Foreword
Produced by the Quebec Coalition on Weight-Related Problems (Weight Coalition), this report outlines advertising strategies aimed at children under the age of 13 in Quebec. It is part of a series of four documents that form a profile of food advertising directed at children in the food retail sector, fast-food and family restaurants, as well as family venues and events.

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Quebec Coalition on Weight-Related Problems
The mandate of the Quebec Coalition on Weight-Related Problems (Weight Coalition), an initiative sponsored by the Association pour la santé publique du Québec, is to advocate for legislative, regulatory and public policy changes in an effort to foster the creation of healthy lifestyle-promoting environments that help prevent weight problems and chronic conditions.

The Weight Coalition has the support of more than 550 partners from the education, municipal, health, research, environment, nutrition and physical activity sectors.

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Food Advertising to Children at Family Venues and Events

Introduction
An inventory of food advertising at different family events and venues was compiled between the months of October 2018 and April 2019. In addition to this exercise, examples of ads documented by the Weight Coalition in recent years are presented to supplement the overview of the situation in these environments. Note that the ads identified before October 2018 are preceded by an asterisk (*).

Cinemas
Children may be exposed to food advertising in several ways when they go to the movies. On screen, there may be product placement in movies or ads before a showing. The use of advertising strategies can also be observed outside the theatres, in hallways and food service areas.

Product Placement in Children's Movies
Five popular children's movies were viewed on the big screen during the data gathering period, namely:

- **The Grinch**, produced by Illumination & Universal Pictures
- **Ralph Breaks the Internet**, produced by Walt Disney Studios
- **Racetime**, produced by Carpediem Film & TV
- **How to Train Your Dragon [3]: The Hidden World**, produced by DreamWorks Animation
- **Dumbo**, produced by Walt Disney Studios

None of these children's movies contained any product placement directed at children. This advertising tactic therefore does not seem to be common in movies as a way of reaching this segment of the population. To date, the Weight Coalition has observed this practice only once in a children's movie with the placement of Coca-Cola and Red Bull beverages in *The Muppets*. This was a co-production of Walt Disney Studios, Mandeville Films and Muppets Studio that was in theatres during the 2011 holiday season.

Product placement in *The Muppets* *
There are two examples of product placement at key points in this movie, when young viewers' attention is at its peak.

*Coca-Cola*-brand carbonated drinks are presented by a funny robot that interrupts the action to offer the characters something to drink. On the robot's tray there are four cans of Coke and Tab – brands owned by Coca-Cola – and it says, "Might I offer you a drink? Tab? New Coke?". The characters decline the offer, saying that it is not the right time. The robot then leaves in anger, clumsily bumping into things and saying, "bummer. Gag me with a spoon Grody to the max". This funny scene immediately

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* Unusually, this movie was seen in two different theatres.
captures the interest of young children while the carbonated drinks appear on screen for nearly 20 seconds (starting at 18:25 minutes).

As for the Red Bull, although the brand is not so easy to make out, it is recognizable by the unique colours of the can and the presence of numerous cans on the screen for about 10 seconds (starting at 73:06 minutes). Mr. Richman, the character threatening the Muppets, is sitting at a desk covered with empty Red Bull cans. He then crushes another can that he has just finished drinking before throwing it on the desk.

A bit earlier in the movie, Mr. Richman performs a rap in which young people can participate as the lyrics are displayed at the bottom of the screen (karaoke style). At this point, he is portrayed as a cool, rich and powerful character. During the song, the backing vocalists launch into, "He's the greatest" when the character proclaims, "Oh, it's great to be me, yeah!". Ascribed to this Red Bull-loving character, the brand may benefit from a transfer effect and be associated with these qualities.

Ads Screened Before Children's Movies
Trailers for upcoming movies and ads are generally shown before screenings. During the screening of the movies seen by the Weight Coalition, only one ad geared directly towards children – within the meaning of Quebec law – was seen and reported, namely a movie popcorn ad. However, children are exposed to a number of food ads, including for McDonald’s, Coca-Cola, Hershey’s chocolates and Dr. Oetker pizza. Note that different ads may have been shown in other theatres screening the same movie, since most of the movies were seen only once.

