Parental mediation of food marketing communications aimed at children

# Details

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## Topics

## Sample

14 families encompassing 16 parents and 29 children aged 2 to 14 years of age

## Implications For Parents About

Parental practices / parental mediation

# Abstract

Children spend the majority of their leisure time watching screens of various kinds (television,
computer, mobile phone, tablet) through which they can potentially be exposed to
many commercial messages. Marketers also reach children through more traditional channels,
such as on-pack, sales promotions, sponsorship and so on. Given the proliferation of channels
and communication methods for reaching the child audience, we ask how parents approach
the task of mediating/restricting their child’s exposure to marketing communications should
they wish to do so. In a qualitative study investigating parents’ and children’s understanding of
food marketing communications in the UK, we found that parents attempt to counter food
marketing messages across a wider range of communications than previously identified, but
that newer media such as advergames and websites are not fully recognised as channels of
food marketing.

# Outcome

"Parents’ focus on the more traditional marketing communications was rather unexpected,
given the rise of newer forms of communication popular with marketers. We
account for this focus by offering two explanations: first, we found that parents were
unaware of the marketing content of newer media and therefore did not recognise websites,
advergames or video games as featuring marketing communications; second, the
internet was regulated by parents for different reasons, primarily to do with unsuitable
content, and thus associated with safety rather than marketing. Both lack of awareness
and focus on safety indicate that parents are not explicitly countering food marketing
messages their children come in to contact with when playing online, and therefore are
not implementing mediation." (Newman and Oates, 2014: 592).