has

- reviewed the research literature as it relates to the impact of media on children. This is an ongoing activity of YMA.
- Surveyed parents to determine their attitudes to aspects of advertising to children. A summary of these recent findings can be found at Appendix 4.

5. *YMA's ongoing involvement in Standards and Codes as they impact on children*

In the preparation of this submission, YMA has

- relied on its experience and active involvement in the use and maintenance of children's TV standards, and in the Codes of practice for Free to Air TV

C. SUMMARY COMMENTS

1. International research on advertising and children offers many reliable insights that must be utilized in this review.

YMA has for many years collected and reviewed research literature related to the impact of advertising on children, and is in frequent contact with active researchers in this field internationally. There are many findings from this research which are not reflected in Australia's Codes and Standards, for eg children's understanding of the language of advertising, and in the areas of the effectiveness of premium offers, character endorsements, repetition of advertisements, and more.

YMA finds the Review of research on advertising to children conducted for the ACMA Review of the CTS ('the Brand review') to be:

- a) deficient in its collection of all important major reviews in this field; and
- b) flawed in the conclusions drawn from its review,

In particular, YMA contends that the conclusion drawn in the Brand review that "the scope, consistency and quality of the research literature about children and advertising is poor" is unsupported.

YMA's assessment is supported by the opinions of two experts in the field of advertising to children, W Doug Evans and Dale Kunkel. Bios for Dale Kunkel and for W Doug Evans can be found at:

http://datamonster.sbs.arizona.edu/communication/faculty/each_detail.php?option=1&detail=11&mtitle=Core%20Faculty

<http://www.rti.org/experts.cfm?objectid=119713C3-4480-44D8-99300B120F72BC6D>

(for Kunkel's and Evan's papers see Appendices 2 and 3).

Overall, it seems that there have been important papers omitted from the Brand review, especially in the field of food advertising, and that the conclusions drawn both on the usefulness of the research on advertising and on food advertising in particular were not well supported by others with well developed expertise in the field.

2. Children under the age of 8 are very vulnerable to advertising and need special protections

In contrast to the Brand review, Jennings, Nancy A and Wartella, Ellen A (2007); the American Psychological Association (2004); and the US Institute of Medicine's recent review (see Appendix 1) all offer very comprehensive and reliable findings. The overwhelming weight of the research shows that **children under the age of 8 years do not understand the selling intent of advertisements, and therefore have no effective defences against the inducements offered through advertisements.** This insight should guide all regulation of advertising for the protection of children.

3. Some advertising techniques, and advertisements for some products, can harm children

The above insight means that the heaviest restrictions should be imposed on those advertising techniques and strategies that are the most effective in stimulating children's desires for a product, and those ads that are for products likely to be injurious to children's health and well-being. At this time, **YMA argues that AANA must take seriously the threat to children's health posed by advertising of foods of low nutritional value, the impact of host and character selling in all its forms, and the issue of sexualised images of children.**

4. The Scope of this Code

YMA urges the AANA to reconsider the scope of its Code. The Code should cover all forms of advertising, from outdoor billboards, to broadcast media, and the internet including corporate sites.

Most if not all of the restrictions in the AANA Children's Code should be extended beyond ads aimed at children, for children's products, to cover those hours when significant numbers of children are likely to be watching television and other contexts where significant numbers of children are likely to be exposed to the advertising.

For television advertising, it might be convenient to use the *C bands*, as defined in the CTS, to define the Code's application. Alternatively the Code could use the G and PG zones to define its restrictions, or rely on viewer data to determine the times at which, say, at least 10% of children are likely to be watching television.

Set time zones are easily understood by the general public, on whom the burden falls to complain if the Code is breached. People are unlikely to take the trouble to

complain unless they can be fairly confident that their complaint will make a difference, and to have this confidence they must also have confidence that their complaint will be upheld. Therefore the simplest criteria for application of the Code are the best.

For advertising in media other than television, the Code should provide guidance as to those contexts where children are likely to encounter advertising; for example, outdoor advertising should be more heavily restricted, for the sake of children, than advertising in magazines which have not been targeted to, or lack interest for, children.

5. The role of the ACCC in review and administration of the Children's Code

YMA is concerned that neither the present process for review of this Code, nor the ensuing Code, appears to require any formal involvement on the part of ACMA, or other independent regulator, such as the ACCC.

However, YMA notes that the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is able to provide guidance to industry associations in relation to the development or administration of voluntary industry codes, and in some cases may participate as an observer on code administration committees or help code administration committees review a code's effectiveness.¹

We also understand that when the AANA self-regulatory scheme was developed following the disbanding of the Media Council of Australia advertising self-regulatory scheme, the ACCC along with the Australian Consumers' Association sought representation on an advisory committee to the scheme, but this was refused by AANA.

We believe the ACCC's expertise would be very valuable in the review of the AANA Code for Advertising to Children and any future review of the AANA Food and Beverages Advertising and Marketing Communications Code. Representation or guidance from the ACCC would also be very useful in administration of the AANA scheme, particularly since consumers are not currently represented. We therefore encourage AANA to seek such representation or guidance from the ACCC.

6. The timing of this AANA Code revision

YMA notes that the ACMA is reviewing its standards related to advertising in children's programs. YMA considers that the AANA should not reach its conclusions until the ACMA has completed its review of the CTS.

Further, YMA believes that the protections deemed by ACMA to be needed and made part of its CTS advertising standards should also, where appropriate, be incorporated in the AANA Code.

¹ Australian Competition and Consumer Commission website, 'Non-prescribed voluntary industry codes of conduct', <<http://www.accc.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/783116/fromItemId/783096>>, at 22 November 2007; Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, *Guidelines for Developing Effective Industry Codes of Conduct*, 2005, <<http://www.accc.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/658186>>, at 22 November 2007.

D. DETAILED COMMENT ON AANA ISSUES PAPER OF OCTOBER 2007

AANA Code for Advertising to Children

Scope and need for Code

A criticism that some stakeholders make of the existing mix of industry self-regulation, co-regulation and regulation of advertising and marketing is that it is complex and confusing and that there should be a single legislated regulatory scheme that is proactively policed by the regulator rather than being complaints driven.

Should there be a specific AANA Code for advertising to children?

One suggestion is changing the Code to 'Advertising and Children' aligning the amended Code more closely with the international Responsible Advertising and Children initiative.

Should the Code be broadened to include marketing communications to children as, for example, in the recently adopted AANA Food & Beverages Advertising & Marketing Communications Code?

YMA COMMENT: YMA supports the broadening of the scope of the Code, and for it to encompass the concept of “responsible advertising and children”.

Advertising industry practices should be actively monitored to ensure observance of The Code.

For further comment on the scope of The Code see C. 4. above.

