

# Food Marketing in Schools Fast Facts

To provide you with the best science and to reduce review time, please find the following science-approved facts for use in your campaigns and materials. After each fact you will also find fast facts based on the science that can be cut and pasted word-for-word without need for additional science review. Please note that any change in wording will result in the need to run your documents through science review before release.

## About Food Marketing to Children

Policy makers, health advocates, and food and beverage companies are pursuing a variety of strategies to address the negative impact of unhealthy food marketing on children's diets and health. The Council of Better Business Bureaus' Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) and the American Beverage Association's (ABA) Guidelines on Marketing to Children are voluntary industry-led efforts to address food marketing to children in the U.S. As of July 2017, food and drinks that do not meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Smart Snacks standards for food and drinks cannot be marketed to students in schools. In 2018, the CFBAI strengthened the nutrition criteria that applies to foods advertised to children. Despite this progress, food marketing to children remains a concern.

## Food Marketing to Children

### FACT 1

The majority of foods marketed to children are of poor nutritional quality. On television alone, children and teens viewed on average about 11 to 12 food ads per day in 2016, almost exclusively for fast food and other restaurants, candy, snacks, sugary drinks, and cereals.

### Fast Facts:

- ▶ The majority of foods marketed to kids on television are unhealthy.
- ▶ Most of the food ads kids see on TV promote unhealthy foods like candy, sugary drinks, cereal, and fast food restaurants.
- ▶ Kids see about 11 to 12 food ads on TV every day. The majority of those ads are for fast food, candy, sugary drinks, snacks, and cereal.
- ▶ Kids see close to a dozen food ads on TV a day. And most of those ads are for fast food, snacks, candy, soda and other sugary drinks.

### Source:

Frazier WC, Harris JL; UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity. Trends in television food advertising to young people: 2016 update. Published June 2017. <http://uconnruddcenter.org/files/TVAdTrends2017.pdf>. Accessed August 22, 2018.

## FACT 2

Exposure to unhealthy food and beverage marketing increases children's dietary intake and influences their dietary behaviors. A review of 29 randomized trials found that children and teens increased their dietary intake by nearly 30 calories during or shortly after viewing an ad for an unhealthy food or beverage. They were also more likely to select the advertised food or beverages.

### Fast Facts:

- ▶ Unhealthy food and beverage marketing can influence kids' choices.
- ▶ Marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages can shape children's preferences for those products.
- ▶ Kids who see ads for unhealthy foods and beverages are more likely to want to eat those products.
- ▶ After seeing ads for unhealthy foods and beverages, kids are more likely to choose those products.
- ▶ Kids tend to consume more calories after seeing an ad for an unhealthy food or beverage.
- ▶ The food industry markets unhealthy food and beverages to our kids because it works. In fact, studies show that kids eat more calories during or shortly after just seeing ads for unhealthy food and drinks.

### Source:

Sadeghirad B, Duhaney T, Motaghipisheh S, Campbell NR, Johnston BC. Influence of unhealthy food and beverage marketing on children's dietary intake and preference: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized trials. *Obes Rev.* 2016; 17(10):945-59, doi: 10.1111/obr.12445.

## FACT 3

The food and beverage industry reaches children through a variety of channels—television, print media, online, at the movies, in video games, and at school. Companies are increasingly using digital marketing to amplify advertising in traditional media, reporting greater brand awareness, greater intent to purchase, and higher product sales.

### Fast Facts:

- ▶ Food and beverage companies are increasingly using digital marketing to reach kids.
- ▶ Digital marketing is proving effective for food and beverage companies. They report greater brand awareness and higher sales using digital marketing to amplify advertising in traditional media.
- ▶ The food and beverage industry uses many chances to reach our kids: including TV, online, at the movies, through video games, and at school.

### Source:

Lapierre MA, Fleming-Milici F, Rozendaal E, McAlister AR, Castonguay J. The effect of advertising on children and adolescents. *Pediatrics.* 2017; 140(Suppl 2): S152-S156, doi: 10.1542/peds.2016-1758V.

