

ALCOHOL FACTS



Marketing to Youth

Despite the alcohol industry's claims that it does not advertise to underage youth, young people are consistently exposed to and affected by alcohol marketing. This exposure increases underage drinking, promotes brand awareness and influences youth attitudes about drinking. Community efforts to limit alcohol advertising, especially in youth-oriented media and events, help foster an environment where youth can make choices free from alcohol industry manipulation.

Problem: The alcohol industry targets youth with marketing messages to develop loyal customers.

- The more alcohol ads young people see, the more they drink. Communities with more alcohol ads have higher levels of youth drinking. Each additional dollar alcohol companies spend on advertising raises the number of drinks youth consume by three percent.¹

- Youth are more likely to see alcohol advertising on TV than ads for products such as juice, gum, chips, sneakers, or jeans.²

- Anheuser-Busch ranks number one among all companies in producing kid-friendly advertisements.³ A study of children ages nine to 11 found they were more familiar with Budweiser's frogs than with Kellogg's Tony the Tiger, the Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers, or Smokey Bear.⁴

- Youth who own alcohol brand promotional items—such as T-shirts and baseball caps—are more than 1.5 times more likely to use alcohol than youth who do not.⁵

- Despite the alcohol industry's self-imposed regulation banning advertising in media whose youth audience is more than 30 percent, 25 alcohol brands spent millions of dollars in 2004 on ads that violated this 30 percent cap.⁶

Solution: Hold the alcohol industry accountable for irresponsible marketing practices; Strengthen and strictly enforce policies that prevent youth overexposure to alcohol ads.

- A 2005 study shows that even the 30 percent youth audience threshold is too high. A more effective youth-audience cap would prohibit alcohol advertising in media for which the average youth audience (aged 12-20) is more than 15 percent.⁷

- Efforts to reduce youth exposure to alcohol ads enjoy strong public support: 77 percent of adults favor banning alcohol sponsorship of youth-oriented events, 75 percent favor banning alcohol ads in youth-oriented media, and 71 percent favor banning alcohol on billboards where high levels of youth exposure are likely.⁸

- When Coors Light and the "Coors Twins" appeared in the PG-13 *Scary Movie 3* and related TV ads, community activists responded with protests, media advocacy and letters to CEO Peter Coors. Following the backlash, Coors admitted that it got "caught" and said it would end the TV ads, revise its advertising pledge and end its deal with the film's production company.⁹



1. Snyder, Leslie B., et al. (2006) "Effects of Alcohol Advertising Exposure on Drinking Among Youth." *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine* 160(1), 18-24.
2. Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth. "Television: Alcohol's Vast Adland." (2002) <http://camy.org/research/tv1202/TVbrochure-english.pdf>
3. "Lessons Learned: Appreciating Kids' Diverse Tastes." *Selling to Kids*, April, 2000.
4. Leiber, L. (1996) "Commercial and Character Slogan Recall by Children Aged Nine to 11 Years. Berkeley, CA: Center on Alcohol Advertising.
5. Auden C. McClure, JD, et al. (2005) "Kids who own alcohol promotional items more likely to be drinking, Dartmouth study finds" Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center. www.dhmc.org.
6. Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth. "Striking a Balance: Protecting Youth from Overexposure to Alcohol Ads and Allowing Alcohol Companies to Reach the Adult Market." (2005) <http://camy.org/research/striking/striking.pdf>
7. Ibid.
8. Richter, Linda, Roger Vaughan and Susan Foster. (2004) "Public Attitudes About Underage Drinking Policies: Results from a National Survey," *Journal of Public Health Policy* 25(1), 58-77.
9. MacArthur, Kate. "Coors Under Fire For PG-13 Movie Tie-Ins." *Advertising Age*. November 3, 2003.