1. DEFINITIONS

In this Code, the following definitions apply:

- (a) Advertisement: means matter which is published or broadcast in all of Australia or in a substantial section of Australia for payment or other valuable consideration and which draws the attention of the public or a segment of it to a product, service, person, organisation or line of conduct in a manner calculated to promote or oppose directly or indirectly the product, service, person, organisation or line of conduct.

Increasingly advertising dollars are shifting from traditional media, such as television and radio, to different communications media and to below the line marketing activities. This change was reflected in the AANA Food & Beverages Advertising & Marketing Communications Code.

Should the definition of advertisement be broadened in line with the AANA Food & Beverages Advertising & Marketing Communications Code as below?

“Advertising and/or Marketing Communication” means matter which is published or broadcast using any Medium in all of Australia or in a substantial section of Australia for payment or other valuable consideration and which

draws the attention of the public or a segment of it, to a product, service, person, organisation, or line of conduct in a manner calculated to promote or oppose directly or indirectly that product, service, person, organisation or line of conduct but does not include Excluded Advertising and/or Marketing Communications.

...

“Excluded Advertising and/or Marketing Communications” means labels or packaging for products.

AANA Food & Beverages Advertising & Marketing Communications Code p.4
(www.aana.com.au/food_beverages_code.html)

YMA COMMENT: Yes, except that packaging should be included. It is often what grabs children’s attention in the supermarket and is clearly an effective form of marketing.

Does the definition of “Advertising and/or Marketing” cover the field of communications to children that should be included in the Code? Are there direct marketing activities that should be included or excluded, for example computer games, corporate or brand websites that have content that may appeal to children?

YMA COMMENT: The definition should be extended to

- product placement in films, TV shows and computer games.
- **to the provision of program material for low or no cost due to associated merchandising arrangements.** YMA is concerned about the provision of program or editorial material at reduced or no cost, in the expectation that the producer will recoup its costs by selling spin-off products. This is the structure which, according to ACMA, already applies in the provision of P programming for television, which is supposed to be ad-free. The definition of ‘advertising’ in this Code should cover such practices because they are really no different from the traditional practice where the advertiser pays the television station to show material. Providing the material at a reduced cost is functionally the same thing.

If the definition is adopted from the AANA Food & Beverages Advertising & Marketing Communications Code will a definition of “Medium” need to be included in the code? Is the AANA Food & Beverages Advertising & Marketing Communications Code definition sufficient?

“Medium” means any medium including cinema, Internet, outdoor media, print, radio, television or other direct-to-consumer media.

AANA Food & Beverages Advertising & Marketing Communications Code p.4

YMA COMMENT: These should all be included

- (b) Product: means goods, services and facilities which are targeted toward and have principal appeal to Children.

Should Products that have any appeal to Children be regulated by the Code, rather than those targeted toward and directed primarily at Children as currently in the Code?

YMA COMMENT: Yes. Many categories cross the boundary but are no less dangerous to children for that reason eg chocolate, chips. Sometimes children are *more* attracted to a product because it is conceived as something for adults (or teenagers). Ideally the restrictions would centre around the time and/or context in which the ad is shown, rather than the type of product as this becomes too subjective a judgment.

- (c) Advertisements to Children: means Advertisements which, having regard to the theme, visuals and language used, are directed primarily to Children and are for Product.

Should advertisements and/or marketing communications that have any appeal to Children be regulated by the Code, rather than those directed primarily at Children as currently in the Code?

YMA COMMENT: Restrictions should apply during certain times and in certain contexts, not based on whom the ad appears to be aimed at. There is nothing to suggest that children are any less likely to notice, or to be manipulated by, an ad that for whatever reason is not seen as directed to them.

Failing that, the definition of an ad directed at children should be based on a single element test; it should not be open to advertisers to circumvent the Code by for example scripting an ad so that a children's entertainer is ostensibly addressing her comments to parents. If there is any one element of an ad that indicates it is likely to attract the special attention of children, it should be covered.

- (d) Children: means children 14 years old or younger.

Some stakeholders believe that the weight of scientific research shows that by age 12, children are confident and critical media viewers who are fully literate about advertising and that therefore the definition should be changed. Other stakeholders believe that the definition should be changed to aged 15 and younger to align it with granting of adult responsibilities, such as the right to drive, at age 16. This later approach has been implemented by Ofcom.

Should the age definition of children in the Code be revised?

YMA COMMENT: It is fanciful to suggest that it is possible to distinguish between an ad aimed at 12 year olds and an ad aimed at 13 year olds. This definition keeps the AANA Code in line with other regulation (CTS, CTICP) and is therefore the most convenient and the least likely to confuse consumers.

- (e) Premium: means anything offered free or at a reduced price and which is conditional upon the purchase of a regular Product.

Are there premium offers being made which are not covered by the definition and therefore suggest that the definition should be amended and, if so, how?

YMA COMMENT: Under the CTICP and CTS, 'premium' has been interpreted so as to exclude the toys that come in children's fast food packs. 'Premium' should be defined in a way that catches products that are not part of the core business of the advertiser; or at the very least non-food items that are packaged with food items.

2. CODE OF PRACTICE

2.1 Factual Presentation

2.1.1 Advertisements to Children:

- (a) must not mislead or deceive Children;
- (b) must not be ambiguous; and
- (c) must fairly represent, in a manner that is clearly understood by Children:
 - (i) the advertised Product;
 - (ii) any features which are described or depicted in the Advertisement; and
 - (iii) the need for any accessory parts.

Should the Code be amended to include the ICC Code of Advertising and Marketing Communication Practice provision that advertising and/or marketing communications to Children should be clearly distinguishable to them as such?

YMA COMMENT: Yes.

Paragraph (a) should refer to ads that are likely to mislead or deceive children, rather than those that actually do so. Otherwise it is necessary for a complainant to show that children have actually been misled and this may be difficult. There should also be a specific reference to the danger of misleading or deceiving by omitting information, and creating an overall misleading or deceptive impression even though the specific information presented may be correct. For example ads for highly sugared breakfast cereals should not be allowed to create an overall impression that they are good for health by referring to the product's micronutrient content.

2.2 Safety

2.2.1 Advertisements to Children:

- (a) must not portray images or events which depict unsafe uses of a Product or unsafe situations which may encourage Children to engage in dangerous activities; and
- (b) must not advertise Products which have been officially declared unsafe or dangerous by an authorized Australian government authority.

YMA COMMENT: YMA supports these provisions, but would

like to see new provisions introduced into the Code limiting the indirect promotion of M programs that appeal to children, or are otherwise marketed to children. (for eg via cereal packets etc). Such promotions encourage young children to want to see M rated movies which can be harmful to them, due to violent, and/or frightening portrayals.

2.3 Social Values

2.3.1 Advertisements to Children:

- (a) must not portray images or events in a way that is unduly frightening or distressing to Children; and
- (b) must not demean any person or group on the basis of ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, age, sexual preference, religion or mental or physical disability.

