



**International Council of Beverages Associations  
Guidelines on Marketing to Children  
Questions and Answers**

- **What is the ICBA?** Since 1995, the International Council of Beverages Associations (ICBA) has been the voice of the global non-alcoholic beverage industry. The members of ICBA include national and regional beverage associations as well as international beverage companies who operate in more than 200 countries and territories and produce, distribute, and sell a variety of non-alcoholic beverages, including sparkling and still beverages such as soft drinks, 100 percent juices, juice drinks and nectars, bottled waters, sports drinks, energy drinks and ready-to-drink coffees and teas. ICBA and its members recognize the important role that the private sector can play in accelerating progress on the UN's Sustainable Development Agenda, and we are committed to doing our part to help reduce the incidence of non-communicable diseases by encouraging healthy lives and promoting well-being for all.
- **What is the purpose of these Guidelines?** ICBA members recognize that parents and caregivers should determine what is appropriate for their children to consume, and accordingly have long made robust commitments regarding advertising and marketing to children in support of these efforts. These Guidelines are one pillar of our commitments to support SDG 3.4 (reducing premature mortality from NCDs), in addition to our other industry efforts including but not limited to sugar reduction, reformulation and innovation to help address the health and well-being of present and future generations. In 2008, ICBA established its original Guidelines on Marketing to Children, which covered broadcast, print, digital media and cinema. These Guidelines were updated in 2015 and subsequently in 2022, reflecting our commitment to continuously evolve and strengthen our policy in key areas, and they now cover an even wider range of programming and marketing communications to children under 13.
- **What types of marketing communications do the ICBA Guidelines cover?** The ICBA Guidelines have long addressed TV, print, Internet and company-owned websites, which represents the vast majority of beverage media and marketing spend. In recent years, however, there has been a proliferation of new technology and a wider array of media channels. ICBA has thus ensured its Guidelines include technologies such as company-controlled content in social media, DVD, direct marketing, product placement, interactive games, outdoor marketing, and mobile/SMS marketing. In addition, our policy addresses the issue of "appeal." Members have committed that use of certain techniques, such as licensed characters, celebrities, contracted influencers and movie tie-ins that are primarily directed to children under 13 in the media channels covered are now covered by these Guidelines.
- **What types of media are not covered by the ICBA Guidelines?** Packaging is not covered as the vast majority of beverage purchasing decisions are made by adults and not the children themselves; adults serve as gatekeepers in those situations. The Guidelines also do not cover in-store, point-of-sale and user-generated content as these are generally not within the control of the brand owner.
- **Why did we change the Guidelines from under 12 years to under 13 years?** The shift to the age 13 provides a coherent and well-recognized cut-off between "children" and "teens," a distinction also reflected in regulations related to digital marketing, such as United States' Children's Online Privacy

Protection Rule (“COPPA”)<sup>1</sup> and European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation (“GDPR”)<sup>2</sup> Age 13 also aligns with both the International Chamber of Commerce and the International Food and Beverage Alliance’s guidelines regarding marketing to children, which ensures global alignment among a majority of industry players. Furthermore, key government-led reviews of the existing academic research conducted in the context of the debate on food marketing communications have identified an age cut-off at 13 years.<sup>3</sup>

- **How is “advertising to children” measured?** For the purpose of these Guidelines, “advertising to children” under 13 years of age means advertising in child-directed media where 30 percent or more of the audience is under 13 years of age. For television advertising, which still attracts the vast majority of beverage marketing budgets, independent data are available to show the composition of the audience. For other forms of marketing communications where measured data is unavailable, members will consider other appropriate factors, which may include the overall advertising impressions, actions taken to restrict child access (if any), and the target demographic based on the media plan.
- **What is your commitment regarding schools?** ICBA members respect that schools are special environments where balanced lifestyles should be encouraged, and we commit not to engage in beverage marketing communications in primary schools.
- **Why does this commitment not cover water, milk and juice?** The beverage industry and its member associations are global and diverse, and countries have varying standards to define these categories (which provide important functional and/or nutrition benefits). While there may be slight variations in the commitments among ICBA member companies, all ICBA members are committed to helping children achieve a balanced lifestyle.
- **What is the difference between the ICBA Global Guidelines and the national or regional association pledges?** Some ICBA members (both associations and companies) maintain specific policies on marketing to children that go beyond these 2022 Guidelines or that reflect specific regional or national considerations, including differing regulatory product definitions.

We would also note that in some rare and necessary instances, national authorities may request our assistance in campaigns to improve children’s health with products formulated to address critical nutritional deficiencies. We respect those requests.

- **What else have ICBA members done to help promote balanced lifestyles?** The global non-alcoholic beverage industry has been working with government, industry, the public health community, and consumers around the world to be part of the solution to public health challenges such as obesity, and to promote balanced and active lifestyles. We have, for example:

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.ftc.gov/system/files/2012-31341.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> See <https://gdpr.eu/tag/gdpr/>

<sup>3</sup> John DR. Consumer socialization of children: a retrospective look at twenty five years of research. J Consum Res. 1999;26(3):183–213

Livingstone and Helsper, Advertising Foods to Children: Understanding promotion in the context of children's daily lives, 2006; Ofcom, Childhood Obesity - Food Advertising in Context (review of academic research conducted by Prof. Sonia Livingstone, LSE, London, UK), 22 July 2004

The Development of a Child into a Consumer, Vlakenburg and Cantor, University of Amsterdam, University of Wisconsin-Madison, NL and US, 2001

- Developed sugar reduction pledges around the globe, working in partnership with an array of stakeholders ranging from governments to civil society. Every day our industry works to provide more beverage options with fewer calories, including more reduced, low- and no-calorie product offerings, and further develops smaller portion size options.
- Developed the 2021 ICBA Position on Interpretative Labeling to guide the global non-alcoholic beverage industry in advocating for science-based front-of-package interpretative labeling to support consumer health.
- Established the 2013 ICBA Guidelines for the Composition, Labelling, and Responsible Marketing of Energy Drinks to help ensure such products are marketed and labeled responsibly, and in 2019 updated these Guidelines to ensure they had evolved to capture developments in the marketplace and science.
- Supported nutrition and physical activity programs, and research and partnerships that advance nutrition science.