

For Immediate Release

CARU RECOMMENDS FISHER-PRICE MODIFY FUTURE ADVERTISING TO BETTER DEPICT ADULT SUPERVISION

New York, NY – April 1, 2009 – The Children’s Advertising Review Unit of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc., has recommended that Fisher-Price modify advertising to assure that broadcast advertising for “Power Wheels Barbie Jammin’ Jeep Wrangler” adequately depicts adult supervision.

Advertising for the product came to the attention of CARU through its routine monitoring practices. The commercial in question showed two girls, approximately four years of age, driving a Barbie Jammin’ Jeep Wrangler around an animated setting. The girls appeared in live-action as they drove through the fantasy environment which included a beach, a shopping area and a forest. The advertising aired during children’s programming.

An adult female, also in live-action, appeared briefly in the commercial and waved to the children as she walked in the opposite direction carrying packages in the shopping area. At the end of the commercial, one girl turned and waved over her shoulder. The commercial included an audio and written disclosure stating “Parental supervision is required.”

The advertiser asserted that the commercial ad portrayed both an adult figure clearly supervising the actions of the children as they drove the vehicle, and that the children understood they were being watched as evidenced by the girls’ wave back to the adult – “a continuous visual demonstration of adult supervision, reinforced by audio and written disclosures about adult supervision.”

The advertiser noted that both product packaging and the owner’s manual include a “WARNING” stating that “direct adult supervision is required” and to “keep children within safe riding areas.” Fisher-Price stated that these messages also appear on a decal affixed to the product. Further, the advertiser said, product packaging and the instruction manual reinforce the message that adult supervision is required.

CARU noted in its decision that the adequate depiction of parental supervision in any case is one of degree. When the use of a product could be potentially unsafe to children, the quantity and quality of the depiction of adult supervision both come into play.

Following its review of the advertising at issue, CARU determined that the interaction between the adult and the children did not rise to the level of adequate parental supervision. CARU recommended that Fisher-Price depict active and direct parental supervision in advertisement for all products that present a risk of injury or damage.

The company said in its advertiser’s statement that it is “disappointed that CARU disagrees that an adequate level of adult supervision was depicted” “As always,” the company said, it will “take CARU’s guidelines and recommendations into account in future advertising.”

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CARU’s inquiry was conducted under NAD/CARU/NARB Procedures for the Voluntary Self-Regulation of National Advertising. Details of the initial inquiry, CARU’s decision, and the advertiser’s response will be included in the next NAD/CARU Case Report.

About Advertising Industry Self-Regulation: The National Advertising Review Council (NARC) was formed in 1971 by the Association of National Advertisers, Inc. (ANA), the American Association of Advertising Agencies, Inc. (AAAA), the American Advertising Federation, Inc. (AAF), and the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc. (CBBB). Its purpose is to foster truth and accuracy in national advertising through voluntary self-regulation. NARC is the body that establishes the policies and procedures for the CBBB's National Advertising Division (NAD) and Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU), as well as for the National Advertising Review Board (NARB) and Electronic Retailing Self-Regulation Program (ERSP).

NAD and CARU are the investigative arms of the advertising industry's voluntary self-regulation program. Their casework results from competitive challenges from other advertisers, and also from self-monitoring traditional and new media. The National Advertising Review Board (NARB), the appeals body, is a peer group from which ad-hoc panels are selected to adjudicate those cases that are not resolved at the NAD/CARU level. This unique, self-regulatory system is funded entirely by the business community; CARU is financed by the children's advertising industry, while NAD/NARC/NARB's sole source of funding is derived from membership fees paid to the CBBB. Funding for ERSP is derived from membership fees paid to the Electronic Retailing Association. For more information about advertising self regulation, please visit www.narcpartners.org.