Should the Code be amended by adding a prohibition against advertisements and/or marketing that contravene prevailing community standards? Should prevailing community standards be established by the Advertising Standards Board as per the AANA Food & Beverages Advertising & Marketing Communications Code or in some other way?

YMA COMMENT: The Code should contain a prohibition against advertisements or marketing that contravene prevailing community standards. These should be ascertained via the use of independent research.

One emerging issue is the sexualisation of children in advertising. Only recently the Federal Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, announced that ACMA, with the radio and television industry, will investigate the short and long term effects of sexualised images of children, reporting back in March 2008². Some stakeholders have called for regulation of direct and indirect³ sexualisation of children.

Should children being directly portrayed in sexualised ways in advertisements and/or marketing communications be prohibited by the Code? Or should indirect sexualisation be addressed also and, if so, how?

YMA COMMENT:

YMA notes that there is growing world-wide concern about the sexualisation of children. We refer the AANA to Appendix 5 for the American Psychological Association's recent paper on the sexualisation of girls.

In particular, YMA states that

² The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator the Hon Helen Coonan

“Howard Government acts to further protect children” Media Release, 15 August 2007

³ Indirect sexualisation is the “exposure to representation of teen and adult sexuality in advertising and popular culture”. The Australian Institute Letting Children be Children: Stopping the sexualisation of children in Australia Dec. 2006 submission to Code Review.

a) Children should not be directly portrayed in sexualised ways in advertisements or other marketing communications as it is harmful to the development either of the child portrayed or of the child viewing the representation.

Australian experts in the field of children's healthy sexual development say that::

"Child development is about play, exploration and experimentation. Child sexual development is not different. When we expose a child to sexual images and messages beyond their years, they don't understand this image/message and will seek to understand it through play. This undoubtedly leads to sexual play and behaviours in children outside of normal development."

Lisa Cox , psychologist and child protection specialist, Childwise Australia.

"Sex and sexuality have been divorced from emotions and feelings of intimacy and are being packaged as something attainable at a very young age and essential to social kudos and peer group acceptance. Being perceived as 'sexy' and a young person's (but particularly girls) self-esteem is inextricably linked. This is reflected, not only through popular culture, but in practice – in the real world. The rise of body dysmorphic image, depression, low self-esteem, and the age at which young people first engage in sexual activity are all indicators that when sexual imagery bombards young people, it skews their sense of self and the relationship they have with each other, the opposite sex and within their social groups. "

Dr Karen Brooks, formerly Snr lecturer, Communications and Cultural studies, University of Sunshine Coast

b) YMA believes that children should not be carelessly exposed to "representation of teen and adult sexuality in advertising" at times and in environments where they have every right to be.

Brooks says "Children are neither cognitively or emotionally ready to deal with sexualised images of adults. Not only does viewing this kind of material seriously impact on a child's sense of self, but their understanding of the role adults play in their life. It undermines their sense of safety, of boundaries and rules and, depending on the images, exposes them to and normalises practices that they should be shielded from"

YMA urges the AANA to:

- Firstly, to actively work with a diverse number of experts, young people and non-experts across the sector regarding sexualised images in order to discuss strategies for minimising sexual imagery in the mainstream;
- Fund education and retraining around sexual imagery for key corporate, media and other key personnel;
- Establish sensible guidelines for use across different industries which acknowledges various practices and which are written in plain English;

- Implement these on, firstly, a trial basis, to eliminate oversights and errors (taking into consideration mixed environments and timeslots, children's and adults' only environments and entertainment as well);
- Once perfected, standardise and enforce them.

2.4 Parental Authority

2.4.1 Advertisements to Children:

- (a) must not undermine the authority, responsibility or judgment of parents or carers;
- (b) must not state or imply that a Product makes Children who own or enjoy it superior to their peers; and
- (c) must not state or imply that persons who buy an advertised Product are more generous than those who do not.

Should the Code be amended to explicitly prohibit advertisements and/or marketing communications which contain an appeal to Children to urge parents and/or other adults responsible for a child's welfare to buy particular products for them?

YMA COMMENT:

It would be well to have a provision that no ad can openly suggest that children ask their parents for the product, but that would not go nearly far enough to deal with pester power, because there are any number of ways besides direct exhortation that ads can inspire children to ask their parents for a product.

"Pester power" works not by directly exhorting children to pester but by making them want a product so badly that they will be willing to drive their parents crazy with repeated requests for it. In fact, we see very few if any ads that would fall foul of the provision being suggested here.

What is needed are provisions against the kinds of highly effective marketing techniques that make children want the product so badly, for example those that link the product to fun or social acceptance; those that put pressure on children with limited edition collectibles; and those that use characters and personalities, especially sporting heroes.

We have become aware of an interpretation of a CTS provision that appears to address 'pester power', CTS 18, in response to a complaint about fast food ads that used highly exhortatory language to encourage children to collect the toys used in meal packs, for example 'for a limited time only'; 'start collecting today'; 'collect them all and then get swapping'; 'the more tokens you collect the more times you can enter'. This was ruled not to amount to 'undue pressure' but rather the normal practice of advertising to create demand for the product. If this kind of language is not undue pressure, it is difficult to imagine what is.

In relation to 'pester power', YMA suggests the introduction of provisions to curb some of the more effective techniques of marketing to children, in particular those that tap into children's insecurities by linking the product to

social success, and those that link the brand of the product to a concept or a lovable character (eg an anthropomorphic animal) without any reference to the qualities of the product itself. Some of the current provisions of the Code go some way towards addressing such manipulative techniques, but in our view not far enough.

In a sense it is impossible to do away with 'pester power' without doing away with advertising. That is, pester power is part and parcel of advertising to children.

The ICC Code of Advertising and Marketing Communication Practice Article 19 - data protection and privacy - sets out a number of principles about the protection of Children's personal information. Should the Code be amended to include a requirement that any advertisements and/or marketing communications inviting Children to contact the advertiser also direct Children to first obtain parental permission?

YMA COMMENT: YMA notes that the Australian Law Reform Commission is presently looking into issues related to children's privacy, and recommends that the AANA take note of its findings.

Should the Code be amended to permit the disclosure of personal information about Children to third persons only with the parental consent or when authorised by law as set out in Chapter D7 of the ICC Code of Advertising and Marketing Communication Practice?

Or should there be a specific privacy section of the Code?

2.5 Price

- 2.5.1 Prices, if mentioned in Advertisements to Children, must be accurately presented in a way which can be clearly understood by children and not minimized by words such as "only" or "just".

Should the Code be amended to include the ICC Code of Advertising and Marketing Communication Practice provision that advertising and/or marketing communication should not imply that the product being promoted is immediately within the reach of every family budget?

