



NFEC Calls for a Halt to All Advertising to Children Under Age 8

Dear [Advertiser],

The NFEC requests that all advertising efforts to children under the age of 8 years old be immediately stopped. Our goal in this request is to protect our children's well-being and ensure that misleading marketing messages are not shaping their values and financial behaviors into the future.

Children aged 8 and younger lack the cognitive ability to recognize the persuasive intent of advertising to which they're exposed, and are unable to discriminate between commercial and noncommercial content. (1) It's also been shown that, even up until age 11, kids do not fully understand advertising's intent and bias.(2)

Research clearly demonstrates that advertising to children can have harmful effects which may last a lifetime. Child-targeted marketing can harm children's health and self-esteem, perpetuate gender and social stereotypes, encourage materialism, and spark family conflict.(3,4) Marketing exposure can negatively affect kids' financial health as well – childhood materialism has been linked with risk of future overspending and debt.(5,6) Children's brains are not fully developed to sufficiently regulate impulsive behaviors and delay gratification. Therefore, advertising to kids also may be associated with drug and alcohol use in adulthood.(4) In addition, violent media like movies and video games are being marketed to children, with potential to increase violent behavior.(1)

Since the advertising industry currently has only self-regulatory measures in place, we strongly recommend that you adhere to those guidelines by ceasing all marketing targeted to reach children under age 8 years. Taking this step can make a powerful difference in children's lives by helping protect them from the negative impact of commercialist and materialistic attitudes and behaviors. In turn, you will be contributing to the health and well-being of our entire society.



Research Cited

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