

We wanted 12 angry parents – we got hundreds!



When we launched the Parents Jury, we called it '12 Angry Parents', but we had seriously underestimated how strongly so many parents feel about children's food and food advertising.

After just a few calls to organisations whose members include parents and child carers, to spread the word about what we imagined would be a small-scale project, the calls and letters were soon flooding in. And from what they said, we found out that parents are delighted that at last they have some way to make their voices heard.

Together, the Parents Jury, will decide what kinds of foods and drinks should be sold as suitable for children... and what foods and drinks should be kicked off the shelves. Members of the Parents Jury will be asked for nominations of products, projects and advertising practices that are particularly awful, and those that deserve praise.

We'll assemble the nominations and circulate them to the Parents Jury, who will vote (by post or email) for the very best and very worst examples of foods for children. They will also get a chance to vote on food advertising and marketing that promotes healthy or junk foods.

We'd like to hear from all parents who feel strongly about the foods on offer for children, whether it's in the school canteen, in the supermarket, in vending machines or in cafés and restaurants.

We've already heard, for instance, from parents whose children attend schools where the only snacks on sale are chocolate, coke and crisps, even though the health lessons talk about a balanced diet. Does this make any sense for children? Parents don't think so.

We've also heard from parents saying that they're sick of toddlers nagging them for sweets displayed at the supermarket

checkout. Of course, parents can say no, but why should they have to play the role of big bad mum or dad? The sweets shouldn't be there in the first place!

Parents have told us about the lack of choice for children in motorway service stations. Try spending a long afternoon in a car with a child hyped up on fizzy drinks and additive-laden foods. No fun at all.

And parents have told us about adverts on TV and in child's comics promoting junky foods in a 'cool' way that encourages children to think they'll be left out if their mum or dad doesn't buy it for them.

If you recognise any of these scenarios, or if you have stories of your own to tell us about children's food or children's food advertising, we want to hear from you. Together, we can tell food manufacturers, regulators and advertisers what parents feel and ensure that we get better food and a healthier future for all our children.

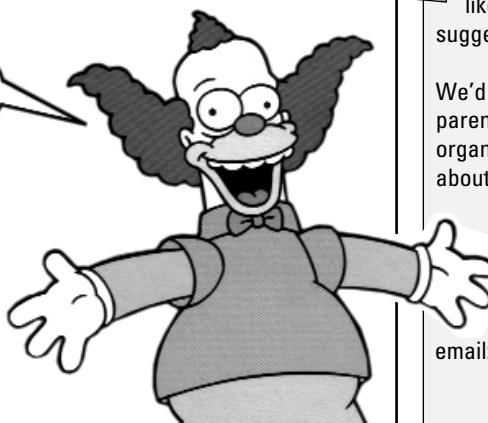
BADvertisement

Mmm, not quite so fruity...

We all know eating fruit is good for kids, right? So if there's a product that says it's made with twice its weight in fruit that must be doubly good for them, right? Well, we'd like to question that assumption.

These rolls of fruit jelly are made with fruit juice, but we challenge the manufacturer, Fruit Bowl, to tell us exactly how much of the natural vitamins, dietary fibre and valuable antioxidants remain in these sweets by the time the fruit has been boiled, congealed, rolled, stored for months and then sold

as 'suitable for lunchboxes'. Would you trust Crusty the Clown to give you nutritional advice? Trust your instincts!



Get in touch!

If you have a child or children between the ages of two and 16 and would like to take part in the Parents Jury, get in touch and we'll send you a short questionnaire and a call for nominations for the first round of awards.

We know that parents' time is precious, and the Jury is designed so that you can spend as much or as little time as you like giving us your comments and suggestions.

We'd also be very pleased to hear from parents' groups, schools or other organisations who can circulate information about the Parents Jury.

Send your name and address to: The Parents Jury, c/o The Food Commission, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF. Tel: 020 7837 2250; email: parentsjury@foodcomm.org.uk