YMA COMMENT: YMA supports this approach

2.6 Qualifying Statements

- 2.6.1 Any disclaimers, qualifiers or asterisked or footnoted information used in Advertisements to Children must be conspicuously displayed and clearly explained to Children.

YMA COMMENT: Ideally the Code would disallow any ad that needs a

disclaimer, qualifier or asterisk.

2.7 Competitions

- 2.7.1 Competitions which appear in Advertisements to Children must:
- (a) contain a summary of the basic rules for the competition;
 - (b) clearly include the closing date for entries; and
 - (c) make any statements about the chance of winning clear, fair and accurate.

YMA COMMENT: In addition to the above, the AANA should include the provisions of CTS 9 (2) a, b, c in relation to prizes for competitions.

2.8 Premiums

- 2.8.1 Advertisements to Children which include or refer to a Premium:
- (a) should not create a false or misleading impression in the minds of Children about the nature or content of the Product;
 - (b) should not create a false or misleading impression in the minds of Children that the product advertised is the Premium rather than the Product; and
 - (c) must make the terms of the offer clear as well as any conditions or limitations.

Some stakeholders have called for the prohibition of all premiums. The AANA Food & Beverages Advertising & Marketing Communications Code section 3.7 requires that the premium (as defined in the Advertising to Children Code⁴) be an integral element of the product being offered.

Should Premiums be further regulated in the Code and, if so, why and how?

YMA COMMENT: This provision focusses on the creation of false or misleading impressions, which should be covered in the section on misleading advertising.

The issue with premiums is the amount of time devoted to the premium, and/or the amount of emphasis it receives in the ad, so the provision should cover that. It could adopt the equivalent provision in the CTS, subject to a recognition that 'incidental reference' is just that, and not related to impressions about the nature of the product.

As to what counts as a premium, this needs to be clarified. As discussed above, there have been interpretations in other contexts to say that a non-food item packaged with food is not a premium but an integral part of the package. Therefore YMA believes that regulation should extend to any product offered, even as part of a 'package', that is not part of the advertiser's core business; or failing that, there should be a provision that toys packaged with food can only be mentioned incidentally in advertising.

⁴ AANA Food & Beverages Advertising & Marketing Communications Code Practice Note p.6

2.9 Alcohol

- 2.9.1 Advertisements to Children must not be for, or relate in any way to, alcoholic drinks or draw any association with companies that supply alcoholic drinks.

Alcohol products other than beverages exist and products promoting alcohol-type flavourings that may appeal to children have been mooted. Should the Code be amended to say that Advertisements to Children must not be for, or relate in any way to alcohol products or have any association with alcohol?

YMA COMMENT: YMA supports this latter proposal.

2.10 Food and Beverages

- 2.10.1 Advertisements to Children for food and/or beverages:

- (a) should not encourage or promote an inactive lifestyle combined with unhealthy eating or drinking habits; and
- (b) must not contain any misleading or incorrect information about the nutritional value of that Product.

The advertising and marketing of food and beverages to children is one of the most disputed public policy debates occurring at present. The range of options advocated by various stakeholders include a total ban on food and beverage advertising to children or a ban on advertising high fat, high sugar, high salt (HFSS) foods and beverages.

Also, since this section was adopted the AANA has adopted the Food & Beverages Advertising & Marketing Communications Code which includes specific provisions in regard to children.

Does the Code need to include specific provisions in regard to Food and Beverages? For example, in relation to the relevant nutritional characteristics of the product?

YMA COMMENT: It would be best to incorporate the Food & Beverage Code into this one, so as to avoid confusing consumers. Paragraph (b) should be amended so that it refers to the overall impression created by the ad, rather than specific information contained within the ad. So for example there should be no ads for 'fat free' lollies.

Should the Code be amended to say "should neither encourage or promote an inactive lifestyle nor encourage or promote unhealthy eating habits"?

YMA COMMENT: It would not hurt to make this change, but it would do little to help either. Advertisers have no interest in encouraging or promoting inactive lifestyles or unhealthy eating habits, if that is understood in the sense of active encouragement or promotion. Therefore this provision, even with the suggested amendment, does not address any kind of advertising that would otherwise be likely to be made. What needs to be addressed is the way that advertising links high-calorie foods to fun, social acceptance and sporting prowess. Of particular

concern is the way that the two meanings of the word 'energy' tend to be conflated. The Code should follow the lead of the recent reforms in the UK to provide that food companies cannot advertise high-calorie foods in a way that suggests they provide physical vigour.

Or should the Code simply require that advertisements and marketing to children must comply with the AANA Food & Beverages Advertising & Marketing Communications Code?

YMA COMMENT: Once again, YMA would rather see the Food and Beverages Code incorporated into this one.

2.11 AANA Advertiser Code of Ethics

2.11.1 Advertisements to Children must comply with the AANA Advertiser Code of Ethic.

ADDITIONAL ISSUES

a) Popular Personalities or Celebrities

Some stakeholders believe that Advertising and/or Marketing Communications to Children must not use popular personalities or celebrities to advertise or market products to Children. The use of such characters or personalities is regulated, for example in the Children's Television Standards (CTS 22).

Also, since this section was adopted the AANA has adopted the Food & Beverages Advertising & Marketing Communications Code which includes specific provisions in regard to popular personalities or celebrities.

Does the Code need to include specific provisions in regard to personalities or celebrities as per the AANA Food & Beverages Advertising & Marketing Communications Code which is replicated below?

Advertising and/or Marketing Communications to Children shall not use popular personalities or celebrities (live or animated) to advertise or market products, premiums or services in a manner that obscures the distinction between commercial promotions and program or editorial content.

Or should the use of popular personalities or celebrities (live or animated) to advertise or market products, premiums or services to Children be prohibited as sought by some stakeholders?

YMA COMMENT: The ACMA Issues Paper for CTS Review rightly concludes that use of program personalities and characters is a highly effective advertising strategy. The issue goes beyond 'host selling' or practices that tend to blur the distinction between programs and advertising. These are of concern because they represent the most blatant exploitation of young children's inability to distinguish between programs and ads. Use of personalities and characters raises a distinct concern simply because it is so effective.

Ideally it would be prohibited, but at the very least the restrictions need to be extended beyond situations that risk 'obscur[ing] the distinction between commercial promotions and program or editorial content.' As noted above, the use of personalities or celebrities needs to be controlled not just because of the risk of confusion but because it is so effective in manipulating children and creating 'pester power'. The current provision would not, for example, do anything about the use of sportspeople whereas this has proved in recent years to be a highly popular means of promoting unhealthy food to children. Presumably it is popular because it works, and for this very reason it needs to be controlled.

In recent years we have seen a champion swimmer endorsing high-sugar breakfast cereal as 'fully sick' and a champion netballer endorsing sugary ice blocks. We regard this kind of advertising as being at least as manipulative as any involving a program personality or character.

