

25 YEARS OF  
PROTECTING KIDS

2025



**fairplay**  
childhood beyond brands

Annual Report • July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025



The event that started it all! A protest in the year 2000 at The Golden Marble Awards for creativity in children's advertising helped give birth to the organization that is now Fairplay.

Friends,

Twenty-five years is a long time to stay committed to a goal. **But at Fairplay, after a quarter century of working to enhance children's well-being, we are just getting started.**

In this Annual Report, you can read all about Fairplay's history: How we formed out of a protest against an advertising industry awards show. How we took on giant corporations — and won. And how we became the leading national voice committed to helping children thrive in this increasingly commercialized, screen-obsessed culture.

**But our Annual Report is not just about the past. It's about how we got to the present moment — and where our movement needs to go in the future.** In these pages, you can learn what we're doing right now to protect children from the exploitative and harmful business practices of marketers and Big Tech. That includes:

- Getting phones out of schools across the United States and Canada!
- Filing complaints at the Federal Trade Commission over the metaverse and AI companions for kids.
- Working to pass the Kids Online Safety Act, a bipartisan bill that will give parents the tools they need to protect their kids from online harms.
- And much, much more.

Suffice it to say, the world is a much different place today than it was when Fairplay got started back in the year 2000. Over the course of our history, we have accomplished major victories for kids and families against advertisers, toy manufacturers, snake oil salesmen, and the world's most powerful tech companies. But as technology has evolved, so have the threats to children.

**That's why, after 25 years, Fairplay's work is more critical than ever. We need your continued contributions to keep up the fight against marketers and Big Tech.**

In this Annual Report, you can learn how donors like you are continuing to power our efforts and sustain our growth. Thank you for being part of our Fairplay community. We hope you are proud of helping us reach our 25th anniversary, and look forward to keeping us going strong for the next 25 years and beyond.

In sincere gratitude,



**Josh Golin**  
Executive Director, Fairplay



**Criscillia Benford**  
Board Chair, Fairplay



Golden Marble Awards protest in the year 2000.

## **“We need to begin a national dialogue on this issue.”**

That's what Fairplay's founder, Dr. Susan Linn, said in an *Ad Age* article from September 2000, as she and other child psychologists prepared to protest at an awards ceremony for creativity in children's advertising. That protest helped plant the seeds for the organization that is now Fairplay and was previously called the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood.

Susan was talking about the issue of marketing to children. And in our early years, Fairplay did foster a national dialogue on that topic. Through our advocacy, expertise, and publicity efforts, we forced large corporations to change their business model and stop exploiting kids. That awards show we protested in 2000? It was discontinued just three years later.

Over the decades, the biggest threats facing kids have shifted from TV sets and toys to social media and smartphones. And as the challenges have evolved, so has Fairplay. We changed our name in 2021, became an independent 501(c)(3) organization in 2023, and adopted a new mission statement last year.

But in all that time, some things have not changed: Fairplay is still mobilizing parents and professionals who believe kids' well-being comes before corporate profits — and racking up major wins against the industries preying on young people.

From that successful first protest in 2000 to our ongoing successes against Big Tech, check out some of Fairplay's biggest accomplishments from the last 25 years on the next page. ■

# Timeline of Success

Over the past 25 years, Fairplay has notched one major victory after another over Big Tech, big advertisers, and other industries that target children. Check out some of our biggest accomplishments in the list below!

