

Centsible parenting

▶ A newsletter for parents of fifth grade children ▲

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Darcy is looking through her favorite magazine. She says to Mom, "This ad shows lots of really cool t-shirts. Can I order some? It says I get two for the price of one." Mom takes the magazine and says, "Darcy, let me take a look at the ad."

(See end of newsletter for a possible answer.)

By the end of a day you've been bombarded with advertising from all directions. You are exposed to these messages via TV, radio, newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, handouts, billboards, signs, displays, posters, and flyers in the mail.

The companies, organizations, and people who advertise spend lots of money to research their potential customers. They know how to produce ads that encourage you to buy their product or service.

Adults are able to look at or listen to ads, seek other information, and make decisions. But, children need help in learning to evaluate ads. Teach them to be skeptical.

EVALUATING ADS

There are good ads and bad ads. Good ads help you make better decisions. A good ad will tell you facts you need to know like:

1. How much a product or service costs
2. Description of the product
3. Where to buy the product or service
4. Other relevant information

Advertisers work hard to make their ads appealing. Talk with your child about the techniques used to make ads appealing and share some real examples.

Promise of rewards—implication you will gain something (friends, attention, sex appeal, etc.) if you just use the product or service

Slogans—catchy phrases or music jingles you can't get out of your mind



Repetition—same ad repeated over and over

Involvement—coupons or getting you to write in for something

Free—the promise of something free if you try a product or service

Target audience—sports fans, animal lovers, nature buffs, specific age groups

Testimonials—somebody famous promotes a product or service

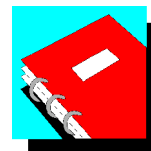
PLAYING THE COMMERCIAL GAME

We tend to associate certain products with brand names. We recognize the brands because we've been exposed to advertising. Have your child write down the name of the first brand she thinks of for each item in the list below. Talk about the ads and why he or she remembers them.

pop	headache pill
jeans	car
tennis shoes	telephone
facial tissue	toilet tissue
soap	fast food restaurant
soup	hot dogs
toothpaste	cereal

CONSIDER THIS

"Darcy," asks Mom, "how much does each t-shirt cost and do you need two?" Darcy answers, "I really want a purple t-shirt." Mom suggests, "Then let's check this price and the price of a t-shirt at your favorite store. We also should see what the shirts are made of and then you can decide if this is a good deal or not."



COMING IN MAY: FINDING OTHER RESOURCES

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... and justice for all

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This newsletter is published for families with fifth grade children by Iowa State University Extension. For more information about parenting education, contact your local county extension office or access the Iowa State University Extension to Families website, www.extension.iastate.edu/families.