World Health Organization. Tackling Food Marketing to Children in a Digital World: Trans-disciplinary Perspectives. Published 2016. [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/322226/Tackling-food-marketing-children-digital-world-trans-disciplinary-perspectives-en.pdf?ua=1](http://www.euro.who.int/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/322226/Tackling-food-marketing-children-digital-world-trans-disciplinary-perspectives-en.pdf?ua=1). Accessed August 22, 2018.

#### FACT 4

Parents are concerned about food marketing to children. In 2015, 85 percent of parents surveyed agreed that food companies should reduce marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to children, 71 percent agreed that food companies do not act responsibly when they advertise to children.

#### **Fast Facts:**

- ▶ Parents are concerned about the amount of unhealthy food and beverage ads their kids see.
- ▶ The majority of parents think food companies should reduce marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to kids.
- ▶ The majority of parents think food companies do not act responsibly when they advertise to kids.
- ▶ Two-thirds of parents think food companies make it difficult to raise healthy kids.
- ▶ Parents agree that companies should reduce their marketing of unhealthy foods and drinks to kids.

#### **Source:**

Harris JL, Haraghey KS, Choi Y-Y, Fleming-Milici F; UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity. Parents' attitudes about food marketing to children: 2012 to 2015. Published April 2017. <http://www.uconnruddcenter.org/files/Pdfs/Rudd%20Center%20Parent%20Attitudes%20Report%202017.pdf>. Accessed August 27, 2018.

## Food Marketing in Schools

#### FACT 5

Most students at all grade levels are exposed to some form of marketing at school, although the prevalence of some types of school marketing has been declining over time. In 2012, 70 percent of elementary and middle school students and 90 percent of high school students attended schools with food and/or beverage marketing. The most common types were food coupons used as incentives in elementary schools and exclusive beverage contracts for middle and high school students.

#### **Fast Facts:**

- ▶ Although some types of marketing in schools has been declining over time, food and beverage marketing is still prevalent.
- ▶ Most students at all grade levels are exposed to some form of marketing at school.
- ▶ In 2012, 70 percent of elementary and middle school students and 90 percent of high school students attended schools with food and/or beverage marketing.
- ▶ In 2012, the most common types of marketing were food coupons in elementary schools and exclusive beverage contracts in middle and high schools.
- ▶ Think your kids are safe from food and drink marketing at school? Seventy percent of elementary and middle schoolers and 90 percent of high schoolers attend schools with food and beverage ads.

#### **Source:**

Terry-McElrath YM, Turner L, Sandoval A, Johnston LD, Chaloupka FJ. Commercialism in US elementary and secondary school nutrition environments: trends from 2007 to 2012. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2014; 168(3):234-42.

## FACT 6

A 2014 nationally representative study found that exposure to food coupons used as incentives in elementary schools, as well as exclusive beverage contracts in middle and high schools, was significantly more common for students attending schools with majority mid or low student body socioeconomic status.

### ***Fast Facts:***

- ▶ Marketing in school, including the use of food coupons and exclusive beverage contracts, is more common in middle- and low-socioeconomic areas.
- ▶ Schools in middle- to low-socioeconomic neighborhoods have a higher prevalence of marketing through food coupons or exclusive beverage contracts.
- ▶ Students from families with middle- and low-socioeconomic status are more likely to be exposed to marketing at school through food coupons or exclusive beverage contracts.

### ***Source:***

Terry-McElrath YM, Turner L, Sandoval A, Johnston LD, Chaloupka FJ. Commercialism in US elementary and secondary school nutrition environments: trends from 2007 to 2012. *JAMA Pediatr.* 2014; 168(3):234-42.

## FACT 7

Advertising unhealthy foods and beverages in schools is contrary to health education curricula, creates inconsistent messages for children, adolescents, and families about healthful eating, and can promote unhealthy dietary choices.

### ***Fast Facts:***

- ▶ Advertising unhealthy food and beverages in schools goes against what students are learning in health education; it creates conflicting messages about healthy eating; and it can promote poor eating habits.
- ▶ Unhealthy food and beverage marketing in schools sends mixed messages to students about healthy eating because it conflicts with what they learn in health education.
- ▶ Unhealthy food and beverage marketing in schools encourages students to make poor eating choices.

