



June 6, 2005

Mr. Richard Kelly  
Federal Trade Commission  
Bureau of Consumer Protection  
601 New Jersey Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20580

**Re: Food Marketing to Kid Workshop – Request to Participate  
Project No. P034519**

Dear Mr. Kelly:

I am writing to respectfully request that the Ad Council participate as a panelist at the upcoming FTC/HHS public workshop “Marketing, Self-Regulation and Childhood Obesity”.

In particular, the Ad Council is interested in presenting on 2 of the workshop’s 5 topics:

1) Education; and 2) Plans/proposals for new initiatives.

**1) Education:**

The Ad Council is spearheading several public service advertising campaigns to address the obesity epidemic and in particular, childhood obesity. We welcome the opportunity to discuss the results of our efforts to date and share our research and findings:

As you may know, the Ad Council, in partnership with HHS, launched its “Small Steps” PSA campaign in March, 2004. (To date, the campaign’s donated media results have been outstanding: It has garnered more than \$109 million in donated media coverage and attracted more than one million unique visitors to the campaign website, an average of over 71,000 per month.) We are presently working with HHS on a national communications program targeted to youth (ages 6 – 9), which we plan to launch this August. The multi-media campaign (TV, radio, and Internet PSAs), coupled with uniquely designed in-school educational programming will engage children to adopt healthier nutrition and physical activity habits. The campaign’s “call to action” will drive audiences to child-appropriate resources where they will discover interactive ways to adopt healthy behaviors.

The Ad Council and HHS have conducted qualitative exploratory research where we obtained learning about 6-9 year old children's eating, health, and recreation habits and attitudes. We also conducted in-depth triad and one-on-one interviews in two cities among children from different ethnic backgrounds and household income levels. This learning served as a basis for

the campaign's underlying communications strategy, which we believe will effectively translate into changed behavior for our target audience.

The Ad Council welcomes the opportunity to discuss the learnings from both campaign efforts. (In addition, the Ad Council has an enormous amount of research on how targeted PSA communications can change attitudes, beliefs and behaviors regarding a multitude of social and health-related issues, including safety-belt usage, drug prevention and environmental issues.)

## **2) Plans/proposals for new initiatives:**

The Ad Council recently convened its *Coalition For Healthy Children: Combating Childhood Obesity* initiative. This unprecedented collaboration utilizes the collective strengths of food, beverage and other corporate marketers as well as the media, nonprofits and government agencies to address the obesity crisis with consistent, research-based messages to parents and children. Our ultimate goal will be to have all of the participants voluntarily incorporate these messages into their communications programs, as appropriate (this will include, but not be limited to advertising and packaging for marketers). The Ad Council, in partnership with Yankelovich, will track changes in key attitudes and behaviors related to nutrition and physical activity for both parents and children. We will work closely with coalition partners to report participation and Members' communications contributions to the program.

The Ad Council, with the help of coalition members and the advertising agency McCann-Erikson, NY, recently tested a short list of key messages, targeting parents and youth through both qualitative and quantitative studies. These messages are presently being refined and will be shared with coalition members for inclusion in their advertising and marketing materials. (The Ad Council plans to assemble a larger group of marketers, nonprofits and government agencies at a coalition meeting on July 13.)

The Ad Council would like to share with the FTC, HHS and workshop participants our findings to date and how we believe this innovative effort can help reverse the obesity crisis and promote healthier lifestyles among our youth.

Given these above-mentioned initiatives, which focus on voluntary and self-regulatory efforts, the Ad Council feels we could provide valuable input and information at your upcoming public workshop.

Should you have any questions concerning the Ad Council's request to be a panelist, please contact:

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Thank you in advance for considering our request and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Peggy Conlon  
President and CEO  
The Advertising Council