

Appendix 2

**Consultations with children,
young people and parents
regarding food and drink
marketing techniques – final
report and survey tools**

(National Children's Bureau)

Report on Consultations with Children, Young People and Parents regarding Food and Drink Marketing Techniques

May 2010

National Children's Bureau



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Executive Summary

This report describes an integrated process of consultation with children, young people and parents conducted by NCB (National Children's Bureau) between March and May 2010. The consultation explored perceptions of the use and influence of different types of non-broadcast food marketing techniques on children's food and drink choices.¹

The consultation process was undertaken as part of an initiative (led by the National Heart Forum and commissioned by the Department of Health) to look at developing a voluntary set of principles to underpin all forms of marketing and promotion of food, particularly where established mandatory, self-, or co-regulatory regimes do not exist.

104 children aged between 9 and 14 years and 36 parents from two geographical areas in England took part in participatory consultation activities, which were further supported by 372 completed surveys.

This consultation process was intentionally conducted on a limited scale. It is not representative of the whole population, and the findings should be read as a 'snapshot' of views and opinions that offer a valuable insight into the influence of non-broadcast food marketing on these children's food choices. The methods used would be replicable to a larger, more representative sample.

Based on an analysis of the data from these consultations, the following themes emerged:

Children and young people's awareness of non-broadcast food marketing techniques:

- Children and young people demonstrated a high awareness of different marketing techniques used to promote food products. They were able to distinguish between a variety of techniques and provided specific examples of their use.
- Parents also reported that their children had awareness of different marketing techniques. Whilst they recognised that their older children were aware of a wider range of techniques, they gave examples of very young children from two years old being aware of and responsive to some of the techniques.

The reported influence of food marketing techniques on the choices children and young people make about food, snacks and drinks:

- Children and young people reported that their choices were influenced by food marketing techniques but not to the exclusion of other factors.

¹ Throughout this report the term 'food marketing' refers to marketing of both foods and non-alcoholic drinks.

The most common influences were free gifts and promotion by celebrities. However, the secondary school age young people in particular were also able to take a critical view of some of the techniques and distance themselves from some of the claims and associations being made by the techniques. Some parents highlighted the importance of the size of packaging and the product, citing examples of how portioned, packaged fruit was more attractive to their children than whole fruits.

- Parents felt that marketing techniques can have a strong influence on the types of food their children choose. Packaging, tempting displays and associations with cartoon characters had the most influence on their children under five years old.
- Both the children and young people and the parents tended to associate the various food marketing techniques with food they regarded as the less healthy options. However, the parents in particular were able to provide some limited examples of the marketing techniques being applied successfully to food they viewed as more healthy options such as small packages of fruit and certain cereals.
- Parents reported that their children have a strong influence on the foods that the parents purchase. This is partly based on parents' recognition that their children are only willing to eat certain foods and only if presented and packaged in certain ways. However, they also reported that the very process of shopping together with their children exposed them to pressure and influence. Their children often tried to influence what was put into the basket or trolley based on what they could see and access in the store. Parents described the process of food shopping together as challenging and difficult at times.
- Peer influence and behaviour complemented the influences of the food marketing techniques. Both children and young people and the parents felt that the foods that children see other children eating and enjoying is a powerful influence on their own choices.

Ways that food marketing techniques can encourage children and young people to choose healthy options from a range of food, snack and drink choices:

- Children, young people and parents felt that food marketing techniques could be used to promote more healthy choices. All groups believed there are opportunities to make more healthy options attractive and interesting to children and young people. Parents were keen to have the support of the food industry to enable them to promote healthy choices with their children.
- There were calls from both parents and children and young people to restrict the use of marketing techniques on foods they considered to be the less healthy options.

- Families who have diets related to their religious or cultural beliefs, such as Halaal, were very keen to see these promoted positively with food marketing techniques.

A fuller discussion of these themes and the evidence to support them can be found later in this report.

1. Introduction

This report describes the work of NCB (National Children's Bureau) between March and June 2010 to deliver a series of consultation exercises with children, young people and parents on the topic of non-broadcast food marketing. The consultation process was undertaken as part of an initiative (led by the National Heart Forum and commissioned by the Department of Health) to look at developing a voluntary set of principles to underpin all forms of marketing and promotion of food, particularly where established mandatory, self-, or co-regulatory regimes do not exist.

1.1 Aims

The consultation aimed to inform the National Heart Forum of the views of children and parents on the influence of non-broadcast food marketing techniques on the choices children make in relation to food, snacks and drinks.

1.2 Objectives

The consultation explored the views of a small sample of primary and secondary school aged children and young people from two west London schools and parents from two Children's Centres, one in Suffolk and one in east London. The consultation groups were asked about the use and influence of different types of non-broadcast media for marketing food and drinks to children, and sought children's and parents' views on how marketing might be used to steer children's choices toward healthy dietary choices.

1.3 The consultation framework

1.3.1 Key lines of enquiry

To assist with the structure of the consultation tools and to ensure that the data sets produced were able to inform the aims of the project, three key lines of enquiry were established and shared between all the aspects of the consultation. These were:

- Children and young people's awareness of non-broadcast food marketing techniques
- The reported influence of food marketing techniques on the choices children and young people make about food, snacks and drinks
- Ways that food marketing techniques can encourage children and young people to choose healthy options from a range of food, snack and drink choices

1.3.2 The four parts of the consultation

Four distinct consultation exercises were completed as part of this project:

- Consultations with primary school age children using participatory workshops
- Consultations with secondary school age young people using participatory workshops
- Self-completion surveys of children, young people and parents
- Focus group consultations with parents

1.4 How this report is structured

The following sections of this report describe the methods used in the consultations (Section 2) and then summarises the key findings from each group (Section 3). The data sets from each of the exercises are shown in Appendices to this report together with descriptions of the consultation plans and survey materials.

2. **Methods**

2.1 **Overview**

A consultation plan was devised to provide a range of data from three groups of participants:

- Primary school age children
- Secondary school age young people
- Parents in early years settings who have one or more children

Four consultation tools were then developed to obtain qualitative participatory data and quantitative data from these groups. These were:

- Four one-hour participatory workshops for groups of children and young people
- A self-completion survey for children and young people
- A self-completion survey for parents
- A focus group format for small groups of parents

Participatory workshops were chosen for the work with the children and young people because these provide effective ways for them to share their views and opinions in a group setting. Pupils participated within their familiar classroom setting through whole class participation, smaller group work and individual exercises, which drew on the experience of NCB in using participation methodology. The participatory methods used are also effective at enabling those with less confidence, problems with literacy skills or English as a second language to contribute.

Focus groups were chosen as the methodology for the work with parents because these closed, small group discussions can enable participants to explore a range of open-ended questions in a structured way, and share insights as part of a wider group dynamic. It was felt that parents may be more comfortable in smaller groups than in participatory workshops and would be able to share their views when in the company of other parents they knew from the same setting.

It was decided to complement the workshops and focus groups with self-completion surveys for children and young people and parents attending the same settings used for the qualitative work. Surveys are an efficient way to collect a range of views that can be quantified.

A preparatory piece of work was completed by the National Heart Forum to map the current nature and extent of food marketing techniques used to promote food and drinks to children and young people. Initial findings from this work were used to inform the development of the consultation tools.

A core list of 14 established marketing techniques were used in each of the parent group consultation tools. This list was reduced for the school

consultations and in the survey to control the length and complexity of the survey². The purpose of this core list was to provide a structure and some initial definitions of the areas of interest. The marketing techniques considered were:

- Competitions advertised on the package*
- Free gifts in the package*
- In-store displays that are easy to spot*
- Money off or 'buy one get one free' offers
- Information at school on posters, workbooks or vending machines*
- Information about products from friends*
- Competitions or free gifts on the product website*
- Adverts on TV
- Adverts on bus stops or billboards
- Adverts and information on websites where the child talks to their friends
- Packaging and wrappers that are fun colours or shapes*
- Packaging and wrappers with famous film or TV characters on them*
- Information on wrappers or adverts from famous sports celebrities*
- Information on wrappers or adverts from music and fashion celebrities³

Specialist practitioners were commissioned to design and deliver the different strands of the consultation based on their particular areas of expertise. The children and young people's consultations were lead by Young NCB staff, the survey design by NCB Research Centre staff and the parent focus groups by an NCB Associate from the Early Childhood Unit.

2.2 Scope of the consultation

It is important to recognise both the strengths and potential limitations of this piece of initial consultation work.

The strengths of the work include:

- The ability to undertake rapid consultation to generate a snapshot of opinions, views and experiences in a short space of time
- The use of participatory techniques to obtain a rich data set of insight material and qualitative data
- The ability to illustrate themes and opinions with direct quotes and examples
- Using established wider networks of children's and parent services to generate trust in the exercise and to create the goodwill of partners to support the recruitment of participants.
- The ability to test out new consultation tools which could be used to inform future replication and scaling up of the work.

² Survey items are highlighted using an asterisk below.

³ The two items on celebrities were combined into a more general item for the survey.

The limitations include:

- A relatively small convenient sample of children, young people and parents from two distinct geographical areas (London and Suffolk)
- The conscious decision to take a consultation approach to the enquiry at this stage rather than a research approach

2.3 Samples

Samples of participants for the consultation were selected through NCB's partners and networks.