### ***Source:***

Merlo CL, Michael S, Brener ND, et al. Differences in food and beverage marketing policies and practices in U.S. school districts, by demographic characteristics of school districts, 2012. *Prev Chronic Dis.* 2016; 13:E169, doi: 10.5888/pcd13.160163.

## FACT 8

In 2009, companies spent nearly \$150 million for in-school marketing of foods and beverages to children and teens. Much of the in-school marketing expenditures were teen-directed.

### **Fast Facts:**

- ▶ In 2009, companies spent nearly \$150 million advertising foods and beverages to students in elementary, middle, and high schools.
- ▶ Companies spent nearly \$150 million in food and beverage marketing for elementary, middle, and high school youth in 2009.
- ▶ A majority money spent for school-based marketing was directed towards teens.

### **Source:**

Federal Trade Commission. Review of Food Marketing to Children and Adolescents – Follow-up Report. Published December 2012. <https://www.ftc.gov/sites/default/files/documents/reports/review-food-marketing-children-and-adolescents-follow-report/121221foodmarketingreport.pdf>. Accessed August 31, 2018.

## The Current Food Marketing Environment

## FACT 9

A 2015 study found that 53 percent of Better Business Bureau's Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) company products approved for advertising to children did not meet the nutrition standards for such products proposed by a U.S. government working group. Of the CFBAI-approved food products, 23 percent exceeded the recommended limit for saturated fat, 32 percent exceeded the limit for sugar, and 15 percent exceeded the limit for sodium.

### **Fast Facts:**

- ▶ Half of the food and beverage products that the Better Business Bureau's Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) approved in 2014 to market to kids did not meet nutrition standards recommended by a U.S. government working group.
- ▶ Some of the food and beverage products approved by the Better Business Bureau's Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) to market to kids in 2014 exceeded recommendations for saturated fat, sugar, and sodium made by a U.S. government working group.
- ▶ Half of the products approved by the Better Business Bureau's Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) in 2014 failed to meet the nutrition standards recommended by a U.S. government working group. Twenty-three percent exceeded the recommended limit for saturated fat, 32 percent exceeded the limit for sugar, and 15 percent exceeded the limit for sodium.

### **Source:**

Schermebeck RM, Powell LM. Nutrition recommendations and the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative's 2014 approved food and beverage product list. *Prev Chronic Dis.* 2015; 12:E53, doi: 10.5888/pcd12.140472.

## FACT 10

Current industry self-regulation efforts have limitations. A 2015 expert panel recommended that the CFBAI program broaden its restrictions for marketing in schools, which currently does not limit advertising in middle or high schools. The panel also recommended that the CFBAI program extend protection from child-direct marketing to children up to age 14, due to evidence that older children are impressionable and vulnerable to food and beverage marketing.

### **Fast Facts:**

- ▶ Self-regulation by the food and beverage industry on marketing to kids has limitations.
- ▶ Industry self-regulation is not enough. There are limitations of what the food and beverage industry may accomplish; therefore, other experts and stakeholders can offer recommendations for responsible marketing to children.

### **Source:**

Healthy Eating Research. Recommendations for Responsible Food Marketing to Children. Published January 2015. [http://healthyeatingresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/HER\\_Food-Marketing-Comm\\_1-2015.pdf](http://healthyeatingresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/HER_Food-Marketing-Comm_1-2015.pdf). Accessed August 27, 2018.

Better Business Bureau. Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI); How CFBAI Works. <https://bbbprograms.org/programs/CFBAI/how-cfbai-works/>. Accessed August 27, 2018.

## FACT 11

A study conducted by researchers at Harvard found that fewer than one-third of foods and beverages in the “Box Tops for Education” national brand marketing program met the USDA’s Smart Snacks standards for foods offered in schools. Noncompliant snacks contained more than twice the recommended sodium and percent of calories from saturated fat.

### **Fast Facts:**

- ▶ Fewer than one-third of foods in the “Box Tops for Education” program meet the USDA’s Smart Snacks standards for foods offered in schools.
- ▶ Two-thirds of the foods in the “Box Tops for Education” program do not meet the USDA’s Smart Snacks standards.
- ▶ Noncompliant snacks in the “Box Tops for Education” program contained more than double the recommended sodium and percent of calories from saturated fat than defined by USDA’s Smart Snack standards.