- 2000** **Protesting the Golden Marbles** Our founder, Susan Linn, and other leading child psychologists organized yearly protests outside this children's advertising award show. By 2003, it was canceled.
- 2006** **Shelving The Pussycat Dolls** We prevented Hasbro from producing a line of dolls for 6-year-old girls based on The Pussycat Dolls, a music group known for sexualized songs and dances.
- 2009** **Refunding Baby Einstein** We stopped The Walt Disney Company from falsely marketing *Baby Einstein* videos as educational and convinced Disney to offer refunds to parents it deceived.
- 2009** **Breaking Up Scholastic and Big Coal** We convinced Scholastic, Inc. to stop distributing the *United States of Energy*, a highly-biased fourth-grade curriculum paid for by the American Coal Foundation.
- 2009** **Turning Off BusRadio** Our three-year campaign led BusRadio, which targeted students with highly commercialized radio broadcasts on school buses, to cease operations.
- 2014** **Ending Your Baby Can Read** Following a complaint by Fairplay, the Federal Trade Commission reached a settlement that put an end to the exploitative video series *Your Baby Can Read*.
- 2015** **Saying "Hell No, Barbie"** We publicized how Mattel's creepy surveillance doll Hello Barbie would threaten kids' privacy, creativity, and well-being. Thanks to our campaign, the doll flopped on release.
- 2017** **Keeping Surveillance Out of Babies' Cribs** Mattel scrapped the release of Aristotle, the first AI assistant for babies and young children, two days after Fairplay and the Story of Stuff Project sent Mattel over 20,000 petition signatures.
- 2018** **Bringing Together Changemakers** The inaugural conference of the Screen Time Action Network at Fairplay was the very first conference dedicated to reducing children's screen time!
- 2019** **Settling with YouTube** A complaint by Fairplay and the Center for Digital Democracy led to a landmark FTC settlement with YouTube that banned behavioral advertising and limited data collection on child-directed channels.
- 2021** **Stopping Instagram for Kids** Meta abandoned its plans to create a version of Instagram for young children following a six-month campaign by Fairplay and its coalition of hundreds of experts and advocates.
- 2024** **Advancing KOSA** Fairplay helped get the bipartisan Kids Online Safety Act passed 91-3 by the US Senate, advancing it further than any kids online safety legislation in Fairplay's history.
- 2025** **Getting Phones Out of Schools** Fairplay's partnership with the Phone-Free Schools Movement spurred national change, with nearly 30 states enacting strong phone-free schools policies.



**Sens. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., and Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., reintroduced the Kids Online Safety Act this year alongside Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., and Minority Leader Charles Schumer, D-N.Y. Credit: Erika Layne.**

## Advocating for the Kids Online Safety Act!

**A**t Fairplay, we believe that tech companies should bear the burden of keeping kids safe online. So for the past few years, we've been advocating tirelessly for the Kids Online Safety Act (KOSA)! This legislation would be the most important new law to protect children online in over 25 years, and it would force social media companies and Big Tech platforms to change their dangerous design features — like infinite scrolling and rewards for time spent online — that fuel social media addiction, cyberbullying, sexual exploitation, eating disorders, and even suicide among children and teens.

Your support allowed KOSA to get closer to becoming law than any similar legislation in the time since Fairplay was founded. Last summer, KOSA passed the US Senate by a whopping vote of 91-3! But despite strong bipartisan support, the bill failed to get a vote in the House, thanks in part to lobbying by Big Tech.

But our fight to pass KOSA is far from over. Earlier this year, KOSA was reintroduced by Sens. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn., and Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn. That means this bipartisan bill once again has a pathway to becoming law! This reintroduction is a testament to the dogged determination of ParentsSOS, our incredible network of survivor parents whose children died as a result of online harms, and many other indefatigable activists in our Screen Time Action Network.

And of course, none of this would have been possible without you. Big Tech has billions of dollars to spend on fighting KOSA, but we have something even more powerful: dedicated supporters who are committed to keeping children safe online. ■

# Hanging Up: Getting Phones Out of Schools

In our 2024 Annual Report, we gave you a heads-up about one of our new initiatives: a partnership with the Phone-Free Schools Movement (PFSM) to get phones out of schools. One year later, that initiative has succeeded beyond our wildest dreams.

Over the past 12 months, 18 states and the District of Columbia have made their schools phone-free. That includes a mix of red, blue, big, small, northern, southern, eastern, and western states.

