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addressed to children**

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DETERMINANTS OF MARKETING ADDRESSED TO CHILDREN

Abstract

This paper deals with the emergence of a new important group of consumers – children. Their purchasing power and influence on current shopping trends is constantly increasing. Therefore, it is crucial to consider the marketing communication practices of companies towards the young. Marketing addressed to children today has become a very profitable and attractive business. Thus, this paper scrutinizes the methods of advertising to children as well as their effectiveness and impact on children.

Key words: Marketing, Consumer Research, Advertising, Brand, Brand Preference, Regulation, TV, Behavior, Consumers

JEL Codes: M30, M31, M37, M38, M39.

Introduction

In an age of social and economic changes driven by the processes of globalization, business is facing new challenges in terms of influencing the consumer's mind with new products or brands. Technological developments that significantly alter the standards and means of communication are happening at a dramatic pace, which on the one hand requires quick adjustments on the part companies, and on the other helps them to reach a wider audience through the use of mass media channels.

The aim of this paper is to emphasize and point out the rising importance of children's role in the current global business world. New directions in social change, together with the globalization process, have led to the rise of new business opportunities for generating outstanding profits and the long term

loyalty of young clients, all in one package. This market opening appears to be used by a growing number of companies around the world who focus on more and more creative solutions and endeavours to appeal to the youngest consumers.

Therefore, the perspective of determining the environment of marketing practices addressed to children seems to be crucial. The observed emergence and development of marketing strategies towards children nowadays has to be highlighted and scrutinized not only in terms of its ethical and legal implications. More importantly, the question needs to be answered as to the real influence it has on children, especially those who correspond to the segment of so called "tweens", aged between 8-12 years.

This research investigates the extent to which children are exposed to advertisements, where numerous advertised products and brands compete for a place in their consciousness. For this purpose the paper examines some examples of powerful marketing campaigns, comprising mainly product placements and mechanisms such as tie-in cooperation.

The paper is divided into 3 main sections. The first consists of a brief introduction to the topic which relates to the rising importance of children as consumers on the global market. The second part concerns the determinants that influence marketing towards children and includes a literature overview of the issue of children as a significant segment of consumers. Section 3 provides an empirical context by examining the success and effectiveness of marketing campaigns aimed at the young. The paper ends with some important conclusions.

"Interest has different masks. Most often it is a mask of disinterestedness."
(La Rochefoucauld)

1. The increasing importance of children as consumers on the global market

According to the latest estimates in mid-2011, the number of children living in the world, of both sexes, reached the level of 1,834,551,420 representatives of the youngest segment of the population, comprising 949,144,353 boys and 885,406,067 girls. If we take into account the entire population, children aged from birth to 14 years account for about 26% of the total population of the world (www.census.gov).

The population of children, defined as boys and girls between 0-11 years of age in the United States, comes to a total of 50.5 million children in the data for 2011 (www.marketresearch.com). Simultaneously, the research conducted by Millward Brown SMG/KRC shows that the population of children in Poland between the ages of 4-14 years is estimated at 5.5 million (www.millwardbrown.com).

Apart from the disparities between different regions, the main focus of this article is on children, from both developed and developing countries, who constitute the target segment of children's marketing at the moment, and who should also be considered as life style precursors and a reference point regarding the preferences and needs of the remaining young populations around the world.

However, the potential of this market segment, as mentioned earlier, is not only due to the abundance of children. The dramatic increase in the number of children with unprecedented purchasing power and having a great impact on their parents' shopping decisions has opened up, today, a very profitable and attractive market.

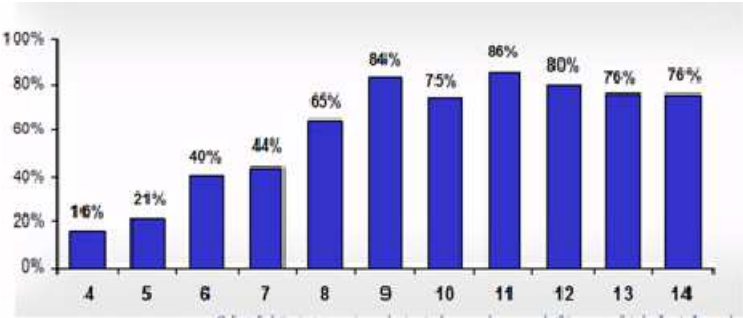
With regard to the overwhelming changes in lifestyle and technology, today's children are incomparably different to us at the same age. They are often called the generation of constant innovation, of the Internet, cell phone and interactive communication. Children are shopping experts in many categories. Moreover, not only do they have an influence on their parents buying behaviour, but the extent of this influence is becoming greater. Simultaneously, the amount

of children's spending, based on their increasing amounts of pocket money, is higher than ever before. This has created a new materialistic generation among modern children and teenagers, oriented towards brands and deeply engaged in the emerging consumer culture.

The United States of America can be considered as an appropriate example of this phenomenon. In 1998, for instance, children aged between 4-12 years received almost 27 million dollars as their own money. In the same year they also directly contributed to their parents' expenditures to an amount having a purchasing value of 187 million dollars, and indirectly by at least 300 million dollars more (Pufall, Unsworth 2004).

In Poland for instance, the percentage of children receiving pocket money, depending on age, was estimated as shown in the following chart.

Fig.1 The percentage of Polish children between the ages of 4-14 years receiving pocket money



Source: http://www.millwardbrown.com/Libraries/Poland_Insights_Downloads/MilwardBrownSMGKRC-ConfPaper-DzieckoKonsumentIRespondent.sflb.ashx

Furthermore, it must be noted that not only do the vast majority of children receive pocket money, but the amount increases with age from about 21 PLN to 38 PLN. A survey of Polish children revealed that nowadays they seem to receive the equivalent of 300 million PLN per year. By comparison, the average American ten-year-old in 1991, received a weekly allowance of \$4.20, and already in 1997 this amount had increased to \$6.30. Moreover, as already mentioned, for example in 1998 in the United States, the youngest consumers aged between 4-12 years spent almost 27 million dollars of their own money. They also directly influenced their parents with regard to the value of purchases totalling 187 million dollars and indirectly to at least 300 million more. Currently, these amounts far surpass our imagination. Most interesting is the fact that their

allowance is only 40% of a child's income in the United States. The rest are minor amounts obtained as a reward for completing household chores or as a gift from relatives for various occasions.