The following overall samples were involved in the consultation activities:

Consultation Group	Number of Participants
Primary school children	24
Secondary school children	28
Children and young people survey respondents	312
Parent survey respondents	60
Parents in focus groups	36

The sample can be broken down in terms of activity and other characteristics as per the table below:

Consultation	Location	Date	Number of participants	Gender	Notes
Primary school children	Belmont School, Harrow, London	4/5/2010	24 per class x 2 workshops	Mixed group	All aged 9-10 years (Year 5) in 2 separate workshops
Secondary school young people	Rooksheath College, Harrow, London	26/4/2010	28 per class x 2 workshops	Mixed group	All aged 13-14 years in 2 separate workshops
Children and young people's survey ⁴	Belmont School and Rooksheath College	May 2010	312	Mixed	195 from primary school and 117 from secondary school
Parent Focus Group 1	Treehouse Children's Centre,	20/4/2010	8	All women	Parents of children aged from

⁴ All schools consultations took place during lesson time allocated for PSHE tuition.

	Ipswich				5 months to 15 years
Parent Focus Group 2	Treehouse Children's Centre, Ipswich	20/4/2010	12	All women	Parents of children aged 8 months to 11 years
Parent Focus Group 3	Woodside Children's Centre, Waltham Forest	23/4/2010	11	10 women and 1 man	Parents of children aged 2 to 14 years
Parent Focus Group 4	Woodside Children's Centre, Waltham Forest	23/4/2010	5	All women	Parents of children aged 2 to 4 years
Parent survey	Woodside and Treehouse Children's Centres		60	Three-quarters female	Parents of children aged birth-11 years or older

2.4 The children and young people's participatory workshops design

The children and young people's workshops used small and large group discussion tools to enable the participants to explore and share their views on the topic of food marketing.

Each workshop used four purposely designed activities to structure the participation using a variety of participation tools. The activities were as follows:

Activity	Description	Outputs
Activity One: Ice Breaker: Buy or Not Buy?	For the pupils to understand what type of products we are discussing, and gauging their immediate views of what foods/sweets/snacks/drinks they purchase. Why have they chosen to buy or not to buy these products? What are the influences?	List of reasons to buy or not to buy
Activity Two: Recognition of marketing methods	To identify the different ways of marketing products including food/sweets/snacks/drinks,	Flipchart list of marketing methods recognised by the young people

	and what pupils think the purpose is of their use – do pupils recognise these techniques as marketing and does it entice them to buy a particular product?	
Activity Three: Star chart of influence	To gather a quick snapshot of key influences in choosing products.	Table of numerical data based on how young people rate different influences
Activity Four: Marketing of foods in the future	To gather the views on how marketing of products including food/sweets/snacks/drinks to children and young people needs to change. This is not to identify what children and young people view as contributing towards a healthy diet, but their perception of how food/sweets/snacks/drinks should or shouldn't be promoted to them.	Postcards written by the young people with key messages and opinions

The full workshop plan is included in the appendices and is complemented by the full data set.

2.5 The parent focus group design

The focus groups were designed as one and a half hour closed, small group discussions for 6 to 10 participants. Parents were recruited to the groups through their local Children's Centres who had advertised the opportunity to participate. To support the parents a member of staff from the Children's Centre also sat in on the groups.

A series of open questions were designed as part of a facilitation plan and structure to cover the different aspects of the topic. The key focus of the discussion was on parent's views and opinions of the influence of food marketing on their children and not on them directly as parents. The full facilitation plan is included in the appendices of this report. The table below summarises the key elements of the plan:

5 minutes	Part 1 – Welcome Aim: To set the scene for the focus group and to agree the process
10 minutes	Part 2 – Warm-up Aim: To provide some simple warm-up questions to build

	parent's confidence and to reinforce parent's expertise about their own lives
20 minutes	Part 3 – Recognising Food Marketing Aim: Discussion about parent's experience of marketing and advertising to their children. To define food marketing techniques. To explore a series of flash cards listing the 14 core marketing techniques
25 minutes	Part 4 – Children's Choices Aim: For parents to share their views and understanding on how the different types of marketing techniques impact on the choices their children make
20 minutes	Part 5 – Advice for the Future Aim: To promote a discussion about parents views on the possible or potential future of food marketing to children based on their experiences (using projective questions)
10 minutes	Part 6 – Summary and close Aim: To summarise the discussion and explain what happens next

A set of flash cards was produced based on the 14 core marketing techniques. These were used to prompt discussion about both the recognition of these techniques and also the parent's views of the influence these techniques have on their children.

The focus groups were audio-recorded and the audio file was transcribed. It was agreed that the parent's identities would be anonymised.

2.6 The survey design

Children, young people and parents were asked to complete short, self-completion surveys designed to capture awareness of various marketing strategies and the degree to which these marketing strategies influence children's food and drink choices. The parent survey asked parents to consider what they thought influenced their children, not what influenced the parents themselves.

Children and young people self-completion surveys were completed by children and young people in the primary and secondary schools where the consultation events took place. Parent self-completion surveys were distributed to parents in the two Children's Centres taking part in the focus groups.

The child and parent surveys cannot be directly linked (i.e. our sample of parents are not parents of the children who completed the survey).

The sampling used for these surveys does not enable generalisation beyond the particular participants who completed the surveys. What the information does provide, however, is an exploratory view of how children, young people and parents perceive various marketing strategies on food choices, which could usefully inform a larger study.

Both survey questionnaire tools are presented in the appendices. Data sets are also included.

3. Summary of the Key Findings

3.1 Key findings from the children and young people's consultations:

- The children and young people in the consultations demonstrated an awareness of a wide range of different food marketing techniques.
- The most commonly recognised marketing technique by children and young people was the type of packaging, competitions, free gifts and associations with TV characters and celebrities.
- Children and young people reported that they were influenced by food marketing techniques but not to the exclusion of other factors. The most common influences were free gifts and promotion by celebrities. However, the young people in particular were also able to take a critical view of some of the techniques and distance themselves from some of the claims and associations being made by the techniques. For example, in terms of competitions there was a recognition that a buyer was unlikely to win.
- Some children and young people identified that the brand name or title of the food product is an important marketing technique in itself.

3.2 Shared findings from both the children and young people's consultations and the parents consultations:

- Both the children and young people and the parents tended to associate the various food marketing techniques with food they regarded as the less healthy options. However, the parents in particular were able to provide some limited examples of the marketing techniques being applied successfully to food they viewed as healthy options such as small packages of fruit and certain cereals.
- Peer influence and behaviour complemented the influence of the food marketing techniques. Both children and young people and the parents felt that the foods that children see other children eating and enjoying is a powerful form of influence on their own choices.
- Both the children and young people and the parents felt that food marketing techniques could be used to promote healthy choices. There are opportunities to make the healthier options attractive and interesting to children and young people. Parents were keen to have the support of the food industry to enable them to promote healthy choices with their children.
- There were calls from both parents and the children and young people to restrict the use of marketing techniques on foods they considered to be the less healthy options.

3.3 Key findings from the parents consultations:

- Parents in all the focus groups agreed that certain food marketing techniques have a strong influence on the choices their children make about what they would eat and drink. Whilst they recognised that their older children were aware of a wider range of techniques, they gave examples of very young children from two years old being aware of and responsive to some of the techniques.
- Parents believe that even their very young children are influenced by the way food is packaged and associated with cartoon characters.
- Parents reported that their children regularly try to influence the foods that they buy for them. Their children have a range of behaviours and techniques for asserting their choices and some parents have developed their own strategies to respond.
- Parents believe that younger children are more likely to respond to packaging, tempting displays and cartoon characters whilst older children are likely to also respond to a wider range of food marketing techniques.
- Parents reported that their children have a strong influence on the foods that the parents purchase. This is partly based on parent's recognition that their children are only willing to eat certain foods and only if presented and packaged in certain ways – often associated with the food marketing techniques. And, they also reported that the very process of shopping together with their children exposed them to pressure and influence. Their children often tried to influence what was put in to the basket or trolley based on what they could see and access in the store. Parents described the process of food shopping together as challenging and difficult at times.
- Food marketing techniques can influence children to want food products that are not necessarily part of their cultural or vegetarian diets.
- Families who have specific cultural diets such as Halaal foods were very keen to see these promoted positively with food marketing techniques. Parents felt this could help their children understand which options were available to them and to make these choices attractive.
- Parents observe that their children are very influenced by the foods that their friends have and also by foods that are introduced in Children's Centres and schools.
- Parents would welcome increased use of marketing techniques for healthier options as this would encourage their children to eat these foods.

3.4 Key findings from the surveys:

- Parents' reports of their children's awareness of various marketing techniques was higher than children's and young people's own reports of awareness.
- Colourful packaging, free gifts contained with packages, packages decorated with TV characters and easy to spot displays were perceived to be the most obvious forms of marketing to children and young people.
- Parents perceived a stronger influence of marketing techniques on children's choices of meals, snacks, sweets and drinks than did children and young people themselves.
- According to parents, free gifts in packets and packages and wrappers featuring TV characters had the strongest influences on children's choices of meals, drinks, snacks and sweets (i.e., between 'somewhat' and 'very much').
- Both children and young people and parents felt that free gifts could be useful to encourage children and young people to choose food and drinks recommended for a healthy diet.
- 16 per cent of children and young people surveyed reported visiting websites connected to food products or brands on a weekly basis.