Fairplay has helped spearhead this growing trend. We successfully advocated for phone-free schools in New York, DC, Oregon, and Vermont, which also became the first state to ban schools from contacting students through social media. We're working with advocates in Canada to help bring a similar urgency to transforming schools north of the border.

Through our partnership with PFSM, we've created toolkits and other vital resources to help school administrators transition to a phone-free environment, and ordinary community members advocate for their schools to go phone-free. In addition, we joined PFSM to publish a coalition letter calling for phone-free schools that was signed by over 40 organizations and over 35 experts in the US and Canada.

Earlier this year, hundreds of you signed up to take part in our first-ever Phone-Free Schools Advocacy Week. Thank you for your support! Together, we can make sure every child gets the phone-free school day they deserve. ■

**Fairplay staff worked with our partners at the Phone-Free Schools Movement to promote phone restrictions in schools throughout the US and Canada. Year one of the campaign saw astonishing success.**



# Introducing Our New Program: Young Children Thrive Offline!

These days, it's no secret that excessive social media use is harming children and teens, but the effects of screen overuse on our youngest children are often ignored. That's why in 2024, Fairplay launched our new early childhood advocacy program, Young Children Thrive Offline! This new program seeks to change the narrative around early childhood screen time by challenging the unfair design practices in apps targeted to children ages 0–8, as well as the unsubstantiated marketing claims that most screen time is "educational" for little ones.

Since launching last year, the Young Children Thrive Offline team has:

- Helped organize a letter to Google signed by renowned child development experts, urging the company to stop the rollout of its Gemini AI bot to kids under age 13.
- Released *Hooked from Birth*, a white paper that proposes a narrative framing that is believed to be the most persuasive path to generate deeper awareness and policy change on issues of early childhood screen time: one that moves away from blaming families toward holding the industry accountable.
- Hosted a two-part training series designed to equip Action Network members with the knowledge and tools to promote systemic change around screen time in early childhood while empowering (and not shaming) families.
- Surveyed 800 families with young children across the US and Canada about their experiences with and perspectives on screen use.

And we're just getting started! Keep an eye out this year for some big new campaigns targeting apps and platforms that exploit young children, making it harder to get the offline time they need to thrive! ■



## Buying to Belong



Our 2025 report, *Buying to Belong: Youth and the Allure of the Metaverse*, showed how *Roblox*, *Fortnite*, and other social games aggressively promote so-called "virtual goods" — including avatars, clothing, and other items — pressuring kids to spend huge amounts of money. This exploitative business model not only causes significant financial harm, but also drives overuse of platforms and fuels cyberbullying, homophobia, and racism. ■

***Learn about the five major ways that social gaming platforms harm young people in our report!***



# Getting Ahead of AI and the Metaverse!

**A**t Fairplay, we know it's important to protect kids not only from the online harms they're already experiencing, but from future harms as well. As the Metaverse expands and AI companions multiply, we're working to stay one step ahead of these emerging threats.

Earlier this year, we urged the Federal Trade Commission to investigate Meta after we found out that its social gaming platform *Horizon Worlds* was full of children under age 13, and that every time they logged on, they faced the threat of sexual predators, financial harm, bullying, and harassment. Even worse, Meta knew these kids were accessing *Horizon Worlds* improperly, but it continued to mine their data without their parents' consent.

Fairplay partnered with former Meta executive Kelly Stonelake on this project. She shared her firsthand experience with Meta's prioritization of growth over youth safety in *Horizon Worlds*, as well as Meta's knowledge that kids under 13 were using *Horizon Worlds* in violation of the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act.

When Google announced plans to release a version of the Gemini AI companion to young children, we immediately called on the FTC to investigate. Putting Gemini in the hands of kids under 13 exposes them to serious privacy and online safety risks and likely violates COPPA.