McDonald's ad
An ad showcasing the work of farmers who supply the restaurant chain was shown at a Cineplex Odeon on November 23, 2018 (Ralph Breaks the Internet) and April 12, 2019 (Dumbo). It was also seen at a Guzzo cinema on December 30, 2018, before a screening of The Grinch.
Cineplex cinema popcorn ad in association with Scotia Bank
In Cineplex Odeon cinemas on November 23, 2018 *(Ralph Breaks the Internet)*, March 9 *(How to Train Your Dragon 3)* and April 12, 2019 *(Dumbo)*, a *childish ad* was screened to promote the movie theatre's popcorn, together with Scotia Bank products. Although there was no direct message alluding to the popcorn sold at the concession stand, the ad provided rather obvious encouragement by showing Cineplex's popcorn packaging in a child’s hands (product placement), as well as the popcorn maker on a movie theatre food counter. The bag can also be seen on the displays at the food counter.

Coca-Cola ad
An ad for Diet Coke beverages was seen on February 24, 2019 *(How to Train Your Dragon 3)* in a movie theatre under the Guzzo banner.
**Hershey’s chocolate ad**
An ad for Crunchers, Reese’s Bites and Cookies N’ Creme from Hershey’s was seen in a Cineplex Odeon theatre on March 9, 2019 (*How to Train Your Dragon 3*).

**Dr. Oetker pizza ad**
On March 9, 2019 (*How to Train Your Dragon 3*), an ad for Dr. Oetker pizzas was shown in a Cineplex Odeon theatre.

**Ad for pizzeria Giulietta**
The ad for this Italian restaurant located near a Guzzo cinema was seen in a Guzzo cinema on February 24, 2019 (*How to Train Your Dragon 3*).

**Ads in the Cinema**
A number of food ads were seen in the space before the entrance to the movie theatres, including **food service areas**. We visited a few cinemas under different banners. Candies, chocolates, chips, popcorn and sugary drinks are promoted intensively in these spaces. **M&M's**- brand products and characters, and sugary **Coca-Cola** beverages are ubiquitous and heavily advertised.

**Cineplex Laval**
Visited on February 24, 2019, this cinema exposes children to numerous food ads. A **large kiosk of candies and various items featuring the M&M's characters** and their products on every side of the display can be found in the central area of the cinema, which can be seen from the entrance and which patrons must go through to buy tickets or get to the hallways where the movie theatres are located.
Displays of other products that appeal to children, such as Pringles chips or Pizza Pizza pizzas, can also be found, not to mention the screens and products visible on menus and various food service counters. In addition to combos, these advertise promotions specific to the films being screened, such as collectible cups featuring How to Train Your Dragon 3, available with the purchase of a combo that includes a sugary drink, popcorn and M&M’s products. Coca-Cola and M&M’s products generally feature strongly on the on-screen menus.
Cineplex Odeon Saint-Bruno
This cinema, which we visited on November 23, 2018, and April 12, 2019, exposes children to numerous food ads. Much like at Cineplex Laval, there is a large kiosk with candies and gifts featuring M&M’s-brand characters and products.

At the food service counter, the combos also feature M&M’s and Coca-Cola products. There is the option to purchase a special-edition Captain Marvel cup, to drink sugary drinks out of, which also comes with a figurine. This cinema also offered specific promotions to children at the time of both visits. On November 23, 2018, a collectible cup and figurine related to The Grinch were offered with the purchase of a children’s combo. On April 12, 2019, the children’s combo was served in a playful box depicting characters from the movie UglyDolls. These promotions directed at children encouraged them to drink sugary beverages and eat candy and popcorn.

In addition, a childish posted ad for M&M’s products was posted in the aisles of the movie theatres and reported.
Cineplex Odeon Brossard
Visited on March 9, 2019, this cinema under the Cineplex banner uses the same strategies to encourage food purchases. In addition to what is found in the food service area and on the central display, the food service area is imposing and has **several types of food counters** (the cinema's, Yoyo's, Tim Hortons, etc.). In addition, there are **vending machines in various locations**, including the aisles of the movie theatres.