Among the main interests of the marketeers, however, is also the level and structure of children's spending. The expenditure structure, based for instance on Polish children, is centred around the money spent on ice cream and potato snacks (respectively 60% and 59%). Additional items are: sticks (32%), chewing gum (21%), soda (21%) and candy (21%). Magazines and books (11%), toys (8%) as well as computer games and videos (5%), are much less likely to be bought with pocket money (Venulet, 2003).

The main point, however, is hidden behind the marketing environment and dramatic life style shifts. Children used to describe their toys and belongings using names such as dollies, blocks, board games and cars. Nowadays, pre-schoolers utilise the names of brands; Barbie, Lego, Fisher-Price and Hot Wheels; instead, undeniably signifying their surprisingly high level of brand awareness. However, the question rather seems to be whether this is brand awareness or maybe an unconscious expression of the effective advertising addressed to them by marketeers.

The motivation and ideas behind purchasing objects are mainly due to the fact that children in the United States are living today in a media saturated environment. Research conducted by Henry J. Kaiser and his foundation concerning the use of media by children revealed that a typical child in the U.S. is exposed to five and a half hours of media outside of school every day. Children between 2 and 7 years spend more than 3 hours absorbed in a variety of media. In turn, the time spent by children over 8 years old reaches a level of 6¾ hours per day of so called media time (www.kff.org). An increasing share of time during a typical day increases the chances of successful marketing communications. The percentages of time spent over the last year; including an increasing amount of time spent on television, the Internet and other media; depending on age, is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Time spent during a week on various media by children in the U.S.

	0-3	4-5	6-8	9-12	13-17	Total
none	70%	19%	8%	5%	3%	31%
< 1 hour	1%	2%	1%			1%
1-2 hours	8%	11%	5%	3%	2%	6%
2-3 hours	3%	8%	7%	4%	1%	5%
4-5 hours	1%	4%	2%	1%		2%
5-9 hours	8%	23%	23%	17%	7%	15%
10-19 hours	4%	19%	29%	27%	19%	17%
20-29 hours	2%	7%	12%	16%	14%	8%
30 and more hours	2%	8%	14%	27%	54%	15%

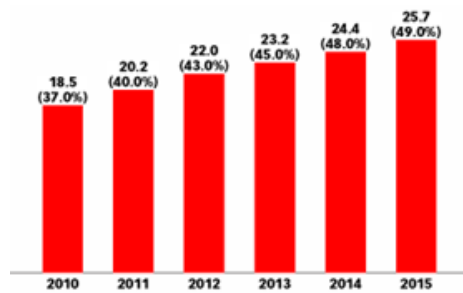
Source: [http:// www.frankwbaker.com](http://www.frankwbaker.com)

The majority of this time is not supervised by adults. As a result, the average child in the U.S. is exposed to more than 20,000 ads per year just on television. The exposure of children aged 8-12 years is equal to an average of 21 food ads viewed per day, and more than 7,600 per year, most of which include relate to sweets and snacks (34%), cereals (28%) and fast food outlets (10%). It is also worth noting that among the young, television directly influences the use of the Internet. More than half of this young audience visited the website closely related to the programmes or advertisements seen on television. Added to this is the advertising through online games, cell phones or the other effective marketing communication channels (www.frankwbaker.com).

Thus, as can be currently observed, a very significant role is being played by new technological solutions in today's world. These are now building the foundations of marketing to children by giving them ideas on how to spend their pocket money, and thus affecting their expenditure structure. As is clear from the statistics and observations, this is a gateway to success in reaching younger consumers.

"Generation Z", "The Network Generation", "The Internet Generation". No matter what we call today's young generation, one thing is clear: children who are born today are already virtually connected to the network. Their lives are saturated with media and different content, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, literally through their fingertips or a mouse click away. Day by day more and more children use the Internet. It is estimated that in the United States the number of Internet users aged 11 years and younger will increase from 20.2 million in 2011 to 25.7 million in 2015 (Fig. 2) (www.marketresearch.com).

Fig.2: The proportion and size of the youngest population of Internet users in the years 2010-2015 in the United States



Source: <http://www.marketresearch.com/Packaged-Facts-v768/Internet-Generation-143479/>

When it comes to children in Poland there is also a statistically significant number of Internet and computer users, and this number is also increasing. About 18% of households with children aged 5 to 14 have a permanent connection to the Internet (this number has increased since 2001 by 5.9%). In addition, approximately 6% of children between 9-14 years of age own a mobile phone. Although the numbers are much smaller compared to those of the United States, the process of globalization and the spread of western trends also suggest a growth in Polish figures in future years.

According to Kidscreen, a newsletter showcasing entertainment media to children, there have never been, until now, so many ways to support a marketing culture for children, and there have never been so many ways to discover how to speak to them. This makes the competition in focusing attention on children growing and significant, forcing advertisers to make greater efforts to reach the mind of a child. What is the result?

Children today represent a generation that is more accessible, but also more diffuse in the various networks, and therefore to reach them by using the same language and concepts, and through the same media, is both a challenge and the key to successful marketing efforts. Faced with this situation, marketing aimed at children should and will be based on newer and newer technological solutions, tracking trends and changes in the models and life styles of young consumers. Also, in this context, great importance is also being put on changing family patterns and changes occurring within it.

Our times abound in the so-called "race for time". More and more young people follow blindly a path of career development. The way parents compensate for this situation is the purchase of new products, brands that their children desire or an increase in pocket money, and thus the increase in purchasing power of the small consumer.

Children are now seen as potential adult consumers, with which corporations can build relationships lasting from childhood, through adolescence, up to and during adult life, especially targeting certain segments of youth like the so-called "*tweens segment*". This explains the huge market potential and marketing activities directed towards youth. However, such marketing communication is also limited and conditional.

2. Determinants of marketing to children. A literature overview on the topic

2.1. The role of psychology and behavioural theories

Marketing to children is closely linked with issues of child development, especially pro-social and moral, according to Beata Mazurek Kucharska (Gregorczyk, 2009). Therefore, experts in child development are key members of most marketing groups.

Young consumers are very easy to manipulate, because they are not fully evolved in their ability to make non-subjective and realistic assessments of the surrounding reality until a certain point in their development. Therefore, establishing a relationship between children and a brand is very simple. Usually it takes place through the creation of a hero, with whom the young consumers quickly build a relationship. Especially if this new relationship results in them widening their circle of friends (Gregorczyk, 2009).