It might be taking matters too far to say that no sportsperson can endorse any product, even in a particular medium, but if there is any reason to think the ad might attract the attention of children, eg the kind of product it promotes, then the Code should prevent this. And/or, such ads should be disallowed during children's viewing periods, as defined elsewhere in this submission.

Such a new restriction should not be based on whether the ad is, on balance, directed to children. Rather it should be based on the presence of any single element that would tend to attract the attention of children. This is for the obvious reason that the point of the restriction is to moderate the impact of advertising on children. The fact that an ad might be seen as, on balance, directed to adults does not mean that it will have no impact on children. Moreover, a balancing approach is too easily manipulated and experience shows that the default will always be against finding that an ad is directed to children.

A clear illustration of this proposition is provided by the recent ad where a children's entertainer promoted a sugary breakfast cereal in a script that was addressed ostensibly to adults. It was held not to be directed to children for the purposes of the *Commercial Television Industry Code of Practice*. This was in spite of the fact that two of the three major elements of the ad were such as to attract the attention of children ie the nature of the product and the identity of the entertainer.

Similarly a campaign for another highly sugared breakfast cereal cleverly had an Olympic swimmer speaking to the children via their mother, helping her to persuade them to eat the product. This too, presumably, was sufficient to prevent it being considered an ad directed to children. A 'balancing' test is simply too easy to circumvent. Greater strictness is required to provide children with adequate protection.

b) *Complaints Process*

Should the Code include a section transparently setting out how complaints under the Code may be made and how a complaint will be processed by the Advertising Standards Bureau and where further information may be obtained? Or is the information more appropriately available to consumers elsewhere?

YMA COMMENT: There is no reason it needs to be either/or. Including this information in the Code itself could be very beneficial to consumers.

Should the ASB report annually on the number and types of complaints made under the Code, and provide an overview of the ASB's processes and decision making rationale?

YMA COMMENT: Yes. Also the outcomes (favourable and otherwise) and any dissenting opinions.

c) Media

The ICC Code of Advertising and Marketing Communication Practice Article 18 Children and Young People states that "...advertisements directed to children or young people should not be inserted in media where the editorial matter is unsuitable for them." Should the Code be amended to introduce such a restriction?

d) Timing

Some stakeholders believe that the review of the Code should be delayed until after ACMA's review of Children's Television Standards. Others argue that television is only one medium used to communicate to children, (albeit an important one), and that the Code review process can encompass a review of submissions made to ACMA and therefore a delay is not beneficial. Should the timing be reviewed?

YMA COMMENT: Yes, or at least the AANA should hold off on making any final decisions until the outcome of the CTS review is known. Television remains a highly significant medium for children and it would be beneficial to consumers if the two sets of regulations were as harmonious as possible.

e) Other

If any specific amendments are proposed to the Code, are there any consequential changes necessary to the advertising and marketing communications self regulatory scheme, the role and function of the Advertising Standards Bureau and the regulatory options available

YMA COMMENT: See comments above (C5) in relation to the role of the ACCC in this system.

END

APPENDIX 1

Reference 1

Jennings, Nancy A and Wartella, Ellen A (2007) "Advertising and consumer development" in Pecora, Norma, Murray, John P and Wartella, Ellen (2007) *Children and television: fifty years of research*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates

Reference 2

APA Monitor

Volume 36, No. 5 May 2005



[In Brief](#)

APA highlights advertising's impact on kids

Print version: page 11

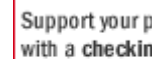
An APA member and an APA staff member--at the invitation of Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa)--participated in a press conference on March 16 to highlight the need for limits on advertising aimed at children, particularly advertising by the food industry.

Jeff McIntyre, senior legislative and federal affairs officer in APA's Public Policy Office, represented APA at the event. Other presenters included APA member Susan Linn, PhD, from the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood; Michael F. Jacobson, PhD, executive director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest; and Marian Nestle, PhD, a New York University nutrition professor.

In his remarks, McIntyre reported on the findings of the APA Task Force on Advertising and Children.

"Because children 8 or younger do not understand persuasive intent in advertising, they are easy targets for commercial persuasion," he said. "This is a critical concern because the most common products marketed to children are sugared cereals, candies, sweets, sodas and snack foods." Such research findings on persuasive intent provided the basis for the APA Task Force recommendation to restrict advertising to children in this age group, McIntyre explained.

At the briefing, Harkin described advertising to children as "a public health crisis of the first order." Holding up a baby "onesy" emblazoned with a picture of a Krispy Kreme donut, the senator said: "Parents' choices about their children's eating habits are undermined by junk food ads everyday. Although parents may want their kids to eat healthy, they often lose out because SpongeBob SquarePants, Shrek and cartoon superheroes entice kids to eat fast food and sugary snacks. The childhood obesity



epidemic is real, and the time to act is now."

Harkin said he plans to send a letter to the food industry, broadcasters and others, calling for a new meaningful, uniform and system-wide set of age-appropriate guidelines for marketing junk food to kids. He also plans to announce legislation that would restore the Federal Trade Commission's authority to regulate marketing directed at children. --**APA'S PUBLIC POLICY OFFICE**

Download the task force report at www.apa.org/releases/childrenads.pdf.

Reference 3 Institute of Medicine.



Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity?

Released On: December 06, 2005

[Read and Purchase](#)

Creating an environment in which U.S. children and youth can grow up healthy should be a high priority. Beverage marketing to children and youth in America represents, at best, a missed opportunity, and at worst, a threat to the next generation.

Dietary patterns begin in childhood and shape the health of Americans, which result from an interplay of values, economics, physical and social environments, and commercial media environments. Ensuring that fundamental responsibility, requiring leadership and action from all sectors.

How marketing influences children and youth is the focus of the IOM report, *Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity?* provides the most comprehensive review to date of the scientific evidence on the influence of food marketing on children and youth. The study was requested by Congress and sponsored by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The report finds that current food and beverage marketing practices puts children's long-term health at risk. To help them develop eating habits that help them avoid early onset of diet-related chronic diseases, they have to reduce their intake of high-fat, high-sodium, and sweetened drinks, which make up a high proportion of the products marketed to them.

The report provides recommendations for different segments of society to guide the development of effective marketing strategies for healthier foods, beverages, and meal options to children and youth. Recommendations are provided for

the food beverage, and restaurant industries; food retailers and trade associations; ... {others listed}

The report offers guidance on research activities necessary to chart the path of future improvements, and to identify marketing practices that have an influence on children's and youth's diets and diet-related health.

APPENDIX 2 LETTER FROM DALE KUNKEL

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ARIZONA
TUCSON ARIZONA

Department of Communication
Faculty of Social and Behavioral
Sciences

Communication Bldg. 25
Tucson, Arizona 85721-0025
520-621-1366
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August 24, 2007

Ms. Barbara Biggins
Young Media Australia
Delivery via internet
<http://www.youngmedia.org.au>

Dear Ms. Biggins:

I am responding to your recent request for comments regarding the report titled "Television Advertising to Children" prepared by Dr. Jeffrey Brand for submission to the Australian Communications and Media Authority.