Imax at Les Galeries de la Capitale (Quebec)
At this cinema, which was visited on February 12, 2019, advertising **directed at children is shown in rotation on screens** overhanging the automated ticket kiosks. Ads for **Skittles** and **M&M's** candies were featured prominently.

As was seen in several Cineplex cinemas, a **large candy kiosk** featuring the **M&M's characters** can also be found in the central area of the cinema, near the entrance. Finally, the food counter is fitted with numerous screens featuring products and promotions. One of them offers collectible **Coca-Cola** ornaments, a bonus available with the purchase of a trio.
We visited this Guzzo cinema on December 30, 2018, and February 24, 2019. A Coca-Cola promotion was showcased at the entrance to the hallway leading to most of the movie theatres during the 2018 holiday season. It consisted of a giant present in the brand’s colours with a slot through which to insert an entry ballot for a contest aimed at families. Displayed on the giant present were two polar bear stuffed toys wearing a scarf with the brand logo. Bigger than many children, this setup gave the brand significant visibility. In addition, the poster explaining eligibility for the contest with the purchase of a Coca-Cola beverage depicted Santa Claus drinking a cola. By the time of the February visit, this seasonal promotion had been removed.
The food counter also exposes children to different ads, including for **Coca-Cola**, **M&M's** candies, **Slushie** drinks and **Beaver Tails**.
Family Festivals

Winterlude (Gatineau-Hull)

The 41st edition of Winterlude in Gatineau-Hull was held from February 1 to 18, 2019. The event had two food sponsors. Tim Hortons’ sponsorship was displayed on two walls made of snow and on the acknowledgments sign. Rôtisseories St-Hubert’s sponsorship was highlighted only by the presence of the company’s logo on the acknowledgments sign. In addition, on February 2, Tim Hortons sponsored a hot chocolate and coffee giveaway in a "Chill Zone". On-site food service was generally offered without directly targeting children, with the exception of the Fritzstone food truck decorated with drawings of The Flintstones, which had fried foods for sale. Otherwise, little food advertising was visible at the vast Winterlude site.
Quebec Winter Carnival
Over the years, the Weight Coalition has documented a number of ads directed at children within the framework of the Quebec Winter Carnival. Following some complaints, the ways in which sponsors of the event are promoted have improved.

With the exception of alcoholic beverage companies, five food sponsors supporting the 2019 Quebec Winter Carnival, from February 8 to 17, were posted on the event’s website. We visited the Carnival site on February 12, 2019.

Christie (Mondelèz International)
A longstanding partner, Christie is a major sponsor of the Quebec Winter Carnival. A playground called the Christie Frost Garden was dedicated to it on the main site and it is listed as a sponsor of parade night. As the pictures below attest, this brand is still highly visible in the youth area, but its products are not promoted.
Other food sponsors
Rôtisseries St-Hubert. Alex Coulombe ltée (a water and carbonated beverage bottler), POM and Côtes-à-Côtes Resto-Grill are activity sponsors. Of these, based on the keywords listed on the Quebec Winter Carnival website for each activity, only St-Hubert and Côtes-à-Côtes Resto-Grill support family activities, namely the St-Hubert Snow Bath on February 17 and La terrasse carnavalesque on February 9 and 16, respectively. Alex Coulombe ltée (via its Montellier brand) and POM support the foodie activity Évènements quartiers et saveurs directed at adults.

St-Hubert Snow Bath
Based on the pictures made public on the Quebec Winter Carnival Facebook page on February 18, 2019, the brand had significant visibility at the St-Hubert Snow Bath. In addition to the name being incorporated into the event, the restaurant's logo appeared on the Snow Bath poster. Plus, red hats shaped like a rooster's comb with the company's logo were given to the participants. Although the Carnival describes this as a "family" activity, the participants had to be at least 18 years of age and, based on the pictures, the activity seemed to attract few children as audience members. It might make sense to arrange more understated sponsorship for the activity or to redefine the target clientele on the website. The current advertising, which draws on the logo children know so well, may pique their interest.
Terrasse carnavalesque
There is little information on social media about the visibility of restaurant Côtes-à-Côtes Resto-Grill within the framework of the Terrasse carnavalesque, a family activity held twice during Carnival. Still, although a number of activities directed at children were offered as part of this event (e.g., hosting team, tobogganing, free roasted marshmallow offer), it is unlikely that an ad directed at children – within the meaning of Quebec law – was displayed, since this restaurant is not necessarily of interest to children.

