

## The Ad-venture: Part 1

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Everywhere we look, we see advertisements—in magazines and newspapers, on TV and the Web, on buses and bus stops, cars, buildings, and scoreboards, even in your kids' elementary school. Do your kids have the critical thinking skills to understand ads, what they're saying, and what they want kids to do?

In our view, you can never spend too much time working with your kids to help them understand what is real and what is not in advertising messages. With millions of ad messages thrown at your kids in a given year, you'll want to spend some time together at least every month or so to build up their ad smarts.

We are starting this adventure with a deeper look at food advertising – a subject near and dear to most kids' hearts!



### When To Do It

Saturday, or any time when you have recently shopped for food

### What To Do

First your kids will take a good hard look at an actual ad for a brand-name food; then they will create their *own* ad.

1. Help your kids select one of their favorite brand-name prepared foods and find an ad for it in a magazine or newspaper. (Tip: locate the ad first, then make sure you have some of the food around to sample for the exercise.)
2. Create a simple worksheet for them to fill out when reviewing the ad and sampling the food.

Food Feature:	What the Ad Says:	What I Think:
How does it taste?		
Is it good for you?		
How long will it last?		
Why is it the best?		
Is it good for me?		
It is natural?		

3. Talk together about your kids' findings. On which features do they agree with the ad? On which features is the truth different from the sales pitch? Why do they think advertisers would say anything that's not true?

### Bonus Project

Have your kids choose another one of their favorite foods and make their own ad, using the following list of common food selling points to guide them. (Note: this could be a packaged food or something completely natural – like fruits, nuts, or veggies. Of course, they can use their own ideas about what features or benefits to portray in the ad.

- Taste
- Smell
- Sensations (crunch, color, cute shapes)
- Size
- Natural or organic
- Healthy
- Low fat
- No trans fats
- Low sodium

### What You Will Need

Food items  
Magazines or newspapers

Pen, pencil, drawing markers  
Patience

### Talk About It

What did your kids think of the ad-venture exercise? Was it hard to find the truth in the advertisements they looked at? Did they find it hard or fun to make their own ad for a favorite food? Is this something they'd like to do again – say, while watching TV?