But on the other hand, this new character can become a cause of quarrels and misunderstandings, and lead to isolation. "For example, a shirt that has a hero's image, statue or mark, or represents participation in a game that is possessed by a child while others do not have it – becomes a motive for a children's argument." This situation creates an attitude of mutual aggression and frustration, and sometimes even leads to being stigmatized by the group,

resulting in the abandonment of the character or brand by the young consumer (Gregorczyk, 2009).





As a particular example we can consider the Barbie doll, and the situation when at a certain age a girl who has one hears from her peers that she should not play with it anymore. This does not necessarily result from the fact that the toy is no longer fitting for this age, because it is childish, but rather from the fact that the rest of her friends do not have one. There is an attitude of jealousy, which evokes a sense of isolation. As a result the girl turns away from the toy or a brand because it isolates her from her environment, because children have a very strong need for acceptance from their peers, the so-called *social motive*.

This need for approval, their assessments and perception of reality as well as their environment vary considerably depending on the age of the child. When speaking about children we are dealing with a very heterogeneous, diverse target group both in terms of age and stage of social and cognitive development. Therefore, before developing marketing activities for children the same attention must be paid to these differences that are simultaneously the basis and starting point not only for formulating appropriate strategies, but also for understanding how the mind of a child, depending on its age and cognitive processes, is developing. This is the first key to determining an appropriate methodology for marketing research, which can result in the creation of an efficient and profit-making brand or product.

One theory, which represents a significant milestone in understanding the functioning of a child's mind, is the revolutionary theory of cognitive development by Jean Piaget. Piaget discovered that the development of formal thinking in children runs through successive stages. And although all the children go through each of these phases in turn, the pace of these transitions may vary significantly (www.learningandteaching.info).

Piaget identified four basic stages of cognitive development according to age.

Fig. 3: Piaget's stages of cognitive development

<p>Sensory-motor phase (practical intelligence) – 0 to 2 years.</p> 	<p>The process of shaping children’s imagination about objects, which is the basis for their future development of concepts. A child assimilates the principle of an object’s permanence and begins to see the sequence of events occurring in the environment. Learning takes place through the physical senses and experience. Memory is still poorly developed.</p>
<p>Preoperative phase (representative intelligence) – 2 to 7 years.</p> 	<p>Acquisition of language skills, activation of their imagination. Development of concepts: close-far, together-separately, before-after. Knowledge of geometric shapes: circle, triangle, square. A child still cannot reverse a situation and look at it from a point of view other than its own.</p>
<p>Concrete operational phase – 7 to 11 years.</p> 	<p>A child sees consistency and transience correctly, and orders objects according to certain relationships. Conclusions are made on the basis of certain conditions which it considers to be true. A child slowly understands the behaviour of mass, weight and volume. However there is still a problem with perceiving abstract concepts.</p>
<p>Formal operational stage – from 11 years (depending on the source, also from 12 years)</p> 	<p>Children develop through logical thinking and start to think abstractly, which allows them to conceptualise the boundaries of time and space. Gradually, they also begin to mentally assess the validity of hypotheses and questions posed.</p>

Source: Own study based on

<http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/piaget.htm>

The methodology of market research in relation to the youth segment, and prepared by interdisciplinary teams before direct communication to young consumers, is based strictly on Piaget’s findings. The importance of stages of cognitive development was also emphasized by Magdalena Fliśnik when proposing a division of child development in the 4-12 year old age group into three main stages: the 4-5 year olds (pre-school period), the 6-8 year olds (early school period) and the 9-12 year olds (school period, the so called ‘tweens’). This approach is an adaptation of Piaget’s theory to facilitate subsequent marketing efforts and also the preparation of marketing research (Mueller, 2007).

As already mentioned earlier, due to the enormous marketing potential and increasing marketing opportunities that come from the children's segment, studies of this type are useful and have tremendous value for companies. However, children are not a typical group of consumers either, due to their objective perception disability. Therefore, they require a special approach and market protection which is reflected in the increasing importance of ethical considerations and the number of legal regulations concerning this type of activity. Marketing research on children is regulated by the ICC/ESOMAR code, which emphasize the children's welfare as an overriding good¹.

In terms of behavioural and psychological approaches to this topic the role of the media in absorbing and shaping a child's mind cannot be forgotten either. Daniel R. Anderson in his research on the media reveals that programmes broadcast with types of images, symbols and sound content coded in them, have a direct impact on a child's perception of the real world (Kasztelan, 1999). Media influence children in different ways. Małgorzata Wolska-Długosz distinguishes the direct, cumulative and unconscious impact (Wolska-Długosz, 2006), while direct and indirect effects for example are considered in the analysis of Maria Braun-Gałkowska (Braun-Gałkowska, 2003).

It is worth mentioning that within families that are not close or have strong family ties, the role of the media is increases significantly. It is commonly known these days that most parental time is dedicated to career and professional life, which in many cases means it is taken from the children. The pursuit of money, wealth and the overwhelming "desire to have" not only give an inappropriate example to children but also leads directly to the situation where computers, the Internet and television become the babysitters bringing up our children. New gadgets and toys just support this situation and are poor attempts to compensate somehow for this lack of time with their parents. In the end, parents themselves are unconsciously pushing their children into the arms of influential media and contribute to these young consumers being exposed to their impact.

Since advertisements/commercials are considered to be one of the few legal means of manipulation (Kasztelan, 1999), on which we ourselves agree, it becomes even more dangerous in terms of its effectiveness on children. In

talking about the determinants of marketing to children, therefore, a principal role is occupied by law and ethics.

2.2. Law and ethics

The need to ensure special protection to the youngest segment of consumers arises from the fact of their lack of a critical assessment ability that relates to the impact of the market and thus marketing communication addressed to children (Malarewicz, 2009). The most famous guardian of the advertising market is the International Advertising Association (IAA) located in New York, which is now needed more than ever before. In times of constant technological development and innovative forms of effective communication, also including techniques based on the latest findings of a new discipline – neuromarketing, communication dedicated to children has also become dangerous and must be strictly controlled.