Cross-advertising in food businesses
The promotion of Christie-brand products and the showcasing of Christie’s partnership with the Quebec Winter Carnival were seen in IGA stores across the province. In addition to the flyer, a poster of Bonhomme Carnaval, the event’s mascot, was seen in an IGA to promote Christie’s Oreo and Chips Ahoy! cookies. The mascot is an appealing way to promote Christie products to children.

Children’s advertising during previous editions*
Christie has been a major Carnival sponsor for a number of years. Inappropriate advertising practices, such as displaying illustrations of or promoting its products (e.g., Oreo cookies), as well as putting up numerous pennants featuring the brand’s colours were specifically reported to the Quebec Office de la protection du consommateur (OPC), which intervened with the Carnival.

2016*

Weight Coalition archives. Quebec Winter Carnival (2016)
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Weight Coalition archives. Quebec Winter Carnival (2016)

2015*

Weight Coalition archives. Quebec Winter Carnival (2015)
Fête de la famille (Laval)*
Each fall, the third most populous city in Quebec organizes a family event, the Fête de la famille, at the Laval nature centre. Activities such as inflatables and shows are open to residents free of charge, attracting thousands of families.

This event was held on Sunday, September 2, 2018. The Laiterie de Coaticook dairy was one of the sponsors and offered its new La gourmande line of ice creams free of charge. Caramel-coloured and displaying pictures of the inside of a container of ice cream in muted tones along with the slogan "Savourez l’excès" [savour excess], the stand was not specifically designed to draw in children. However, its large size made it impossible to miss. A small sign at the top saying “Free” also drew attention. No other food advertising was seen at the event site.

Advertising during a previous edition*
During the Fête de la famille event in 2014, a giant advertising poster for Slush Puppie featuring the brand character, a happy little dog holding a big glass of slush and licking its chops, was seen near a kiosk for the company Sucrerie73. The company was selling this product, as well as popcorn, lemonade and cotton candy. A complaint was made about this poster, which was not seen again during subsequent editions of the Fête de la famille event.
Fête de la famille (Saint-Basile-le-Grand)*
No advertising aimed at children was seen during this event, which was held on September 9, 2018.

Fête des neiges (Montreal)
The 36th edition of Fête des neiges was held at Parc Jean-Drapeau over four weekends from January 19 to February 10, 2019. This family event attracts about 100,000 Montrealers each year.

The site was exemplary during the visit on February 10, 2019, in that no food advertising was seen.

Children's advertising during previous editions*
In 2016, the Weight Coalition reported the promotion of the Tim Hortons and Tim Bits brands in the multisport area to the OPC. It appeared on pennants, bands and the participants' jerseys.

Santa Claus Parade - Destination Centre-Ville (Montreal)
Over 300,000 people, including many children, attended the 68th edition of the traditional Montreal Santa Claus Parade held on Sainte-Catherine Street West on Saturday, November 17, 2018.

Produced by the Quebec Winter Carnival, this event's partners are primarily media and other sponsors that are of no interest to children. The event's only food sponsor is Planters, which highlights its contribution by having the mascot of its brand character, Mr. Peanut, march in the parade. Since some Planters products are directed at children, as shown by the advertising of some of the brand's packaging tied in with children's movies, this practice should be changed by mentioning the company's contribution in a more understated way. Finding only one ad directed at children at a large-scale parade with around 20 floats makes it an almost model event.
Amusement Parks

Jungle Adventure (Laval)

This indoor amusement park is popular with children. Outside the play structures, food advertising is ubiquitous. Many ads are aimed directly at children, including ads for Slushie, Ricos nachos and Coca-Cola, which was reported to the OPC after our visit on February 10, 2019.
Before leaving the amusement park, patrons must stop behind a gate and wait for the attendants to unlock the door. A lion made of Mega Blocks is positioned here, strongly engaging children. A Disney cup with a Coca-Cola sticker has been deliberately placed on a tray that the lion holds in his paw, giving particular visibility to the brand.

