

Advertising and Children

- Why advertisers target children?
 - Kids have their own money
 - Kids influence parents' spending
 - Kids can be socialized into brand loyalty
 - "cradle-to-grave" marketing
- 1970s
 - Children viewed >20,000 product commercials/year
- 1980s
 - >30,000 product commercial/s/year
- Today
 - nearly 40,000 TV ads per year
 - Typical hour of commercial TV for children features 9-11 minutes of ads
- Program-length commercials

TV and beyond

- More than 9 in 10 young people have TV's in their home
- 2/3 have a TV set in their own bedroom
- Children are now marketed to in unprecedented ways
 - brand licensing
 - product placement
 - viral marketing
 - via schools
 - the Internet

Content of Ads targeting kids

- Most ads= toys, cereal, candy, snacks, fast-food restaurant
 - food dominates
 - Average tween (8-12 yr old) sees 21 food ads per day
- Very small percentage for healthy foods
- Food ads more often targeting kids rather than adults
- Ads emphasize food/happiness and taste

- positive emotion with the product
- Stereotypes based on gender and race are prevalent

Commercial Examples

- Barbie & Ken
- Furby
- Hotwheels

Children & Advertising: Developmental Differences

(Comparing how age defines advertising attention span)

- Patterns of attention
 - younger children attend more and longer than older children
- Distinction between the ad and the program
 - Younger children can't distinguish them well
 - Distinction made based on perceptual features
 - "Separators" (required since 1974) not usually effective
 - Burger King online
 - Looney Tunes on Nickelodeon
- Purpose of ads
 - Who is the source? (children don't understand who and why this ad is there)
 - Younger children think ads are there for entertainment or information
- Recognition of bias
 - kids think the ads are telling the truth
 - more vulnerable
- Host Selling
 - eg- selling Smurfberry Crunch cereal during a break in the Smurf's cartoon
 - Common in 1950s (62% of ads)

- Banned since 1974
- Disclaimers: Honey Nut Cheerios
 - warnings or disclosures
 - intended to prevent deception caused by an ad
 - common for a cereal ads (“part of a nutritious breakfast”)
 - poor comprehension among children
- Ethical issues

Effects of Advertising on Children

- Brand Loyalty
- Desire for products
 - enhanced through repeat exposure, prizes, celebrity/character endorsements
- Parent-child conflict
- Materialism

1. Recognition of brands

- Children are highly aware of brand names
- most children (3-6) recognize McDonalds, Burger King logos
- Children (8-12) could name:
 - 5 different brands of beer
 - 4 US Presidents

2. Desire for products

- compared to light TV viewers children who watch **more** TV:
 - want more advertised toys
 - consume more advertised food
 - want more brand name products
- Experimental studies
 - randomly assigned to view or not view commercials
 - Then choose a toy, snack, beverage, etc
 - Results show:
 - ads can increase desire for product
 - increase positive attitude