

## OVERVIEW OF THE KIT

# TV Commercials and Nutrition

## Overview, Objectives, Pedagogy, and Practice

### Overview

This kit provides teachers and other educators with the materials and guidance to help children begin to understand the purpose of TV commercials (and advertising in general) in terms of selling intent, and to recognize the types of tricks that advertisers may use to make products look better than they really are. Children are also introduced to concepts like “target audience” to help them realize that sometimes advertisers are directly targeting them. Specific lessons focus on food groups and the new *My Pyramid for Kids*, with follow-up media literacy lessons that deal with the two most common misleading nutritional messages in children’s commercials: the “complete breakfast” shot, and highly sugared pseudo-fruit snacks and beverages. Many different commercials are provided so that children can practice what they have learned.

### Objectives

- To teach students about the purpose of advertising and the implications of persuasive intent (e.g., that TV commercials may use tricks and techniques to make products look and seem better than they may actually be).
- To help students recognize that advertisements have particular target audiences, and that sometimes TV commercials are targeted to children like themselves.
- To teach students basic nutritional information about different foods groups, including the importance of eating a lot of some foods (like whole grains, fruits and vegetables) and very little of foods that contain unhealthy fats and sugars.
- To help students recognize misleading nutritional information presented in TV commercials, especially about fruit and what constitutes a “complete” breakfast.

- To train students in visual literacy and media literacy skills, especially the ability to identify persuasion in marketing ideas and consumption.
- To engage all students, but particularly those who are at risk or disengaged from traditional school work, in critical thinking and the development of reading, listening and visual decoding skills.

### Learning Standards

This kit addresses the following specific New York State Learning Standards for:

#### **Elementary Health Education:**

- *Personal Health and Fitness*: understanding the relationship between behaviors and healthy development, demonstrating and practicing positive health behaviors.
- *A Safe and Healthy Environment*: recognizing characteristics of the environment that contribute to health.
- *Resource Management*: understanding the influence of culture, media and technology in making decisions about personal and community health issues, recognizing how the media influence healthy choices.

#### **Elementary ELA Learning Standards:**

- Read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation, including...persuasive texts such as advertisements [and] commercials
- Make decisions about the quality and dependability of texts and experiences based on some criteria, such as...the logic and believability of the claims made in an advertisement.