### **Source:**

Moran AJ, Rimm EB, Taveras EM. A school-based brand marketing program’s adherence to federal nutrition criteria. *Am J Prev Med.* 2017; 53(5):710-713, doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2017.06.017.

## Improving School Marketing Environments

### FACT 12

Parents support restricting food marketing in schools. A national survey of parents found that support for policies to address food marketing in schools, such as not allowing book covers or other materials with food company logos to be distributed in schools and not allowing food company mascots to visit schools, increased significantly from 59 percent in 2012 to 66 percent in 2015.

#### **Fast Facts:**

- ▶ Parents are in favor of limiting food marketing in schools.
- ▶ Parents support policies that limit food marketing in schools, such as restricting food company mascots from visiting schools and eliminating materials with food company logos from being distributed.
- ▶ From 2012 to 2015, there was a significant increase in the number of parents who support policies to address food marketing in schools.

#### **Source:**

Harris JL, Haraghey KS, Choi Y-Y, Fleming-Milici F; UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity. Parents' attitudes about food marketing to children: 2012 to 2015. Published April 2017. <http://www.uconnruddcenter.org/files/Pdfs/Rudd%20Center%20Parent%20Attitudes%20Report%202017.pdf>. Accessed August 27, 2018.

### FACT 13

State provision of policy guidance can help schools reduce unhealthy food marketing practices. Researchers at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that the odds of a district requiring or recommending that schools prohibit advertisements for junk food or fast food restaurants on school property were 54 percent higher among districts in states that distributed or provided policy guidance and other materials to district or school staff, compared with districts that did not receive this assistance.

#### **Fast Facts:**

- ▶ School districts that receive policy guidance from their state are more likely to require or recommend that schools prohibit ads for junk food or fast food restaurants, compared to those that do not receive guidance.
- ▶ School districts that do not receive policy guidance from their states are less likely to require or recommend that schools prohibit ads for junk food or fast food restaurants.
- ▶ Schools are more likely to prohibit ads for junk food or fast food restaurants if their district has received policy guidance from the state.

#### **Source:**

Merlo CL, Michael S, Brener ND, Blanck H. State-level guidance and district-level policies and practices for food marketing in US school districts. *Prev Chronic Dis.* 2018; 15:E74. doi: 10.5888/pcd15.170352.

## FACT 14

A study of three schools in Maine found that noncompliant school-based food and beverage marketing was most common in athletic areas, teachers' lounges, and cafeterias. However, it could be inexpensively corrected to adhere to the federal Smart Snacks standards with help from a School Health Coordinator and school-based wellness teams.

### **Fast Facts:**

- ▶ A study of three schools in Maine showed that marketing of foods and beverages that did not meet Smart Snacks standards was most commonly found in athletic areas, teachers' lounges, and cafeterias.
- ▶ A study of three schools in Maine showed that athletic areas, teachers' lounges, and cafeterias were the places where marketing of foods and beverages that did not meet Smart Snacks standards were mostly likely to be found.
- ▶ Food and beverage marketing that does not meet Smart Snacks standards can be fixed at low-cost with help from a School Health Coordinator and school-based wellness teams.

### **Source:**

Polacsek M, O'Brien LM, Pratt E, Whatley-Blum J, Adler S. Investigating how to align schools' marketing environments with federal standards for competitive foods. *J Sch Health*. 2017; 87(3):167-173, doi: 10.1111/josh.12488.

## FACT 15

Raising profits while promoting health in schools is possible. The Center for Science in the Public Interest gathered examples of school districts that did so - including one high school that organized the sale of nearly 12 tons (960 boxes) of fruit for the high school's after-prom party, raising almost \$8,000.

### **Fast Facts:**

- ▶ Schools can raise money and promote health at the same time.
- ▶ It is possible for schools to raise money by selling healthy food.
- ▶ More and more schools are finding ways to raise money that don't involve unhealthy food.

### **Source:**

Center for Science in the Public Interest. Healthy School Fundraising Success Stories. Published March 2016. <https://cspinet.org/sites/default/files/attachment/healthy-school-fundraising-success-stories.pdf>. Accessed August 31, 2018.