

Who Would Enjoy Broccoli for the Meal?

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In its recent decision dated 10th of November 2020 and numbered 2020/1626, the Advertisement Board, confirmed once again, its strict and tight scrutiny conducted over advertisements intended for children.

The advertisement and promotions for the brand-new “Cry Babies” dolls as well as the cartoon movie named “Cry Babies Magic Tears” which was based on these baby doll characters were found to be violating the principles for the protection of children by the Advertisement Board.

In the censored advertisement subject to the violation, the face of a baby doll was divided into two parts, one smiling face and the other half crying. The crying face was matched with the expression underneath stating, *“when today’s meal is broccoli!”* and the smiling baby face was matched with the expression in the same way stating *“If there is dessert after meal”*. The following expression relating to the advertisement also captioned *“Cry Babies are just as you are! Who would enjoy broccoli for the meal? Do not miss the adventures of the Cry Babies Magic Tears on Minika Children TV channel and Kitoons Youtube channel.”*

The Board made a complex examination of these advertisements. Before making assessment of the advertisement in terms of its content as to the conformity of the advertising rules, the Board first assessed if these advertisements are intended for children. Although the advertising company claimed that neither the advertisement was intended for the children, nor the content was shared on an open platform accessible to the children; the Board considered that the main advertising claim was children oriented as the cartoon movies were uploaded on YouTube channels which

is accessible to children. In addition, the child-centered visuals, messages and child actors were included in the advertisement and the expression "*Cry Babies are just as you are! Who would enjoy broccoli for the meal? Do not miss the adventures of the Cry Babies Magic Tears on Minika Children TV channel and Kitoons Youtube channel*" were found to be targeting the children.

The above-mentioned claims and expressions used in the cited advertisement were evaluated by the Board as inclining the children to abstain from consumption of healthy food and encouraging them to consume more food containing sugar and confectionary. The board reasoned that the advertisement gives false impression and incentivizes the consumption of the sugary products, the vegetables are inappropriately categorized as undesired / food making cry instead the sugar containing food was categorized as pleasant. The Board further held that these advertisements would impose unhealthy feeding habits to the children.

As the result the Board, ordered the company to cease the advertisement presenting broccoli, a healthy and nutritious food, in a food category that distresses the children and presenting, on the other hand, sugar containing food as pleasing the kids, in fact excessive consumption thereof is not recommended. The said advertisements were found to negatively influence the children's physical, mental, ethical, psychological and social development. On the other hand, the Board did not impose administrative monetary fine against the advertising company due to censored advertisements.

This decision is important in terms of strict scrutiny of the Advertisement Board conducted over advertisements intended for children. There is no doubt that the children are very vulnerable to expressions or images in the advertisements and those might negatively affect their physical, mental, moral, psychological, and social development. Messages in the advertisement could easily influence children's behavior according to the research. When it particularly comes to food habits of the children the advertisement which might have negative effect could tightly be surveilled as it is in this case.

