

- If your family belongs to a religious or community organization, try to interest the religious or community leaders in addressing commercialism on a regular basis and in a variety of ways. This could include workshop for kids as well as lectures or workshops for adults on a variety of topics- from marketing violence to marketing values.
- Invite your local consumer organization to give talks for children and parents on the effects of advertising and how we could protect our kids.



3. *Never* enter a chat room without your parents presence or supervision. Some “kids” may not really be kids; they may be adults with bad intentions. Remember, people may not be who they say they are.
4. *Never* tell anyone online where you will be or what you will be doing without your parents’ permission.
5. *Never* respond to or send e-mail to new people you meet online.
6. *Never* go to into a new online area that is going to cost additional money, without first getting your parents’ permission.
7. *Never* send, without your parents’ permission, a picture over the internet or through regular mail to anyone you have met on the internet.
8. *Never* buy or order products online or give out any credit card information online without your parents’ permission.
9. *Never* respond to any suggestive or “naughty” contact or anything that makes you feel uncomfortable. End such experience by *logging off* and telling your parents as soon as possible.
10. *Always* tell your parents about something that you saw, intentionally or unintentionally, that is upsetting. (It is better for your child's mental health to be able to discuss exposure to pornography than for it to become a dark and confusing secret).

### What parents can do in Schools

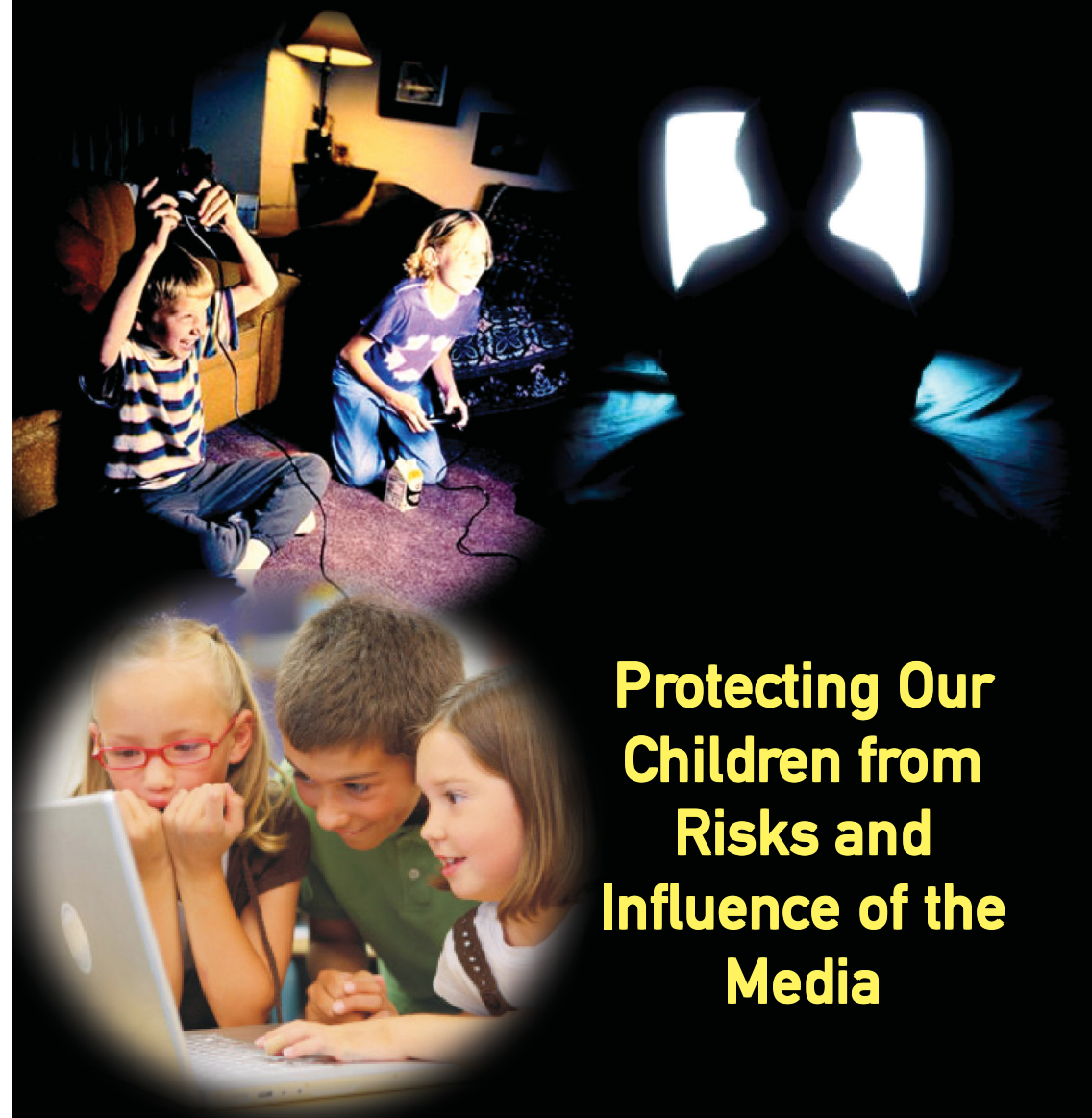
- Take a hard look if there are any advertisements, commercial materials in the school. Ensure that no company has managed to influence school leadership in overtly or subtly incorporating commercial messages.