Polish legislation does not include any specific acts that refer to children and young children. Looking at the restrictions regarding the Polish advertising market, it is first necessary to mention that Poland, along with other member countries of the European Union, is subject to the Directive of "Television without Frontiers" (Council Directive 89/552/EEC) on 3.10.1989, which concerns the harmonization of the laws of Member States with regard to television broadcasting. But mainly relates to advertising addressed to children, which is subject to the following acts (Jasielska, Maksymiuk, 2010):

- Act of 29 December 1992 regarding radio and television: which prohibits direct advertising messages to children suggesting and urging them to buy a product or service, or persuade their parents to purchase. Moreover, it also does not allow the use of images of children in presenting dangerous situations that could negatively affect the physical, mental and moral development of under aged children;
- Act of 9 November 1995 regarding the protection of health from the consequences of tobacco use and tobacco: which prohibits advertising these products completely with particular focus on places such as schools, newspapers or children's sports and recreation facilities;

- Act of 26 October 1982 regarding an upbringing in sobriety and counteracting alcoholism: which prohibits the advertising of alcoholic drinks addressed to minors;
- Act of 16 April 1993 on unfair competition: which includes the prohibition of advertising based on the credulity of children or their lack of experience and knowledge. At the same time it allows a child's presence in advertising if it is not incompatible with their welfare.

These laws clearly prohibit advertisements causing moral or physical harm, either directly appealing to the credulity of children to buy something or suggesting their parents purchase a product or service. This prohibition also refers to advertisements based on the children's trust in the authorities, such as teachers or parents, or finally those showing a child in a situation of danger to their life or health.

It should be noted that any violation of the appropriate advertising code in respect of children and of all issues relating to violations of the principles mentioned above, are directed to the President of the Polish Office of Competition and Consumer Protection (OCCP).

In addition to the law, regulations covering the children's advertising market are contained in and adopted voluntarily by advertisers' codes of ethics, such as the Code of Advertising Ethics, of which the main executor in Poland is the Advertising Council (www.radareklamy.org)².

The above provisions in the Code of Advertising Ethics oblige producers and others involved in marketing communications to children to conduct them appropriately for the child's development. It is worth mentioning here the voluntary initiatives taken in the advertising industry, for example, the adoption by Canal + (broadcasting 4 channels for children: ZigZap, MiniMini, Cartoon Network and Jetix) of the so called "Charter of admission rules for advertising aimed at children", as part of their work on the "Initiative - Advertise for children". Such actions are also characteristic of Polish Public Television, notable for limiting the freedom of promotional campaigns, such as children's advertising, by controlling broadcast times and assessing the content's

appropriateness, e.g. through so-called "Preventative protection"(www.canalpluscyfrowy.pl).

The laws and ethics relating to marketing to children vary depending on the market and country. Ethical standards of advertising to children in the United States are the responsibility of the Children's Advertising Review Unit - CARU, administered by the American Council of Good Business (Council of Better Business Bureaus - CBBB), and established in 1974 as a self-regulating programme to promote responsible advertising to children.

CARU, founded by actors from the advertising industry, and sponsored by companies such as e.g. Cartoon Network, The Walt Disney Co., and Fisher Price, assess the advertising content directed towards children and any promotional material appearing in all media. Also, with its participation in 1990, the United States adopted the Children's Television Act, which still applies today (www.caru.org).

Furthermore, due to the increasing importance of media such as the Internet, the institution of CARU also contributed to the development of the 1996 guidelines referring to interactive media (Kasztelan, 1999). For complementary correspondence with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA), which entered into force in April 2000, CARU guidelines refer to websites created for young consumers under the age of 13.

In addition to CARU, in the case of the children's advertising market in the United States, institutions such as the American Advertising Federation, the American Psychological Association and the Responsible Advertising and Children Programme (RACP) cannot be forgotten, which also play a significant role in creating and enforcing the ethics of advertising to young children in the United States.

On the other hand, the European Market, in addition to the harmonization of regulatory activities in the media and advertising, contributes to the creation of international ethical standards which would support responsible advertising directed to children. Among the ethical guidelines relating to children's advertising that have been formulated there is, for instance, The Code of Toys Advertising, approved by the European Association of Toy Manufacturers. It should be noted that the non-normative character of the document means it fulfils the function of being illustrative rather than limiting (Kasztelan, 1999).

In addition, each member state has its own specific laws regulating advertising to children. For example, in Germany, only one organization exists, which aims to protect the overall adequacy of advertising efforts. It operates under the name Zentralausschuss der Werbenwirtschaft. In Great Britain, on the other hand, there are more than 60 national acts, regulating advertising and covering general issues controlled by many institutions constituting the nature of this market. Among the most significant actions can be mentioned the ban, in 2007, which referred to "junk food" advertising during the broadcasting of programmes for children between 7-9 years old. In 2008, the ban was extended to include programmes for children under the age of 16 (www.globalissues.org).

Attention should also be directed to recent efforts in countries such as Sweden, which in 1991 introduced a ban on all types of advertising during children's programme time in the most important media, based on concerns about the harmfulness of the ads reception by the young. The European Union is also currently considering further regulations relating to advertising directed at children, even debating a ban on such advertising across the whole of Europe (Kasztelan, 1999).

3. Growth of successful marketing addressed to children. The topic's empirical context

The growth of successful marketing addressed to children is closely linked to the many technological developments that are responsible for an increase in the significance of various media and the role they play in our lives.

Recognizing the opportunities arising from effective communication and facilitating technological progress to reach the recipient, the media market has become very competitive in attracting consumers, leading to the occurrence of the so-called IIIIO effect – Invisible and Intangible Information Overload (Acuff, Reiher, 2006).

The current generation of young people is brought up in a world of ubiquitous information, coming from various sources and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, which is thus a powerful social mechanism for creating prevailing attitudes and behaviours. Electronic media are therefore an integral part of young people's lives, leading to the occurrence of certain phenomena such as KGUY, Kids Grow Up Young (Lindstrom, 2005), and consequently to the

occurrence of hidden dangers in the form of the so-called "loss of innocence" (Acuff, Reiher, 2006). Children are regularly exposed to information where the content and incentives of contact are definitely inappropriate for their age. The consequences are often signs of confusion and the creation of abnormal values and behaviours.

A particular danger in this context is irresponsible marketing aimed at younger audiences through the media, producing "Children who grow up faster" (Lindstrom, 2005). This provides an opportunity for companies whose targets are children to generate tremendous profits. At the same time the situation is compounded by profit maximization based on the fact that they are so called "easy prey" because their skills development has only just been formed, so they are particularly vulnerable to the impact of advertisements and programmes broadcasted by the media (Acuff, Reiher, 2006). A key role in the rise of these phenomena has been played by television, which is now further intensified by other media such as the twenty-first century's main medium - the Internet.

3.1. The role of the media

Studies conducted in the U.S., and also confirmed in Poland, show that the time children spend viewing ads is estimated to be on average 3 hours per week, and during any one day they are exposed to the pull of about 8,000 brands (Lindstrom, 2005).

