

Child-Directed Marketing at Fast- Food Restaurants: Who is marketing to whom?

Punam Ohri-Vachaspati, PhD, RD

School of Nutrition and Health Promotion, Arizona State University

Co-Authors: Zeynep Isgor, Leah Rimkus, Lisa Powell

Bridging the Gap, University of Illinois at Chicago

Fast Food: Children's Diets and Health Outcomes

- Fast food is the second largest source of energy in children and adolescents diets
- 33 – 41% children and adolescents consume foods and beverages from fast-food restaurants on a given day
- Fast-food consumption is associated with unhealthy diet and poor health outcomes

Poti and Popkin, JADA, 111(8), 1156, 2011; Powell et al., AJPM, 43(5):498, 2012; French et al., Annu Rev Public Health, 22(1):309, 2001; Fulkerson et al., JADA, 111(12):1892, 2011; Niemeier et al., Journal of Adolescent Health, 39(6):842,, 2006.

Fast Food Is Heavily Marketed to Children

- Accounts for 24% of all food marketing to children and adolescents
- \$714 million spent on marketing fast food to children in 2009
- Almost half of all expenditure is directed towards premiums such as kids' meals toys

Federal Trade Commission, A review of food marketing to children and adolescents: a follow-up report, 2012

Self Regulatory Industry Initiatives

Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative

CFBAI: Established in 2006 by major food and beverage companies, including two fast-food chains, McDonald's and Burger King to limit child-directed marketing to healthier foods and beverages

Kids LiveWell: A National Restaurant Association initiative launched in 2011 to help restaurants offer and promote healthy menu items for children.

Nutritional Quality of Fast-Food Targeted to Children and Adolescents

- Poor nutritional quality
- Does not align with dietary recommendations

Harris et al., Fast Food FACTS, 2013; Batada et al, JADA, 108(4):673, 2008, Powell et al., Childhood Obesity, 9(6):524, 2013; Wu and Sturm, Public Health Nutr, 16(01):87, 2013

Objectives

- Examine the extent of child-directed marketing in the interior and on the exterior of fast-food restaurants
- How child-directed marketing varied over time (2010 – 2012)
- Examine disparities in child-directed marketing by neighborhood characteristics (income, race/ethnicity, and urbanicity)

Study Sample

- Bridging the Gap Community Obesity Measures Project
- Data from 6716 fast-food restaurants collected between 2010-2012
- Restaurants located in a nationally representative sample of 434 communities where public school students (8th, 10th, 12th graders) reside

Data Collection

- Validated observation checklist used by trained data collectors
- Child directed marketing defined as
 - ❖ **Exterior:** advertising with cartoon characters; advertisements with movie, television, or sports figures; advertisement of kids' meal toys; play area; other (e.g. 3-d characters, advertisements for hosting birthday party)
 - ❖ **Interior:** play area, in-store display of kids' meal toy
- Neighborhood demographic data obtained using 5-year estimates from the American Community Survey

Sample Description (N = 6716)

Chain Status

Non Chain Restaurants	40.6%
Chain Restaurants Excluding CFBAI Members	49.7%
Chain Restaurants, CFBAI Members	9.7%

Offers kids' meals

58.4%

Median Household Income in Neighborhood

High	36.1%
Medium High	24.3%
Medium Low	24.4%
Low	15.3%

Neighborhood Ethnicity (Majority)

