



**International Council of Beverages Associations  
2015 Guidelines on Marketing to Children  
Questions and Answers**

- **What is ICBA?** The International Council of Beverages Associations (ICBA) is a nongovernmental organization that represents the interests of the worldwide non-alcoholic beverage industry. The members of ICBA include national and regional beverage associations as well as international beverage companies who operate in more than 200 countries and territories and produce, distribute, and sell a variety of non-alcoholic beverages, including sparkling and still beverages such as soft drinks, 100 percent juices, juice drinks and nectars, bottled waters, sports drinks, energy drinks and ready-to-drink coffees and teas.
- **What is the purpose of these Guidelines?** ICBA members recognize that parents and caregivers should determine what is appropriate for their children to consume, and accordingly has long made robust commitments regarding advertising and marketing to children. In 2008, ICBA established its original Guidelines on Marketing to Children, which covered broadcast, print, digital media and cinema. These Guidelines were updated in 2015 and they now cover an even wider range of programming and marketing communications to children under 12.
- **What types of marketing communications do the 2015 ICBA Guidelines cover?** The ICBA Guidelines have long addressed TV, print, Internet and company-owned websites, which represents the vast majority of beverage media and marketing spend. In recent years, however, there has been a proliferation of new technology and a wider array of media channels. ICBA has thus enhanced its Guidelines to include technologies such as company-controlled content in social media, DVD, direct marketing, product placement, interactive games, outdoor marketing, and mobile/SMS marketing.

In addition, the enhanced policy addresses the issue of “appeal.” Members have committed that use of certain techniques, such as licensed characters, celebrities, and movie tie-ins that are primarily directed to children under 12 in the media channels covered are now covered by these Guidelines.

- **What types of media are not covered by the 2015 ICBA Guidelines?** Packaging is not covered as the vast majority of beverage purchasing decisions are made by adults and not the children themselves; adults serve as gatekeepers in those situations. The Guidelines also do not cover in-store, point-of-sale and user-generated content as these are generally not within the control of the brand owner.
- **Why are children defined as under the age of 12?** Although scientists differ on the age by which children have developed an understanding of the persuasive intent of advertising, few would put that age at 12 years or higher. For this reason, all of the

government-led reviews of the existing academic research conducted in the context of the debate on food marketing communications have identified an age cut-off at 12 years.<sup>1</sup>

- **How is “advertising to children” measured?** For the purpose of these Guidelines, “advertising to children” under 12 years of age means advertising in child-directed media where 35 percent or more of the audience is under 12 years of age. For television advertising, which still attracts the vast majority of beverage marketing budgets, independent data are available to show the composition of the audience. For other forms of marketing communications where measured data is unavailable, members will consider other appropriate factors, which may include the overall advertising impressions, actions taken to restrict child access (if any), and the target demographic based on the media plan.
- **What is your commitment regarding schools?** ICBA members respect that schools are special environments where balanced lifestyles should be encouraged, and we commit not to engage in beverage marketing communications in primary schools (which are defined as schools responsible for the education of children under the age of 12). However, in primary schools, menuboards, charitable donations or fundraisers, public service messages and items provided to school administrators for educational purposes or for their personal use are not covered.
- **Why does this commitment not cover water, milk and juice?** The beverage industry and its member associations are global and diverse, and countries have varying standards to define these categories. Notably, these three listed products provide important functional and/or nutrition benefits, and while decisions on whether and what to advertise to children may vary among ICBA member companies, all ICBA members are committed to helping children under the age of 12 achieve a balanced lifestyle.
- **What is the difference between the ICBA Global Guidelines and the national or regional association pledges?** Some ICBA members (both associations and companies) maintain specific policies on marketing to children that go beyond these 2015 Guidelines or that reflect specific regional or national considerations, including differing regulatory product definitions.

We would also note that in some rare and necessary instances, national authorities may request our assistance in campaigns to improve children’s health with products formulated to address critical nutritional deficiencies. We respect those requests.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://info.be/RAC\\_AgeEvidence\\_final.pdf](http://info.be/RAC_AgeEvidence_final.pdf) ;  
[http://info/wfa.be/RAC\\_Child\\_Age\\_Review\\_Onepager\\_200911.pdf](http://info/wfa.be/RAC_Child_Age_Review_Onepager_200911.pdf);  
[http://www.bbb.org/Global/Council\\_113/CFBA/Audience%20definitions%20Aug202014.pdf](http://www.bbb.org/Global/Council_113/CFBA/Audience%20definitions%20Aug202014.pdf)

- **How does ICBA plan to monitor implementation of these Guidelines?** Since 2009, ICBA has worked with the International Food and Beverage Alliance (IFBA) to engage Accenture Media Management to independently and impartially monitor member's compliance with the global policy. Over the past years, Accenture has found that the compliance rates for television advertising have been over 94 percent in every market analyzed, and 100 percent for print and internet advertising. ICBA plans to continue with similar independent monitoring for these enhanced 2015 Guidelines.
- **What else have ICBA members done to help promote balanced lifestyles?**

The global non-alcoholic beverage industry has been working with government, industry, the public health community, and consumers around the world to be part of the solution to public health challenges such as obesity, and to promote balanced and active lifestyles. We have, for example:

- Worked to develop and provide more beverage options with fewer calories, including more reduced, low- and no-calorie product offerings.
- Further developed smaller portion size options.
- Developed the 2011 ICBA Guidelines on Nutrition Labeling to guide the global non-alcoholic beverage industry in advocating for and providing meaningful and understandable fact-based nutrition information.
- Updated the 2008 ICBA Guidelines on Marketing to Children in 2015 to cover even more programming and marketing communications to children under the age of 12.
- Established the 2013 ICBA Guidelines for the Composition, Labelling, and Responsible Marketing of Energy Drinks to help ensure such products are marketed and labeled responsibly.
- Supported nutrition and physical activity programs, and research and partnerships that advance nutrition science.