Young audiences empathise with advertisements, accepting them at face value, not realizing their true aim and their intended impact (Kasztelan, 1999).

Preschool children are not able to critically assess the images shown them; therefore they consider television content to be real. The advertised toys are presented as moving and speaking, as well as given feelings and emotions, so the advertised world comes to life for children through the phenomenon of animation they are confronted with in advertisements. How dangerous this can be is revealed by the subsequent "collision" with the real world. The child does not understand why it is very different from that in the ads.

The world of advertising is a kind of utopian reality for a child, without defect, in which people are full of kindness and love. Reflected in this world are the faces, gestures and glances that give children a sense of security and peace. Moreover, in the advertising world everything becomes possible, something which is ensured by the "wonderful" product that is being advertised. It awakens

in the child the "desire to have", because in their imagination this object is a source of satisfaction and happiness (Kasztelan, 1999).

Using this knowledge manufacturers and experts in such ads manipulate children by highlighting, above all, characteristics of the product in the ads that are irrelevant from a user's point of view and, furthermore, build their marketing communication on them. This is to convince the viewer, in this case the child, that the advertised product is unique and has unique characteristics: such as those in the world of chocolate either because "it comes from Alpine milk", a wonderful world in which purple cows live; or, for other products, because "it dissolves in the mouth"; "has no equal"; or through it "you can be cool" (Kasztelan, 1999).

This goal is also helped by the use in advertisements of children and young characters, plus heroes and role models they like or admire. Typical in modern advertising to children is the use of myths, with cartoon and comic heroes taking the main roles. These figures usually possess supernatural powers and their main task is to fight against evil. The effectiveness of this approach as a method of communicating with youthful audiences is confirmed the fact that these characters are understood and accepted by children of different backgrounds and ages. Among these heroes for example can be mentioned the use of the Teletubbies, the dragon from Danone advertisements, and famous characters like Bob the Builder advertising dairy products, or Bugs Bunny in Nesquick advertisements (Kasztelan, 1999). The behaviour they manifest, full of magical abilities, predominates in the unreal world of advertising, along with the dominant bright colors of the images, and speaks to a child's imagination, creating huge interest in the world presented as well as stimulating their thinking (Samborska, 2009). Their attention, moreover, is also captivated by the "cool" images, striking sound effects and short slogans, all 'seasoned' together by elements of humor which children adore.

In presenting the world of advertising so as to attract older groups of children at pre-adolescent age, marketers make use of the "support or endorsement" of athletes, singers and movie heroes to encourage young audiences to desire, consume and own the same goods or services that they do. Shaping the preferences and tastes of this target group is not a case of emphasizing the appropriate values of the products advertised, but by

stimulating and encouraging their social environment, which is what they do; what goods others consume and what their peers like or do not like.

An example here can be the 'worth a million dollars' image of Michael Jackson, used by Pepsi-Cola in order to achieve a competitive advantage over Coca-Cola by attracting many young consumers – Jackson fans. Other advertising campaigns, such as by Nike, use figures like Michael Jordan crossing space together with the aforementioned Bugs Bunny, one of the favorite childhood cartoon heroes (Lindstrom, 2005).

Therefore, appeals to this market segment are based on the fact that such children are consumers whose preferences are influenced by their peers and the natural social processes such as observation and imitation. Thus their basic preferences, combined with the increasing financial resources available to children nowadays, are beginning to create enormous interest that is leading to an increasing variety of attempts to reach the young consumer.

The marketers seem to understand the fact that once established among children at this stage, a relationship of product loyalty will continue for years. An example of measures in accordance with this rule is the Werthers Original advertising campaign, referring to a tradition handed down from generation to generation in which the lovable grandfather figure encourages his grandchild to use the product by saying: "I can still remember the very first sweets given to me by my grandfather." (Kasztelan, 1999).

Thus it is important to raise questions regarding the role and influence of the media on the children's segment. The impact of the media on young consumers, objectively speaking, can have both positive and negative dimensions. The positive effects relate to functions such as providing entertainment, increasing awareness and a gradual integration into social life. The best examples are the advertising campaigns of the Lego brand where the creativity and learning process is emphasized, or M&M's campaign in Polish schools to increase the children's awareness about safety on the roads. The negative aspects, in turn, include instances such as the eroticisation of the imagination, strengthening belief in the correctness of the ubiquitous so-called "must have" attitudes, increased aggressiveness and an alienation from the real world, along with increasing the phenomenon of obesity among children (Braun-Gałkowska, 2003).

Advertising may imply or even impose upon a youthful audience a certain code of values. This carries risks associated with inappropriately influencing the process of personality development.

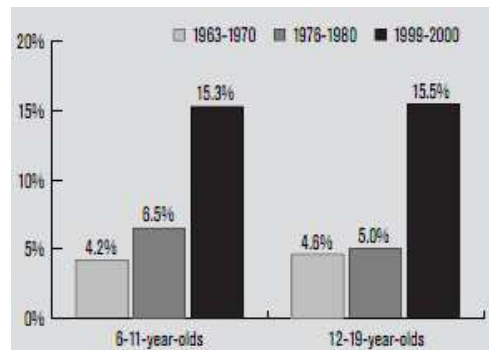
The commercial content included in advertising campaigns shapes certain attitudes in children that the most important goal in life is to achieve a state of wealth or outer beauty, as well as collect toys, candies or other items that obviously generate a profit for the producers. Commercials therefore suggest various role models. From these ads young people learn "what clothes are worn?" or "what is being read?" by every "cool girl" and "awesome guy". Children are exposed to educative advertising which indicates which toys are "trendy" and which toys should be fun. Temptation comes from shiny displays, magazine covers and examples from their fashionable and affluent peers. In this way the advertising system of values is being created (Samborska, 2009).

The effect, as mentioned before, is youth reaching adolescence early. This situation can be seen for example in the advertising of cosmetics and other products for creating the "look" of an ideal model or actress, which are not specifically addressed to teenagers but to girls at a pre-adolescent age as well, the so called "tweens". Interesting in this context is the positive attempt to draw attention to this problem by one of the leading cosmetics companies, the Dove brand, whose eloquent advertising campaign "Beauty Pressure" promotes the slogan: "Talk to your daughter before the beauty industry does" (www.dove.us). Moreover, according to research conducted by A. Gonzalez-Levin and L. Smolak on a group of 11-14 year old girls, it seems that they preferred and favoured the thin characters when watching their favourite programmes and shows, based on the overwhelmingly perfect world of advertising (Kasztelan, 1999). The creation in advertising of an unnatural, perfect world is related to another problem connected with the media, the problem of children's obesity. The extent of changes in children's behaviour under the influence of the media and advertising are causing greater and greater concern regarding their eating habits.

