



## Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood

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November 8, 2005

President William Clinton  
William J. Clinton Foundation  
55 West 125th Street  
New York, NY 10027  
212-348-8882

Dear President Clinton:

CCFC  
STEERING COMMITTEE:

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Alvin F. Poussaint, MD

As advocates for the health and well-being of children, we want to express our gratitude to you and the Clinton Foundation for getting so actively involved in the effort to curb childhood obesity. We are writing to you today, however, to express grave concern about your partnering with Nickelodeon in these efforts. Although childhood obesity is a major public health problem, Nickelodeon threatens public health and the public interest by consistently using its media to market junk food to children and by undermining policies established to protect children from predatory marketing.

We are particularly concerned that even as Nickelodeon is launching Alliance for a Healthy Generation, Viacom, Nickelodeon's parent company, is going to court to get the Federal Communications Commission to jettison its rules on advertising and marketing to children as they apply to digital television. These safeguards will ensure that programs broadcast for children will not show unlimited advertisements of commercial websites and will prohibit the advertisement on television of websites that contain "host-selling," that is, websites on which popular characters from the very same children's television programs pitch products to children. If Viacom is successful in this legal challenge, it will be even easier than it is today for food marketers to use media to bypass parents and target children directly with ads for unhealthy food.

Nickelodeon is already one of the major venues for food marketing to children, aggressively promoting foods high in fat, sugar, salt and calories to children on television, on the Internet, in films, in their magazines, in live performances and through brand licensing of its most popular characters, including Dora the Explorer and SpongeBob SquarePants. If successful, this lawsuit would allow marketers unlimited use of digital technology for unlimited commercial access to children.

It is hypocritical for Nickelodeon to use the Alliance for a Healthy Generation to promote an image of commitment to children while they, through Viacom, are simultaneously working to undermine any legal safeguards for limiting commercial access to children. We are asking you to withdraw from the campaign until and unless this lawsuit is dropped.

Sincerely,

Susan Linn, Ed.D.

On behalf of the CCFC Steering Committee

Alvin F. Poussaint, M.D.

