

**Consuming Kids Summit:
Market Values, Human Values and the Lives of Children**
April 8-10, 2010 – Wheelock College, Boston

Breakout Session Descriptions

Breakout Session A ~ Friday, 10:45am-12:00pm

1. But what if they don't fit in? Conformity, Non-conformity, and the Commercialization of Childhood

Susan Linn, Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood

Pressure to conform, whether overt or covert, is an essential component of any mass marketing campaign. And when the prevailing culture celebrates brands as badges of belonging and icons of identity, important values—creativity, divergent thinking, and personal integrity—are marginalized. Meanwhile, family decisions about consumption are often shaped by parents' hopes and fears about their children's social life, and by their own childhood memories of fitting in, or not fitting in. How do we help parents help children develop a sense of self apart from brands? What can we offer parents afraid to assert their values for fear of harming their children's social standing? Join CCFC's Director, Susan Linn, in an exploration of these and other questions about consumption, conformity, and the lives of children.

2. Fathers in the Fight: Mobilizing Dads as Advocates & Activists

Joe Kelly, The Emily Program

Fathers are an under-utilized resource in battling marketing to children. This session describes hurdles that inhibit fathers' involvement in the cause--and simple strategies you can use to leverage fathers' unique positions of influence with decision-makers.

3. Problems with Contemporary Children's Media: Graphic Violence, Sex in Video Games, Bullying on Facebook and Exploiting Kids on Reality TV

Mike Brody, The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

This presentation depicts the harmful affects of the New Media, which promotes not only more graphic sex and violence in video games, but inappropriate behavior using social networking. It also describes the present insensitivity of the Old Media as it exploits children on Reality TV.

4. High-calorie Images: Television's Role in Childhood Obesity

Brandy King, Center on Media and Child Health & Nancy Marsden, FIT Media Coalition

Scholars have been investigating the link between TV-watching and childhood obesity for years, but the reasons for the connection are often misunderstood. Research suggests that TV commercials and product placements may be influencing kids to eat more and to make poor food choices. In this workshop, Brandy King (Center on Media and Child Health, Harvard Medical School and Harvard School of Public Health) will update you on relevant studies and their implications for parents, teachers and health professionals. Nancy Marsden (FIT Media Coalition) will take you between the lines to discover embedded ads (product placements) that go beyond selling sugary, fatty foods to model attitudes and behavior that may influence a child's health for a lifetime. So how can YOU protect kids from TV's high-calorie images? Come to this must-do workshop to create an action plan that CAN make a difference!

5. From Six, Going on Sixteen to Empowered by Play: Turning Issues Into Opportunities

Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin, Empowered by Play

Fighting the commercialism of childhood is an upward battle. Learn how one classroom teacher, author of "Six, Going on Sixteen" for Rethinking Schools, turned the issues her students were facing into opportunities to inform and empower students, faculty and families. At the heart of this work is finding ways everyday to help families and teachers protect and promote imaginative play in our way-too-busy, media-filled, consumer-driven world. This includes everything from providing workshops on blocks to teenage moms, to staff development workshops on the importance of play, to blogging, and more. Come and share your stories of how individuals can become activists - and turn issues into opportunities.

Breakout Session B ~ Friday, 2:30-3:45pm

1. Feminism Lost: The Harm Caused by the Use of Sex and Sexualization to Market to Children

Diane Levin, coauthor, So Sexy So Soon

Today's children are growing up in an environment saturated with images of sexual appearance and behavior that they cannot fully understand. It is influencing what both girls and boys think about being male and female, their bodies, what they want to be, do, and wear and teaching harmful lessons about social behavior and relationships. It can promote eating disorders, low self-esteem, and precocious sexuality. Based on her book, *So Sexy So Soon*, Levin explores the current situation, how it is affecting children, and what we can do to promote healthy development as we work for change.

2. Making the Media System Work for Children

Stevie Converse, Free Press, Kendra Hodgson, Media Education Foundation & Alex Peterson, Media Education Foundation

Want a better media landscape for children? Understanding the basics of media education and media reform is vital to create lasting change. This workshop will address the existing corporate media system and the challenges it poses for producers and distributors of quality, independent programming. We'll learn about educational tools for media literacy, and we'll explore ways to voice your concerns and insert human values into the public discourse about marketing and children. Some workshop highlights:

