

Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative
McDonald's USA Pledge

Updated January 2026

McDonald's USA, LLC ("McDonald's") is a participant in the Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI), a self-regulation program with the goal of improving the landscape of food and beverage advertising directed to children. McDonald's supports CFBAI's objectives and is committed to its Core Principles. McDonald's is pleased to submit this pledge, which reflects CFBAI's Core Principles, 8th ed. (2026).¹ This pledge takes effect January 1, 2026.

We believe that we can make a difference for families and kids by offering balanced choices that kids and parents will love. In 2013, we began working with Alliance for a Healthier Generation and developed a set of commitments to increase our customers' access to fruit, vegetables, low-fat dairy and water. As a result of that work, the share of Happy Meal® Bundles served with milk, water or juice increased 15 percentage points from September 2013-2018. Following that work, in 2018, we announced our Global Happy Meal Goals, an expanded commitment to families that continued our collaboration with Alliance for a Healthier Generation and focused on the Happy Meal. The goals include offering balanced meals, simplifying ingredients, transparently communicating nutrition information, marketing responsibly and leveraging marketing innovations to encourage increased purchase of items containing recommended food groups. In August 2023, we released our final Global Happy Meal Goals report, detailing the progress we've made since 2018. More than 5.7 billion fruit, vegetable, low-fat dairy, water, lean protein or whole grain items have been served in the Happy Meal. We also reduced calories by 6%, sodium by 9%, saturated fat by 15% and added sugar by 26%, on average, in Happy Meal Bundle Offerings.

McDonald's is proud of our long heritage of responsible communication with our customers and continues to actively participate in the development of standards for marketing responsibly to children. McDonald's was a charter member of the Council of Better Business Bureaus ("CBBB") Children's Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative ("CFBAI") in 2006. In addition to CFBAI, McDonald's is also an active member of the Children's Advertising Review Unit ("CARU") Supporter's Council and participates in the CARU self-regulatory program.

¹ This commitment does not apply to other marketing channels, such as point-of-sale materials or packaging (provided that the packaging does not appear in advertising primarily directed to children). This commitment also does not apply to the use of company-owned characters.

I. Identifying Information

1. *Corporate Contact Information:*

McDonald's USA, LLC
110 North Carpenter Street
Chicago, IL 60607
www.McDonalds.com

2. *Individual(s) responsible for overall implementation of the Pledge:*

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McDonald's USA, LLC
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Elle Cassidy
Global Public Policy & Stakeholder Engagement
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3. *Entities covered by the Pledge:* McDonald's USA, LLC

II. Core Principles

1. Advertising Primarily Directed to Children under Age 13

For purposes of this pledge, "children" refers to persons under age 13. For television and other measurable media, this means marketing communications where children under age 13 represent at least 30% of the expected audience.

McDonald's commits that all advertising primarily directed to children under age 13 in covered media will be for foods that meet [CFBAI's Category-Specific Uniform Nutrition Criteria, 2nd ed.](#)

The company will provide information regarding such products to CFBAI prior to advertising them so that CFBAI can assess whether the products meet CFBAI's nutrition criteria and publicly indicate that the products qualify, and effectively monitor McDonald's compliance with its Pledge. A list of McDonald's Happy Meal Bundles that meet CFBAI's nutrition criteria

as well as individual product nutrition and ingredient information is publicly available on the CFBAI website.

2. Covered Media

The advertising commitment applies to advertising primarily directed to children under age 13 in the following media (“covered media”):

- Television
- Radio
 - McDonald's generally does not utilize radio in its National Advertising primarily directed to children under 13 years old.
- Print
 - McDonald's generally does not utilize print media in its National Advertising primarily directed to children under 13 years old.
- Digital media, including but not limited to the following media (and influencer content therein):
 - Company-owned websites
 - Third-party websites, including display, banner, pop-up, audio or video advertising²
 - Mobile apps or mobile media, including advertising on phones, laptops, tablets, other personal digital devices, in whatever form, including email, text, IM or SMS messaging
 - Podcasts
 - Social media³
 - Video sharing platforms (e.g., YouTube)
 - Gaming platforms (e.g., Roblox)
 - Over-the-top (OTT) streaming platforms (e.g., Netflix, Disney+)
- Video and computer games
- DVDs
- Word of mouth⁴

² User-generated content that is not under the control of company is not covered by the Core Commitments.

