

BTS NÉGOCIATION RELATION CLIENT
ÉPREUVE ORALE D'ANGLAIS – Session 2016

Sujet 1

This holiday season protect your kid from consumerism by just saying 'no'

Never before have children been marketed to more aggressively than they are now. Never before have parents allowed marketers so many direct routes of access to their kids – social media, TV, the Internet, even schools and extracurricular activities. We are increasingly unwilling to pay for content, so advertisers are stepping up to foot¹ the bill – and in return, we allow them to turn our kids into consumers.

Our kids are more than consumers. Tiny dictators wearing diapers² ? Yes. Bewilderingly angry tyrants waging all-out war over the colour of their water glass? Yes. My daughter has been all of these things. And she will be a consumer too, one day. But not yet.

I don't like the idea of multimillion dollar advertising campaigns aimed at manipulating her desires. I don't like companies using cartoon characters to sell unhealthy food. I especially don't like not being able to go a single day without the advertising world teaching children to want things so deeply that they fall, spaghetti-legged, to the floor in full-on tantrums³ when these things are denied.

The solution has to come from you. In order to delay the inevitable influence of our consumer economy, we require a double approach.

First, cut off the advertising at its source – especially important as we head into the holiday season. Be a crazy parent and sequester your child away from as many ads as you can. For older kids, install an ad blocker on your web browser and then encourage them to financially support the sites, artists and media they value.

Second, do not give in to tantrums in stores or at the checkout counter. I know this is far easier said than done, especially when many stores now require customers to walk past racks of eye-level toddler bait⁴ before ever even reaching the cash registers. Before you enter a store, explain what you are there to buy. Tell your kids they can look at things, and even touch things, but that they will not be taking anything home.

This doesn't mean you can't buy things for your kids. If they can choose one toy, explain that to them. If they can pick a reward after finishing shopping, explain that to them. Eliminate uncertainty. Kids want limits. They want predictability. They want to trust that you can make good decisions for them until they're able to make them for themselves. And of course, occasionally they want some ridiculous thing they saw on TV or in a movie or at a friend's house. They'll helpfully communicate this to you by asking politely, or whining⁵, or screaming incessantly.

Choosing to swim against the tide of a consumer economy isn't easy. Parents, it's OK to say no. It's also OK to say: not yet.

Adapted from theguardian.com, Madeleine Somerville, Tuesday 24 November 2015

1. to foot : to pay

2. diapers : couches

3. tantrums: a childish fit of rage

4. toddler bait: an attractive shop item for very young children

5. whining: complaining in an annoying way.