Children's advertising previously observed*
This amusement park was also reported in 2014 for Coca-Cola ads on the signs indicating the rules of the play areas. Those signs were subsequently modified and remain ad free to this day.
**Funtropolis (St-Hubert)**

This amusement park is a popular place for children's parties and family outings. Outside the play structures, there is an open-air food kiosk that generally offers nutrient-poor food. Candies, chocolates, popcorn, sugary drinks, slushes, or hot-dog/pogo/hamburger and carbonated drink combos are on the menu and displayed on screens.

There are displayed ads aimed at children, including a *poster for Imperial popcorn* depicting the brand’s colourful clown, as well as a *poster for Ricos nachos* depicting the brand character and a simple, appetizing slogan, "mmm...Nachos!". In addition, children's advertising is visible on the *Slushie-brand slush machine*. Not only is the brand’s childish character displayed, but the website is also promoted on the front and side of the machine. Finally, a slush cup depicting the brand character takes centre stage above the machine.
**La Ronde (Montreal)**

This amusement park was visited on October 27, 2018. **Numerous food ads** are visible to children at this site, including in the children's section called *Pays de Ribambelle*, food services areas or near the rides for everyone. As the park map shows, some rides are sponsored directly by certain brands, including two family attractions: the **Pizza Pizza Spirale** and the **Yum-yum Minirail**.
Coca-Cola is by far the most visible brand at the park, much like in the picnic area outside the entrance to La Ronde. It cannot be said, based on Quebec's criteria for determining if an ad is directed at children, that the way in which Coca-Cola advertising is presented specifically targets children. Below are a few examples that illustrate the extent of the brand's visibility throughout the park.
Advertised at the exit from the ride *Le Monstre* and located near the Aqua Zone’s water features and the Aqua Twist ride, there is also a *Zone du bonheur Coca-Cola* lounge area dedicated to the brand.

The *children’s areas* are no exception in terms of the visibility of the popular brand of sugary drinks. There are a number of *Coca-Cola-branded umbrellas* in the *Pays de Ribambelle*, as well as near the *Le Galopant* carousel, which is a ride for everyone.
The McDonald's brand is also clearly visible in the *Pays de Ribambelle* area, as is an ad for *Coca-Cola*.

Other food ads are also visible in the general areas of La Ronde. *Sloche slush* from *Couche-Tard*, *Yum-Yum* and *Viva* chips, *Krispy Kernels* nut mixes, *Célébration de Leclerc* cookies, *Beaver Tails*, *Moozoo*, *Lafleur* and *Pizza Pizza* are specifically featured. The *Krispy Kernel* ads on the mini-train ride are likely to appeal to children because of their childish design.
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La Ronde (2018): Sloche and Krispy Kernels
Food Advertising to Children at Family Venues and Events

La Ronde (2018): Leclerc, Pizza Pizza, Yum Yum, Queue de Castor, Lafleur, Moozoo
Méga-Parc at Galeries de la Capitale (Québec)
This amusement park located inside a shopping mall was being renovated when we visited on February 12, 2019. There were no ads on the rides and few decorations at the time. However, a giant central stage was visible, where ads and games flashed up on screen to entertain passersby. There was no real advertising directed at children, but a boy licking an unbranded sucker was shown. Two posters depicting a young girl with a candy apple were also seen in the hallways adjacent to the amusement park. As the foods shown were available at a central kiosk, these images of happy children with their sweets may encourage children to ask their parents for them.

It should also be noted that the food businesses on the periphery of the amusement park expose children to junk food as well (popcorn, confectionery, pretzels, ice cream and Beaver Tails). In addition, some merchants, such as Kernels, display their flavours and products in a childish way.