This report's analysis has been organized and presented quite professionally, and there are many fundamental aspects of it with which I agree. In summarizing the relevant research, the study is right on target in emphasizing that age-related differences in children's cognitive development are the most important factors in shaping how children understand and are influenced by television advertising. Moreover, the report is reasonably comprehensive in terms of including the full range of relevant sub-topics that have been the subject of investigation in this realm.

There are several important aspects of this report, however, with which I disagree. First, the study is too generous in asserting that "between the ages of six to 11 years children begin to develop the ability to think skeptically about advertising" (p. 5). In my view, the relevant research indicates quite consistently that children below age 8 do not evidence any meaningful capability to defend effectively against televised commercial persuasion. On the contrary, children below age 8 tend to accept commercial claims and appeals as mostly fair, accurate, and balanced information, in much the same way that an adult would understand the message conveyed by an anchorperson on a credible newscast. Even after age 8, it is a slow and gradual process for the developing child to master and apply the notion that advertisers exaggerate and engage in puffery to present their product in the most favorable light. Without this "discounting" of the messages contained in persuasive communication efforts, younger children are at a clear disadvantage, as compared to older children or adults, in defending against advertising.

Young children's lack of a mature comprehension of the nature and purpose of advertising raises fundamental questions of fairness in allowing commercials to be targeted at this audience. Such concern forms the foundation of numerous regulatory policies in the United States that restrict television advertising to children. For example, host-selling (i.e., including the same character in both the program content and an adjacent ad) has been

restricted by the Federal Communications Commission since 1974, while the amount of time that may be devoted to advertising during children's programming has been limited by Congressional statute since 1990. There is strong and long-standing consensus in the U.S. about the need for policy protections in the area of television advertising to children, and that consensus is grounded in the relevant scientific evidence.

The Brand report notes that "few empirical studies report a statistical relationship between children's age ... and the influence of advertising on children" (p. 5). This is an accurate assessment, but may easily be misunderstood without more clarity and context. It is indeed surprising and disappointing that researchers have neglected to document that younger children are more readily or more powerfully influenced by advertising than older children as a function of their limited cognitive development. The data do not contradict this expectation, but rather the issue has largely gone unaddressed in most studies. Indeed, the Brand report notes that Livingstone and Helspur (2006), who engage this issue directly in a recent review, observed that there are many complicating factors that make this relationship difficult to document, including the variable appeal of different products to differing age groups as well as the use of differing persuasive tactics in advertising targeted at various age groups. While it would be helpful to obtain additional data on this point, this is hardly a major shortcoming that in any way diminishes the extensive knowledge that has accumulated about children's vulnerability to commercial persuasion over many years.

Indeed, no scholar who has reviewed the totality of evidence in the area of children and advertising has ever characterized the overall state of knowledge in this realm as "poor," as the Brand report concludes on page 8. It is on this point that I must disagree strongly with Dr. Brand. Besides the issue of television violence, which most observers agree has been studied more frequently than any subject in the field of communication, the topic of children and advertising is among those subjects that have attracted the most extensive research interest and examination over the past 30 years.

The Brand report indicates at the outset that it is based on a review of "more than 200 sources on children and television advertising, including 100 refereed primary sources" (p. 4). This body of evidence would constitute only a sub-set of the overall scientific evidence in this realm. By way of comparison, a recent textbook in the area (Barrie Gunter, Caroline Oates, & Mark Blades, *Advertising to Children on TV: Content, Impact, and Regulation*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005) includes approximately 500 citations, while a review study that I helped to conduct for the National Academies of Science in the U.S. (Committee on Food Marketing and the Diets of Children and Youth, Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science, *Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity?* Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2006) identified a total of 122 empirical studies on just a single area of advertising effects: the influence of food marketing on the diet and health of children.

To summarize my perspective, I believe the level of knowledge about the relationship between children and advertising is quite strong and mature in most regards, and affords scientists strong ability to draw conclusions across studies. While it is true that researchers in any area are rarely satisfied and constantly thirst for more studies and a richer understanding of their subjects, the available evidence in this realm is both rich and compelling. Academics have not wasted their extensive efforts over the past 30+ years in studying the topic of children

and advertising. The existing knowledge is more than sufficient to buttress regulatory action by responsible policy-makers.

Finally, it is unfortunate that one of the most significant reviews of children and advertising research yet conducted in the United States, which was released in December 2005, was not considered as part of the Brand report. The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science commissioned an expert advisory committee with the task of reviewing all existing evidence about the influence of food marketing on the diets and diet-related health of children. The committee conducted a systematic analysis of the empirical evidence, and 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.” This conclusion was grounded in the committee’s confidence that the evidence of the effects of food marketing is consistent and compelling. For example, one of the key findings of the committee was that:

“Given the findings from the systematic evidence review of the influence of marketing on the precursors of diet, and given the evidence from content analyses that the preponderance of television food and beverage advertising relevant to children and youth promotes high-calorie and low-nutrient products, it can be concluded that television advertising influences children to prefer and request high-calorie and low-nutrient foods and beverages.” (pp 260-261).

Similarly, the committee concluded that “there is strong evidence that television advertising influences the short-term consumption of children ages 2-11 years” (p. 266) as well as weak to moderate evidence that it influences the regular diet of children. (The qualification in the latter conclusion is related to the modest base of empirical evidence bearing directly on the relationship; few studies have yet explored regular diet as an outcome variable.)

Thus, the report from the National Academies of Science in the U.S. stands at odds with the Brand report’s key conclusion regarding food marketing to children. Brand concludes:

“Empirical research shows correlations but not causal relationships between children’s exposure to advertising and knowledge about diet and nutrition, and preferences as indicated by requests (but not necessarily actual consumption) of advertised foods.” (p. 7, and repeated at p. 42)

I suspect that the variance in our conclusions regarding the relevant scientific evidence stems at least in part from the limited amount of evidence examined by Brand. Indeed, our committee reviewed a greater number of empirical studies of the influence of food marketing on children than the Brand report considered across the entire landscape of children and advertising concerns.

To conclude, the Brand report offers many accurate and helpful conclusions about the nature and extent of research on the topic of children and advertising. As I have noted above, however, there are several aspects of the report that I find to be insufficiently developed and/or justified. Specifically, I do not believe the totality of the evidence examining the issue of children and advertising can be characterized as “poor,” and I am confident that most experts in this area would agree with me. Secondly, I believe that the Brand report’s conclusions about the influence of food marketing on children seriously underestimate the existing body of scientific knowledge on this issue. There is a strong body of evidence, including a

convergence of findings across both survey and experimental designs, that warrants clear causal conclusions about the influence of food marketing on children.

