Marketing for baby and toddler food and drinks: What is it teaching parents?

Jennifer L. Harris
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Baby Food FACTS

Food and drinks for babies and toddlers <3 years
$6.5 billion sales:

All children’s food and drinks: $23 billion

Source: Mintel 2014; Packaged Facts
# Methods

## Nutrition content and profile score

### Marketing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional media</th>
<th>Digital media</th>
<th>Content analysis</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ad spending*</td>
<td>Food company websites**</td>
<td>TV and magazine ads</td>
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<td>TV advertising*</td>
<td>Display ads on 3rd-party websites**</td>
<td>Product packages</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Spanish-language</td>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>Posts and mom blogs</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Syndicated data sources: *Nielsen  **comScore
Expert recommendations*

• Birth to 6 months: Breastmilk
• 6 months to 1 year
  – Breastmilk optimal, or infant formula
  – Learning to eat: pureed to harder food, self-feeding
• 1 to 2 years
  – Plain, whole milk
  – Transition to family diet
• Taste, textures and flavors of fruit and veggies
• No added sugar

*WHO, American Academy of Family Physicians, AAP, AND, AHA, Healthy Eating Research
2015 advertising spending

3 companies, 8 brands = 99% of spending

4 additional brands:
- Plum Organics
- Beech-Nut
- Happy Baby, Happy Tot
Infant formula

2011 to 2015: Ad spending declined by 2/3

Total advertising spending (mil)

$30

$25

$20

$15

$10

$5

$0

Product claims

Structure/function claims: 100% of packages

• 5.9 nutrition messages and 3.1 child development messages per package

• Proposed FDA guidance
Advertising messages

Enfamil Infant is proven to deliver 16% higher scores on a test measuring the understanding of vocabulary at age 5.*

A growing vocabulary is a sign of cognitive development, and you can help support it with Enfamil.

Enfamil routine formulas have a Neuro Complete™ blend that nourishes milestones with clinically proven nutrients, like brain-nourishing DHA. Enfamil Infant is proven to foster learning – like understanding words through age 5.

See the proof at enfamil.com.

DHA
Lutein
OptiGRO™

50% LESS CRYING

L. Reuteri reduces crying time by 50% in colicky breastfed infants after 1 week of feeding.

0 DAYS
7 DAYS
Social media

Gerber
- 6.4 mil Facebook likes
- 51 mil YouTube views
#EndMommyWars
- 20 mil video views
- 321 mom blog posts
Toddler drinks

2011 to 2015: Ad spending increased 22%
- Toddler milk +74%

[Graph showing trends in advertising spending for Toddler drinks and Infant formula from 2011-2012 to 2014-2015]
Nutrition

INGREDIENTS: NONFAT MILK, CORN SYRUP SOLIDS, VEGETABLE OIL (PALM OLEIN, COCONUT, SOY, AND HIGH OLEIC SUNFLOWER OILS), GALACTOLOSIGOSACCHARIDES*, POLYDEXTROSE*, AND LESS THAN 1%: CALCIUM CARBONATE, MAGNESIUM PHOSPHATE, FERROUS SULFATE, ZINC SULFATE, MANGANESE SULFATE, CUPRIC SULFATE, TUNA FISH OIL**, NIACINAMIDE, ASCORBIC ACID, CALCIUM PANTOTHENATE, VITAMIN B6 HYDROCHLORIDE, THIAMIN HYDROCHLORIDE, VITAMIN D3, RIBOFLAVIN, FOLIC ACID, BIOTIN, ASCORBYL PALMITATE, VITAMIN E ACETATE, VITAMIN A PALMITATE, NATURAL FLAVOR, SOY LECITHIN.

Enfagrow Toddler Next Step
Brain-nourishing DHA
Vitamins
Minerals
Prebiotics

DHA content: 17 mg powder and 10 mg liquid per serving.
Expert recommended amount: 70-100 mg/day.
Are they necessary?

“There is no evidence of advantage over whole milk in terms of growth or development…Parents who remain concerned about picky eaters could be directed to a multi-vitamin instead.”

American Academy of Family Physicians and AAP
Potential confusion

- Infant formula:
  - $2.00
  - $1.90
  - $1.80
  - $1.70
  - $1.60
  - $1.50
  - $1.40
  - $1.30
  - $1.20
  - $1.10
  - $1.00
  - $0.90
  - $0.80

  - $1.95/oz.
  - $1.41/oz.
  - $1.38/oz.

- Toddler milk:
  - $0.99/oz.
  - $1.09/oz.

Recommended age (in months):
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 31 32 33 34 35 36
Most-advertised brand

- $21 million in 2015
- 240 kcal
- 12-14 g sugar

*Studied in children at risk of malnutrition
**Spanish-language ads**

Enfagrow, Pediasure and Nido:

- Only brands on Spanish-language TV
- 25% to 100% of brand spending
Baby and toddler food

2011 to 2015: Ad spending increased 26%
- Toddler food +48%
100% nutritious options

- Pureed fruits and vegetables, mixed foods,
Baby and toddler snacks
### Nutrition and marketing

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baby snacks</th>
<th>Toddler snacks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nutritious</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added sugar</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition messages per package</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name/ingredient mismatch</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No better than: Cheetos Puffs reduced-fat, Stauffers animal crackers, BelVita Bites
Recommendations

- Adopt WHO provisions on aggressive promotion of breastmilk substitutes
- Support FDA structure/function claim guidance on infant formula
  - Include toddler milk
  - Similar FTC regulations on advertising
- Effective industry self-regulation
- Pediatricians, healthcare providers, nutritionists advise parents
Thank you

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www.UConnRuddCenter.org/BabyFoodFACTS