Children and teenagers frequently eat out, consume unhealthy drinks and eat so-called snacks between meals. Such a lifestyle has led to the phenomenon of excess weight among young consumers. Research performed by the Henry J. Kaiser Foundation, and done during the periods of 1963-1970, 1976-1980 and 1999-2000, shows that the phenomenon of obesity among children between the

ages of 6-11 and 12-19 increased by more than 10% in both groups (www.kff.org).

Fig.4. Percentage of children suffering from obesity in the U.S. during 1963-2000



Source: <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/upload/The-Role-Of-Media-in-Childhood-Obesity.pdf>

The data from 2010 is even more alarming. It is said that every third child in the United States (31.7%) between the ages of 2-19 is overweight. According to forecasts of the future, one third of children born in 2000 will suffer because of diabetes. The effects of obesity among children are estimated to cause direct medical costs of approximately 3 billion dollars (www.reboot.fcc.gov).

However, studies point mainly to the impact of ambient advertising on children's eating habits. This seems obvious, given that as many as 98% of food ads viewed by children aged 2-11 years are products high in sugar, fat, and sodium (salt) (www.nytimes.com/2011/07/24/opinion/sunday/24bittman.html?pagewanted=all).

U.S. spending on food product ads in 1999 was equal to an amount of 7.3 billion dollars. For 1997 this expenditure was successively apportioned among the product groups concerned as follows: breakfast cereals - 792 million dollars; candy and chewing gum - 765 million dollars; drinks - 549 million; snacks - 330 million³.

While the amount spent on advertising specifically directed towards children cannot accurately be assessed, in the U.S. it is said that an amount greater than 1 billion dollars is spent on advertising in the media, mainly television, "focused on young consumers." Additionally, it seems that more than 4.5 billion is spent on promotions "targeting" children and adolescents, such as samples, coupons and contests with prizes. Two billion is spent on PR, which can

include printed and electronic publications, marketing events and marketing in schools. Finally, we should also mention the amount of about three billion dollars on the packaging of goods specially designed for children, like for instance the Happy Meal box that comes with a small toy inside or the newer Mighty Kids version of it designed for teenagers, by McDonald's (Story, French, 2004). Attention should also be paid to new technologies like specially designed websites encouraging children towards particular brands and products through games, interesting content and their favourite character, like for example Chester Gepard or Tucan Sam, as well as techniques such as product placement⁴ (Lindstrom, 2005).

3.2. Product placement and its effectiveness

Product placement as we know it today, and which has also begun to affect children, is associated with the appearance of the movie "ET" by Steven Spielberg. The main character - a boy named Elliot - lures the little alien from the forest using the well-known and widely recognizable candy Reese's Pieces from Hershey. Associating the product with the story line gained the company a 65% increase in sales after the film's release, while at the same time showing the size of the loss suffered by Mars which had earlier rejected a proposal to use the image of the company's M & M product in the movie.

Also, the latest research conducted in the field of neuromarketing shows that the effectiveness of product placement is strictly linked to the integration of the product or brand within the plot or narrative of the programme. The ideal example, also in terms of children's marketing, is Coca-Cola, which along with Cingular Wireless and Ford was one of the sponsors of American Idol. Incorporated into the scenery were things designed to be associated with a bottle of Coca-Cola; in the form of colours, the shape of the chairs and couches for participants, or the most significant item - the beverage on the judging panels table; which meant the audience definitely remembered the brand and gave it a positive image. The presence of Coca-Cola in the Idol programme, also watched by younger viewers, not only contributed to Coca-Cola's place in their minds but at the same time displaced from their minds the presence of Ford and Cingular Wireless (Lindstrom, 2005).

According to the classification given by Shaphiro there are four types of methods for using product placement (Williams, Petrosky, Hernandez, Page Jr.,

2011). Moreover, all of them are widely used in product placements addressed to children, which is shown by the following examples.

A cartoon film released in 2002, and therefore a perfect example of product placement for a child audience is given by the movie "Scooby-Doo" by Warner Bros., which recorded gross takings of \$54.2 million in its first weekend. The marketing included in the movie refers to brands such as Coca-Cola, Heinz, Marshall Amplification, NASA, Plantronics, Reebok, Sprite, Tabasco, Teen Beat and Telemundo (www.brandchannel.com). What is interesting is the fact that these brands were used in highly stylized, conventional ways in accordance with the unusual character of Scooby-Doo, which would otherwise mean that such product placement exposure was unnaturally striking, and therefore there are only a few of them.

The presence of brands in children's films is also evident in productions such as the film "Cars" from 2006, with gross takings for its opening week of \$93.8 million. The vehicle manufacturers involved in this movie were BMW, Cadillac, Chevrolet, Corvette, Dodge, Ferrari, Fiat, Hudson, Hummer, Jaguar, Jeep, Lincoln, Mack, Maserati, Mercury, Peterbilt, Plymouth, Porsche, Volkswagen, and a consumer electronics representative - Apple (www.brandchannel.com). All this seems to be justified in the predispositions of young audiences, in this case boys, whose awareness of cars and future vehicle preference battle begins here. The perspective is rather long term, but the real goal is to raise potential future car buyers' awareness of the models presented, which explains the presence of so many competing companies to be involved in and be visible in the movie.

Another example of product placement in a children-oriented movie is the "Toy Story 3" production from 2010, by Walt Disney Pictures (Pixar). With gross takings of \$168 million in its first weekend, brands such as Apple, Barbie, Corvette, eBay, FAO Schwarz, Fisher-Price, GI Joe, Monopoly, Mr. Potato Head, Sharpie, and Super Glue were widely exposed (www.brandchannel.com). A year later, in 2011, "The Smurfs 3D" was released, where the budget was estimated to be about 110 million dollars. Although the reception of the film was not entirely consistent with expectations, attention was undeniably drawn to the product placements of many manufacturers; including Sony, M & M's, F.A.O. Schwartz, Blue-Ray, Madame Alexander, and Yamaha (www.brandchannel.com).

