

FOOD ADVERTISEMENTS ON NETWORKS FOR KIDS



With the President Barack Obama being re-elected for another four years in office, the debate in Washington on food marketing and child obesity continues to gain heat. Many people believe that the advertisements of junk food and candy only contribute to childhood obesity, and that the best way to help childhood obesity rates decline is to monitor the types of foods that are advertised on different networks for children. The Food Marketing Workgroup is currently targeting the popular child network, Nickelodeon, in hopes of trying to get the network to begin following nutrition guidelines when it comes down to the types of foods that are advertised to the children, according to AdWeek. The debate between whether or not the government should be able to regulate the types of food advertisements displayed to children has been quite the battle. Many different health groups refuse to give up the fight, hoping to get these networks to start following specific guidelines that would only allow them to advertise foods that are good for children. The Food Marketing Workgroup has been keeping an eye on Nickelodeon and its advertisements. Some of the advertisements that are being closely watched include advertisements for Air Heads, Fruit Roll-Ups, Pez Candy, Cocoa Puffs, and more. The group sent out a letter to Viacom, the parent company for the network, and the letter stated, "Nickelodeon lags behind the efforts of other children's entertainment companies." The director for CSPI, Margo Wootan, has even said, "[Nick] will be hearing from a lot of parents over the next couple of months that responsible programming means responsible advertising. If in the middle of Dora the Explorer, there are ads for Cocoa Puffs or Air Heads candy, the parent can't feel as good about the programming." The Food Marketing Workgroup believes that Nickelodeon should follow the guidelines that have been set by the Better Business Bureau's Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative. However, Nickelodeon feels that following these guidelines would not make much sense. The vast majority of food companies that are advertising to the children on the network actually are already adopting the standards that have been set by the CFBAI. Nickelodeon provided its own statement, in which they said, "We have proven our commitment over and over, and the vast majority of our advertisers have already signed on to the CFBAI pledge." Nick has even joined a variety of different programs with an effort to help combat childhood obesity, including the Let's Move Program, which was started by Michelle Obama. Even with the efforts that Nick has been making, it is still not enough for the Food Marketing Workgroup.