- The role of media education in working toward a commercial-free environment for children
- An overview of federal policies that affect television programming and distribution, Internet access and public media
- Basic concepts of media education and learning to deconstruct media, using exercises and lessons
- Short clips from Media Education Foundation films, "Consuming Kids" and "Mickey Mouse Monopoly"
- Envisioning the future for children's programming and the policies needed to achieve that vision
- Discussion of networking and communications tools for getting your message out to the public and widening your audience
- Handouts to help with concrete actions to organize, educate, legislate and communicate

3. Healthy Media Choices: It's About Time. Empowering Parents of Children Birth to Age 9 to Make Informed and Custom-made Choices

Mary Rothschild, Healthy Media Choices

Discussions of values can be divisive. We all wish to spend our time in ways that are consonant with our wishes for our loved ones and ourselves. This interactive workshop offers a process for parents and teachers of children birth through age 9 to look at developmental needs and influences and bring our own understanding and priorities to bear on our unique environments.

4. Reclaiming Our Schools: Lessons from the Victory Over BusRadio

Josh Golin, Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood

Channel One. Branded fundraisers. Advertising on school buses, hallways, in cafeterias, on textbook covers, school lunch menus, and even milk cartons. With schools facing unprecedented budget gaps and looking for funding sources anywhere and everywhere, it may seem like the corporate takeover of our nation's schools is inevitable. It's not. Drawing on lessons from CCFC's victory over school bus marketer BusRadio, Josh Golin will describe strategies that parents and educators can use to keep advertisers from exploiting a captive audience of schoolchildren. Discussion topics will include: Types of advertising to look out for, moral and economic arguments against advertising in schools, and organizing tactics. If your school has marketing that you want gone, come to this session and we'll come up with a plan!

5. Children, Media and Consumption: Reflections from a Mobile and Sedentary Society

Cecilia von Feilitzen, Södertörn University, Sweden

Sweden has a ban on TV advertising aimed at children under 12 years of age. Does this mean that children in Sweden are less consumer-oriented than children in countries where child advertising is allowed? This question gives rise to new ones: How is consumer society related to all other media, such as films, games, the Internet and mobile phones, which take up more and more of our time? What is the parents' role? The school's? How do societal values affect the commercialization of children's lives? Besides discussing policies on marketing, and making some international comparisons, this session will also ask if the present advertising lives up to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This Convention says, among other things, that children shall have access to information and material in the media aimed at the promotion of his/her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health, but also that children shall be protected from information and material injurious to his/her well-being.

Breakout Session C ~ Saturday, 10:30-11:45am

1. Tough from an Early Age: The Harm Caused by Using Violence to Market to Children

Diane Levin, coauthor, So Sexy So Soon

Ever since the deregulation era of the Eighties, violence has increasingly been used to capture children's attention and get them to buy, buy, buy. Today's children are growing up in an environment saturated with enormous amounts of entertainment violence—a multibillion-dollar industry of TV shows, movies, video games, toys and other products all linked around a single violent theme. It is having an enormous impact on children, families, schools, and society. This presentation will look at the nature of the problem, how it is harming children and the kinds of societal responses that are needed to support children's healthy development as we work for change.

2. There is No Free Speech Right to Market to Kids - Corporate Myths and Policy Solutions

Michele Simon, Marin Institute; author, Appetite for Profit

For decades, corporations that market to kids, along with powerful advertising trade groups, have fooled policymakers and the general public into thinking that the First Amendment shields them from laws that would restrict their exploitative marketing practices. At the same time, industry has cleverly invented its own non-system of voluntary oversight called self-regulation as a way to mollify and deflect legal restrictions. But the truth is that free speech is not an absolute right, and marketing to children can and should be restricted through policy change. In this workshop, you will learn the basic elements of free speech law, why self-regulation is a dismal failure, and what kinds of Constitutionally-sound policies can be implemented at the federal, state, and local levels to protect children from commercialism.

3. After the Analysis: Challenging Commercialism by Living Mindfully

Kendra Hodgson, Media Education Foundation

We are surrounded by commercial messages that tell us that: our value is derived from what we buy; the world is a frightening, violent place; intimate relationships are primarily based in passionate sex; we are considered beautiful only if we are the 'right' height, weight, race, and age; and more. Cultural analysis and media criticism play important roles in freeing our imaginations from such stories. But real, sustainable change in our selves and in our communities also requires personal work -- cultivating a deep sense of self-worth from within, examining our own personal shadows, and practicing mindfulness so we can make conscious decisions about how we engage with others and interact with the world. A mindfully lived life pushes back against commercialism and issues a powerful challenge to the stories told by corporate media. In this workshop, you will learn about accessible mindfulness practices, and how you can use these techniques in your own life as well as in your work as an anti-commercialism activist.

