Parham v. McDonald’s

What Experts Are Saying About McDonald’s, Toys, and Kids

“McDonald’s didn’t consult with parents about whether they wanted toys in the kids’ meals. You weren’t part of the decision. That was a large corporation paying a large fee to a marketing firm that told them ‘Here’s how you can get people to buy more of these meal for their kids.’ Well guess what folks—that’s classic manipulation.”

David L. Katz, MD, MPH
Director, Yale University Prevention Research Center

“Advertising targeted at children too young to comprehend the persuasive intent of the message is inherently deceptive. Companies that use premiums to lure children to their products, as McDonald’s does with its Happy Meals, are the worst offenders in taking unfair advantage of children’s vulnerabilities.”

Dale Kunkel, Ph.D.
Communications Department, University of Arizona

“When it comes to marketing to children, McDonald’s is among the worst of the worst, relentlessly pressuring young children to nag their parents for products that undermine their wellbeing. It’s past time for McDonald’s to stop undermining parents’ efforts to raise healthy children by luring kids into its restaurants with the promise of a plastic toy.”

Susan Linn, Ed.D.
Director, Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood; author, Consuming Kids

“We know from scientific research that young children—and even older ones—do not have the ability to understand how marketing has been designed to influence them. In the era of digital marketing, these vulnerabilities are magnified even further. McDonald’s use of toys and these techniques raises troubling questions, for health professionals, parents, and policy makers.”

Kathryn Montgomery, Ph.D.
Department of Communication, American University

“Egregious advertising to children using toys to lure them to McDonald’s for low-nutrient, high-calorie Happy Meals is damaging to the well-being of children and their families. No doubt, it is one major contributing factor in the current obesity epidemic in the United States.”

Alvin F. Poussaint, MD
Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School

“The practice of enticing children to eat unhealthy food by offering toys undermines our country’s ability to raise future generations, and deprives these children of their right to a life of health and well-being.”

Juliet Schor, Ph.D.
Department of Psychology, Boston College