

CHILDREN'S WELLBEING

It is our belief... that children are being exposed to more advertising – and at a younger age. Although the long-term impact of this is unclear, there are certain sectors of advertising that we believe risk having a negative effect on their wellbeing.

The leadership position

Advertisers should be ensuring they adhere to ASA guidance and put the interests of children first and foremost, ensuring that their wellbeing is considered within their strategies from the outset.

The commercial imperative

40% of us have avoided a brand because of its values or behaviour¹. And, it's well known that digital content influences young minds². So, on an emotive issue like child welfare, it makes sense to ensure brands' dialogue with children is responsible and authentic. This extends beyond content into placement³. Conversely, brands that place child welfare first, in a sophisticated and engaging way, could position themselves as responsible leaders.

We believe organisations should make the following commitments to advertising and include the following criteria in all agency briefs:

Child-focused advertising

Advertising to children should be age appropriate and consider the impact on their wellbeing. Advertisers should:

- Consult with regulatory bodies to ensure anything produced is in no way detrimental to children's health
- Where possible, communicate with parents regularly when planning campaigns to better understand the impact of advertising on children
- If targeting the 'family' audience, follow the same ASA guidance as outlined for children
- Include a diverse variety of positive role models throughout all advertising to offer a realistic and representative reflection of society
- Label advertising clearly and upfront, using language that can be easily understood by the target audience
- Promote positive messaging and values throughout campaigns and avoid glamourising negative lifestyles and behaviours
- If advertising to under 13s, use a child-safe technology platform, such as SuperAwesome, to ensure safe, digital engagement with no data collection

Non-child-focused advertising

Age inappropriate adverts should not appear on websites specifically aimed at children or where they are likely to be seen by children. Advertisers should:

- Use sophisticated targeting mechanisms, such as combining age verification targeting with interest targeting, to help reduce exposure to age inappropriate advertising
- Implement strong age verification systems on websites and avoid using platforms to advertise through that do not have an age verification system in place
- Consider financially incentivising your media buyer to ensure transparency around media placement

¹ Julia North, Mediacom

² www.economist.com/graphic-detail/2018/05/18/how-heavy-use-of-social-media-is-linked-to-mental-illness

³ www.marketingweek.com/2018/02/12/unilever-threatens-pull-ad-spend-platforms-breed-division/

- Ensure your digital media vendor is using a brand safety tool, such as JICWEBS
- Ensure you are able to justify ad placement choices, particularly in new ad formats
- If running an influencer campaign, take into account their social following through demographic analysis. This should be done using either a self-service tool or by using an intermediary such as Takumi or a media agency. Ensure that a large percentage of influencer's following are not "children" unless campaign has positive message that takes into account their wellbeing