Non-Hispanic	92.5%
Hispanic	7.5%

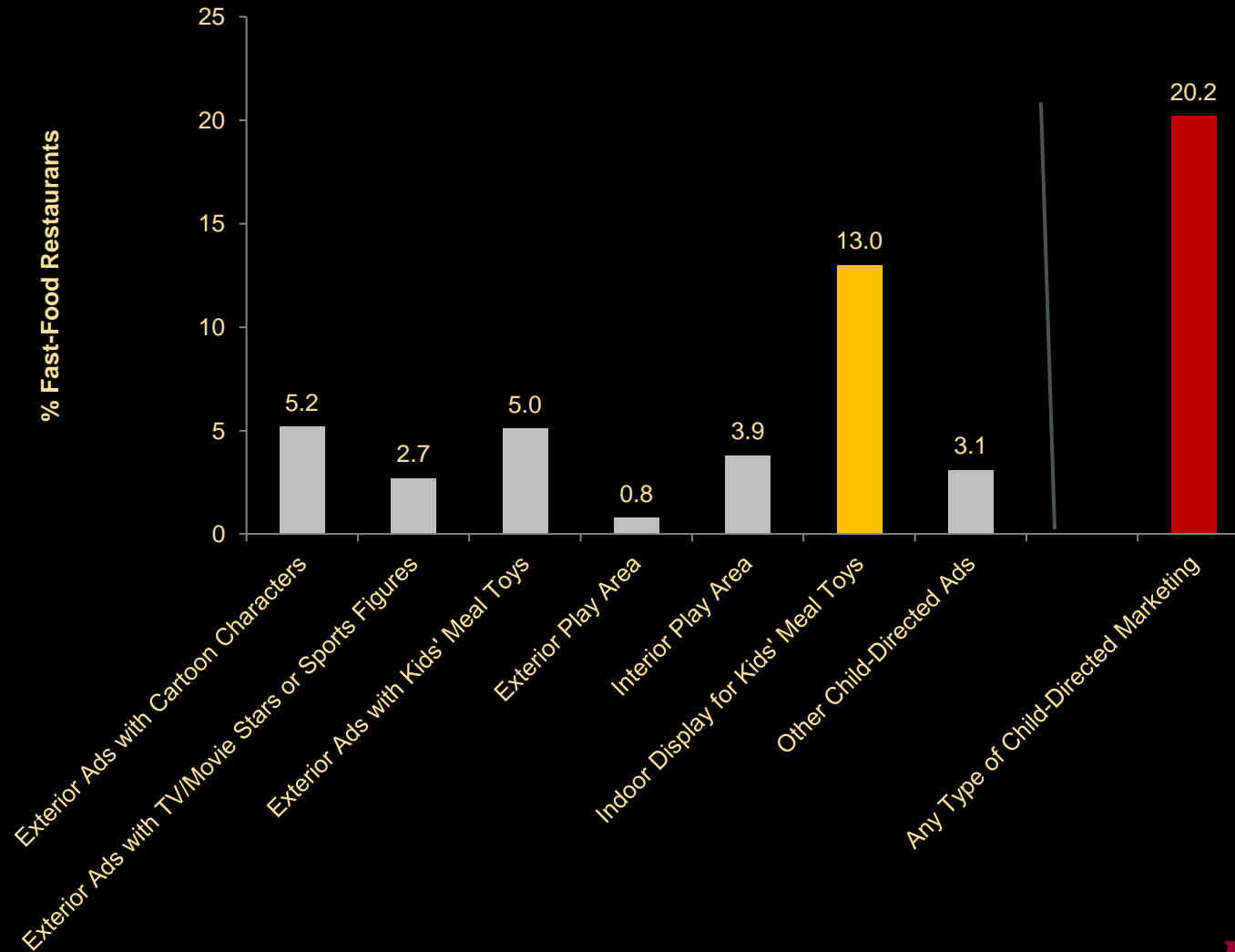
Neighborhood Race (Majority)

