

A Marketer's Dream
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When you were a child, did you ever see a really cool commercial on TV for a toy and say “I want that!”? Did you use your allowance towards buying it? Or did your parents go out and get it for you? [Kids spend on average \\$40 billion a year](#), and influence adults around them to spend up to \$700 billion. Parents are blind to the influence that their kids have on what products they buy, from technology like iPods and movies, to expensive items like computers, cars, and trips. [SutJhally](#) states that in today’s society happiness is dependent on self validation, or that it’s about what we have and not who we are, and that concept is starting to affect our younger generations.

After watching the film *Consuming Kids: The Commercialization of Childhood*, I was immediately struck at how affective advertisements are on kids. A concept that was covered in the film was [“cradle to grave”](#), which was defined as when “marketers want to get to children early, often, and in as many places as they can—not just to sell them products and services, but to turn them into life-long consumers”. Our children are being influenced at such a young, vulnerable age by marketers. What I found troublesome was that kids less than a year old are being targeted with products in hopes that the children will be vulnerable to their product influence, and hook them onto their products making them their consumers for life. Our children almost have no choice but to be pulled into this sort of advertising technique because products without an obvious brand or character are so hard to find these days. The industry is forcing our children to be consumers, but unfortunately many adults are oblivious to the impact of such marketing techniques.

Marketers are feeding off of the fact that children are up to date in technology, and that they are users of numerous media. They catch children’s attention with persuasion techniques including [repetition, and intensity](#). Repetition is as simple as repeating the same message or product name over and over again in order for young consumers to be familiar with the product and be more willing to purchase such item. This correlates with the intensity technique, which is when the ad consists of words, colors, and camera angles that exaggerates the product. An example of these two techniques at work would be a number of [Nerf Gun](#) commercials. The product is shown and the name is mentioned throughout the commercials, along with bright colors, intense narration with descriptions like “rapid-fire” as well as claiming to be the best and largest gun, and quick camera movements that keep the young consumer’s attention. Because these types of advertisements can keep a child watching, they’ll be more susceptible to the marketers’

encouragement for the young consumer to purchase their products. The target audience of this type of advertising would be children from the age's two to five. [According to Joanne Cantor and Patti Valkenburg](#), at this, age children “do not understand the persuasive intent of commercials; they focus on the attractive qualities of products and cannot keep their minds off the product for long”.

These advertisements are instilling a belief in the younger generation that they cannot live without products that they see in TV or in other media, that happiness is solely based on the toys that a kid has. This will only transition when the child gets older, making them more likely to be materialistic and greedy. It is important to be aware of the true intentions of advertisements targeted towards children in order to prevent children from being such vulnerable consumers. It is almost impossible to completely avoid such advertisements, but it is vital that we limit the exposure to children and educate them at an early age of marketers' techniques.

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