

Youth-Targeted Advertising

Ban all advertising aimed at young children? I say yes.

We protect our children from harm, except for the psychological damage many say ads cause. Parents have the power to end it

How on earth did we come to this? We protect our children obsessively from every harm, we vet every carer, teacher or medic with whom they come into contact, we fret about their education, their development. Yet despite all this, one group, which in no way has their best interests at heart, has almost unlimited access.

We seem to take it for granted that advertisers and marketers are allowed to groom even the youngest children. Before children have even developed a proper sense of their own identity, or learned to handle money, they are encouraged to associate status and self-worth with stuff, and to look to external things such as fame and wealth for validation. We're turning out legions of little consumers rather than young citizens who will value themselves for what they contribute to the society in which they live. If you teach these values of the consumer society from childhood then it's no wonder that those of the "big society" fail to take root. The one surely can't co-exist with the other.

We've reached this point so gradually that many of us have never questioned it. It's been developing since the 60 years since advertisers started to target the young and found that they could recruit them to a commercial attack on their parents. We've come to know it as pester power.

Like so many aspects of parenthood we only grasp the full reality when we experience it first-hand, in my case when my son, now six, mastered the TV remote. When he'd watched only the BBC's CBeebies he was largely shielded from the effects of advertising. Once he'd found the commercial channels, it was like watching the consumerist equivalent of crack take hold. The adverts would come on. A minute later there would invariably be a demand for something that had just been advertised - anything, so long as it wasn't pink and didn't involve fairies. Then there would be the tantrum when I said no; this from a boy who had never been prone to tantrums.

Many psychologists, child development experts and educators point to research suggesting that this emerging cradle-to-grave consumerism is contributing to growing rates of low self-esteem, depression and other forms of mental illness.

Not all psychologists agree. There are plenty working hand in glove with a £12bn-a-year industry that has turned the manipulation of adult emotions and desires into an artform - often literally. It's also one that's forever developing new ways to persuade our children to desire the material goods dangled before them, and because of advertising's viral effect they only need to infect a few to reach the many.

I do have friends whose children are largely free from the pressures of advertising, but they live in a mobile home on a smallholding in a remote corner of Ireland. For the rest of us, ads are ubiquitous.

The Guardian

Ex. 1 Find the words or expressions in the text which mean the following:

- 1) verify, check authenticity or quality: _____
- 2) treat something as a sure thing: _____
- 3) influence, prepare in such way that people do as you say: _____
- 4) good, correct: _____
- 5) to deal with something, to learn how to use: _____
- 6) have your input into something, add your effort to a common goal:

- 7) understand: _____
- 8) protected, covered: _____
- 9) likely to be influenced by something: _____
- 10) present everywhere: _____
- 11) annoying child who persuades parents to buy something: _____

Ex. 2 Match the expressions from the two columns into logical collocations:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| 1) to take | customer complaints |
| 2) pester | a tantrum |
| 3) to handle | glove |
| 4) to throw | financial management |
| 5) viral | something for granted |

- 6) personal advertising
7) hand in power

Ex. 3 Provide English equivalents of these expressions:

1) z wyłączeniem	7) trwający przez całe życie
2) mimo	8) bez odstępstwa od norm
3) wnieść wkład w coś	9) marketing wirusowy
4) społeczeństwo konsumenckie	10) wespół, razem
5) opanować obsługę czegoś	
6) niekontrolowany atak złości	

Grammar corner...

There is a group of words in English that usually go only with certain prepositions - they are called depended prepositions, because they depend ON the verb that comes before them. Paradoxically, the very name of dependent prepositions contains the words that requires a dependent preposition:-) The best way to learn them is to practice.

Ex. 4 Complete the sentences with a correct preposition:

- 1) Consumers need to be protected _____ the influence of clever marketing specialists.
- 2) Except _____ a few individuals who choose to live in remote areas with no media access, virtually everyone is influenced by advertising.
- 3) Children are the group that is the most prone _____ manipulation by the media.
- 4) Everyone who has ever come _____ contact with telemarketers will admit that they are annoying.
- 5) The new law is an obvious attack _____ civil liberties!
- 6) I don't own a TV, therefore I am sure I am shielded _____ advertising.

7) There is a growing demand _____ online advertisements, e.g. backvertising.

8) I hope our children will not turn _____ obsessive consumers.

GLOSSARY	
to vet	zweryfikować / zlustrować
to take something for granted	brać coś za pewnik
to groom somebody	urabiać kogoś (np. klienta)
to handle customer complaints	rozpatrywać skargi klientów
to validate a transaction	autoryzować transakcję
an individual contributor	pracownik niezależny
pester power	wywieranie przez dzieci wpływu na rodziców poprzez „terror”
to grasp an idea	pojąć / zrozumieć
to throw a tantrum	wybuchnąć niekontrolowaną złością
to act hand-in-glove	działać razem / wspólnie
viral marketing	marketing wirusowy
ubiquitous	wszechobecny
demand for something	popyt na coś
prone / susceptible to	podatny na coś
cradle-to-grave	trwający przez całe życie

Answer key

Ex. 1.

1. to vet
2. to take something for granted
3. to groom
4. proper
5. to handle
6. to contribute
7. to grasp
8. shielded
9. prone
10. ubiquitous
11. pester

Ex. 2.

1. to take something for granted
2. pester power
3. to handle customer complaints
4. to throw a tantrum
5. viral marketing
6. personal financial management
7. hand in glove

Ex. 3.

1. except for
2. despite
3. to contribute
4. consumer society
5. to master something
6. a temper tantrum
7. cradle-to-grave
8. invariable
9. viral marketing
10. hand-in-glove

Ex. 4.

1. from
2. for
3. to
4. into
5. on
6. from
7. for
8. into