

# [Issues of advertisements for children](https://assignbuster.com/issues-of-advertisements-for-children/)

Each year, enormous sums of money are spent to reach the valuable audience of children and adolescents. Companies soon came to realization of investing in marketing to children and adolescents because it provides excellent immediate and future dividends. According to Statista the United States alone spent 183 billion dollars in media advertising in 2015. (“ U. S. advertising spending,” n. d.) Every year after that it only seems to grow. Marketing has contributed to many problems’ children face today, it bombards children at every waking moment and it exploits children’s developmental vulnerabilities. Despite all the faults a reality without children’s advertisement is becoming harder to realize because it’s a big business.

If advertisers find a space whereconsumers will look, they will not hesitate to buy it up.  This space for advertising can come in anyform of media to meet its needs, including print, television, radio, cinema, outdoor, mobile and online. Since advertising is everywhere it has basicallybecome an integral part of growing up for some children. As companies came torealize this investing in marketing to children and adolescents grew because itprovides excellent immediate and future dividends.

Television has been the main outletadvertisers use to get to children. Through the 1960’s to the early 90’s theonly original animated television programs were typically scheduled only onSaturday mornings in the United States. It was also only on the majortelevision networks, so for advertisers it was a little window to advertise tochildren. Then the rise cable television came and changed the whole advertisinggame all around. Cable television introduced this new multi-channel era thatincluded numerous national program services primarily or even exclusively beingdevoted to children. These channels like Nickelodeon, Disney Channel, CartoonNetwork, and Noggin delivers significant amounts of child-oriented marketingmessages. With this advertiser would have more connections to thechildren.  Advisors could then show theirregular commercials and then also sneak in some product sponsorships. More thanlikely the product placement would somehow be linked to the show or thecharacters. One of the examples out there is Kraft Macaroni & Cheese. Ifyou go to the grocery store and pick up some Kraft mac & Cheese, there’s isalmost always a popular character on the front of the box. Characters from suchshows as “ Rugrats,” “ Pokemon,” “ Blue’s Clues,” and “ SpongeBob SquarePants” areonly there to advertise to children. The child sees it in the stores and isimmediately gravitated to this because their beloved character is on the box.

Not only are children beingbombarded by advertisements at home, advertisements have also infiltrated theschools. Schools are supposed to be a safe haven from commercialism forstudents but in recent years it has changed. If a school is in a financialpredicament one of the outlets, they turn to are advertisers. The advisors willthen place posters, billboards, and show commercials around the schools. Someeven go far incorporating it into the classroom with corporate sponsorededucational materials and product placement in textbooks. Students beingconstantly around these advertisements could derail the actual education thatsupposed to go in the institute. Schools must pick either to only educate theirstudents without commercialism or not educate and focus on their ads. Theycan’t pick and choose both elements.

For decades, advertisers have cometo the realization that children can be a profitable consumer group. The mainreason they are so profitable is because they are vulnerable with theiremerging developmental abilities. They pry on the naivete of children to selltheir products and services. According to Piaget’s theory of cognitivedevelopment children in the 2-7 range “ can [only] think about thingssymbolically.” (McLeod, 2018, para. 30) With that children under 8 are not ableto think logically about objects or events. So, they are sustainable to liesthat advertisers might say to get them to buy their products. These childrenwill believe everything they hear and say. If an ad advertises that it that itwill provide benefits and pleasures, they will believe that. They go not havethe cognitive ability to detect persuasive intent in advertising.

Today’s youth has been exposed todark elements of society because of advertisements. The aggressive marketing ofunhealthy habits is linked to negative outcomes for youth. Food marketing hasamplified “ children’s desire for, and ultimately their consumption of, energy-dense snack foods”. (Anderson & Butcher, 2006, p. 27) Which will thenincrease children’s immediate and future consumption of that certain foodbrand. This ever-growing consumption often leads to childhood obesity.

Exposure to alcohol advertisements“ is associated with the likelihoodthat adolescents will start to drink alcohol, and with increased drinkingamongst baseline drinkers.” (Anderson, de Bruijn, Angus, Gordon, &Hastings, 2009) This is very concerning because early alcohol useincreases the risk of future alcohol dependence. Even though tobacco ads havebeen banned from tv for over 40 years youth are still exposed to e- cigarettes. The exposure in advertisements“ increased 256% from 2011 to 2013” then use “ increased 321% over the sameperiod”. (Arnold et al., 2014) At this time e-cigarettes, are fairly newso there isn’t definitive evidence to know the affects it causes to people. Butif the trend stays the same awareness and use of the e-cigarettes will onincrease.

