

*The*  
**Susan Linn**  
**Fund** *for a*  
**Commercial-free**  
**Childhood**



**Building for  
Our Future**

**ccfc**

Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood



Founded in 2000 by Dr. Susan Linn and a group of healthcare professionals, educators, and parents concerned about escalating commercialism in the lives of children, CCFC's mission is to support families' efforts to raise healthy children by limiting commercial access to kids. Over the years, CCFC has created a strong network of supporters committed to working for the rights of children to grow up – and the freedom for parents to raise them – without being undermined by corporate interests. Our achievements are notable. We have convinced multinational corporations to change harmful practices, garnered significant media attention, helped parents make healthy choices, and promoted public policies designed to protect children from exploitative marketing.

Equally important, we are prepared to address new, rapidly evolving challenges to a commercial-free childhood.

Now, as we celebrate our 15th anniversary, CCFC is embarking on the next phase of our journey. Susan has stepped down as Executive Director. While she will be missed by all who admire her vision, unshakable integrity, and proven effectiveness, she has assembled a team that is poised to achieve even greater impact in the future.

Josh Golin became CCFC's new Executive Director on July 1, 2015. Josh not only shares Susan's core values and strong ethics, but as CCFC's longtime Associate Director he played a major role in our success. He is supported by an extremely capable staff and a deeply committed Board of Directors. A new four-year strategic plan will guide our goals, campaigns, and growth in the years ahead.

On the occasion of Susan's departure, CCFC is launching **The Susan Linn Fund for a Commercial-Free Childhood** to ensure that we will increase our capacity to protect children from commercialism and corporate exploitation. The purpose of this campaign is to secure \$1 million to equip CCFC for the victories that will comprise our future. The campaign will accomplish two transformational goals:

- *Accelerate our efforts to create a commercial-free environment for children by raising public awareness, changing corporate practice, improving public policy, and supporting families.*
- *Honor Susan's outstanding contributions to children and families by providing the additional resources necessary for CCFC to build on her remarkable legacy.*

To launch the campaign, and ensure its success, a generous and committed CCFC donor has pledged \$500,000 and challenged advocates and supporters like you to help us match this amount.

## Background and History of CCFC

In 2000, Susan and a handful of colleagues dreamed of building a movement to end marketing to children. Groups around the country were already focused on problems like food marketing, violence, materialism, and sexualization. What was needed was an organization devoted to addressing the link between those issues and the commercialization of childhood.

CCFC began with no money, no staff, and a whole lot of people questioning the quixotic nature of our vision. We knew from the start that this was going to be a long, hard struggle. Considerable money and power are invested in keeping children as targets for marketing. Against all odds, our small group has expanded and, through unshakable determination, judicious selection of campaigns, clever use of media, and mobilization of thousands of like-minded people, we have succeeded beyond all expectations.

Today, CCFC is the only organization in the United States devoted to reclaiming childhood from corporate marketers. We have never wavered from our commitment to children, even in the face of harassment and serious threats to our survival. While there is still much to do, CCFC has achieved outstanding success over the past 15 years with a small staff, limited resources, and without ever taking corporate funding.

## With the support of thousands of members around the globe, CCFC:

- Stopped the *Walt Disney Company* from falsely marketing *Baby Einstein* videos as educational and convinced Disney to offer refunds to parents who had been deceived.
- Prevented *Hasbro* from producing a line of dolls for six-year-old girls based on the *Pussycat Dolls*, a singing group known for its sexualized songs and dances.
- Organized parents around the country to stop *BusRadio*, a company that broadcast student-targeted ads on school buses.
- Convinced *Scholastic, Inc.* to stop distributing the *United States of Energy*, a highly-biased fourth-grade curriculum paid for by the *American Coal Foundation*, and to significantly limit distribution of corporate-sponsored teaching materials.
- Spurred the Federal Trade Commission to put an end to the exploitative video series *Your Baby Can Read*.
- Helped parents and educators defeat state legislation to put advertising on school buses in more than a dozen states.
- Stopped *McDonald's* from advertising Happy Meals on report card envelopes in Florida.
- Pioneered an innovative program to help parents reduce children's screen time and promote play by working with leading organizations such as the National WIC Association and the National Black Child Development Institute.

## New Challenges in Protecting the Healthy Development of Children

With the escalation of new digital technologies, including the advent of smartphones and tablets, children's exposure to unhealthy commercialism continues to grow:

- Advertisers use a "360 degree" strategy designed to expose children to brands every waking moment.
- Marketers today have unprecedented direct access to children, as kids spend more time with commercial media than ever.
- New technologies enable marketers to invade children's privacy and target them with insidious personalized advertising.
- Powerful corporations that profit by targeting children have convinced lawmakers to weaken long-standing regulations protecting kids from advertising.
- Schools, once safe havens from commercialism, increasingly turn to advertisers in a misguided attempt to raise needed funds.
- Organizations like the Girl Scouts that once provided commercial-free alternatives now partner with corporations that profit by predatory marketing to children.

As a result, commercialism permeates nearly every aspect of childhood with serious consequences including obesity, unhealthy body image, youth violence, sexualization, family stress, increased materialistic values, and the erosion of creative play.

In addition, excessive screen time itself has adverse effects:

- It has been linked to deficits in learning, attention, and social skills.
- Young children who spend more time with screens spend less time in activities proven to benefit them, including creative play and interaction with caring adults.

CCFC's advocacy in the coming years will address these and other commercial threats to a healthy childhood.



## The Opportunity – New Directions

Following a recent in-depth organizational assessment and the development of a new strategic plan, CCFC's vision for the next 15 years is one in which there is widespread public agreement that child-targeted marketing undermines healthy development. As a result, government policies and corporate practices will change so that children are less likely to be targeted. In addition, families, and the institutions that serve them, will be better able to protect children from the harmful effects of advertising and marketing.

Over the next four years, CCFC will build a vital and effective movement for change. We will continue our campaigns to stop the worst instances of marketing, while taking steps to become more proactive and strategic.

**The Susan Linn Fund for a Commercial-Free Childhood** will achieve CCFC's transformational vision by supporting our intensive focus on these priorities:

- 1. Raising public awareness that all marketing to children is harmful in and of itself by embarking on a bold new communications strategy.*
- 2. Mobilizing more individuals and institutions to take action to stop corporations from targeting children – by strengthening our partnerships, forging new alliances, and expanding our network of advocates and supporters.*
- 3. Providing practical tools and resources for parents, educators, and others to protect children from harmful advertising, limit their screen time, and promote a more active, healthy, and creative childhood.*
- 4. Advancing public policies that prevent advertisers from marketing to children, shield kids from corporate marketing, and mitigate its harmful effects.*
- 5. Preventing corporations from targeting captive audiences of students by helping communities keep schools commercial-free.*

### Please Help Us Meet Our Goal

Now is the time to honor Susan's legacy, build on past success, plan for the future, and continue to create positive change in the lives of children and families. CCFC is well-prepared to move forward. We have a capable and experienced new leader, a committed Board, a talented staff, thousands of supporters, a clear plan of action, a healthy balance sheet, and \$650,000 already pledged toward our \$1 million campaign goal.

At this important moment in our history, please join us in making sure that CCFC has the capacity and fiscal strength to advance the important work Susan began. Your generous contribution to **The Susan Linn Fund for a Commercial-Free Childhood** will ensure that we expand and strengthen our efforts to protect children from the harmful effects of commercialism and corporate exploitation.

**Thank you in advance for your support.**



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[commercialfreechildhood.org](http://commercialfreechildhood.org)