### What Parents can do in the Marketplace

- If something concerns you, contact a consumer or advocacy group by phone or e-mail and see if they can help you mount a protest.
- Begin working with existing advocacy group on an ongoing basis.
- Write letters to the editor of national newspapers that takes a strong protest against commercialism as it harms children

### Top Ten Things to Tell Your Child

1. *Never* fill out questionnaires or any forms online or give out personal information (such as name, age, address, phone number, school, town, password, schedule) about yourself or anyone else to anyone without your parents’ permission.
2. *Never* agree to meet in person with anyone you have spoken to online without your parents’ permission.



# Protecting Our Children from Risks and Influence of the Media



National Consumer Campaign  
2008 – 2012  
“CHANGE BEGINS WITH ME”  
[www.kkk.org.my](http://www.kkk.org.my)

Organised by  Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (FOMCA)

Campaign Partners



## Our Concerns:

- Our children are watching too much television and spending too much time on the internet.
- Media can and does influence food consumption patterns, value systems and psychological well-being.
- 84% youths says their favorite past time is surfing the internet. 73% say it is watching television. For 42%, it is computer gaming.
- Our children are being exposed to too much advertisements and too much various programming.
- Our children are not exercising or getting involved in physical activities.
- Our children are not sufficiently interacting with others.



## Our concerns of our children:

- Increasing rate of obesity and overweight
- Increasing cases of diabetes
- Increasing hypertension
- Increasing anxiety and mental stress
- Increasing parent-child conflict in the home
- Increasing feelings of insecurity and self worth amongst children

## What should others do:

- The government should regulate the media and telecommunications industry towards protecting our children
- The industry should put the health and welfare of our children above profits.

## What can Parents Do:

### What Parents Can Do at Home

- Before we help children deal with their vulnerability to advertising and marketing, parents need to have to understand their own. In the process, parents need to look honestly at what matters to them. If your values are primarily materialistic, it is likely that your children's values will be materialistic as well. The more you understand and try to change your consumption patterns, including tendencies to overspend or to turn to products for gratification, the better your position to help your children.
- We need to find ways for children to spend time away from advertisements. Depending on our interests and opportunities, we can spend more time with them in nature, doing art projects, in community service, working for social causes and or in churches, mosques or temples. We can read to our kids or play cards or board games with them. We can get in the habit of doing things together that do not involve media.
- Talk to children about advertising, including product placement as they encounter it. While young children cannot fully grasp the purpose of advertising, they will pick up your attitudes about it.
- Before trips to the supermarket, prepare kids ahead of time about what purchases you will and will not be making, It's easier to set limits when you can say, "Remember we have already talked about what cereals and snacks we were going to buy".
- Find ways to help children find meaning in celebrations such as Hari Raya or Christmas, that extends beyond the Commercial.
- Participate in National Events such as TV Turn Off Week and Buy Nothing Day.

## How Parents Can Limit Television and Why It Is Important

Despite the growing popularity of computers, television is still the primary and most effective means advertisers have for reaching children. Setting limits on television is the single most effective thing we can do to reduce children's exposure to advertising. Television is primarily a tool for marketing. The more children watch it, the more they are barraged by marketing messages.

- We can limit television by limiting the number of hours children are allowed to watch. These rules are easier to enforce if they are in place from the time children are little but can be instituted when children are older as well.
- Keep television off during meals. This not only cuts down exposure to advertising, but gives us an opportunity for spending commercial free time with the kids.
- Parents of babies and very young children can heed the American Academy of Pediatrics suggestion that children under two be kept away from screens as much as possible. What children do learn from watching television is to turn to the screen for pleasure and stimulation. Do not be influenced by claims that video or computer toys can raise the IQ of children or make them smarter. They don't.
- When TV serves as background noise when children play, it actually interferes with their concentration in a way that may have negative effects on their developing intelligence. If you like watching TV, try taping programs and watching them at a later time when your kids are taking a nap or after they go to bed.
- If possible, avoid taking your young children with you when you shop at mega toy stores. These trips can be a nightmare for young children who have trouble with impulse

control and can't readily understand why you aren't buying them the things they want.



- Children are also targets for marketing in computer and video games as well as on the Internet. For this reason, we can keep the computers out of their bedrooms as well. If a quiet place is available for their homework, there is no reason for kids to have a computer in their rooms.

## What Parents Can Do in the Community

As children grow and become more independent, they are often exposed to different set of values and rules, including rules about media that might be quite different from your own. "But everyone else has one" becomes a common complaint. Once this happens, limiting children's exposure to marketing becomes much more difficult.

- Begin sharing your concerns about advertising to children with other parents. If you find neighbors and other parents who share at least some of your feelings about commercialism, you might be able to set rules together about the amount and kinds of media your kids will consume when they are together. It is easier for groups of parents, or even few parents, to set certain kinds of limits than it is to do it alone.