

# Policy to Reduce Marketing of Unhealthy Food and Beverages to Children

## Rationale

**Children have the right to know the truth about healthy eating. They deserve to be protected from marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages.**

**To understand how important this is to childhood health, consider that:**

- **Marketing influences children regarding their food preferences.** In fact, there is strong evidence that advertising of foods and beverages has a direct influence on what children eat. This is important to health because we all establish our lifetime food preferences and eating habits during childhood.
- **While marketing per se is just a tool, when it comes to food and beverages for children, this tool is used mainly to advertise unhealthy products.** Nearly \$2 billion is spent each year on advertising to children, and almost every food and beverage product advertised to children is unhealthy. A study of advertisements aired during children's television programming found that over 80% of ads featured unhealthy foods.
- **Watching TV or playing internet games means more exposure to unhealthy advertising and less time for active play.** Consequently, the more time children spend in front of a television, computer, and other screens, the more likely they are to be overweight or obese.
- **Kids don't know an ad when they see one.** Most children under four years of age cannot distinguish between advertising and entertainment. This makes them especially vulnerable to junk food ads that feature cartoon characters and celebrities or that offer incentives like free toys and games. When brand preferences are established at an early age, they are more likely to lead to life-long adherence to potentially unhealthy patterns of consumption.
- **Children in low-income communities are disproportionately exposed to unhealthy food and beverage marketing.** Food and beverage marketers have created culturally-resonant advertisements that appeal to children and families in these communities, and so it is no surprise that these same communities suffer higher rates of diet-related chronic diseases.

---

The marketing is working. Today, added sugars and unhealthy fats make up nearly 40% of what children eat. We can positively address the childhood obesity crisis by reducing the marketing of unhealthy foods to children.

---

## Position Statement

**The Community Services Bureau recognizes that the foods and beverages being marketed to children are mostly unhealthy items. There have been studies in which more than 80% of the products failed to meet basic nutritional standards. These "junk" foods and beverages are a significant risk to the health of the children being served.**

## Implementation

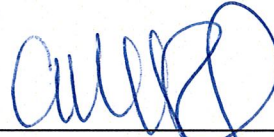
The role of CSB in serving families includes consistently modelling the behavior we wish to encourage. CSB is committed to promoting a healthy environment for young children, free from unhealthy food and beverage advertisements. CSB recognizes that while marketing practices influence public health, so do organizational practices and policies. Therefore, CSB will adopt the following policies and practices.

- CSB recognizes the benefits from computer time such as stimulating language comprehension, teaching spatial and logical skills, boosting problem-solving skills,

and increasing self-esteem and self-confidence. Nonetheless, screen time will be limited to ten minutes per day/per child.

- CSB understands that outside their walls children are being bombarded with advertising of unhealthy foods and beverages. Therefore, there will be no advertising of unhealthy food or beverage items at CSB, including our administrative sites. Books and other educational materials will promote healthy, unbranded foods and beverages.
- Meal times at CSB are family-style, where children not only serve themselves but are engaged in conversation modelled by their teachers. These participatory acts promote healthy eating and communicating.
- CSB will introduce parents to marketing that contributes to children's health, such as screen time recommendations and what parents can do to help limit screen time. CSB will also help parents learn about how marketers target low-income communities.
- CSB supports a healthy environment by seeking out opportunities to provide healthy messaging. CSB will also reduce or prohibit displays of characters, celebrities, games, and gimmicks that promote unhealthy foods, at all CSB facilities.
- CSB will ensure that all children we serve will have enough time for active play and are served only healthy foods.
- CSB will continue to advocate for healthier food environments for children by supporting public health policies that reduce marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to all children.

Approved: November 1, 2014



---

Camilla Rand, CSB Director