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Free Lesson Teaches Children to See Through Super Bowl Alcohol Ads

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In the past decade, Americans realized how tobacco companies market cigarettes to kids, and have taken strong actions to limit their abusive advertising practices. It's time parents demand the same accountability from the alcohol industry. Alcohol companies know the Super Bowl attracts kids, and for the past 20 years, Budweiser has been its largest advertiser, consistently running 8 to 10 commercials during the big game. Despite claims that they do not market to children, Budweiser knows kids are watching—14 Million youth below age 18 watched last year's Super Bowl according to Nielsen ratings, and over 7 million of them were under 12.

Capitalizing on our younger viewers, Budweiser has consistently aired commercials containing what kids love most in ads—cute animals, humor and fun music—such as last year's highest rated spot Super Bowl spot that clearly featured elements targeting children. It told the story of a dog that trains a forlorn horse to join the Budweiser team. "Budweiser has a long history of predatory marketing to children," according to Dr. Peter DeBenedittis, one of America's foremost media literacy experts.

To combat alcohol companies' targeting of children, Dr. DeBenedittis is offering a newly revised version of a free lesson that parents and teachers can use to increase children's awareness of the impact of these marketing messages. "I've gotten great feedback from students who have participated in the 'Media Literacy Monday' lesson over the past few years," DeBenedittis said, "so I decided to update the content and post it as a free download on my web site (<http://www.medialiteracy.net>)." The lesson asks students to keep a log of alcohol promotions during an hour of the game, and then provides resources for analyzing alcohol ads in class the next day.

"Kids love looking at their favorite ads, and bringing them to the classroom allows parents and teachers to make sure the health message about under aged drinking doesn't get lost in the slick laughter the alcohol ads encourage around drinking," DeBenedittis said. Four in 10 teenagers who get drunk by age 15 become alcoholics later in life, and brain scans of teens who drink show they suffer an average 10% loss of brain function compared to non-drinking teens. According to Dr. DeBenedittis, "these advertisements are no laughing matter, research has found that kids who are savvy about alcohol marketing drink less, that's why I'm hoping concerned adults will take advantage of this free prevention tool."

Download this and other free lessons at <http://www.medialiteracy.net>.

Prevention  # # # Critical Thinking  Self Esteem 

Sample Newspaper Guest Editorial:

Americans realize how tobacco companies have marketed cigarettes to our children, and we have taken strong actions to limit their abusive advertising practices. It's time parents demand the same accountability from the alcohol industry. Alcohol companies know the Super Bowl attracts our children, and for the past 20 years Budweiser has been its largest advertiser, consistently running 8 to 10 commercials in the big game. Despite claims that they do not market to youth, Budweiser knows kids are watching—14 million youth below age 18 watched last year's Super Bowl according to Nielsen ratings, and over 7 million of them were under 12.

Budweiser consistently airs commercials containing cute animals, humor and fun music—elements that the Prevention Research Center in Berkeley, CA have identified as what kids love most in ads. The USA Today Ad Meter found that in last year's Super Bowl, Budweiser aired 3 of the top 10 rated spots. The highest rated spot clearly featured elements that target children, telling the story of a dog that trains a forlorn horse to join the Budweiser team. And the year before that, the highest rated spot was once again a spot with cute animals, music and humor. The USA today labeled this spot "Crabs worship Bud ice chest."

Lost in the slick laughter, are the serious health consequences children suffer from drinking. Four in 10 teenagers who get drunk by age 15 become alcoholics later in life. In addition, brain scans conducted by researchers at the University of Pittsburgh of teens who drink show they lose an average 10% of their brain's ability to function when compared to non-drinking teens. This is no laughing matter.

What is crazy is that on a governmental level, our society actually condones marketing that abuses our children. We give tax deductions for advertising to alcohol companies, even though social scientists have found a direct correlation between teen drinking rates and the alcohol advertising dollars spent in markets where teens live. Until our community is ready to limit how alcohol companies train our children to drink dangerously, we need to do our individual part to solve this problem.

One person doing this is Dr. Peter DeBenedittis, one of America's foremost media literacy experts. He is offering a newly revised version of a free lesson that parents, teachers and health activists can use with children to combat the alcohol advertising they'll see in the Super Bowl. The lesson asks students to keep a log of alcohol promotions during an hour of the game, and then provides resources for analyzing alcohol ads...so after the big game talk to your children or students! More and more studies are showing that children who understand how alcohol marketing targets them are significantly less likely to drink. Visit <http://www.medialiteracy.net> and download the lesson called "Analyzing Super Bowl Ads." Do your kids a favor by teaching them to be savvy about predatory marketing tactics.

Sample Letter to the Editor:

Americans realize how tobacco companies have marketed cigarettes to our children, and we have taken strong actions to limit their abusive advertising practices. It is time parents and communities demand the same accountability from the alcohol industry. Alcohol companies know the Super Bowl attracts kids. Last year, 14 Million youth below age 18 watched according to Nielsen ratings, and over 7 million of them were under 12. To capitalize on this audience, Budweiser consistently airs commercials containing cute animals, humor and fun music—elements that the Prevention Research Center in Berkeley, CA have identified as what kids love most in ads.

Continuing its long history of targeting our children, Budweiser aired the highest rated spot in the last Super Bowl, according to the USA Today's Ad Meter. It told the story of a dog that trains a forlorn horse to join the Budweiser team.

Lost in the slick laughter, are the serious health consequences our children suffer from drinking. Four in 10 teenagers who get drunk by age 15 become alcoholics later in life. In addition, brain scans conducted by researchers at the University of Pittsburgh of teens who drink show they lose an average 10% of their brain's ability to function when compared to non-drinking teens. This is no laughing matter.

Research shows that children who understand how alcohol marketing targets them are significantly less likely to drink. A free resource for parents, teachers and health activists to teach children how alcohol companies train them to become drinkers can be downloaded at: <http://www.medialiteracy.net>. Look for the lesson called "Analyzing Super Bowl Ads," and do your kids a favor by teaching them to be savvy about predatory marketing tactics.