4. More is Always Better. Any Attention is Good Attention. You Have A 'Right' to Satisfy All Desires, NOW!

Sharon Maxwell, author, The Talk

These market values, designed to create the perfect consumer are shaping our children's character and undermining parent's ability to raise healthy, responsible kids. This workshop examines the impact of these three market values on our children's understanding of friendship, communication and sexual behavior and gives participant's strategies for counteracting market values with family values.

5. Marketing to Diverse Youth: Problems and Solutions

Velma LaPoint, Howard University & Dionne Stephens, Florida International University

This session will feature presentations by Dr. Dionne Stephens, Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology and African Diaspora Studies program at Florida International University, and Dr. Velma LaPoint, Professor in the Department of Human Development and Psychoeducational Studies at Howard University. First, Dr. Stephens will present, "Selling Sexy: Mainstream Hip Hop Culture's Commodification of Black Female Sexuality," drawing on her research examining socio-cultural factors shaping minority populations' sexual health processes, with emphasis on gender and ethnic/ racial identity development. Then, Dr. LaPoint will discuss "Lessons Learned and More: Teaching a College Course on Youth and Consumer Culture" based on reviews of research, policy, practice, and teaching tools, as well as her experiences with students at Howard.

Breakout Session D ~ Saturday, 1:45-3:00pm

1. What Now? Harnessing the Summit Spirit to Activate and Educate in Your Community and Beyond

Dianna Morton, media literacy educator & Mindy Holohan, Stop Targeting Our Kids

CCFC Summit attendance can be a bit like labor—exciting, intense, occasionally excruciating and full of ups and downs. When it's over, it is not surprising to feel the unique combination of exhaustion and invigoration that comes from such a potent experience. This workshop focuses on what can be birthed from the experience of attending the summit and connecting with the CCFC community of activists. Hear from two 2008 summit attendees who were inspired by the CCFC platform to launch creative activism in their hometowns and beyond. Engage in constructive idea sharing with others. Leave the summit with strategies and resources to initiate activism and education in your own community.

2. Don't Lose Your Child to Video Games, the Internet, and Texting

Richard Freed, psychologist, private practice

Children are losing their attachment to the real people in their lives as the power of new interactive devices and media overwhelms relationships and healthy activities. The result is addiction to video games and the Internet that often leads to school failure and the destruction of the parent-child relationship. What puts children at greatest risk? What are signs a child may have an obsession with media vs. a full-blown addiction? What works to help kids and what doesn't? Join Dr. Richard Freed in a discussion of the issues and strategies to combat the ever-increasing draw of the new technologies.

3. Target Market: Kids

Estela Renner, film director, Target Market: Kids & Tamara Gonçalves, Instituto Alana

Screening and discussion of: *Target Market: Kids* (Crianca, A Alma Do Negocio). This powerful documentary, which was shown on the floor of the Brazilian Senate in full session, examines how childhood in Brazil is being transformed by child-targeted advertising. After the film, director Estela Renner and Instituto Alana's Tamara Gonçalves will lead a discussion about consumerism and children and the growing movement in Brazil to protect children from harmful marketing.

4. Childhood and Consumerism: The Role of Faith, Spiritual and Humanist Communities

Moderator: Enola Aird, Mothers for a Human Future; Panelists: Mary Rothschild, Healthy Media Choices; Martha Bettis Gee Child Advocacy and Networking, Presbyterian Church (USA); & Adnan Onart, Boston University

In this workshop, panelists and participants will share their personal perspectives on the role of faith, spiritual, and humanist communities in the movement to end the commercialization of childhood, with a focus on the challenges to—and opportunities for—engagement.

5. Business & Parents: Can We Be on the Same Team?

Julia Chen, The Play Store & Nancy Gruver, New Moon Girl Media

The many examples of exploitive marketing to children are distressing and discouraging. It can lead us to feel like we need to protect our children from ALL commercial enterprises. Julia and Nancy believe that parents must support businesses that truly support children and parents, even if they are for-profit! Hear about their experiences and ongoing challenges in companies that walk the talk of social responsibility and come away with some new perspectives on how to evaluate businesses.

6. Actions Speak Loudest: How Our Actions with Media Shape Our Children's Future

Bob McKinnon, YELLOWBRICKROAD communications, editor Actions Speak Loudest

Every generation makes a commitment to see its children lead better lives than they have and to leave the world a better place than they have inherited. Today many media related issues are compromising our ability to keep this promise. This session will examine what our actions will say about the world we're creating for our children and what we should be doing about it.