I respectfully submit my views for your consideration, and encourage Australians interested in the topic of children and advertising, as well as the more particular focus on food marketing to children, to carefully peruse the National Academies of Science report I have referenced above. It reflects the efforts of a large committee of scientific experts who labored for approximately 18 months to produce an impressive analysis in this critical area. I am confident that the National Academies report will be helpful in informing ACMA's consideration of the issue of television advertising to children.

Sincerely yours,

Dale Kunkel, Ph.D.
Professor of Communication

**APPENDIX 3: LETTER FROM W DOUGLAS EVANS
RESEARCH TRIANGLE INSTITUTE. NORTH CAROLINA**

MEMORANDUM

August 11, 2007

TO: Barbara Biggins
FROM: W. Douglas Evans, Ph.D.
RE: Review of report entitled "Television Advertising to Children"

This memo summarizes my review of the above referenced report. All views expressed in this review are my own, and do not necessarily reflect the views of RTI International.

General comments:

The report is well written and provides a reasonably thorough overview of the main areas of research on advertising effects on audiences, research on the effects of specific advertising features and strategies, and specifically on the effects of advertising on children's knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors. Overall, I think the report does a pretty good of surveying the relevant research literature and accurately describes the studies reported. However, I have some specific concerns about interpretations of the evidence and conclusions, noted below. In particular, the report tends in several cases to take an overly narrow interpretation of evidence, and concludes that no effects of certain types (e.g., premiums, pester power) can be concluded from the evidence.

On the contrary, these seem to be the most likely explanations given the available evidence. Overall, while well documented and argued, the report has a surprising tendency to understate what is known on the subject of advertising effects on children, and in many cases seems unwilling to adopt the most likely explanation given the evidence (e.g., that advertising causes pestering for unhealthy food products), holding the field to an unreasonably high standard and refusing to accept likely explanations based on the evidence. In some cases, these explanations should be considered working hypotheses deserving of further study. In others, they are the overwhelmingly likely explanation, awaiting final confirmation through appropriately designed studies. The report fails to acknowledge this situation in many of the domains it addresses.

Specific comments:

The report did a reasonably good job of reporting on the child development literature, citing research from the US, UK, Sweden, Australia and other countries. The results reported are consistent with my own reading of this research literature, and the specific domains explored (in terms of stages of cognitive development) are appropriate.

Similarly, the research on advertising repetition and its effects on food preference and choice is reasonably good. Some of the more recent studies from 2000 to present were not cited (e.g., work by Pollay et al. in the UK), but some very good ones (e.g., Kotler, 2005) were discussed and the overall conclusions of this section that characters and other advertising strategies/features can affect children's preferences and behavior are well founded.

The section on the effects of premiums on children's behavior is highly questionable in my opinion. The overall conclusion that evidence does not point to any effects of premiums marketed through televised advertising on children is not well supported. The argument is that only qualitative evidence supports this narrow claim, which is true. However, there are numerous quantitative studies that support the general claim that TV-advertised premiums affect adult consumer behavior. It is easy to conclude at a minimum that there may be an effect on children as well, and that this hypothesis should be assumed until further evidence to contrary is uncovered. Instead, the authors point to 2 studies from the 1970s and early 1980s that showed no effect on TV-advertised premiums on children, hardly convincing given their antiquity and the massive changes in advertising to children since that time.

The section on pester power is similarly questionable in my opinion. Numerous studies showing correlation between advertising exposure and increased requests for unhealthy food and other products by pre-operational children are cited, as are studies showing that older children are also affected and are even more successful in having their request fulfilled by parents. While it is true that these studies do not isolate TV advertising as the sole causal agent in these requests, TV advertising is typically the most salient form of advertising in the overall marketing mix to which children in these studies were exposed. The most likely explanation is that it plays a major role in the pester power effect. Yet inexplicably, the report fails to acknowledge this and plays down the role of TV advertising. This seems to me a misleading interpretation of the evidence.

The section on children's exposure to food and beverage advertising is well reasoned and provides a thorough review of research literature. However, the conclusions again seem overly conservative. The authors state that "[e]mpirical research shows correlations but not causal relationships between children's exposure to advertising and knowledge about diet and nutrition, and preferences as indicated by requests (but not necessarily actual consumption) of advertised foods. The research also establishes correlations between television advertising and 'healthy' as well as 'unhealthy' knowledge, attitudes and behaviours on a broad range of issues to do with diet and lifestyle." But later they go on discount the evidence on effects of TV advertising on childhood obesity and other health behavior. This seems far too conservative. We know that TV is the predominant advertising medium. While it may be difficult to disentangle the proportion of effects of the overall marketing mix on a particular childhood health behavior, we can rest assured that TV plays a major role. The relative exposure to TV advertising compared to other media for children and adults makes this a relatively straightforward conclusion. Granted, more evidence is needed, but there is no reason to discount the most likely explanation given a substantial body of evidence for lack of a precise estimate of the effects of TV advertising. It is reasonable to conclude that the effect is large given the reach of TV advertising. The report fails to acknowledge this obvious point.

The section on interactive technology is weak. There is a much more substantial body of evidence on video games, online gaming, viral marketing in online entertainment, and so on. The report fails to cover any of this ground in depth. For example, the work of Sandra Calvert, who has worked on this topic for many years in the US, is not mentioned at all. This is the weakest section of the report in terms of evidence reviewed. I would suggest that this section of the report needs substantial additional work to be comprehensive and its conclusions deserving of serious consideration.

The section on media literacy draws reasonable conclusions about the limited evidence for this intervention strategy. However, it fails to cite several important projects, such as the Media Smart intervention funded by NIH in the US.

Overall, I would argue that the research on advertising effects on children's health that certainly points to behavioral effects, such as the effects of premiums, characters, viral marketing, a variety of effective marketing mixes using TV, pestering, etc. on negative health outcomes (e.g., obesity, smoking). But little is known about the cognitive and affective mechanisms (e.g., does ad content cause obesity-promoting behavior?) by which advertising affects behavior. We know advertising can be a negative health influence, but we don't really know HOW. This is an important gap in the knowledge base, but it doesn't change the fact that a very large and growing body of evidence points to the strong behavioral effects of advertising on children, and the negative health effects of TV advertising (alone or in concert with other marketing strategies) of certain products on children's health. The report seems to miss this major point.

If you have any questions regarding my review, please contact me at my Washington, DC, USA office at 202-728-2058 or by e-mail at devans@rti.org. Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the report.

Sincerely,

W. Douglas Evans, Ph.D.
Vice President
Public Health and Environment
RTI International

APPENDIX 4

EXTRACT: YMA SURVEY OF PARENTS' VIEWS OF ADS TO CHILDREN 2006

Over a 3 month period in late 2005 to early 2006, over 900 parents, Australia wide, were surveyed about their views of TV food advertising on their children.

