
Stop Commercial Exploitation of Children

SCEC Congressional Briefing

Predatory Marketing: The Impact on Children's Health

July 16, 2004

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On Friday, July 16, 2004, SCEC in conjunction with the Children's Caucus hosted a breakfast briefing about what *Time Magazine* calls "the burgeoning and increasingly controversial business" of marketing directly to children. Over forty people, including staff from about twenty congressional offices, attended. The audience also included representatives from the health and education communities, faith based organizations, and the advertising industry.

Marketing directly to children undermines all aspects of children's healthy growth and development and contributes to public health problems like childhood obesity, eating disorders, precocious and irresponsible sexuality, underage drinking and smoking, youth violence, excessive materialism and family stress. Yet corporations continue to spend about \$15 billion annually targeting children.

Children see 40,000 ads per year on television alone—and that doesn't include the insidious and increasingly pervasive phenomena of product placement and brand licensing. Children are also inundated with ads on the Internet, in movies, videos, video games, on the radio and in school.

PANELISTS: Click on a panelist's name to read a summary of the presentation.

[Michael Brody, MD.](#) Chair of the Television and Media Committee of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

[David Jernigan, PhD.](#) Research Director of the Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth at Georgetown University.

[Velma LaPoint, PhD.](#) Associate Professor, Department of Human Development and Psychoeducational Studies, Howard School of Education.

Susan Linn, Ed.D. Associate Director, Media Center, Harvard's Judge Baker Children's Center. Instructor in Psychiatry. Author, *Consuming Kids: The Hostile Takeover of Childhood*.

Enola Aird, JD, Founder and Director of the Motherhood Project, Institute for American Values, was unable to present. The text of her presentation can be found [here](#).

"All our advertising is targeted to kids. You want that nag factor so that seven-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, senior brands manager for Heinz's catsup division, quoted in: Jonathan Eig, "Edible Entertainment – Food Companies Grab Kids by Fancifully Packaging Products as Toys, Games," *Wall Street Journal*, 24 October 2001, B1.