Types of In-School Food Marketing

1) Product sales of foods and beverages

2) Direct advertising, including:
   - Posters
   - Signs
   - Vending machine exteriors
   - In-school television ads such as on Channel One
   - Ads in school newspapers, yearbooks, and on school radio stations
   - Announcements on the public announcement (PA) system
   - Computer banner ads and screensavers

3) Indirect advertising, including logos, brand names, spokes-characters, or product names on or in conjunction with:
   - Curricula and educational materials
   - Textbook covers
   - Books and notebooks
   - Pencils
   - Sports equipment
   - Uniforms
   - Scoreboards
   - Buses
   - Taste-tests
   - Scholarships
   - Coupons and free samples
   - Sports team sponsorships
   - Food or beverage cups and containers
   - Educational incentive programs that provide food as a reward
   - Incentive programs that provide schools with supplies when families buy food products
   - Corporate-sponsored educational programs
   - School discount nights at restaurants

4) Market research

Food marketing influences youth

According to a comprehensive review by the National Academies’ Institute of Medicine, studies demonstrate that food advertising affects children’s food choices, food purchase requests, diets, and health. Studies also show that labeling and signage on school campuses affect students’ food selections at school.

Low-nutrition foods are commonly marketed in schools

Many foods and beverages of poor nutritional quality are marketed in schools. Candy and snack food manufacturers, soft drink bottlers, and fast-food restaurants are among the companies that market most heavily in schools. A national survey found that 67% of schools have advertising for foods that are high in fat and/or sugar.

Children are uniquely vulnerable to marketing of low-nutrition foods

Many children lack the skills and maturity to comprehend the complexities of good nutrition or to appreciate the long-term consequences of their actions. Children of different ages face diverse challenges to healthy eating and different vulnerabilities to food marketing. Young children do not understand the persuasive intent of advertising/marketing and are easily misled. Older children, who still do not have fully developed logical thinking, have considerable spending money and opportunities to make food choices and purchases in the absence of parental guidance.
Marketing of low-nutrition foods undermines parents and health education

Marketing in schools promotes the purchase and consumption of low-nutrition foods while children are away from their parents, in a captive environment that is supposed to be dedicated to education. The marketing of low-nutrition foods in schools undermines in-school nutrition education, parents’ efforts to feed children a healthy diet, and children’s health.

Key policy recommendation:

Implement state or local policies to limit marketing of low-nutrition foods in schools

States, local school systems, or individual schools should implement policies to limit the marketing of low-nutrition foods on campus. On elementary school campuses, only the following foods should be marketed to children: water, 1% and fat-free milk, fruits, and non-fried vegetables. Foods and beverages marketed on middle and high school campuses should meet strong nutrition standards. School districts also can negotiate vending agreements to allow only healthy foods and beverages to be sold and marketed in schools. For a model state policy on limiting marketing of low-nutrition foods in schools, go to: www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/schoolfoodmarketingbill. For a model local policy go to: www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org.

Parents, the public, and school administrators support limits on in-school marketing of low-nutrition foods

In a nationwide survey, 90% of the public reported that they oppose marketing of junk food and soda in schools. 5 Seventy-seven percent of parents in a national poll said that they would prefer that companies directed their marketing toward them rather than at their children. 6 Sixty-nine percent of school officials participating in the National Survey on Marketing Junk Food in Schools expressed strong support for increasing regulation of ads for low-nutrition foods in schools. 4

References


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