4. The Findings in detail

4.1 Datasets

Four distinct data sets were produced from the consultation activities:

- Records of the participatory exercises with the children and young people
- Records of the focus group discussions with the parents
- Results of the children and young people's surveys
- Results of the parent surveys.

Each data set was structured around the three key areas of enquiry:

1. Children and young people's awareness of food marketing techniques
2. The influence of food marketing techniques on the choices children and young people make about food, snacks and drinks
3. Ways that food marketing techniques can encourage children and young people to choose healthy options from a range of food, snack and drink choices

This findings section of the report pulls out the themes that emerged and also explores noticeable synergies and differences between the views of different groups of children and young people and parents. Themes are presented in each section by age group:

- Themes from primary school aged children
- Themes from secondary school aged young people.
- Survey results from children and young people
- Themes from parents via the focus groups and the parent survey.

Full copies of the data sets are included in the appendices of this report. Quotes and evidence have been taken from the data sets to illustrate the analysis of the findings section.

4.2 Key Line of Enquiry One: Children and young people's awareness of food marketing techniques

4.2.1 Children's consultation

The participatory workshops with the primary school age children demonstrated that they have a wide range of awareness of different food marketing techniques. Activity Two from the workshops titled 'Recognition of marketing methods' produced a combined list of 101 contributions. Some examples include:

- highlighting little fat content
- half price offers
- persuasive language

- television programme sponsorship
- slogans
- free cinema tickets and books
- mascots
- competitions
- pictures
- games on websites
- celebrities
- cross promotion with films
- pictures on packaging.

The most common types of marketing techniques listed by the children were those relating to the types of packaging. Examples of types of packaging included the use of 'wow words', 'nice colours', 'jokes', the 'shape' of the packaging and 'eye catching titles'. Other frequently recognised techniques included free gifts, competitions, links to celebrities and TV characters. Several children mentioned the importance of price and listed features such as discounts and buy-one-get-one-free offers.

Several of the children raised the issue of the brand name of the product being important, which was not one of the explicit marketing techniques from the core list produced at the start of the project but appears to have significance to the children.

There were some references to children's perceptions of the nutritional characteristics of a food. For example, there were comments that reduced fat or having an association with health were themselves marketing techniques. There was also a reference to 'Halaal Haribo'⁵ and associations with cultural food products.

4.2.2 Young people's consultation

The consultation workshops with the secondary school young people similarly produced a large list of marketing techniques that they recognised including 71 examples. As with the primary school children, packaging was described as a common type of food marketing technique – factors included the colour, newness, uniqueness, size of words and the name. But a full range of other types of technique were also listed including competitions, price based marketing offers, links to celebrities and sports personalities and games and competitions. Where the secondary school young people contrasted with their younger counterparts was in the more frequent listing of websites and online marketing techniques and also in the recognition of friends and peer involvement. As well as broadcast media, the pupils identified an array of additional strategies that the food and drink industry employ in marketing their products to children and young people including celebrity endorsements; pop-ups online; the ways products are packaged; special offers; product placement (in music videos); TV sponsorship; charity offers (e.g. 5p goes to charity from every sale); animations; and free gifts. Product slogans and

⁵ This related to the presence of gelatine in some confectionery.

jingles came up time and time again, with pupils able to reel off dozens of catchphrases of popular food and drink items.

During the school workshops there was evidence of young people's ability to recall slogans and songs from examples of food marketing. They demonstrated this by sharing these with the group. The young people also showed insight in to the ways that marketing techniques associated with celebrities and sports stars can make them feel as consumers, whilst recognising this as a marketing technique, but not necessarily a healthier food or drink choice. For example:

"makes you feel like you're famous as well"

"we eat it, so you should eat it, it's cool"

A few young people also referred to the association of foods with health, and one mentioned a positive association with charities, but this was not a common viewpoint.

4.2.3 Parents' consultation

The focus groups with the parents provided data on their perceptions of their children's awareness of food marketing techniques. The parents themselves were able to recognise all the marketing techniques and were able to give examples. However, parents felt that although their children responded to certain marketing techniques very strongly, the younger children did not necessarily recognise them as particular marketing technique in themselves – rather it was the direct relationship between the food product and its attraction to the specific child. Therefore, most of the findings in this area are more appropriately dealt with in the second key line of enquiry below that addresses the choices children make (and try to influence) when reacting to foods marketed in different ways.

"he points at displays"

A1⁶ – describing a two year-old boy

"she doesn't ask for it – but she will comment on what she sees"

A31

Several parents commented on where their young children preferred to go shopping when with their parents. Whilst there was not consensus on the types of place, there was recognition that their children enjoyed a different type of experience in different types of food shopping environments. For example, whilst some parents would prefer to shop more locally or in a local market, they recognised that their young children did not like this type of environment and were easily bored (A2). By contrast, other parents reported that their older children preferred the market experience and enjoyed the free

⁶ Specific quotes taken from the focus groups are referenced to the specific text in the data set included as an appendix

samples on offer. Other parents commented that their children enjoyed pushing the little shopping trolleys provided by some stores.

There was a broad consensus in all four parents' groups that some of the marketing techniques are not recognised or even responded to by their younger children (up to 4 years old) because of their age, general awareness and stage of development. The techniques most commonly felt by parents to be less relevant to their young children were:

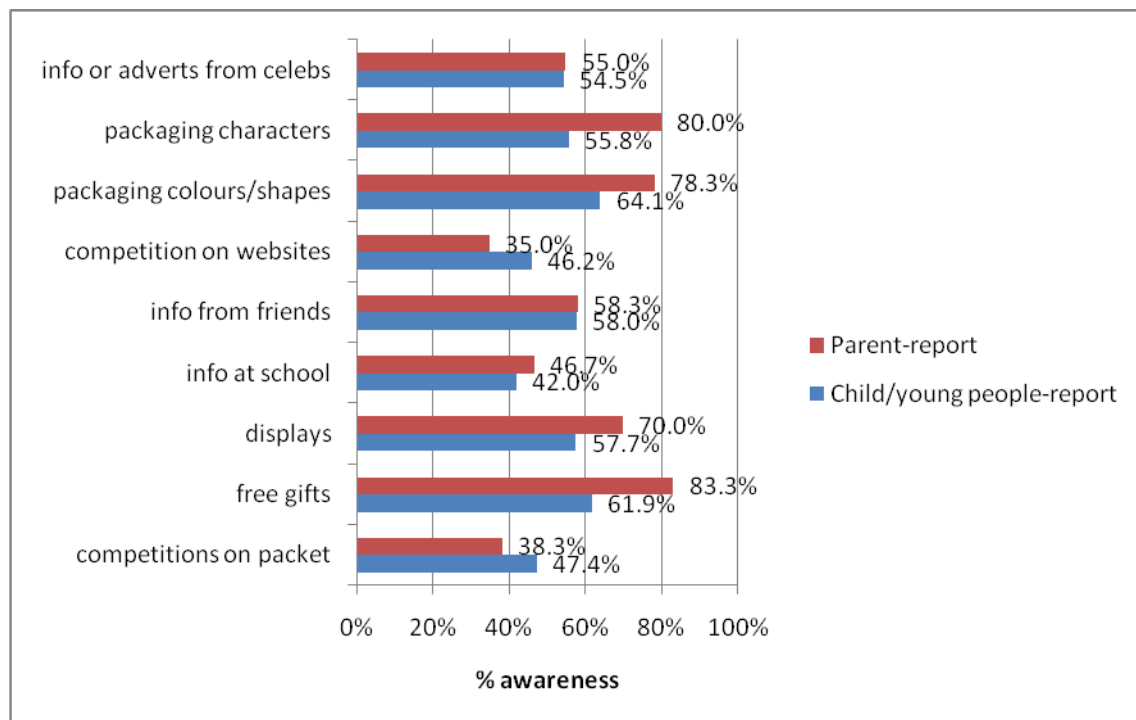
- Competitions
- Money off or 'buy one get one free' offers – although parents did report that this was one of the most recognised techniques for themselves. There were two examples where parents felt that when they explained to a young child that if they bought a particular product the child could have more of it because of the pricing offer that their child then wanted it.
- Information at school on posters or work books
- Competitions or free gifts on the product website
- Information on wrappers or adverts from famous sports celebrities
- Information on wrappers or adverts from music and fashion celebrities.

4.2.4 Survey

Findings from the surveys revealed that children and young people were most aware of packaging, including packaging and wrappers with colours and shapes (64 per cent) and free gifts included in packets (62 per cent) when deciding which meals, snacks, sweets or drinks to have (see Figure 1). Young people in secondary school seemed to be more aware of colourful and shapely packaging than primary school children (75 per cent and 60 per cent for secondary and primary children, respectively), although further surveys with a representative sample are needed to assess this trend.⁷ Children and young people were least aware of information at school (42 per cent), competitions on websites (46 per cent) and competitions on packets (47 per cent).

