

International Council of Beverages Associations Guidelines on Marketing to Children

Context

The International Council of Beverages Associations (ICBA) represents international non-alcoholic beverage companies and major national and international beverage associations.

ICBA and its members recognise public concerns about today's health issues, particularly the rising levels of obesity and chronic diseases related to poor diets and lack of physical activity in a growing number of countries. The ICBA and its members further recognise our responsibility to play a positive role in tackling these problems, together with other global, regional and national actors.

In particular we recognise the need to respond to requests from consumers to implement a robust commitment in the area of advertising and marketing to children and to find ways which reinforce the role of parents and other adults as gatekeepers. We have listened to parents and understand their desire for our marketing practices not to undermine their role as primary decision makers in choosing what their children consume.

We also recognise that the fast development of new technology, by offering a wider variety of media channels, is changing the way in which we communicate to consumers and this too should be addressed.

Commitments

All companies undersigning this declaration commit, for the product categories mentioned below, not to place any marketing communication in any paid, third party media whose audience consists of 50% or more of children under the age of 12. This covers broadcast (TV and radio), print and digital media (including internet and phone messaging) as well as cinema (including product placement). To demonstrate their commitment, companies will communicate their implementation plans.

In addition, we recognize the need to review other forms of marketing practices (including the use of licensed characters, sponsorships and other forms of marketing communications) in channels which are predominantly related to children under 12 (e.g. primary schools). We will undertake this work by the end of 2009.

Scope

The commitment focuses on and distinguishes between different forms of advertising and marketing to children rather than different products. As producers of a wide variety of beverages, we fundamentally believe that all of our products can be part of a healthy lifestyle. Positive marketing messages which emphasize good nutrition and the importance of physical activity can also provide a solid foundation for achieving a healthy lifestyle.

This commitment applies to all non-alcoholic beverages other than water (mineral, source and purified) fruit juice, and dairy-based beverages*, as such segments are not covered by all ICBA members. The commitment also excludes products specifically formulated to address critical nutritional deficiencies and which, with the agreement of national authorities, may be part of a campaign to improve children's health.

Age

The commitment is intended to address commercial practices with respect to children under age of 12. Evidence suggests that below this age, children may lack the necessary skills and judgements to properly understand the purpose behind the persuasive techniques commercial advertising represent. It is therefore appropriate that special care be taken in deploying advertising practices to children in this age group.

Reporting

We intend to issue our first report on the implementation of these guidelines by the end of 2009.

ICBA members commit to involving third parties in the process of ensuring compliance with these commitments. We welcome comments, suggestions and offers of partnership from those international organisations that are best placed to participate in the implementation of these commitments.

* As defined by local regulations