

I. Background and Purpose

The Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative's Core Principles outline the minimum commitments participants must publicly pledge to abide by with respect to child-directed food and beverage advertising. The original Core Principles were issued in November 2006, when linear television programming was the primary medium for food and beverage advertising to children. Today, digital media is the primary media with which children engage.

CFBAI has updated the Core Principles several times over the years to reflect new developments in digital advertising and children's increased engagement with digital media, but it has been nearly five years since the Core Principles were updated to reflect changes in the digital advertising landscape. Since that time, the digital media environment has continued to evolve. The forms of digital media with which children engage has expanded and digital advertising tools continue to be developed that help mitigate children's exposure to food and beverage ads for which they are not the intended audience.

CFBAI pledge commitments have covered child-directed food and beverage advertising in these newer forms of digital media, and participants have been using available digital ad-targeting tools to aid compliance with those commitments for many years. Until now, however, the Core Principles have not expressly listed these newer forms of digital media within the program's scope or clearly stated the expectation regarding participants' use of these digital advertising tools.

The updates to this Core Principles, 8th edition, clarify the inclusion of these newer forms of digital media within the scope of participant's CFBAI pledge commitments (including the use of influencers therein), as well as address how tools like age-targeting factor into assessments of whether an advertisement is primarily directed to children. The updated Core Principles also clarify a commitment by participants to reasonably use available and appropriate digital tools like exclusion lists and audience targeting to mitigate serving food and beverage advertising intended from older audiences to children. As stated, participants have already been using these tools in practice.

II. Summary of Key Updates in the Core Principles 8th edition

- ◆ **Additions to List of “Covered Media.”**
The list of “covered media” to which the Core Principles apply has been expanded to clarify the inclusion of popular forms of digital media like streaming television, podcasts, and video sharing and gaming platforms. CFBAI pledge commitments apply to advertising primarily directed to children under age 13 in this covered media, including through the use of paid influencers.
- ◆ **Addition of Targeting as Basis for Determining an Ad to be Primarily Child-Directed.**
An advertisement will be deemed to be primarily directed to children if targeting tools expressly direct the ad to be served to users identified as age 12 or younger or to content expressly designated or categorized as “child-directed” by the publisher or content creator. Similarly, the use of reliable age-gating or age-targeting tools to expressly exclude individuals under age 13 from receiving an advertisement will be evidence that such advertisement is not primarily directed to children.
- ◆ **Restated Commitment to Reasonably Use Digital Tools to Avoid Serving Ads for Non-Qualifying Foods to Children.**
Participants agree to reasonably use digital tools like age- and interest-based targeting and exclusion lists and keyword filters, where available and appropriate, to mitigate serving ads for foods that do not meet CFBAI's nutrition criteria to children.
- ◆ **Distinction between Advertising and User-Generated Content.**
The updates distinguish participant advertising subject to the Core Principles from user-generated content referencing participant brands or products that is created by third parties with whom participants have no material connection and which is accordingly not participant advertising.

III. Effective Date

The effective date of the Core Principles, 8th edition is January 1, 2026.