

## **Marketing strategies and impact on childhood obesity**

Jessica Burns Fugate  
The University of Tampa

Erika Matulich, Ph.D  
The University of Tampa

Erica Sackett  
The University of Tampa

Sarah Ham  
The University of Tampa

### **Abstract**

Marketers could be held responsible for the increase in obesity of American children. As the shift in control over spending and purchase decisions transitioned from parents to children during the past two decades, it is evident marketers have capitalized for far too long on the innocence of children through targeted marketing tactics and have only increased such efforts. By now, children influence household spending upwards of \$500 billion annually and are responsible for spending \$40 billion themselves on junk food products, clothing and entertainment. In turn, marketing budgets have ballooned in hopes of influencing this young segment. With technological advances in communication methods, continuous child exposure to marketing messages has become a norm and created difficulty for parents in monitoring and protecting their children.

On the other hand, marketers should not bear all the blame for the increase in childhood obesity. Lack of activity and cannot be blamed entirely on consumption choices. When it comes to making food choices, marketers help to educate consumers. Suggested serving sizes and nutritional information are clearly displayed on all product packaging. Large corporations and the media are teaming up to promote nutritional educational and physical activity. Self-regulation has been effective to date, with many marketers going above and beyond what is expected.

This paper explores trends in marketing strategies and marketing regulation as related to trends in childhood obesity.

Keywords: marketing, childhood obesity, strategies, nutrition, marketing law