“They aren't children as much as what we like to call ‘evolving consumers,'”
Elliot Ettenberg, Marketing Executive

Children see more 40,000 advertisements on TV alone

Marketing to children is big business

Almost every major media program for children has a line of licensed merchandise . . .

. . . And is used to sell junk food
Annie Leith, arrested for downloading music illegally.

Marketing exploits children’s vulnerabilities.

There is a growing movement to protect children from marketing.

Seuss For Sale

Product Licensing
Product Placement

Co-Branding

Contests and Promotions

Advergaming at candystand.com

Immersive Advertising – A trademark of neopets.com

Materialism and Family Stress
Being materialistic affects children’s well-being

- Children who are more materialistic are less happy, more anxious, and have lower self-esteem
- Psychologically healthy children are made worse when they become enmeshed in a culture of getting and spending
- Exposure to marketing contributes to children’s materialism

"All of our advertising is targeted to kids. You want that nag factor so that 7-year-old Sarah is nagging Mom in the grocery store to buy Funky Purple. We're not sure Mom would reach out for it on her own."

Kelly Stitt, a senior brand manager at Heinz quoted in the Wall Street Journal 10/24/2001

The “Nag Factor”, purchase requests and family conflict.

- Children’s purchase requests are related to their exposure to advertising.
- Marketers deliberately try to get children to nag for products . . . and make parenting harder.

If we understand what motivates a parent to buy a product, that if we could develop a creative commercial you know a 30 second commercial that encourages the child to whine or show some sort of importance in it that the child understands and is able to reiterate to the parents then we're successful.

Is it ethical? I don’t know. But our role at Initiative is to move products. And if we know you move products with a certain creative execution placed in a certain type of media vehicle then we’ve done our job.

Lucy Hughes
Initiative Media World Wide
Created the Nag Factor Study

Marketing to Babies and Toddlers
Babies and infants are spending more time in front of screens

- 26% of children under two have a TV in their bedroom
- Every day, 68% of children under two watch TV or a video or use a computer
- The American Academy of Pediatrics “urges parents to avoid television for children under two years old.”

Since the advent of Teletubbies, there are an increasing number of media programs for babies and toddlers

For babies 9 months and up

There is no evidence that videos have for babies have any educational value

Computer software for babies takes them from active, multisensory exploration of the world

“At six months of age, the same age they are imitation simple sounds like ‘ma-ma’, babies are forming mental images of corporate logos and mascots”

Children’s marketing guru, psychologist James McNeal

Baby Branding
“All of these people understand something that is very basic and logical, that if you own this child at an early age, you can own this child for years to come...Companies are saying, 'Hey, I want to own the kid younger and younger and younger.'

Mike Searle, former President, Kids R Us

Even PBS shows are used to target babies

When it comes to targeting kid consumers, we at General Mills follow the Proctor and Gamble model of ‘cradle to grave’... We believe in getting them early and having them for life.

Wayne Chilicki, General Mills

Play is essential to a child’s healthy development

- Play promotes critical thinking, problem-solving skills and intellectual development
- Children play to express their fantasies and feelings and to gain a sense of control over the world
Young children are spending more and more time in front of screens – and less time playing creatively

- Children six and under spend an average of two hours a day with screen media
- 36% of children six and under have a TV in their bedroom
- Two-thirds of children six and under live in a household where the TV is on at least half the time

Many of the top-selling toys for children are de facto ads for media programs

Toys created from media programs come with built-in stories – so children do not have to create their own.

Other toys are ads for food
Marketing and Obesity

- There has been a dramatic increase in obesity among American Children.
- The rates are higher among minorities.
- Obesity has serious health consequences for children and adults: diabetes, hypertension, asthma, orthopedic problems and low self-esteem.

Marketing is a factor in childhood obesity.

Children are bombarded with advertisements for junk food.

Children’s favorite media characters sell junk food.

American Idol – the #1 TV Show for children
Many toys and games for children are junk food advertisements.

At the same time, food is marketed as a toy.

A number of researchers and professional organizations are concerned about the link between childhood obesity and food marketing.

Junk food marketers target children in schools.

Increasingly, marketers have looked to infiltrate schools to gain access to a captive audience.
Channel One is shown in over 12,000 schools to more than 8 million students

94% of high schools, 84% of middle schools, and 58% of elementary schools allow the sale of soda or other sugar-laden drinks on their premises

Delivering pizzas for Domino's Pizza Day at North Hills Junior High School.