⁷ $\chi^2(1, N=306)=6.8, p<.01$

Figure 1. Children and young people’s awareness of marketing techniques (child/young people- and parent-report)



Note. Percentages reflect the percentage of participants who selected ‘yes’. The parent-report survey also had a ‘don’t know’ option. ‘Don’t know’ was selected by more than 10.0 per cent of parents for the following items: information at school, information from friends, competitions on websites and information or adverts from celebrities. *N*=312 for child/young people-report survey; *N*=60 for parent-report.

The children and young people’s survey included space for them to write in anything else they noticed when deciding what foods and drinks to choose. Approximately 100 respondents included a response to this optional item. Common mentions included:

- adverts
- brands
- price
- whether the product is ‘tasty’
- nutritional information
- ingredients.

According to the findings from the parent surveys more than three-quarters perceived their children were aware of competitions or free gifts on websites (run by a product or brand) and packaging including packages and wrappers with different colours or shapes (78 per cent) and packages and wrappers with film or TV characters (80 per cent). ‘Displays that were easy to spot’ was also chosen by 70 per cent of parents. More than half of parents claimed that their children were aware of information about products they received from friends (58 per cent) and information or adverts from celebrities (55 per cent). Competitions – whether on packets or on websites – were cited by fewer parents than the other techniques (38 per cent and 35, respectively).

Parents felt children were more aware of the various marketing techniques than children and young people reported being with the exception of competitions (on packets or websites), which were identified by about half of children and young people, but less than 40 per cent of parents.

Overall parents felt that colourful packaging, free gifts contained with packages, packages decorated with TV characters and easy to spot displays were the most recognised forms of marketing to children.

4.3 Key Line of Enquiry Two: The influence of food marketing techniques on the choices children and young people make about food, snacks and drinks

4.3.1 Children’s consultation

The consultation workshops with the primary school children used the *Star Chart of Influence*, a voting exercise designed to explore the extent to which different marketing methods influenced their choices. Primary school pupils tended to favour the ‘maybe’ column; however, free gifts (65 per cent voted yes they were influenced by this) was the most frequently identified marketing method influencing pupils to buy a particular product. This was followed by packages and wrappers with film or TV characters on them (45 per cent voted yes), competitions advertised on the packet (39 per cent voted yes) and information at school on posters, workbooks and vending machines (36 per cent voted yes).

Marketing methods that fewer pupils felt influenced their choice were packaging and wrappers with colours or shapes (47 per cent voted no), information at school on posters, workbooks and vending machines (36 per cent voting no – very close to the percentage that said yes), information from friends about the products (32 per cent voted no) and competitions or free gifts on websites run by the product or brand (24 per cent voted no). One pupil stated that competitions are designed to make you buy a product, and you entered them with little success.

“They lie about free gifts, never a success .”

“With a free gift, the food might not be nice so I wouldn’t buy it.”

Another stated that if it was a choice between chocolate or fruit at a checkout, they would choose chocolate as it’s more tasty.

“At checkouts I would pick up chocolate, but not fruit, chocolate is more tasty. Chocolate is more addictive.”

Figure 2. The extent to which marketing techniques influence primary school children’s choices

	Yes	No	Maybe
Competitions	39%	16%	45%

advertised on the packet			
Free gifts in the packet	65%	4%	31%
Displays that are easy to spot – such as at checkouts	23%	23%	54%
Information at school on posters, workbooks or vending machines	36%	38%	26%
Information from your friends about the products	28%	32%	40%
Competitions or free gifts on websites run by the product or brand	28%	24%	48%
Packaging and wrappers with colours or shapes	31%	47%	22%
Packages and wrappers with film or TV characters on them	45%	15%	40%
Information or adverts from famous celebrities	17%	25%	58%

For this exercise the class worked in groups of 4-5, placing stars in the relevant columns of 'yes', 'no' or 'maybe'. The groups worked with sheets that identified techniques in different orders so as not to be easily persuaded by peers in other groups.

4.3.2 Young people's consultation

The workshops with the secondary school students also used the *Star Chart of Influence* exercise. Again it asked to what extent different marketing methods influenced their choices. Free gifts (74 per cent voted yes they were influenced by this) was identified the most popular marketing method that influenced pupils to buy a particular product, followed by information from friends (53 per cent), information or adverts from famous celebrities (40 per cent) and displays that are easy to spot (40 per cent).

"if it's a celebrity promoting something, it depends if I like them or not"

"kids are influenced by animations like coco-pops"

"things like the Simpson's appeal to everyone"

Marketing methods that the pupils felt did not influence their choice were information at school on posters, workbooks or vending machines (72 per cent voted no they were not influenced by this), competitions advertised on the packet (52 per cent), information or adverts from famous celebrities (40 per cent) and competitions or free gifts on websites run by the product or brand (38 per cent).

It is worth noting that the numbers of pupils saying they were and were not influenced by competitions or free gifts on websites and information or adverts from famous celebrities, were almost equal.

“no teenager wastes their time on free gifts”

“if there was three cereals, I’d go for the one with the free gift”

Some pupils tended to be skeptical around their chances of winning competitions.

“if there’s a competition I’d want to buy it in case I win”

“you get codes on packets and you enter them online to win free stuff”

“you buy them more in case you win”

Figure 3. The extent to which marketing techniques influence secondary school students’ choices

	Yes	No	Maybe
Competitions advertised on the packet	21%	52%	27%
Free gifts in the packet	74%	9%	17%
Displays that are easy to spot – such as at checkouts	40%	27%	33%
Information at school on posters, workbooks or vending machines	10%	72%	18%
Information from your friends about the products	53%	16%	31%
Competitions or free gifts on websites run by the product or brand	36%	38%	26%
Packaging and wrappers with	30%	13%	57%

colours or shapes			
Packages and wrappers with film or TV characters on them	30%	21%	49%
Information or adverts from famous celebrities	40%	40%	20%

“if it’s a drink in a colour like blue or purple, I’ll buy it regardless of flavour”

4.3.3 Parents consultation

Parents in all the focus groups agreed that certain food marketing techniques have a strong influence on the choices their children made about what they would eat and drink.

The most common area of consensus between the parents was around the significance of how foods and drinks are packaged. All four groups felt that this had the most powerful influence on their children’s choice of food. The most important features of packaging were its colour and brightness and also if the packaging associated the product with a particular cartoon character.

“definitely pink, she loves pink, anything in pink she notices, she doesn’t like plain packets”

A13

“Thomas, Peppa Pig – she wants to have it, apart from that she does not really notice anything, she’s not interested in what’s in it, she is more interested in what’s on it”

A12

“he just likes anything mint and if it is in a green packet he prefers it”

A32

“I’m not saying they are naughty when we go shopping because they are fairly good but I have to avoid certain aisles”

A33

Other important factors in the packaging included the size and usability of it. Parents reported that their children were often intimidated by large food items that looked like they were designed for adults and preferred smaller, accessible packages. The most common examples were in terms of fruit where a large piece of fruit such as a pineapple was cut up into small bite size pieces and packaged in a small pot or wrapper. Similarly, many parents reported that their children really liked grapes as they were small and easy to use.

“she won’t be interested in any other fruit and veg – she has to look for these little packets”

A10

Whilst this type of small packaging can be very influential on children's choices, it can create a dilemma for parents if they wish to buy items in bulk.

“she loves everything in miniaturised form – she won't eat raisins in a bowl but in a packet...she only eats carrots in a packet, work out the cost”

A17

As well as the size of the packaging, parents felt that some packaging was more fun for a child to use and play with. Examples were given such as juice bottles and boxes, which their children really enjoyed. Several parents commented that the contents were less relevant than the fun their children had with the bottle and gave examples of re-filling the bottles with water and their children being just as happy with the water as they were the juice.

Several parents expressed the caveat that although the packaging of the food was very important, it was still less important than the contents and whether the child actually liked the taste and texture of the item.

When shopping in supermarkets (which was the most common place that parents shopped together with their children), all the parents reported that tempting displays that are easy to spot were very powerful in influencing what their children would choose. As well as the tempting nature of the displays, parents reported that the height and accessibility of the product also influenced the child as they were able to grab the product and either hold it or put in it the shopping trolley themselves. Parents reported that this could often lead to conflict with their child if they had taken an item that the parent did not wish to purchase. Attempts by the parent to get the child to replace the item on the shelf were sometimes met with upset or tantrums. Several parents reported strategies of allowing the child to place these items in the trolley only for the parent to quietly remove them at the last moment before arriving at the till. Additionally, parents commented how frequently tempting displays of accessible items such as chocolates and sweets were placed near the till.

“he can see the crisp aisle from a mile away”

A11

“Cake packaging – I try not to go down that aisle – Dora, Barbie cakes – they are all at her level”

A20

There was less agreement between the parents about the influence of free gifts. Some described how their children had been influenced by the idea of saving tokens or wrappers to get a toy or book. Others felt that this was less important to their children. Competitions were felt to be even less appealing to younger children – it was felt that older children and young people would be more influenced by these techniques.

“free gifts in a packet – yes, Kinder Eggs”

A4

“Branded Peppa Pig yogurts – collect tokens to get a Peppa Pig book – it was a missive thing – we had to collect them – we lived on yogurts”

A18

The influence of friends and other adults – either at school or within the Children’s Centre or nursery setting – was seen as very powerful. Many parents gave examples of how their children were influenced to try a new type of food or eat things like vegetables by seeing their friends eat them in a setting. Sometimes this influence would then translate in to what they ate at home and what they chose when out shopping with parents.

