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Push/pull factors at the supermarket

Editorial

The Australian

The Paddle Pop lion is evil and must die, says an editorial. Ditto the Coco Pops monkey, the “gaudy Fruit Loops” mascot Toucan Sam, and other “subversive promoters of pester power”. Cancer Council NSW, The Parents’ Jury and the Obesity Policy Coalition want to remove all cartoon characters, movie tie-ins and athletes from food packaging. They see parents as “too intimidated, too debilitated or too irresponsible” to say no, so they’ve called in the Feds. Best to give the kids a head-start on the long nanny-state road ahead, eh? By the time this stoush with the food companies is over, today’s “tubby tots” will have “waddled soberly” into their twenties, buried under a deluge of food and drink health warnings, “compulsory sunhats” and playgrounds with rubber where grass used to be. The anti-pesther push is “well intentioned” but cartoon characters aren’t the real enemy – it’s the suppression of parents’ authority and “personal responsibility”. A recent study on parental failure warned of outcomes such as “self-harm, mental disorders, STDs and substance abuse” among children. Now, that’s more worrying than an argument with a three-year-old at the checkout.