White	90.0%
Black	3.3%
Mixed	6.6%

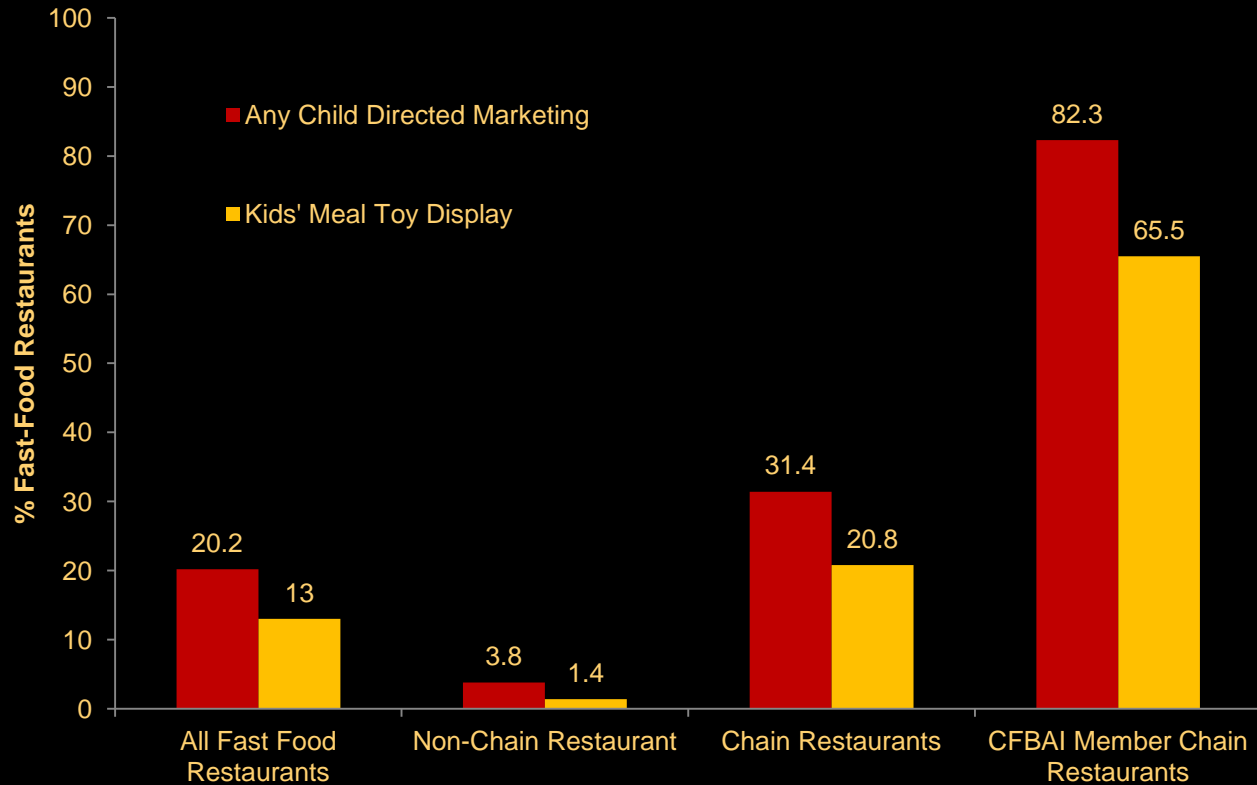
Urbanicity of Neighborhood

Urban	41.2%
Suburban	44.9%
Rural	13.9%

Prevalence of Child-Directed Marketing



Child-Directed Marketing by Restaurant Type



Predictors of Child-Directed Marketing

	Any Child-Directed Marketing (full sample) n=6716		Any Child-Directed Marketing (CFBAI chains) n=596	
	OR	95% CI	OR	95% CI
Chain Status [Non Chain (referent)]				
Chain Fast-Food Restaurants	6.29**	4.51 - 8.79		
Offers kids' meal	8.80**	5.74 - 13.50		
Median Household Income in Neigrhd [high (referent)]				
Near-high	1.28*	1.02 - 1.60	1.76	0.74 - 4.18
Near-low	1.34*	1.07 - 1.69	1.12	0.47 - 2.67
Low	1.04	0.77 - 1.40	0.36	0.12 - 1.03
Neighborhood Ethnicity [Non-Hispanic (referent)]				
Hispanic	0.97	0.68 - 1.38	2.24	0.57 - 8.81
Neighborhood Race (Majority) [white (referent)]				
Black	1.68	0.92 - 3.06	8.10**	1.86 - 35.30
Mixed	1.03	0.76 - 1.40	3.71	0.75 - 18.30
Urbanicity of Neighborhood [urban (referent)]				
Suburban	1.03	0.85 - 1.25	1.01	0.48 - 2.14
Rural	1.40*	1.07 - 1.83	2.60*	1.00 - 6.72
Year [2010 (referent)]				
2011	0.64**	0.52 - 0.78	0.42	0.17 - 1.05
2012	0.84	0.66 - 1.06	0.36**	0.17 - 0.75

Conclusion

- Child-directed marketing is prevalent, with kids' meal toy displays being most commonly used strategy
- Chain restaurants, specifically those that offer kids' meals and those that are members of CFBAI use child-directed marketing most often
- Child-directed marketing declined in all fast food restaurants specifically in CFBAI chain restaurants since 2010
- Black neighborhood, rural communities, and near-low and near-high income communities are disproportionately targeted

Conclusion

Given the disproportionate burden of unhealthy diets and poor health outcomes among low income, minority children, fast-food companies should limit children's exposure to marketing that promotes consumption of unhealthy food choices.



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Punam Ohri-Vachaspati, PhD, RD

Associate Professor

School of Nutrition and Health Promotion

Arizona State University

pohrivac@asu.edu