“they have fruit in a High School Musical bag at school and she is always going on about that”

A8

However, for some parents a divide remained between what their children were prepared to eat in the company of others and at home. Also, the types of food that children were influenced to eat by their peers also varied. Some parents reported that sessions to explore healthy eating in the Children’s Centre setting increased their child’s awareness and interest in fruit and vegetables. For other parents, it was the exposure of their child to party food and snacks at social events and birthday parties that had an influence.

“she will eat it if she is with other kids but if I buy it at home she won’t eat it”

A14

As reported in the previous section, the parents felt that due to the age of their younger children they were less influenced by food marketing techniques that used celebrities, sports people and TV characters that were not cartoon based. However, there were a small number of examples given in the focus groups of young children accessing websites advertised on food packaging (A27) – these are usually associated with a particular cartoon character linked to the food product. Children’s access to the internet varied within the groups and parents expressed a range of positive and cautious attitudes to their children going online.

Adverts on bus stops and billboards were seen as quite influential by parents – in particular if they were out shopping and their child saw an advert for a fast food restaurant.

Parents described the impact that these types of adverts can have on hungry children when they are out of the home. One parent described a strategy she has devised to mitigate the influence of such marketing:

“give them food before going food shopping – to avoid temptation and pressure to go to McDonalds”

A26

There were a number of examples of very young children (from 18 months to two years) beginning to be influenced by the way food is marketed. Examples were given in the parents' focus groups of children refusing to eat foods if they were not presented or packaged in a certain way.

One theme that emerged from the parents across all four groups was the challenge of supporting young children to eat. Food and meal times were often described as a difficult time and young children may not always want to eat or cooperate with parents. Many parents expressed their anxiety about getting their children to either eat at all or to eat a balanced diet. A significant factor in the relationships between their children and food is the role of food marketing and the associations that their younger children have with different foods. The associations that children make with foods can have a strong influence on what they eat at home.

“they do a High School Musical cereal and it is the only cereal she will eat”
A34

One of the focus groups in Woodside had a detailed discussion about how marketing makes distinctions between the idea of food for adults and food for children and how very young children can become attuned to the sorts of foods that they are expected to eat whilst others may be more willing to try other types of food.

“she loves things not associated with children – olives and mackerel”
A16

“it is hard to imagine supermarkets putting Peppa Pig on mackerel”
A30

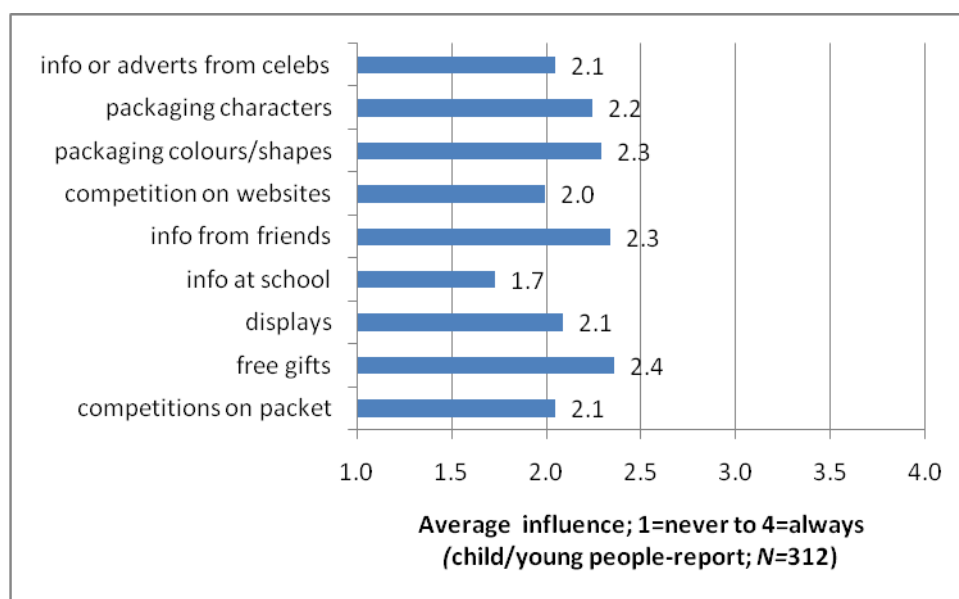
4.3.4 Survey

To assess the influence of the various marketing techniques on children's food and drink choices, the survey asked children and young people to rate the overall frequency each of the techniques had on their decisions about which meals, snacks, sweets or drinks to choose (1='never' to 4='always'). The parents were asked to rate the extent to which their children were influenced by each of the marketing techniques when deciding which meals, snacks, sweets or drinks to choose (1='not at all' to 4='very much').⁸

For both surveys, we computed the average rating scores for each of the marketing techniques, and findings are displayed in Figures 4 and 5 below.

⁸ Given the differences in the wording of the questions in the children and young people's survey and the parent's survey, we have presented the findings separately.

Figure 4. Children and young people’s average ratings of the influence of marketing techniques on children’s food choices



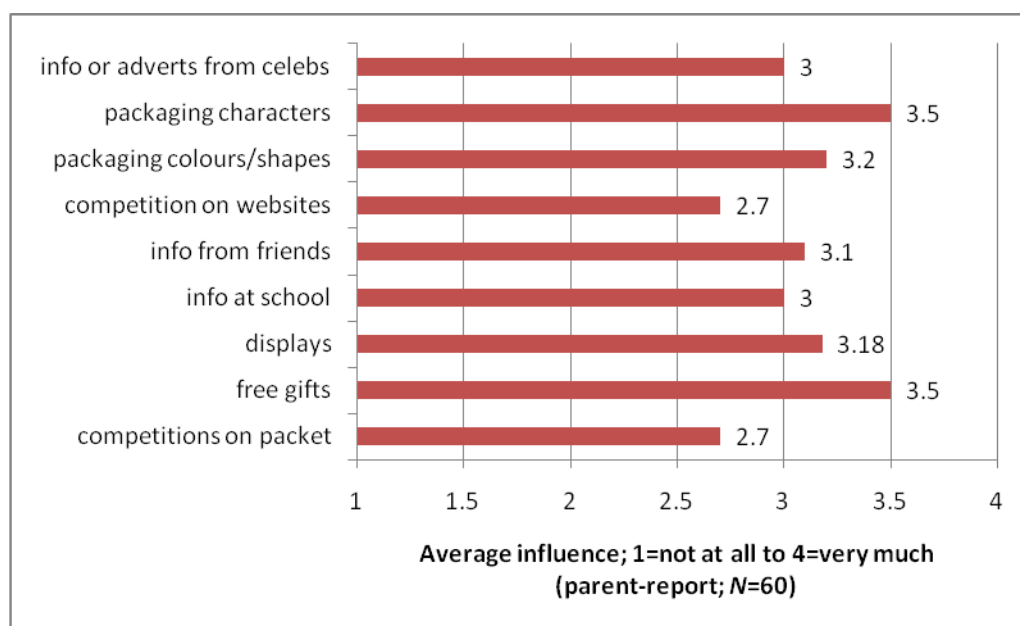
Predominantly children and young people felt that the marketing techniques influenced their food and drink decisions ‘sometimes’ (i.e., a score of 2). With the exception of information at school on posters and workbooks and the like, for which children’s average response was only 1.7, there was little variability in their responses. Children in primary school rated packaging with film or TV characters as having somewhat larger influence on their food and drink choices than secondary school young people, but only by about one-third of a point ($M=2.36$, $SD=1.0$ and $M=2.03$, $SD=.9$ for primary and secondary children, respectively).⁹ Further research is needed to assess whether this difference remains using a representative sample of children and young people.

Parents were much more likely than children and young people to think that the marketing techniques influenced children’s food and drink choices.¹⁰ According to parents, free gifts in packets and packages and wrappers featuring TV characters had the strongest influences on children’s choices of meals, drinks, snacks and sweets (i.e., between ‘somewhat’ and ‘very much’). Not surprisingly, the techniques that parents perceived their children were most aware of were also the techniques that they viewed as having the most influence on their children’s food and drink choices. Competitions (on websites and on packets) appeared to have somewhat less of an influence on children’s food and drink choices, according to parents.

⁹ Equal variances between groups not assumed; $t(243.8)=2.9$, $p<.01$

¹⁰ As described above, the items for children and parents were not identical, thus they are not directly comparable. Parents did, however, tend to rate the items at 3 or above, where children rated the items at a 2, on average.

Figure 5. Parents’ average ratings of the influence of marketing techniques on children’s food choices



Some parents were unsure how the marketing techniques influenced their children. Parents were most unsure of the influence of information from friends ($n=9$), information at school ($n=9$) and competitions on websites ($n=7$) on their children’s food and drink choices.

4.4 Key Line of Enquiry Three: Ways that food marketing techniques can encourage children and young people to choose more healthy options from a range of food, snack and drink choices

4.4.1 Children’s consultation

The final activity of the school participatory workshops was called *Marketing Foods in the Future*. During the exercise pupils wrote postcards to the food and drink industry recommending how food and drink products that they thought children and young people should be encouraged to eat and drink should be marketed, and for those they think should be discouraged, how they should not be marketed.