Children's advertising previously seen at the Méga-Parc*
In 2013, the Weight Coalition filed a complaint regarding the massive display of the Pepsi logo on the Montgolfière children's ride. In 2015, we could see that the Pepsi advertising on the children's ride had been removed. The ride was no longer there at the time of the February 2019 visit.
Village du Père Noël (Val-David)

Visited on December 27, 2018, no food advertising was seen at the winter site of the Village du Père Noël.

Children's advertising previously seen*
In 2014, however, some complaints were filed over advertising for frozen treats seen in several places at this amusement park directed primarily at children under the age of eight.

Granby Zoo*
A displayed food ad was seen in the amusement park, which was visited on June 16, 2018. Located in an eating area, the advertising poster for Slushie is appealing to children as it features the likeable brand character, a childish drawing of a polar bear drinking slush. A Coca-Cola umbrella as well as a recycling bin in the shape of a cola bottle were also spotted nearby.
Children's advertising previously seen*

In 2014, the Weight Coalition filed a complaint against a "your face here" cutout for the company Krispy Kernels found in the ride area of the Granby Zoo. The scenery illustrated on the panel with holes in it encouraged children to have their pictures taken with the brand character for the popular snack foods. In 2018, the cutout was understated with no advertising.

In 2014, giant Coca-Cola-brand umbrellas were ubiquitous in the amusement park’s eating areas. Based on Quebec’s criteria, however, it is impossible to say that the way in which the Coca-Cola advertising is presented specifically appeals to children. However, one vending machine had a picture of a lion on it alongside the logo, which might have been appealing to children.
Ski Facilities

Many families visit ski facilities in the winter. Lots of children learning the sport can be found on the training hills of downhill ski facilities. As children’s advertising has been seen at ski facilities in the past, some were visited to create a profile of the ways in which food advertising is used at these venues. It was not possible to visit more ski facilities because of the high cost of accessing the slopes.

Mont Massif (Charlevoix)
On December 30, 2018, there was no food advertising in the downhill skiing areas frequented by children.

Mont Morin Heights (Laurentides)
On February 16, 2019, there was no food advertising in the downhill skiing areas frequented by children.

Mont Saint-Bruno (Montérégie)
On January 27, 2019, there was no food advertising in the downhill skiing areas frequented by children.

Val St-Côme (Lanaudière)
On February 24, 2019, there was no food advertising in the downhill skiing areas frequented by children.

Mont Tremblant
On April 4, 2019, there was no food advertising on the ski slopes frequented by children. However, in Place Saint-Bernard in the village of Mont-Tremblant, there was a family area with some hustle and bustle. The Coca-Cola logo and branded carbonated beverages were ubiquitous in this area (fake cabin, seats, marquee with DJ). A volleyball net had been set up in front of the Coca-Cola marquee so that children could play. Coca-Cola is an official partner of Mont-Tremblant (Mont-Tremblant website, April 24, 2019).
Children’s advertising previously seen*

Mont Tremblant*
In 2015, the Weight Coalition reported Coca-Cola’s sponsorship of a beginners’ snow park and inner-tube Sliding Evenings at Station Mont-Tremblant. In 2019, the site had no advertising.

Mont Sainte-Anne (Beaupré)*
In 2014, the Weight Coalition reported the omnipresence of the Minute Maid beverage logo on the ski school slope and windows of the drop-in daycare centre at Mont Sainte-Anne. The Minute Maid brand is owned by Coca-Cola and refers to fruity drinks, punches and lemonades.

As the pictures below reveal, the logo was displayed on a variety of platforms and often in a playful manner. It was notably accompanied by funny animal drawings, giant cans, little tunnels to go through or colourful banners set up as obstacles to go around.
On December 30, 2017, there was no food advertising in the downhill skiing areas frequented by children.

Conclusion

In short, children are exposed to advertising for junk food, some of which is specifically aimed at them, at many family events and venues. A number of tactics were observed. While cinemas and amusement parks are venues where children are heavily exposed to it, the situation has improved at family events following various complaints to the OPC, especially at certain winter festivals.