Predatory Junk Food and Beverage Advertising to Youth of Color

Healthy Kids’ Meals Policy Summit
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Why does it matter?
All kids deserve good health

• Every child needs a healthy start, for themselves and for the foundation of our society
• One obstacle is junk food and beverage marketing -- research shows it harms kids by manipulating their preferences and ultimately what they eat
• In this presentation, we describe how that works, why it’s worse for kids of color, and what we can do about it
How marketing works: The 5 Ps of marketing

• Design **products** you think people want
• **Price** them according to the audience you are trying to reach
• Put them in **places** where your audience will be
• **Promote** what you’re doing to get your audience familiar with your brand
• Use digital tools to **personalize** your pitch
Create a kids market with products
Schools are a place with a captive audience for junk food marketers where they can promote their products in the hallway, the gym, or in the classroom at a price students can afford. Online, companies can personalize the marketing for individual kids.
Place + Promotion: Schools
Promotion + Price: Coupons
Place + Promotion: Schools
The 5th P: Personalization – The digital game-changer

- Physically surrounds young people in their schools, neighborhoods, and online
- Increasingly digital: always on and personalized
- By sharing promotional content on their social channels, friends become “brand ambassadors”
- Teen brains are affected by food ads
PRINGLES CHALLENGE! 20 Flavors! Extreme Potato Chip Tasting Contest!

Up next:
1. PRINGLES CHALLENGE Parents Edition!!! Can You Guess the Ingredients?
2. OREO CHALLENGE!!! The Blindfold Cookie Tasting Game
3. ICE CREAM CHALLENGE!!! Ben & Jerry's 16 Flavor Taste Test!
4. HARRY POTTER BEAN BOOZLED CHALLENGE! Gross Bertie Bott's Slugs & Beans
5. MAGICALLY GROSS SODA CHALLENGE!!! Kids Drink Weird Soda Flavors! GROSS!
Sponsorship brings “place” marketing into community spaces
Marketing in Indian Country: Which costs more?
Food marketing works!

- Food marketing not only affects kids’ purchase requests, but also influences their tastes, diets and health.
- Digital marketing has been a game-changer, and these new advances are likely to have a disproportionate impact on youth of color.
Marketing to kids of color
What is “target” marketing?
Health impacts on kids of color

Communities of color have been the hardest hit by the current epidemic of diabetes and other nutrition-related diseases.
Why are kids of color being targeted?

• Rapidly increasing market
• Significant economic impact
• Trend-setters for white kids
• High levels of media use (TV, digital)
Promotion saturates kids’ message environment

Youth of color are more interested in, receptive to, and influenced by marketing than their white peers.

84% of foods and drinks advertised to kids on Spanish TV are unhealthy.

Black kids see more than 2X as many TV ads for sugary drinks as white kids do.
What can we do? Understanding the Marketing Mix

Product: are healthier products being marketed to kids of color?
Price: at prices they can afford?
Place: in places where they live, learn and play?
Promotion: advertised as aggressively as junk food?
Personalization: without compromising privacy?
Understanding the marketing mix in your community

In your community:

- What unhealthy products are marketed to communities of color?
- How is price used to attract low-income and communities of color?
- Where does marketing to communities of color show up?
- What type of festivals, holiday events and other venues for communities of color are unhealthy products promoted?
- How is digital technology used to promote unhealthy products?
What can we do? Advocate for more research

- Monitor rapidly changing marketing practices & message environments
- Use all 5 Ps to examine the effects of racial/ethnic targeting specifically
- Research the effects of brand advertising and content marketing
- Help parents understand targeting effects & susceptibility, including adolescent brain development
What can we do? Advocate for policy change

- Strengthen nutrition standards for self-regulation
- Protections should cover children and youth
- Include products and brands in all forms of marketing (digital, packaging, sponsorship, in schools, toys)
- Address all the Ps, including product, price, place, promotion, & personalization
What can we do? Educate and act

- Support kids of color who want to raise their voices about being targeted
- Partner with community leaders
- Help parents get involved
- Share the research
- Encourage the companies to do better
- Educate policymakers about what they can do to protect children and youth of color from harmful target marketing
Encourage audiences to:

- Understand how the problem is currently framed.
- Illustrate the landscape.
- Articulate values.
- Assign responsibility for a policy solution.
Thank you!

For more information, contact Berkeley Media Studies Group

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