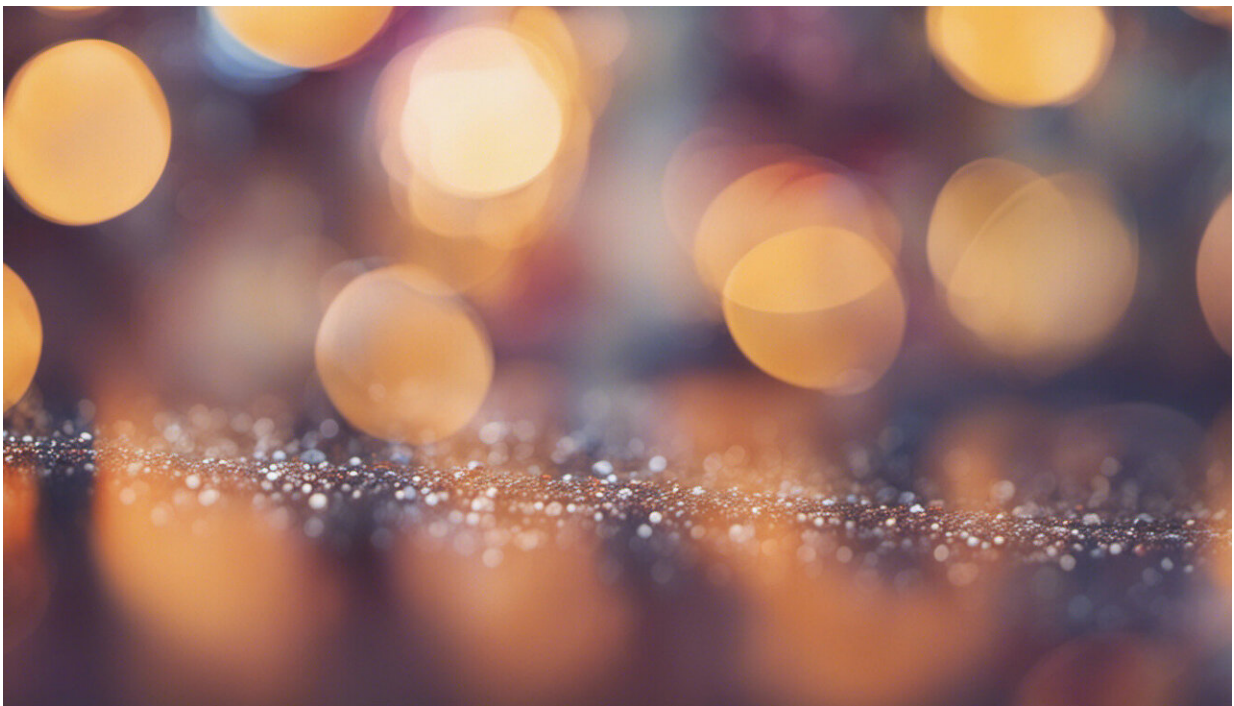


An issue we can agree on: Parents support policies limiting unhealthy food marketing to children, survey finds

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Credit: AI-generated image ([disclaimer](#))

Parents are concerned about food marketing and the way it impacts their children's eating habits and would support policies to limit the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to children, according to a study from Yale's Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity.

The study is the first of its kind to assess parents' attitudes about policies to promote [healthy eating](#), such as nutrition standards for foods sold in schools, as well as policies limiting marketing to children. Details of the study will be presented in San Francisco today during the American Public Health Association's annual meeting.

"The food industry has responded to parents' concerns about [food marketing](#) with self-regulatory pledges that have produced only small changes," said Jennifer Harris, lead author and director of marketing initiatives at the Rudd Center. "Parents are becoming more aware of food marketing and they want to start seeing real improvements."

Researchers conducted an online survey of more than 2,000 parents of children and teens ages 2 to 17 in 2009, 2010, and 2011. They surveyed parents who participate in decisions about food and beverage choices in their households. They found that parents are just as concerned about advertisements promoting unhealthy foods to children as they are about alcohol and tobacco use in the media. The majority of parents surveyed, regardless of gender or political orientation, supported nearly all proposed actions. These included: improving the school food environment; reducing advertising of unhealthy foods and beverages on television; restricting other types of advertising, such as cartoon characters on packages, toys, social media, and mobile devices as well as viral marketing and marketing in schools; and promoting healthy eating in children's media. Support was highest for nutrition standards for foods sold in schools and policies to promote healthy eating in children's media.

From the time the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI), an industry-led self-regulatory program, was fully implemented in 2009 to 2011, parents have become increasingly concerned about food and beverage marketing to their children. In 2011, 65 percent of parents surveyed rated the food industry as a negative

influence on their children's [eating habits](#), up from 59 percent in 2009. These findings suggest that parents are not satisfied with industry self-regulation.

"The food and media industries must do more to support parents' efforts to raise healthy children," said Harris. "If parents demand that food companies change their youth-targeted marketing practices or that government step in if companies do not improve voluntarily, food marketing to [children](#) would improve."

More information: www.yaleruddcenter.org/marketingsurvey

Provided by Yale University

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