Food Advertising and Marketing Directed at Children and Adolescents in the US

While eating behaviours and food choices among youth are not the result of multiple factors, food advertising is one that is increasingly becoming of interest to policy makers. Children and adolescents are often taken as a target group by marketers given their strong power as consumers. The principal goal of food advertising and marketing aimed at children is to influence brand awareness, brand preference, brand loyalty and food purchases among youth. The purpose of this article was to examine the food advertising and marketing channels used to target US children and adolescents, the impact of food advertising on eating behaviour of youth, and current regulation and policies.

The analysed youth-oriented marketing channels and techniques include television advertising, in-school marketing, product placements, kids clubs, the Internet, toys and products with brand logos, and youth-targeted promotions. The study highlights that food advertising targeting youth is omnipresent in their environment. With the growth of multiple channels, food marketing is becoming indirect and more subtle.