



International Obesity TaskForce

Reducing Food Marketing to Children: The 'Sydney Principles'

Background:

The International Obesity Taskforce (IOTF) has developed a draft set of principles to guide action on reducing the commercial promotion of foods and beverages to children. They were launched at the International Congress on Obesity in Sydney in September 2006 and now these 'Sydney Principles' are out for global consultation. IOTF and the International Association for the Study of Obesity (IASO) are also part of the Global Prevention Alliance, a coalition of international non-government organisations calling for an International Code of Marketing of Food and Beverages to Children.

There are important discussion points around these Principles: the appropriate age for defining a 'child' for the issue of protection from commercial marketing, and whether restrictions in commercial promotions to children should apply to only energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and beverages, or all foods and beverages, or all commercial products. The Sydney Principles do not relate to the non-commercial promotion of healthy eating such as government-funded social marketing campaigns.

Draft Principles:

Actions to reduce commercial promotions to children should:

1. **SUPPORT THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN.** Regulations need to align with, and progress, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Rome Declaration on World Food Security which endorse the rights of children to adequate, safe and nutritious food.
2. **AFFORD SUBSTANTIAL PROTECTION TO CHILDREN.** Children are particularly vulnerable to commercial exploitation, and regulations need to be sufficiently powerful to provide them with a high level of protection. Child protection is the responsibility of every section of society – parents, governments, civil society, and the private sector.
3. **BE STATUTORY IN NATURE.** Only statutory regulations have sufficient authority to reduce the volume of marketing to children and the negative impact that this has on their diets. Industry self regulation is not designed to achieve this goal.
4. **TAKE A WIDE DEFINITION OF COMMERCIAL PROMOTIONS.** Regulations need to encompass all types of commercial targeting of children (e.g. television advertising, print, sponsorships, competitions, loyalty schemes, product placements, internet) and be sufficiently flexible to include new marketing methods as they develop.
5. **GUARANTEE COMMERCIAL-FREE CHILDHOOD SETTINGS.** Regulations need to ensure that schools and other child care and education settings are free from commercial promotions that specifically target children.
6. **INCLUDE CROSS BORDER MEDIA.** International agreements will be needed to regulate cross-border media such as internet, satellite and cable television, and free-to-air television from neighbouring countries.
7. **BE EVALUATED, MONITORED AND ENFORCED.** The impact of regulations on children's dietary patterns needs to be evaluated when instituted and the ongoing compliance with regulations needs to be monitored and enforced.

For further information and to **SUBMIT YOUR FEEDBACK** visit:
www.iotf.org/sydneyprinciples