Corporate-sponsored classroom materials

“Free” textbook covers for students
Viewing entertainment violence can lead to increases in aggressive attitudes, values and behavior
- Viewing violence can lead to emotional desensitization
- Entertainment violence feeds a perception that the world is violent and mean place
- Children exposed to violent programming have a higher tendency for violent and aggressive behavior later in life

Children’s media are fraught with violence
- Children’s TV shows average 14 violent acts per hour
- Almost all of the top-selling video games contain violence
- Despite the use of rating systems throughout the entertainment industry, violent media content is frequently marketed to children
Children are bombarded with sexual content and messages

- Most of the top TV shows for teens contain sexual content
- Video games, music and music videos popular with teens are often sexually explicit
- There is a link between watching sexual content and adolescent’s sexual activity.

Sex sells milk to children . . .
. . . and soda

Bratz dolls – for children 5 and up

Abercrombie and Fitch’s thong underwear
for 10-year-old girls

Ad in Young Miss Magazine

Ad in Teen People
Almost half of models are malnourished according to World Health Organization standards

Concerns about body type and eating disorders are prevalent among girls
- The number one wish for girls 11-17 is to be thinner
- Many girls as young as 9-years-old are on diets
- As many as 10 million females are struggling with an eating disorders

Marketing is a factor in eating disorders
- Adolescent girls’ discontent about body image is directly correlated to how often they read fashion magazines
- Viewing television commercials leads to increased body dissatisfaction for both male and female adolescents
- Girls with eating disorders are more susceptible to messages about body image than girls with normal eating patterns

A life-size Barbie would have a 16-inch waist

Almost half of models are malnourished according to World Health Organization standards

From Young Miss Magazine
Alcohol marketing has a significant impact on youth decisions to drink

- Teens say ads have an influence on their desire to drink in general
- Alcohol is regularly advertised on television programs watched by children and teens
- Alcohol marketing that reaches children is everywhere

Underage drinking is extremely prevalent and has serious consequences for youth

- The average age at which young people begin to drink is less than 13-years-old
- 12.4% of 8th graders, 22.4% of 10th graders, and 28.6% of 12th graders are heavy drinkers
- Lifetime alcohol abuse and dependence is greatest for those who begin drinking between the ages of eleven and fourteen

The Budweiser frogs, popular with 9-11 year-olds.
A popular PG-13 rated James Bond movie sponsored by Finlandia Vodka

From Stuff, a magazine popular with adolescent boys. Youth see more alcohol advertising than adults in magazines.

Sweetened “alcopops” are targeted to youth

Sex and hip-hop used to market alcohol to African-American Youth

Kid Rock Coors Light Television Commercial
Teens see more ads for alcohol on TV than they do for jeans, sneakers, or potato chips

Alcohol brands sponsor concerts and sporting events popular with youth
Almost three-quarters of parents fault alcohol companies for the amount of ads that teens see and hear.

“The base of our business is the high school student.”
- Lorrilard Tobacco

“Cherry Skoal is for somebody who likes the taste of candy, if you know what I’m saying”
- U.S. Tobacco

“Today’s teenager is tomorrow’s potential regular customer, and the overwhelming majority of smokers first begin to smoke while still in their teens. The smoking patterns of teenagers are particularly important to Philip Morris.”

The tobacco industry still markets their product to kids.
- Tobacco companies regularly advertise in youth-oriented magazines.
- Cigarette companies have increased advertising and promotions in convenience stores and retail outlets.
- Kids are more than twice as likely as adults to recall seeing a tobacco ad in the past 2 weeks

The impact of tobacco marketing to kids
- There is a causal relationship between tobacco marketing and smoking initiation
- Teens are more likely to be influenced to smoke by cigarette advertising than they are by peer pressure
- Tobacco marketing can even trump good parenting
Hip-hop sells tobacco to youth

From Stuff, a magazine popular with adolescent boys.

Sex and rebellion sell cigarettes to youth

Tobacco marketing next to the candy and cashier

Adolescents who own a tobacco promotional item are more likely to become smokers

There have been many important victories in the battle to protect children from the tobacco companies . . .

But there is still more work to be done.