



Creating Healthy Schools

3.2 Restrict Marketing of Unhealthy Choices

What is the current policy?

Our school district understands the importance of school-based marketing being consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, our school policy prohibits the marketing or promotion of unhealthy foods or beverage, those with low to no nutritional value, to students

in the school and during the school day. The promotion of healthy foods and beverages that meet nutrition standards, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

Ideas!

How can your school get more involved?

There are several ways you can help improve the marketing of healthy food choices at your school. Below are a few examples:

Marketing in the Classroom Environment

- Have students participate in a scavenger hunt to find unhealthy and healthy marketing in the classroom, cafeteria, hallways, gym, and other school areas. This would allow staff to discuss healthy and unhealthy marketing.
- Reduce participation in academic performance incentive programs that provide coupons or discounts to restaurants.
- Limit participation in unhealthy food based fundraisers.
- Prohibit the use of curriculum and educational materials that promote unhealthy food and beverages.
- Have students participate in creating their own healthy marketing posters.
- Set a good example by eating healthy at school yourself.
- Limit Internet and computer use in your classroom.

(more on back)

Why is food marketing important?

Food marketing to children and adolescents is a major public health concern. According to the UCONN Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, the food industry spends \$1.8 billion per year on marketing targeted to young people. Most ads targeted toward children and adolescents are for unhealthy products. The Rudd Center reports that children aged 12 to 14 are most susceptible to unhealthy food marketing and that school wellness policies need to be put in place to protect them from being targeted by unhealthy marketing campaigns.¹

Companies increasingly market to children anywhere they spend their time, including in schools. Research shows that marketing toward children and adolescents work, and 98% of food marketing geared toward this group is for unhealthy foods. As unhealthy marketing toward children and adolescents has increased in the United States, so has overweight and obesity. Food and beverage advertising can influence the food preferences of children which can have a lifelong impact on health status.

It is important that schools are aware of the effects of marketing and take action to reduce and eliminate marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages. Schools can counter these messages with messages about nutritionally rich foods and beverages. Having consistent marketing of nutritious foods and beverages that meet the school nutrition guidelines set by the USDA supports the health and wellness of students.

Resources:

- **Pestering Parents: How Food Companies Market Obesity to Children**, Center for Science in the Public Interest: <https://cspinet.org/resource/pestering-parents-how-food-companies-market-obesity-children-pages-1-13>
- *Marketing Food to Children* (a report on ways that different countries regulate food marketing to children [including marketing in schools]), World Health Organization (WHO): whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2004/9241591579.pdf
- *Guidelines for Responsible Food Marketing to Children*, Center for Science in the Public Interest: cspinet.org/marketingguidelines.pdf
- *Restricting Food and Beverage Advertising in Schools*, Change Lab Solutions: <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/fact-sheet-school-food-ads>
- **Food marketing to children in school: Reading, writing, and a candy ad?**, Food Marketing Workgroup: www.foodmarketing.org/resources/food-marketing-in-schools/marketing-of-low-nutrition-foods-and-beverages-in-schools/

Two other versions of this policy item are available for both administration and family to assist with implementation.

¹ Food Marketing to Youth. Retrieved February 14, 2015, from UCONN Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity: http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/what_we_do.aspx?id=4

Ideas!

- Talk about peer pressure. Many ads will count on the fact that kids are especially sensitive to peer pressure to be “cool.” Remind your students that advertisers are counting on this vulnerability to sell things.
- Talk to your students about why eating healthy is important.
- Instead of name brands, use healthy food logos or slogans on school computer banner ads and screen savers.

Marketing in the Cafeteria Environment

- Highlight healthy food items in the cafeteria line.
- Participate in healthy food taste tests, and prohibit unhealthy food taste tests.
- Limit unhealthy food items sold in á la carte and standard lunch lines.
- Use product placement to make healthier food items easier to choose.
- Create healthy value meals.
- Charge more for unhealthy items.

Marketing in the School Environment

School-wide use healthy food logo or slogan on:

- Posters, Signs, Scoreboards
- Vending machines, food display racks, cafeteria coolers
- In-school television ads, school sponsored websites, computer screen savers
- Ads in school newspapers, yearbooks, and on school radio stations
- School supplies, like books, notebooks, pencils, and textbook covers
- Public announcement (PA) system
- Sports equipment
- Uniforms
- Buses
- Sports team sponsorships
- Food or beverage cup & containers at school sponsored events

Reduce participation in school discount nights at restaurants.