“I would talk to the government to make healthier foods in schools and to sell more fruits, vegetables for free or cheaper to eat more.”

Highlighting nutritional value and health benefits, free gifts (sometimes via websites) celebrities, telling children and young people it will make you stronger, competitions, special offers, games and activities were all listed as ways to encourage food and drink products to children and young people.

“by saying it makes you stronger and taller, put gifts and toys, put colourful pictures, more positive language, put celebrities and games”

To discourage children and young people from certain products, the following techniques were suggested:

- make the product more expensive
- do not use celebrities to endorse products
- do not put these types of products in shops
- highlight health implications
- do not include free gifts and toys
- educate parents
- ban websites and the use of bright colours and interesting packaging
- be more honest about the ingredients.

A full list of postcard messages is included in the appendices.

“in schools they should ban these unhealthy chocolate bars”

“they shouldn’t give free gifts, they should make dull black boxes with no colours or anything”

4.4.2 Young people’s consultation

A similar exercise was completed with secondary school age young people. Their ideas included slogans, highlighting health benefits, animation, celebrities and sports personalities, mascots, free gifts and sponsorship to encourage children and young people to buy food and drink items.

“Animation is a good way to promote this product because little kids would love it if their hero’s drank it”

“Packaging isn’t very appealing, make it bold and colourful, children should have games and jokes on the back”

Not allowing celebrities to endorse products, telling the consumer the negative health implications, removing foods that should be discouraged from eating from shops and not using cartoon characters to advertise a product were all suggestions of guidelines to discourage children and young people from selecting certain products.

“Artificial colouring. Bad for teeth. They should advertise the discouraging things as well.”

Pupils regularly spoke about the threat of obesity in eating foods they deemed as being high fat sugar and salt (HFSS), saying that the food industry should show pictures of people who have eaten a lot of HFSS food, and the related health conditions. Pupils generally seemed very aware of marketing methods, the aim of them and health implications of HFSS.

“...perhaps shops should remove them from shelves in front of the counter to stop people from buying them. Shops put chocolates in front of the counter to

get people to decide to buy them as they are purchasing their goods...children should be given tasty and healthy cereal bars at school...shops should put cereal bars on the shelves near the counter.”

Parents in all four focus groups felt that food marketing techniques made an important contribution to the dietary choices and preferences of their children. They felt that the marketing techniques could be a force both for their children choosing a healthier or less healthy diet depending on which food products they were used with. When asked which sorts of food and drink the marketing techniques were most associated with the initial response of parents in all four groups was the less healthy choices. Many examples were given of these foods.

“you never see a free gift with healthy stuff, it is always the junk food you see”
A6

“they only put the toy in the really sweet sugary stuff”
A5

However, as the discussions progressed in each group there was a recognition that some of these techniques were also used for options that parents perceived as more healthy and that the marketing techniques could also be an aid to parents encouraging healthier choices. The most common examples of these included fruit that was packaged in small packs and associated with a cartoon character.

“I have seen things that are healthy that have the Tweenies on and if that has got it on it she will eat it”
A7

“if it is being used to attract the attention of children to good food then it is useful”
A29

4.4.3 Parents' consultation

Parents reported that younger children had less awareness than older siblings about the concept of some food and drink being a healthier choice. But the process of how they make healthier choices in partnership with their children is something that the parents were concerned about. For example, they felt that it was not always easy to read the labels about the contents of food products and that sometimes they could raise their child's expectations of what they were going to buy simply by picking it up to read the label.

“Once I have picked something up and I am reading the label, she thinks I've got it there, and then there is a tantrum if I put it down”
A24

This concern was also echoed by those families who have a particular cultural diet such as Halaal. When picking up an item to see if it is culturally

appropriate it is not always easy to explain this to their younger child and again it may raise expectations about diet.

“suitable for vegetarians in tiny print and words – a child can have expectations as mummy is holding it”

A25

Parents were very keen to engage with the food industry and have a voice in the use of food marketing techniques and to explore ways that this could help them as parents.

“he’s very fussy but if he sees George Pig he will taste it”

A19

Their advice to the food industry included:

- Avoid the association of less healthy choices with cartoon characters and celebrities
- Make more healthier choices available in smaller, child-friendly packs, but also avoid increasing the unit cost of these smaller portions
- Use marketing techniques more for the more healthy options
- Organic foods are often marketed with pastel colours, which do not appeal to children
- Use similar techniques, for example ‘child friendly’ stickers and information on Halaal food or vegetarian food
- Avoid putting less healthy options by the tills and at children’s eye level
- Offer more healthy options at the till – for example little bags of celery or carrots
- Improve the clarity of food labelling and make it easily recognisable by adults and children so that they can spot the healthier options.

“she makes me trail around the fruit and veg and won’t look at any fruit or veg except in those bags”

A9

“there is something about the packaging – how the thing works – a point of fascination. She likes a juice box – fruit shooters – a lid she can put on and off – she loves to have a plain water bottle if she can put the lid on or off – the nature of the packaging and how it works seems to be for a three year old a distinctive element”

A23

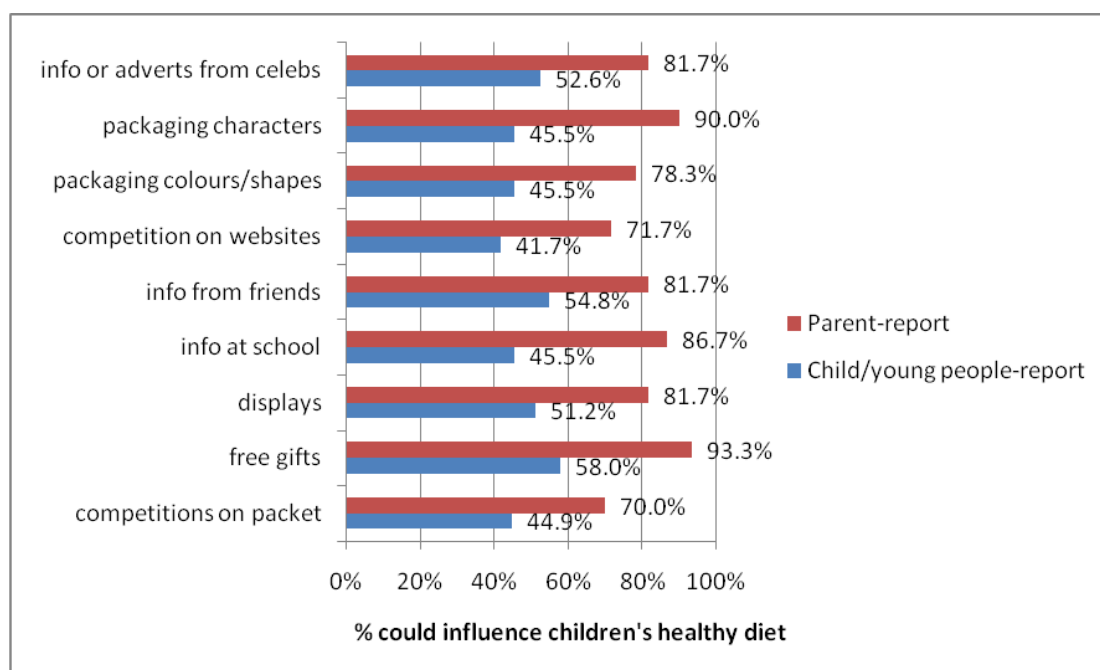
4.4.4 Survey

For the self-completion surveys, all participants were asked whether they thought any of the marketing techniques could help children and young people choose food and drinks recommended for a healthy diet. As seen in Figure 6 below, children and young people were much less likely than parents to endorse any of the marketing techniques.

Children and young people were most likely to view free gifts included in packets (58 per cent), information from friends (55 per cent), information or adverts from celebrities (53 per cent) and easy to spot displays (51 per cent) as potentially enticing them to choose food and drinks that contribute to a healthy diet. The remaining techniques were chosen by 42-46 per cent of children. Children in primary school appeared to be more likely than secondary school students to perceive packages decorated with TV characters (53 per cent and 39 per cent for primary and secondary pupils, respectively) and free gifts contained with packages (68 per cent and 53 per cent for primary and secondary pupils, respectively) as potentially influential on choices for a healthy diet.¹¹ Further research is needed to assess these age-related findings with a representative sample of children and young people.

According to parents, free gifts in packets and packages (93 per cent) and wrappers featuring TV characters (90 per cent) were viewed as the most influential techniques, and competitions (on websites and on packets), the least 72 per cent and 70 per cent, respectively).

Figure 6. Perceived influence of marketing techniques on children and young people’s choices for a healthy diet



Note. N=312 for child/young people-report survey; N=60 for parent-report.

Both children and young people and parents felt that free gifts could be useful to encourage children to choose food and drinks recommended for a healthy diet.

4.5 Discussion

¹¹ $\chi^2(1, N=298)=5.7, p<.05$ for packaging decorated with characters and $\chi^2(1, N=290)=6.5, p<.05$ for free gifts.