Surveys were only distributed to a family where there was a child aged 3 to 5 years living with the family for at least half the time. All other families were excluded from the survey. Data was collected from all six states in Australia from a total of 910 families.

An extract from the findings follows:

- 69.5% of parents said that their children had asked to buy food as advertised on TV
- 87.2% of parents said that their children had asked to buy food that has pictures of TV or movie characters on the packaging
- 82.5% of parents agreed fully or to some extent, that food companies should stop selling unhealthy foods to their children through food advertising
- 80.1% agreed fully or to some extent that the government should put more controls on TV food advertising to children

APPENDIX 5

American Psychological Association Report on sexualised images of girls in media and advertising

APA Press Release

February 19, 2007

Contact: [Public Affairs](#)

(202) 336-5700

(202) 494-0860 (After-hours calls: [Rhea Farberman](#))

SEXUALIZATION OF GIRLS IS LINKED TO COMMON MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN GIRLS AND WOMEN—EATING DISORDERS, LOW SELF-ESTEEM, AND DEPRESSION; AN APA TASK FORCE REPORTS

Psychologists call for replacing sexualized images of girls in media and advertising with positive ones

WASHINGTON, DC—A report of the American Psychological Association (APA) released today found evidence that the proliferation of sexualized images of girls and young women in advertising, merchandising, and media is harmful to girls' self-image and healthy development.

To complete the report, the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls studied published research on the content and effects of virtually every form of media, including television, music videos, music lyrics, magazines, movies, video games and the Internet. They also examined recent advertising campaigns and merchandising of products aimed toward girls.

Sexualization was defined by the task force as occurring when a person's value comes only from her/his sexual appeal or behavior, to the exclusion of other characteristics, and when a person is sexually objectified, e.g., made into a *thing* for another's sexual use.

Examples of the sexualization of girls in all forms of media including visual media and other forms of media such as music lyrics abound. And, according to the report, have likely increased in number as "new media" have been created and access to media has become omnipresent. The influence and attitudes of parents, siblings, and friends can also add to the pressures of sexualization.

"The consequences of the sexualization of girls in media today are very real and are likely to be a negative influence on girls' healthy development," says Eileen L. Zurbriggen, PhD, chair of the APA Task Force and associate professor of psychology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. "We have ample evidence to conclude that sexualization has negative effects in a variety of domains, including cognitive functioning, physical and mental health, and healthy sexual development."

Research evidence shows that the sexualization of girls negatively affects girls and young women across a variety of health domains:

Cognitive and Emotional Consequences: Sexualization and objectification undermine a person's confidence in and comfort with her own body, leading to emotional and self-image problems, such as shame and anxiety.

Mental and Physical Health: Research links sexualization with three of the most common mental health problems diagnosed in girls and women—eating disorders, low self-esteem, and depression or depressed mood.

Sexual Development: Research suggests that the sexualization of girls has negative consequences on girls' ability to develop a healthy sexual self-image.

According to the task force report, parents can play a major role in contributing to the sexualization of their daughters or can play a protective and educative role. The APA report calls on parents, school officials, and all health professionals to be alert for the potential impact of sexualization on girls and young women. Schools, the APA says, should teach media literacy skills to all students and should include information on the negative effects of the sexualization of girls in media literacy and sex education programs.

"As a society, we need to replace all of these sexualized images with ones showing girls in positive settings—ones that show the uniqueness and competence of girls," states Dr. Zurbriggen. "The goal should be to deliver messages to all adolescents—boys and girls—that lead to healthy sexual development."

Full text of the Executive Summary, Report, and tips on "What Parents Can Do" are available at: <http://www.apa.org/pi/wpo/sexualization.html>

Members of the APA Task Force:

Eileen Zurbriggen, PhD (Chair)

Associate Professor of Psychology, Psychology Department, University of California, Santa Cruz

Expertise: Associations between power and sexuality, including rape, childhood sexual abuse, and mental connections between power and sex (such as eroticizing dominance and submission). She is currently conducting a study to investigate the ways in which college students link power and sex, and the messages concerning these linkages that they receive from parents, peers, and the media.

Available for interviews

Sharon Lamb, EdD

*Clinical Psychologist, Professor of Psychology,
Saint Michael's College*

*Co-Author: Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing Our Daughters
from Marketers' Schemes*

Expertise: Licensed psychologist, Professor of Psychology at Saint Michael's College, and co-author with Lyn Mikel Brown of the book "Packaging Girlhood: Rescuing Our Daughters from Marketers' Schemes" (St. Martin's Press, 2006). She has also written on "normal" sexual development in girls and on how therapists can treat sexual issues as they arise in the therapeutic encounter with children and teens. Her research on girls' development, teenagers and sex, and abuse and victimization is widely cited. As a clinical psychologist, she also works with girls in her private practice.

Available for interviews

Tomi-Ann Roberts, PhD

Psychology Department, Colorado College

Expertise: Psychology of gender and emotions. She studies girls' and women's attitudes and emotions toward their own bodies and body functions in a sexually objectifying culture.

Available for interviews

Deborah Tolman, EdD

Center for Research on Gender and Sexuality, San Francisco State University

Expertise: Adolescent sexuality, specifically the sexuality of girls, focused on their experiences of their own sexuality; gender and its development in adolescence, specifically in tandem with sexuality; how boys' sexuality development and girls' sexuality development co-occur through adolescence; mental health as it relates to gender and sexuality; sexual content on television; sexualization of adolescent girls; and both mental health and healthy sexuality.

Available for interviews

Monique Ward, PhD

Psychology Department, University of Michigan

Expertise: In general, her research examines contributions of parents, peers, and the media to sexual socialization. She has focused on the role of the media in this process, examining how media portrayals shape adolescents' attitudes, expectations, and behaviors related to gender roles, sexual roles, and sexual relationships. She also explores intersections between gender ideologies, body image, and sexuality.

Available for interviews

Rebecca Collins, PhD

RAND Corporation

Expertise: The causes and consequences of health risk behavior, including sex and substance use, in adolescents and adults (in particular, the role of the media in these behaviors).

Unavailable for interviews.

Jeanne Blake, Public Member

Words Can Work

Jeanne Blake is a medical journalist and president of Blake Works, Inc. which produces research and evidence-based multimedia (DVDs, the Words Can Work® series of booklets, wordscanwork.com, and abouthealth.com) about the challenges young people face growing up. She is an affiliated faculty member with the Division on Addictions at Harvard Medical School.

Not a researcher, not recommended for interviews

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The American Psychological Association (APA), in Washington, DC, is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. APA's membership includes more than 145,000 researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants and students. Through its divisions in 54 subfields of psychology and affiliations with 60 state, territorial and Canadian provincial associations, APA works to advance psychology as a science, as a profession and as a means of promoting health, education and human welfare.