One of the last issues is the mediaportrayals of thin women and men. This ideal can be harmful to children in thedevelopmental stage. This depiction will ultimately lead to body imageconcerns. Multiple studies have tested “ links between media exposure to women’s body dissatisfaction” andthe findings support the notion thatit is harmful. (Grabe, Ward, Hyde, 2008, pg. 460) So not only can mediainfluence children into unhealthy habits it can also influence how we viewthemselves.

Today’s marketing is promoting thesesick values and it is not improving anybody except the business. Businesses arespending around “$1. 4 billion per month [just] marketing to children.”(Horovitz, 2006, para. 5). Advertisers are spending this much money to targetto youth and get them to convince their parents in buying the advertised food, toys, clothes, or many other products. Because of this children & theirparents will spend a lot of their money to just go in the pockets of big corporations. These advertisements influence the family about which product to buy and couldpossibly create a lifetime brand loyalty. The amount of money that goes in tomarketing then begins to become clear. Alone kids “ under 14 spend about $40billion annually” and “ teens are spending about 159 billion” annually.(Marketing to children overview, n. d.) With that much revenue coming out ofjust children I don’t see any business backing down on advertising anytimesoon.

To protect children from the advertisementsthere are few people that could speak up and make difference. Medicalprofessionals are one and they could influence the parents. Some national andinternational public health organizations have already spoken up. Theseinstitutions include the World Health Organization, the Institutes forMedicine, and the American Psychological Association. All of them have calledfor restrictions on marketing to children. The medical professionals couldeducate the parents on how to handle the subtleness of advertising.  How to also handle the negative effects thatcome with kids’ constant exposures to advertisements.  With that medical professionals would mostlikely suggest ways parents could monitor the kid’s media exposure. Also, howto talk to the kid about what they just saw and how to respond to theadvertisements. In recent years many little organizations and coalitions havecome out to stop the advertising to children also.

Another big player of making a hugechange is policy makers. The policy makers made a separate entity that dealswith advertising and the laws. It is called the Federal Trade Commission and ita “ federal agency that enforces advertising laws and regulations.” (Lubben, 2016, para. 2) Any business, manufacturer, or retailer that deals withchildren’s products must follow the rules set by the federal trade commission. If they do not “ comply with advertising laws can result in costly enforcementactions and civil penalties.” (Lubben, 2016, para. 2) These laws made by theFederal Trade commission are there to mainly protect consumers. It requiresadvertisers to be honest about their products that they are selling. The FTCwill usually look at case a consumer point of view and consider how it conveysto the consumers. The federal trade commission is the national level ofadvertising regulations; but state and local government can also form andregulate advertisements also. Several states have even passed legislation torestrict junk food marketing in schools. With this Federal Trade Commission, they are able to make more laws that could ultimately lead to less advertisingtargeted to kids.

The concern of these young children‘ s targeting is not a new development. Research on the question dates from thelate 1960s. In the early 1970s, the Federal Communications Commissionconsidered a proposal to ban advertising to children ‘ s audiences, but decidedon a more modest approach programming for children and restricting certainadvertising practices that make it more difficult for children to attributepersuasive intentions. Later in the 1970s, the Federal Trade Commission alsoconsidered banning all TV advertising for young children, citing the type ofdevelopmental research exactly as the task force reviewed. In response topressure from the television and advertising industry, Congress forced the FTCto abandon this proposal by threatening the funding of the agency.

Lastly there are the educators ofthe youth. They are working with the kids every day and would be the bestoption of making change to in manipulative advertisements. There could becurriculum focused on media. It how to think critically about the message thatproduct is trying to send out. They could easily explain to the children on howmarketing works and how they are involved. This could then start a chainreaction that would decrease sells of products and then stop the aggressiveadvertisements.

In summary, commercial targeting children have experienced profound changes over recent years, resulting in unprecedented levels of advertising reaching young audiences. These advertisements can be very harmful to the developing youth. Big business is not going to stop their revenue from flowing so the only rational thing to stop advertising is to take it into our own hands.

### References

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