One common theme running through all the consultation findings was the importance of packaging in influencing children and young people's choices. Some possible explanations for this, emerging from the findings, include:

1. Packaging is reported as one of the most common marketing techniques children and young people exposed to whilst actually in shops and hence with the immediate opportunity to make a purchase or try to influence their parents to buy

2. Packaging is reported to often be combined with the accessibility of products in tempting displays that are at eye and hand level. The combination of these two factors, including the way displays may highlight or complement the images, colours and characters on the packaging, means they are easily visible to children and young people. Packaging therefore can demand the attention of children and young people in a visual and immediate way.

3. Packaging is also associated with the physical and sensory experience of the product. The parent focus groups particularly emphasised this feature for younger children.

4. There appears to be a social dimension to how children and young people interact with each other and packaged food. The data demonstrates a variety of instances when one child is interested and influenced by what others are holding or eating. The process of holding the physical packaging also provides opportunities for discussion between children and young people.

5. For young people the packaging also holds other information and opportunities such as competitions and website addresses

6. Packaging may be linked to other interests a child or young person may have including television characters and music

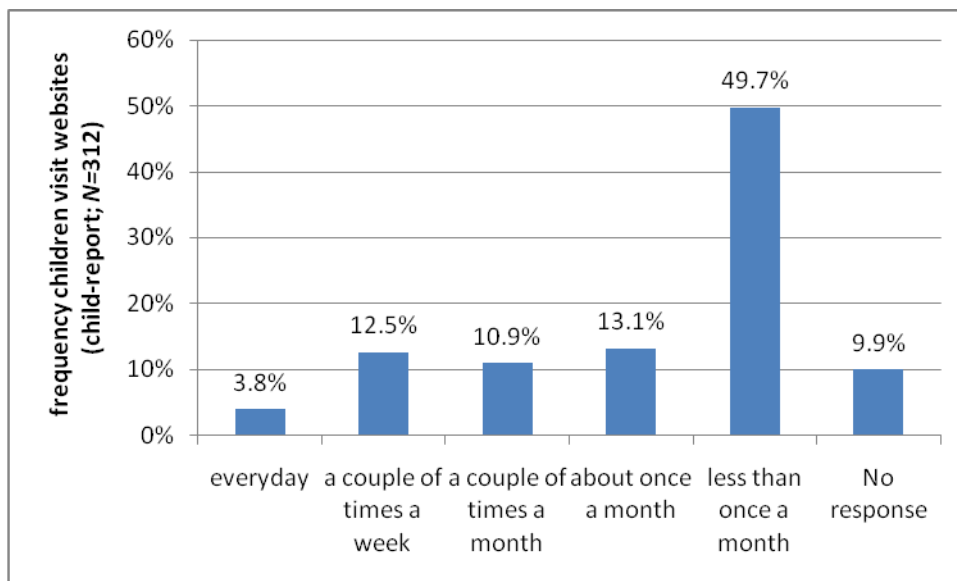
7. The style of packaging may also be a signifier to children and young people about the types of food that are 'children's foods' and that distinguish them from 'adult food and drink'.

In contrasting the data from the different sources there is also a theme that parents felt that some of the other marketing techniques influenced their children more than the children and young people themselves reported. From the parent focus groups this emerged from parents' observations of their children's behaviour patterns and interests rather than from talking with them. What also emerged from the focus groups was an increasing realisation amongst parents of the significance of marketing techniques on their children as they shared their experiences and listened to others. This process of group reflection provided several examples of where parents were able to share new insights in to patterns of behaviour that they had not been so conscious of before.

4.6 Children's use of websites connected to food products or brands

As displayed in Figure 7 below, about half of children (49.7 per cent) visited websites connected for food, snacks, sweets or drinks 'less than once a month', which was the most infrequent option. This seemed to vary by child age with 46.4 per cent of primary school children visiting websites once a month compared with 70.6 per cent of secondary school children. Among the children who did visit websites more frequently, 16.3 per cent visited the websites weekly (22.0 per cent and 9.8 per cent for primary and secondary children, respectively).¹²

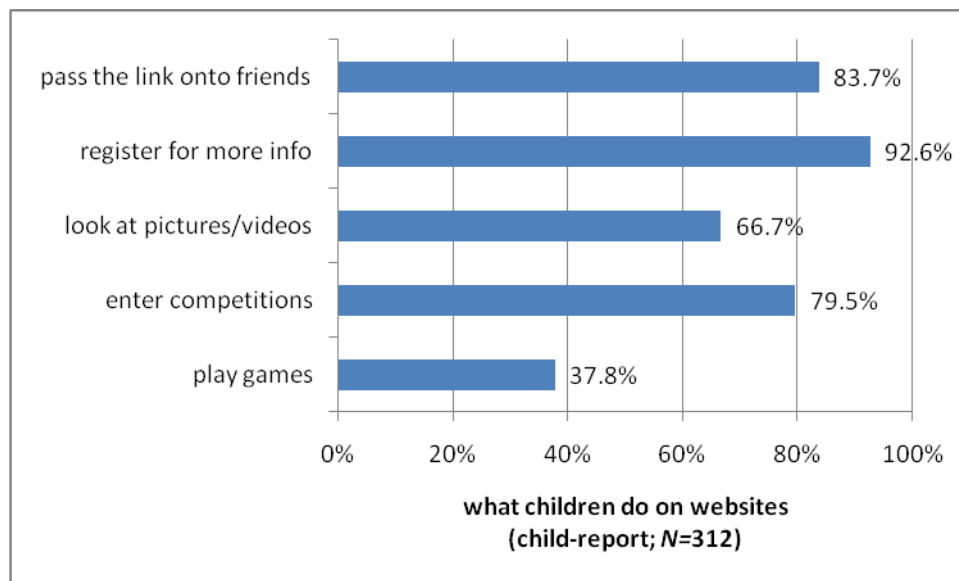
Figure 7. Frequency children visited websites connected to food products or brands



As seen in Figure 8 below, children tended to register for more information, pass links onto their friends and enter competitions on these websites.

¹² $\chi^2(4, N=281)=20.4, p<.01$

Figure 8. What children do on websites connected to food products or brands



Children were also asked to write in any other activities they engage in when visiting these websites. Very few children provided additional responses; of those that did, their responses included:

- explore website
- read information about healthy food
- get information about products
- research (e.g., take part in surveys)
- chat.

By and large, children did not use websites hosted by products or brands very frequently.

In summary:

- Parents' reports of children's awareness of various marketing techniques was higher than children's own reports of awareness.
- Colourful packaging, free gifts contained with packages, packages decorated with TV characters and easy to spot displays were the most obvious forms of marketing to children.
- Parents perceived a stronger influence of marketing techniques on children's choices of meals, snacks, sweets and drinks than did children themselves.
- According to parents, free gifts in packets and packages and wrappers featuring TV characters had the strongest influences on children's choices of meals, drinks, snacks and sweets (i.e., between 'somewhat' and 'very much').

- Both children and parents felt that free gifts could be useful to encourage children to choose food and drinks recommended for a healthy diet.
- Children did not visit websites connected to food products or brands very frequently: only 16 per cent of children visited the sites weekly.

5. Recommendations for further work

The process of delivering this consultation has highlighted opportunities for further work to strengthen and test out the findings in wider settings. NCB's recommendations include:

- The consultation tools developed for the work with the children and young people and the parents were successful in producing a rich variety of detail and data. These tools could easily be replicated and used in more settings.
- The consultation model could be scaled up to address a broader cross-section of children and adults across England. The current work could then be used as a pilot for further investigation into themes and issues that emerged from the initial piece of work as well as addressing gaps in knowledge and understanding about the influence of other marketing techniques through a more diverse cohort of children, young people and parents.
- The pilot could also be extended with a more robust approach to identify a sampling methodology to ensure a greater diversity of participants were part of the consultation. Issues such as ethnicity and culture could be more robustly addressed.
- There was a strong interest from parents in both Children's Centres. It was easy to recruit participants and there was additional demand from other parents who would have liked to be involved. The topic of food marketing is therefore of interest and relevance to this group. Parents were very keen for their voices to be heard by both the government and the food industry and to engage in constructive dialogue.
- The parents were recruited through Children's Centres and as a consequence they all had young children between the ages of six months to five years. Some also had older children. The focus groups therefore gave a powerful insight in to the perceptions of the parents of young children. However, it would be interesting to explore the views and opinions of a wider cross section of parents of children of all ages.
- It is important that feedback is provided to all the participants of the consultations as to how their contributions have been used.

List of appendices

Appendix Group 1 - Consultation plans

- 1a – Children and Young People Consultation Plan
- 1b – Parent Survey Questionnaire
- 1c – Children and Young People Questionnaire
- 1d – Parent Focus Group Plan

Appendix Group 2 – Data sets

- 2a – Data set from primary school children
- 2b – Data set from secondary school children
- 2c – Data set and statistical analysis from survey
- 2d – Data set from parent focus groups

NOTE: Only items 1a, 1b and 1c are included in Appendix 2 of the report *An Analysis of the Regulatory and Voluntary Landscape Concerning the Marketing and Promotion of Foods and Drinks to Children*.



