

Codes Review Panel
ASA Secretariat
P O Box 10675
WELLINGTON

13 April 2016

Dear Panel,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the children's advertising codes. As a busy working mum my submission is rushed, but I hope I can offer some worthwhile contribution to the review anyway. My feedback relates in particular to the children's code for advertising food.

I am a mother of a six year old and four year old. I have the luxury of being well educated, reasonably affluent and well aware of what food is good for my kids to eat everyday versus occasionally. Despite this, ensuring my children have healthy food each meal is a challenge. There are many reasons for this, but one is the marketing tactics of junk food companies.

The panel has asked for examples of advertising and marketing of concern. The rest of my submission offers three such examples to demonstrate the challenging food marketing environment I find myself parenting my kids in.

Example 1: Instore Chupa Chup display at Pac n Save Papamoa.



In the photo above is a chuppa chup bin at the perfect height for my four year old son to look at while waiting in the check out aisle at Pack n Save. Every time I went to the store whilst that display was on, I had a battle with my son because I wouldn't let him have any. He would grab them tightly in his fist and I would have to forcefully open his hand to make him put them back while he loudly protested. This is despite him knowing not to expect any food treats when we go supermarket shopping. I got so fed up with this happening that I complained to the store and this was their response:

Hi R [REDACTED],

[REDACTED] from Papamoa Pak'n Save here, I am our interim buyer while our usual buyer is on leave.

I have been made aware by our checkout supervisor that you have lodged a complaint against the Chuppa Chup tins we have on display.

While I acknowledge that there are times when parenting can be challenging, we will be standing by our decision to use these tins to display our product and will be unable to facilitate your request to have them removed as yours is the sole complaint we have had against the display and the grounds of your complaint does not affect, in my eyes, the health or safety of our customers.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

GROCERY BUYER

PAPAMOA PNS

PHONE: 07 5474572

FAX : 07 5474578

[REDACTED]

You will notice the promotional pricing also encourages over-consumption beyond having one of these as an occasional treat.

Example 2: McDonalds branded products designed to promote brand recognition and loyalty at school.



My six-year-old daughter came home from school one day with these stickers given to her by a friend. I assume they came in a McDonalds happy meal. McDonalds is using popular characters to promote its brand and is trying to get its brand into the school environment by getting kids to stick it to the front of their school books which they will be opening up regularly for up to a year. This is a very sly tactic to promote brand recognition and loyalty in kids. I feel really upset that this is allowed as if she had put the sticker on her books at school I wouldn't have known about it. I don't take my kids to McDonalds and I don't want them to know about it for as long as possible.

I have also heard about how McDonalds often sponsors Most Valuable Player prizes for kids sports teams. When my kids get involved in sports I would be horrified if they experience this. The code should protect kids against sponsorship by junk and fast food companies.

Example 3: Promotional pricing of junk food outside schools.

Not something I have to deal with yet, but still a concern to me as my kids age; below are photos of a series of really cheap junk food deals promoted outside three dairys and one supermarket which are all situated within very close walking proximity of two high schools, one intermediate and one primary school in Tauranga.





As kids get older and start walking independently to school plus having a bit of pocket money, it must be a nightmare for parents knowing that they will be walking by these and no doubt buying the junk food deals. I had the opportunity to do a teaching practicum at one of the high schools nearby these dairy's nine years ago and many boys turned up eating pies for breakfast. I am distressed that my kids will be subjected to this in future.

Above are just three examples of the many high pressure and manipulative marketing techniques used by the food industry to make it challenging for parents to make healthy food choices for their kids. Making a healthy choice should be easy – the default thing to do, not a hard thing that requires exceptional parenting skills and nutritional understanding. The children's food advertising code needs to be strengthened to prevent this type of harmful and unethical practice happening in future.

Yours sincerely,

R [REDACTED] Culliford

Concerned parent

[REDACTED]