“High School Musical 3: Senior Year”, dedicated to an older audience of tweens and teenagers, was released in 2008, achieving gross takings of \$57.3 million in the first three days of its release. The brands presented in the film consist of a wide range of manufacturers from American Eagle by American Eagle Outfitters; Apple; Champion; Converse; Dasani; Dell; Diesel; Ford; Honda; Juilliard; Nike; OPI; Spalding; Stanford University; University of California, Berkeley; Vera Bradley; and Yale University (www.brandchannel.com). It is noteworthy that some product placements in this case suggest prestigious institutions of learning in the United States that will soon be fighting for young students when they finish their high school education.

Continuing with “Hannah Montana: The Movie”, there is a constellation of brands in this Walt Disney Pictures production of 2009 (with first-weekend gross takings of 32.3 million dollars), which includes ABC, Apple, Bell, Bloomingdale's, Cadillac, Cartier, Chevrolet, Cole Haan, Donald J. Pliner, Ford, Gibson, Gucci, LG, Marc by Marc Jacob, Marc Jacobs, MINI, Panavision, Sharp, Teddy Grahams, Teen Vogue, USA Today, Vogue, and Volvo. The most interesting companies here are for instance Cartier, Vogue and Gucci (www.brandchannel.com), which are fighting for a position in the minds of young girls, undoubtedly interested in fashion.

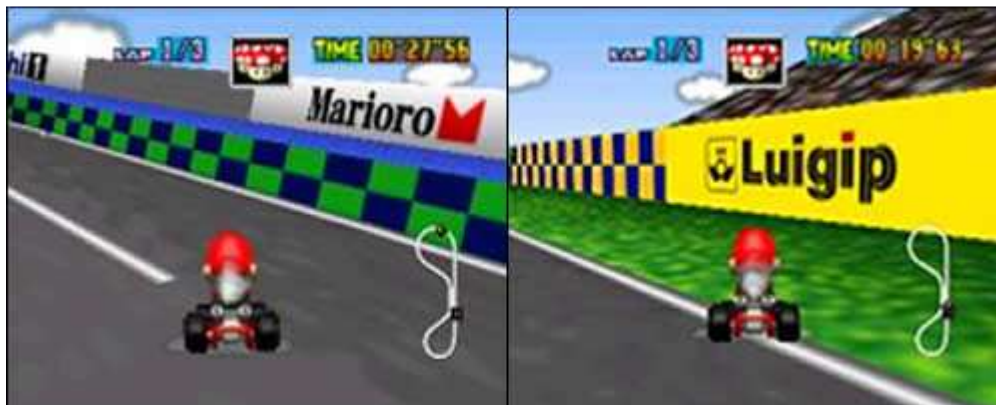
In reality, however, not all famous or well known movies for children or adults include brand or product placements, and this happens not only by reason of the law or ethics, but also other factors. Among these should undoubtedly be highlighted such productions as Ice Age, Kung Fu Panda as well as Shrek.

The case of Shrek, however, is significant in respect of the use of an innovative solution in the form of replacing the typical product placement advertisements with discussing brands in the conventional framework of a joke. In the second part of these adventures of a green-skinned hero (\$180.2 million, first weekend) and the next two (\$121.6 and \$114.55 million), this new convention directs the attention of children and their parents to “fake” brands such as Versachery, Ye Olde Foot Locker and Ye Old Hooters for example in the second part (www.brandchannel.com), and presents them in the guise of a fairytale kingdom where Shrek lives. Similarly, all four productions are based

around the adventures of Shrek, which is rather unusual among the examples of children's movies analysed here.

Although it is clear from neuromarketing research conducted by M. Lindstrom that product placement does not always lead to the effect intended by the advertisers (Lindstrom, 2009), achieving these aims still seem to be easier in respect of children. Therefore, the wide use of these means to get into to the consciousness of youthful consumers is not surprising. Unfortunately, there are also not entirely appropriate product placement strategies in the market, such as references to brands like Marlboro in a computer game targeted at children (Papp-Váry, 2008). Although the name does not appear directly, the colours and the similarity in the pronunciation of Marioro are confusingly similar to Marlboro's. This procedure sneaks through the unconscious mind as a first attempt to achieve recognition of Marlboro products, mainly cigarettes, which have a decidedly negative impact on children. It is an example not only of an unethical, sly way to hide an ad right in the basic conventions of a game, but also a kind of refuge for the manufacturer, as the name Marioro might also indicate the famous 90's Mario Bros game.

Pic.1. Examples of hidden Marlboro and Agip advertisments in online games



Source: <http://gameextraction.blogspot.com/2011/06/anuncios-famosos-en-mario-kart-64.html>

Children also remain in many cases the involuntary recipients of marketing practices such as product placement. Brands need to continually provide a positive presence in the minds of consumers (Sobocińska, 2002), including, and perhaps especially, to children. Regarding this attempt we can also observe the

“return” of famous children’s figures – the Muppets last days and their participation in promoting Orange through brand placement.

Furthermore, the conviction of companies as to its effectiveness is reflected in their increasing expenditure on this type of activity (Williams, Petrosky, Hernandez, Page Jr., 2011).

Already, a hundred years ago, the famous founder of the world's first department store, John Wanamaker, stated that: “Half the budget I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is I don’t know which half” (Lindstrom, 2005). Although, the effectiveness of marketing practices, such as brand or product placement, is still not fully assessed, product placement is now a rapidly growing multi-billion-dollar-industry. Based on research by the firm PQ Media, the global value of product placement was valued in 2006 at 10.52 billion dollars. The expected increase in the year 2010, in turn, was about 18.4% (www.highbeam.com).

As is clear from the statistics, product placement spending is often invested in programmes broadcast on television, which amounted to 71.4% of global expenditure in 2006. Significant finance is also absorbed by the computer games market, where product placement fees were about \$1 billion in 2010 in the U.S. alone, which constitutes the largest and fastest growing product placement market (\$1.5 billion in 2005, \$2.9 billion in 2007 and \$3.7 billion in 2008) followed by Brazil, Australia, France, Japan and China (Williams, Petrosky, Hernandez, Page Jr., 2011).

The effectiveness of product placement is further reinforced by the support of other marketing communication techniques.

3.3. Other attempts to approach children

Communication to children is also based on complementing product placements with other marketing practices. The most important to mention here are tie-in contracts that support the ongoing effects of product placements to children. This type of practice offers an opportunity for expanding advertising contracts because they allow advertisers to refer to the film that a product or brand has invested in. Therefore, for instance cooperation between McDonald’s and Disney through including movie figures in Happy Meals can be observed; or Mattel, for example, that has created a special series of Barbie dolls like Reese Witherspoon which refer to the movie *Legally Blonde 2* (2002).