Marketing food to children and young people through non-broadcast media

School Consultation, April / May 2010

Time	Activity
00.00 – 00.05	<p>Introduction and aim for the day.</p> <p>Who are Young NCB?</p> <p>Why are we here today?</p>
00.05 – 00.15	<p>Activity 1: Buy or not to buy?</p> <p>Aim: for the pupils to understand what type of products we are discussing, and gauging their immediate views of what foods/sweets/snacks/drinks they purchase. Why have they chosen to buy or not to buy these products? What are the influences? How are choices influenced</p> <p>Each young person has a green card that they should hold up if they would buy the product shown, and a blue card if they wouldn't buy the product. The young people are taken through a series of images on A3 paper with different products – snacks, fast-food and soft drinks.</p> <p>The group are asked to individually rate what they would buy, and what they wouldn't buy. After each product, ask 2-3 why they have made that particular selection. What has influenced them? If after a few products, answers are all based on taste, rule this out as a reason for their choice – how else might they be influenced? If time is running out, we can show 6-8 products rather than the full 10.</p>
00.15 – 00.35	<p>Activity 2: Recognition of marketing methods (Recognition & Influence)</p> <p>Aim: to identify the different ways of marketing products including food/sweets/snacks/drinks, and what pupils think the purpose is of their use – do pupils recognise these techniques as marketing and does it entice them to</p>

	<p>buy a particular product?</p> <p>Ask the group to shout out as many foods and soft drinks products that are promoted/advertised to them – spend a couple of minutes writing these up on the board (3 minutes)</p> <p>Ask the class to work in groups to discuss what methods are used in promoting food and soft drinks to them and other school age children, older and younger (7 minutes), writing answers on flip chart paper. Ask if anyone has examples of products and who has endorsed them – musicians, sports personalities, film stars, animation characters etc.</p> <p>Ask groups for feedback, writing up results on to a board/flip chart (5 minutes).</p> <p>Ask the class how much these kinds of promotions influence what they buy? For example, would they buy more of one product to collect tokens to win a competition/ if their favourite band was helping to promote a particular product/ if a product was promoted through a latest film? Why? (5 minutes)</p> <p>Pose the question: Could other types of food/drinks/snacks, other than those listed, be promoted in the same way to encourage children and young people to eat a balanced diet? (5 minutes)</p>
<p>00.35 – 00.45</p>	<p>Activity 3: Stars charts for influences</p> <p>Aim: to gather a quick snap shot of key influences in choosing products.</p> <p>There are not right or wrong answers! Everyone is influenced by different things.</p> <p>A3 sheets get passed from table to table, where pupils identify how they are influenced to buy a product, placing stars in the yes / maybe / no columns (5 minutes), followed by 5 minute discussion.</p> <p>Categories include buying a product dependent on.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitions advertised on the packet • Free gifts in the packet • Displays that are easy to spot – such as at checkouts

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information at school on posters, workbooks or vending machines • Information from your friends about the products • Competitions or free gifts on websites run by the product or brand • Packaging and wrappers with colours or shapes • Packages and wrappers with film or TV characters on them • Information or adverts from famous celebrities
00.45 – 1.00	<p>Activity 4: Marketing of foods in the future</p> <p>Aim – to gather the views on how marketing of products including food/sweets/snacks/drinks to children and young people needs to change. This is not to identify what children and young people view as contributing towards a healthy diet, but their perception of how food/sweets/snacks/drinks should or shouldn't be promoted to them.</p> <p>Each pupil will be given an envelope with a post card inside. On one side of the postcard there will be a “product” (either a chocolate bar, drink, fruit item, granola item, cereal, fast food item etc)</p> <p>Ask the pupils to think about the exercises we have undertaken today.</p> <p>If they get a product that they would want to encourage children to eat or drink, how could it be made more appealing to children and young people? What more could be done to promote it and other products like these?</p> <p>If they have a product they might want to discourage children from eating, what might they suggest to the food and drinks companies about the way products like this are marketed.</p> <p>Ask pupils to post the postcards in the post box once finished. (NB these will not be sent to the industry but this is a good way of getting children to relate to and focus on a complex issue)</p>
1.00	Closing session

Children's food marketing survey



NCB (National Children's Bureau) is doing a quick survey to understand what influences which meals, snacks, sweets or drinks you choose.

Please read each question carefully and tick the answer or answers that apply to you with a large mark in the box. For some questions there are spaces where you can write in your answer. This is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. The answers are confidential – this means that you don't have to record your name and no one will know what you have written.

When you have finished, please return the survey to your teacher. *Thank you!*

1. Do you notice any of the following when you are deciding which meals, snacks, sweets or drinks to have? Tick Yes or No for each item below.

	Yes	No
Competitions advertised on the packet		
Free gifts in the packet		
Displays that are easy to spot – such as at checkouts		
Information at school on posters, workbooks or vending machines		
Information from your friends about the products		
Competitions or free gifts on websites run by the product or brand		
Packaging and wrappers with colours or shapes		
Packages and wrappers with film or TV characters on them		
Information or adverts from famous celebrities		

Is there anything else that you notice or remember when deciding what meals, snacks, sweets or drinks you want to buy, eat or drink? *If yes, write it down below.*

2. How often does each of the following help you to decide which meals, snacks, sweets or drinks to have? Tick Never, Sometimes, Most of the time or Always for each item below.

	Never	Some-times	Most of the time	Always
Displays that are easy to spot – such as at checkouts				
Packaging and wrappers with colours or shapes				
Packages and wrappers with film or TV characters on them				
Information or adverts from famous celebrities				
Information from your friends about the products				
Information at school on posters, workbooks or vending machines				
Free gifts in the packet				
Competitions or free gifts on websites run by the product or brand				
Competitions advertised on the packet				

3. **Would any of the following make you more likely to choose foods and drinks recommended for a healthy diet?** *Tick Yes or No for each item below.*

	Yes	No
Packages and wrappers with film or TV characters on them		
Displays that are easy to spot – such as at checkouts		
Information at school on posters, workbooks or vending machines		
Packaging and wrappers with colours or shapes		
Information from your friends about the products		
Competitions or free gifts on websites run by the product or brand		
Competitions advertised on the packet		
Free gifts in the packet		
Information or adverts from famous celebrities		

4. **How often do you visit websites connected to food, snacks, sweets or drinks?** *Tick one box below.*

- Everyday
- A couple of times a week
- A couple of times a month
- About once a month
- Less than once a month

5. **If you visit these websites what do you do?** *Tick as many boxes as you need to below.*

- Play games
- Enter competitions
- Look at pictures and video clips
- Register for more information
- Pass the link on to my friends
- Something else (*write what it is below*)

6. **How old are you?** years

7. **Are you a boy or a girl?** *Tick one box below.*

- Boy Girl

8. **Which region of England do you live in?** *Tick one box below.*

- East Midlands
- East of England
- London
- North East
- North West
- South East
- South West
- West Midlands
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- I'm not sure

Parent food marketing survey



NCB (National Children’s Bureau) is doing a quick survey to understand what influences which meals, snacks, sweets or drinks that your children choose.

Please read each question carefully and tick the answer/answers that apply to you with a large mark in the box. For some questions there are spaces where you can write in your answer. This is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. The answers are confidential – this means that you don’t have to record your name and no one will know what you have written.

When you have finished, please return the survey to the Children’s Centre staff.
Thank you!

When answering the questions below think about the things that influence your children’s choices of meals, snacks, sweets and drinks.

1. To your knowledge, are your children aware of the following marketing techniques?
 Tick Yes, No or Don’t know for each item below

	Yes	No	Don’t know
Competitions advertised on the packet			
Free gifts in the packet			
Displays that are easy to spot – such as at checkouts			
Information at school on posters, workbooks or vending machines			
Information from their friends about the products			
Competitions or free gifts on websites run by the product or brand			
Packaging and wrappers with different colours or shapes			
Packages and wrappers with film or TV characters on them			
Information or adverts from famous celebrities			

2. To what extent are your children influenced by the following when deciding which meals, snacks, sweets or drinks they want? Tick Not at all, Very little, Somewhat or Very much for each item below.

	Not at all	Very little	Somewhat	Very much	Don’t know
Displays that are easy to spot – such as at checkouts					
Packaging and wrappers with different colours or shapes					
Packages and wrappers with film or TV characters on them					
Information or adverts from famous celebrities					
Information from their friends about the products					
Information at school on posters, workbooks or vending machines					
Free gifts in the packet					
Competitions or free gifts on websites run by the product or brand					
Competitions advertised on the packet					

3. Do you think any of the following could help your children choose foods and drinks recommended for a healthy diet? Tick 'yes' or 'no' for each item.

	Yes, this could help	No, it would make no difference
Packages and wrappers with film or TV characters on them		
Displays that are easy to spot – such as at checkouts		
Information at school on posters, workbooks or vending machines		
Packaging and wrappers with different colours or shapes		
Information from their friends about the products		
Competitions or free gifts on websites run by the product or brand		
Competitions advertised on the packet		
Free gifts in the packet		
Information or adverts from famous celebrities		

4. How old are you? ___ __ years

5. How many children are currently living in your home in each of the following age groups?

	Please write in the number of children in each age group currently living in your home
Under 3 years	
3-7 year olds	
8-11 year olds	
Over 11 years	

6. Are you male or female? Tick one box below.

Male Female

7. Which region of England do you live in? Tick one box below.

- East Midlands
- East of England
- London
- North East
- North West
- South East
- South West
- West Midlands
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- I'm not sure