



Food Ads on Children’s Programming: 2012 Snapshot

CHILDREN’S FOOD & BEVERAGE ADVERTISING INITIATIVE



Overview. This snapshot shows foods advertised to children by participants in the Children’s Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) are continuing to improve and becoming even healthier. The vast majority included a food group to encourage – fruit, vegetables, whole grains or low/non fat dairy – and met reasonable limits on calories, sugars, sodium and fat. This snapshot also found that food and beverage ads represented less than a quarter of all ads and that ads from CFBAI participants represented the majority of those ads.

About the CFBAI. The CFBAI was launched in November 2006 with the goal of shifting the mix of ads to children to include healthier products – those with fewer calories, less sodium, sugar and fats, and more nutrient dense. The CFBAI’s participants agree to use meaningful, science-based [nutrition standards](#) that are familiar to nutrition professionals to govern their advertising primarily directed to children under 12 (“child-directed advertising”) or not to engage in such advertising. The participants represent the substantial majority of child-directed food advertising on TV. Our focus is on child-directed advertising in children’s programming that are designed to be appealing to and persuasive to them, and not on all ads children may see, such as ads on prime time dramas or reality shows where children are a small percentage of the audience. While CFBAI covers a [wide range of media](#), this snapshot focuses on TV because it still dominates media use among children.

About the Snapshot. We analyzed ads in 31 hours of Nickelodeon shows from one week in March 2012. The sample includes ads from different dayparts and weekday and weekend shows.

Snapshot findings: Nutrition density

CFBAI participant advertising met all applicable nutrition criteria. The 18 products that CFBAI participants advertised a total of 216 times met their science-based nutrition criteria, including applicable limits for calories, fats, sugars or sodium. Many had nutrient levels below the relevant limits. The products included cereals, yogurts, fruit snacks, soups, meals and small meals. (A “small meal” is a multi-item product that contains less food by weight than specified in FDA’s definition of a “meal.”)

Almost all of the CFBAI participant ads are for products that contain a food group to encourage OR are a “good source” of a nutrient of concern. Our analysis showed that 90% of the ads were for products that are at least a “good source” (10-19% of the Daily Value) of a “nutrient of concern” according to the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (calcium, fiber, potassium, and vitamin D), or contain a food group to encourage (low/non fat dairy or at least a half-serving of fruit, vegetable, or whole grains). This shows a steady upward trend based on our past analyses (see Figure 1).¹

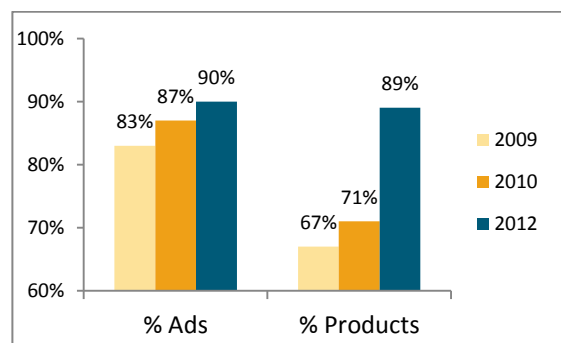


Figure 1. Percent of CFBAI Participants’ Ads and Products Containing a Food Group to Encourage or a Good Source of an Important Nutrient

¹ In 2009 and 2010 we analyzed whether advertised products were a good source of nutrients the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) characterized as “shortfall nutrients” (calcium, fiber, potassium, magnesium and vitamin E) or contained a

An overwhelming majority of CFBAI participant ads were for products that contain a food group to encourage. Our analysis of the nutrition content of the advertised products showed that 83% of the CFBAI participant *ads* (72% of *products* in the ads) were for products containing a food group to encourage: low/non fat dairy² or at least a half-serving of fruit, vegetable, or whole grains. As shown in Figure 2, this represents a 50% increase over products that contained a food group to encourage in 2010. All of the small meals and meals contained at least 1.5 servings of food groups to encourage. We also found:

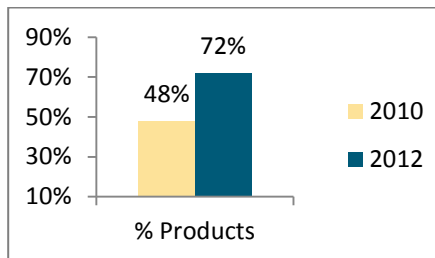


Figure 2. Percent of CFBAI Products Containing a Food Group to Encourage

Whole Grains and Fruit. Almost 3/4 of the *ads* were for products with at least a half-serving of whole grains OR fruit (72% of *ads*; 56% of *products*). About 50% of the *ads* and *products* contained at least a half serving (8 grams) of whole grains (52% of *ads*; 44% of *products*).

Dairy. Over 30% of the *ads* (22% of *products*) were for or included low/fat free milk, yogurt or yogurt/dairy drinks.

Snapshot findings: Food ads compared to non-food ads

Food and beverage ads were only a small portion of all ads.

We found that food and beverage ads represented only 23% of the 1163 ads in the Nick ad sample. Ads for sedentary entertainment, such as show promos, movies or video games, were more prevalent.

Only 23% of all ads were food & beverage ads

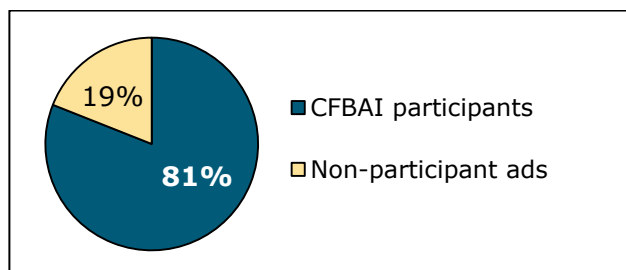


Figure 3. Percent of Food and Beverage ads that were CFBAI Participant Ads

CFBAI participant advertising represented a substantial majority of the food and beverage ads. More than 80% of food and beverage *ads* in the sample were for CFBAI participants' products, as shown in Figure 3 (62% of all food and beverage *products* advertised).

Looking forward. This snapshot illustrates how CFBAI participants are steadily improving foods advertised to children through the use of meaningful nutrition criteria. The positive trends described here will accelerate as CFBAI's new uniform nutrition criteria go into effect on December 31, 2013, and become the new foundation for CFBAI participants' child-directed advertising.³

food group to encourage. The 2010 DGA list is slightly different. See CFBAI 2009 and 2010 Progress Reports, available at www.bbb.org/kids_food.

² We did not set a half serving minimum for dairy products because some products, such as yogurts, are individually packaged in less than 4 ounce serving sizes.

³ See [CFBAI Press Release on Uniform Nutrition Criteria](#) (July 14, 2011).