Among the variety of cutting-edge techniques for achieving brand awareness and consumer loyalty today is undoubtedly the practice of viral marketing that bombards children. This form has little in common with traditional ads where the purpose was to transmit information about the company, product, brand or service to consumers or prospective buyers in the market (Wilson, 2005). Today, the ideal tool for the development of viral marketing has become the Internet. As already mentioned, today's children are the generation that was born with a mouse in one hand and a computer screen as their window on the world. Viral marketing is a form of communication that can potentially be very effective in reaching young consumers. In the case of the Internet, attention is increasingly being paid to the mechanisms of the social media: "Refer to a friend".

This is not simply a key to achieve success in the children segment, due to the fact that children delight to share or "show something cool" to their peers, but it can also be a source of obtaining additional personal information such as e-mail addresses which a child "shares". So this is actually more of a gate for further promotional activities, for instance direct mailing. The major advantage of infectious marketing is primarily due to the lack of a direct link to advertising (www.idmnet.pl).

For years so-called whisper marketing has been widely thought of as an effective form with high potential. If you consider children, a perfect example of the use of viral marketing, other than through the use of the Internet, is the inclusion of outdoor elements in the campaign of Amsterdam's Artis Zoo (Żyrek, 2011). As a part of its promotional activities special emblems were distributed, which bore detachable animal shapes. In this way the public was encouraged to visit the zoo. Moreover, it is worth noting that the labels corresponded proportionally to the natural size of the various individual species. For children it was undoubtedly an incredible attraction.

Finally, we cannot forget that today, when the global market for products and services targeted at younger consumers is worth about 500 billion dollars a year (in Poland 17 billion zlotys), that apart from giants such as Nestle and Unilever, or for example Maspex in Poland, there are also an increasing number of so-called Microenterprises addressing their services and promotions to children, and

in addition are therefore influencing their market development through the creation of needs (Omachel, Grzegórska, 2011).

The need for appropriate marketing communications addressed to children ought to be emphasized, considering all that has been said before. Therefore, it is necessary to mention the importance of supporting such efforts as enrichment marketing.

Summary

Along with the processes of globalization, children have today become an attractive segment for marketers due to their increasing purchasing power, influence on parental shopping decisions as well as trend creation abilities. This has led to the emergence of an ideal environment for the development of diverse advertising communications, aimed at ensuring maximum profits for producers operating in the market addressed to children. The question that definitely arises, therefore, is the role of ethics and the impact of marketing on the healthy development of children. The media, depending on the content of their contributions, can affect young consumers both positively and negatively.

Therefore, the obvious fact seems to be the need for special legal and ethical regulations imposed on each market. However, attention should first of all be paid to ethics, which should be the basis for advertisers activities, particularly in relation to marketing addressed to children. The regulations regarding advertising and the content transmitted by various media still seem to be insufficient as exemplified by the still unclear legislation permitting the use of techniques such as product placement.

Companies are creating brand new strategies and ideas in the battle for children's attention and there are huge potential profits from gaining a place in children's minds. A market in which younger consumers are fully involved is therefore now growing. Promoting a culture that focuses on an attitude of "having" only means that even the smallest opportunity for satisfying desires is immediately followed by an increasing number of newer, and definitely growing in extravagance, ideas for products or services as a response to such demands from the market.

Everything, therefore, depends on the responsible behavior of marketers and their respective advertising communications, taking into consideration children's

degree of development, not only to achieve a commercial profit but also to contribute to appropriate values for the young and the development of their worldview. Therefore, it seems that more attention should be paid to promoting initiatives such as enrichment marketing. For companies this would undoubtedly be a form of involvement in conducting socially responsible business and would give the public a sense that in the consumer market children are protected and can develop normally.

Notes

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- ¹ More information about the code can be found on the following website: http://enzo.pl/wpcontent/uploads/Miedzynarodowy_Kodeks_Badan_Rynku_i_Badan_Spolecznych.pdf
 - ² The content of the code is appended to this article in the attachment.
 - ³ By comparison, in the same year the U.S. Department of Agriculture spent 333 million dollars on nutritional education, evaluations and demonstrations.
 - ⁴ Following the example of McDonald's the same strategy was adopted by Burger King and Wendy.

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Attachement 1

Restrictions on advertising to children and young people according to the Polish Code of Advertising Ethics

The methods of presenting products in advertising offers targeted at younger consumers cannot lead to inadequate assessments of their real value. This situation may result from an improper use of phrases like "just", "little", suggesting in advertisements that a product is within reach of every household budget.

The content of children's advertising must not endanger their health, safety or environmental protection for purposes other than educational.

Advertising cannot make a profit from the natural credulity and lack of experience of the children and therefore be misleading.

Advertising to children must take into account the degree of their development. It should not have a negative impact on their physical, mental or moral development. Neither should it refer to excessive violence.

<p>Commercials addressed to a child audience cannot contain advertising content promoting a belief that being in possession of or using the advertised product will contribute to their social or psychological advantage or vice versa.</p>
<p>Advertising messages cannot deny the authority of parents or guardians, their responsibilities, judgements, or preferences.</p>
<p>Advertising to children must not be misleading in the case of actual dimensions, represented value, natural durability, appearance, as well as other technical characteristics relating to the item on offer, eg:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. When additional accessories are required, for the proper functioning of the product or the effect presented, the advertisement must provide information about this. b. When the advertised products are sold separately, this fact must also be included in the advertisement. c. The maturity of the child that is necessary for achieving the results presented through the use of the product cannot be diminished in the ad.
<p>Advertising must not suggest persuasion or a possible method of persuading adults to purchase the products</p>
<p>Where necessary for safety reasons, ads and products aimed at children must clearly state the age range to which they are addressed.</p>
<p>Sponsorship, and all marketing events associated with children, should not profit from their inexperience or age. Neither can such ads evoke anything prejudicial to moral and mental health, or affect the loyalty of children to their parents or guardians.</p>
<p>These rules also apply to those ads that are not directly aimed at children, and where they are involuntary recipients, which results from the form, location and method used in the transmission of the advertisements, such as in the case of television commercials, cinema and outdoors.</p>

Source: Own study based on Polish Code of Advertising Ethics (<http://www.radareklamy.org/ker-reklama-skierowana-do-dzieci-i-mlodziezy.htm>)