³ Advertising on platforms that use valid age verification measures to restrict platform access by children under age 13 is presumptively not advertising primarily directed to children under age 13.

⁴ Word-of-mouth advertising refers to advertising of a participant’s food or beverage products that is primarily directed to children under age 13 by brand ambassadors, influencers, or other individuals with whom the participant has a material connection as the result of the participant providing payment, product samples, or other incentives (financial or otherwise) to such individuals in consideration for such individuals promoting the participant’s branded food or beverages.

3. Product Placements

McDonald's commits to not paying for or actively seeking to place its food or beverages into third-party program or editorial content of any medium primarily directed to children under age 13 to promote the sale of those products.

4. Product Integrations

McDonald's commits that the paid for or actively sought integration of their foods or beverages in any medium primarily directed to children under age 13, including in interactive games or other digital content, will promote only foods or beverages that meet CFBAI's Uniform Nutrition Criteria.

5. Influencers

McDonald's commits to use influencers to promote foods and beverages in communications primarily directed to children under 13 only if the foods or beverages meet CFBAI's Uniform Nutrition Criteria.

6. Licensed Characters, Celebrities and Movie Tie-Ins

McDonald's commits that its use of third-party licensed characters, celebrities (including athletes) and movie tie-ins in advertising primarily directed to children under age 13 will be consistent with its advertising commitments set forth above.

7. Advertising in Elementary Schools

McDonald's commits to not advertising its branded foods or beverages to children in elementary and middle schools, pre-K through 8th grade. This includes but is not limited to advertising on or through the following items:

- Posters
- Scoreboards
- School buses
- Pencils, book covers, and other school supplies offered for sale in school
- Textbooks
- Tray liners, cups, napkins, plates
- Coolers
- Food samples and taste tests

This commitment does not apply to displays of foods and beverages that identify foods that are for sale; fundraising support; public service messaging; curriculum materials; items given to school administrators for their personal use; charitable donations, or sponsorships.

III. Definitions of Child-Directed Advertising

McDonald's will consider advertising to be primarily directed to children when:

- (1) children ages 2-12 constitute 30% or more of the expected audience at the time the advertisement placement is purchased based on reliable third-party audience measurement data;
- (2) targeting tools have been used to direct the digital advertisement to be served to users in a defined age demographic that includes ages 12 or younger or in content expressly designated or categorized as child-directed by the publisher or content creator;⁵ or
- (3) McDonald's lacks reliable third-party audience measurement data showing children to be less than 30% of the expected audience; (b) McDonald's cannot demonstrate that reliable age-gating or age-targeting tools were used such that individuals under age 13 were expressly excluded from the target audience;⁶ and (c) the content in which the advertisement is placed appears to be primarily directed to children based on an evaluation of multiple factors relating to the content, including but not limited to the subject matter, visual content, language used, difficulty of game play, kind of music or audio content, influencers featured, actions taken to restrict children's access to the site or content, and entertainment ratings or content identifiers that may be used to label child-directed content.

In digital advertising, McDonald's commits to use one or more of the following tools, where available and appropriate, to avoid serving advertisements for foods that do not meet CFBAI's Uniform Nutrition Criteria to children:

- (1) age-based targeting of only users identified as age 13 or older and excluding all individuals under age 13 or whose age is unknown;
- (2) interest-based or behavior-based targeting of only consumers identified as having an interest not primarily associated with

⁵ For example, content designated on YouTube as "Made for Kids" or content categorized by a video streaming platform as children's programming.

⁶ Advertisements permitted to be served to users whose age is unknown would not be deemed to expressly exclude individuals under age 13.

- individuals under age 13 or exhibiting online behavior that is not reasonably associated with individuals under age 13; and
- (3) exclusion lists of sites, channels, or content known to be or identified as child-directed and/or filters that exclude keywords and topics likely to be of primary appeal to children.

IV. Advertising to Children Under Six Years Old

McDonald's commits to not engaging in advertising primarily directed to children under six.