

# Ethics In Advertising To Children

Stanley, T. (2007, October 15).  
Babies in Brandland. *Brandweek*,  
48 (37), 28-32.

# Targeting Kids 8 and younger:

- \* Include adolescents, tweens and gradeschoolers
- \* 75% of youngsters watching ads for toys, sneakers and snacks are under 6 years old.
- \* 43% younger than 2 years old.

*(Kaiser Family Foundation Study, 2005)*

Kids who spend 2 or more hours watching TV each day, by age:

- |               |       |
|---------------|-------|
| * 6-23 months | * 14% |
| * 2-3 years   | * 41% |
| * 4-6 years   | * 43% |

*Kaiser Family Foundation, 2005*

## The under 12 age demographic - common traits

- \* Weak psychological will
- \* Can't understand motives of ads
- \* Misunderstand persuasive intent
- \* In mind of a toddler, its all fact
- \* Commercial concept means nothing

## Josef Mandelbaum, CEO

*“Most marketers would tell you that 5-year-olds are their gateway. And 6-11 is certainly a reasonable target.”*

## 3 Questions:

- \* Is It Acceptable to Market to Children?
- \* If So, What Should Messages Look Like?
- \* What can marketer do to promote brand without exploiting children?



# Marian Salzman, CMO of JWT

*“At a very young age, kids speak three languages now: English, digital and brand.”*

# According to 3 studies:

- \* Children between 4-12 spent \$30 Bil. In 2002 (compared to \$8.8 Bil in 1989).

*Campaign For Commercial-Free Childhood*

- \* Kids influence another \$600 Bil. a year on small and big-ticket items.

*Texas A & M*

- \* A third of 4-6 year olds own a DVD player, TV and Portable videogame device, and 90% of them use screen media every day for 2+ hours.

*Kaiser Family Foundation*

# Juliet B. Schor, *Born To Buy*

- The more kids are exposed to consumer culture, the more likely they are to become depressed, suffer from anxiety or experience low self-esteem.

# What forms do ads take?

- \* Links between big budget movies and snack foods.
- \* Thinly disguised product pitches appear to be programming.
- \* Vague transitions between ad/entertainment.



## Eric Clark, Journalist

*“Kids are being treated like little adults but they’re not yet equipped for it.”*

## Responsible Advertising to children under 8.

- \* Kellogg
- \* Fisher-Price
- \* Little Tykes
- \* MGA Entertainment
- \* Geppetto Group

Focus Groups Include  
Parents, Children.

*“Do What Is Right.”*

Give kids credit, feed  
their interests.

*“They’re much smarter  
than we think.”*

# Success Stories

- \* Kellogg agrees to stop marketing its food to kids under 12 unless those foods meet certain specific nutrition guidelines.
- \* The move came after threats of a lawsuit by an advocacy group.

# Success Stories

- \* 10 food and beverage companies pledged that half their advertising aimed at children would promote exercise; certain spots that promote products that exceed certain sugar / sodium thresholds will be pulled.
- \* Critics complain there exist loopholes.



## Kids' exposure to food advertising on TV, on average

Age 2-7: 12 ads/day

Age 8-12: 21 ads/day

Age 13-17: 17 ads/day



# Vicky Rideout, VP, Kaiser Family Foundation

*“You’re playing Whack A Mole. If you stomp it down in one area it’ll pop up somewhere else.”*

Percent of 4-6 year olds who have ever done the following on a computer:

- \* Used a mouse to point and click: 66%
- \* Used a computer on their own: 52%
- \* Loaded a CD-Rom by themselves: 37%
- \* Looked at Web sites for kids: 33%

*Kaiser Family Foundation*