But Google isn't the only company rolling out chatbots for children. We also joined over 80 orgs to send a letter to Mark Zuckerberg demanding that Meta stop deploying AI chatbots to users under 18 and get rid of AI companion bots that simulate the likeness of a child or teen. And critically, we helped lead a groundswell of civil society organizations that stopped federal legislation that would have prevented states from regulating AI products targeting children. ■

**Meta whistleblower Kelly Stonelake (left) provided a sworn statement in support of our request for the FTC to investigate Meta for violating children's privacy law on its *Horizon Worlds* gaming platform.**



# Fairplay in the News

Fairplay is a trusted voice in newsrooms across the globe. Reporters seek out our expertise and insights on kids, media, and commercialism, and they share our perspective with audiences around the world. Here are just a few highlights of our press mentions this year!

TIME

**Inside the Parent-Led Movement For Phone-Free Schools**  
August 2025

The New York Times

**Why A.I. Should Make Parents Rethink Posting Photos of Their Children Online** August 2025

CBS NEWS

**An app is using AI to help parents track their children's online habits and wellbeing. Here's how it works.** August 2025

THE AMERICAN PROSPECT

**How Public Media Cuts Hurt Kids** July 2025

MARKETPLACE

**The case for the FTC to rein in Big Tech for online safety** June 2025

The Boston Globe

**It's a stretch to call algorithm curbs a threat to free speech**  
June 2025

Tech Policy PRESS

**With Congress Silent, the FTC Must Protect Kids from Big Tech**  
June 2025

The Washington Post

**Youth safety group calls for an FTC probe into Meta's virtual-reality program** April 2025

BBC

**How big tech's ad systems helped fund child abuse online**  
February 2025

WALL STREET JOURNAL

**Screens Have Taken Over Classrooms. Even Students Have Had Enough.** January 2025

TIMES UNION

**Commentary: Phone-free schools protect kids during emergencies**  
October 2024

The Guardian

**What's ahead for Kosa, an online safety act for minors, as it reaches US House?** August 2024

npr

**A historic new law would protect kids online and hold tech companies accountable** August 2024

POLITICO

**The unlikely alliance bringing the tech giants to heel** July 2024

Washington Examiner

**Senate to consider biggest tech regulation in decades to protect children online** July 2024

AP Associated Press

**What to know about the Kids Online Safety Act that just passed the Senate** July 2024

# Checking In with Our Screen Time Action Network

## our action kits and resources provide simple, concrete support

Energy was high, ideas were flowing, and work groups were on fire this year with their creation of resources to help shift our culture toward screen awareness and digital health.

Our Online Harms Prevention (OHP) Work Group released Phase I of its Online Harms Prevention Action Kit, a series of one-pagers with facts and actions for parents and anyone working with children and teens who want to keep them safe from the serious harms that lurk online.

**Cyberbullying**  
The use of digital devices and/or phones, gaming, messaging, video, or other media, or other means, to intentionally, or recklessly to annoy, peer, or abuse someone, either physically or publicly online.

**Harmful Online Challenges**  
A viral game that uses online or mobile media platforms to encourage users to perform increasingly dangerous and harmful acts to themselves and others.

**Illegal Online Drug Sales**  
Online exchange of illegal substances for money, including prescription drugs, controlled substances, and other illegal substances.

**Gaming Overuse**  
The steady and repetitive use of the internet to play games, which can lead to negative consequences in many aspects of life.

**Screen Overuse**  
The compulsive and problematic use of electronic devices for non-essential purposes, such as playing video games, watching movies, shopping, and reading online.

**Online Sexual Exploitation**  
A range of online and offline activities involving the sexual abuse of children and adolescents. This could result in the production, distribution, and/or exhibition of child sexual abuse material.

**Types of Screen Addiction**  
Gaming disorder and young people under age 25 who were asked if they had ever experienced symptoms of gaming disorder in their lifetime and exhibited behaviors that met the diagnostic criteria for gaming disorder.

**6.4% of children aged 10-14 years reported "I've tried to play violent games lots, but I can't."**

**Design Features that Manipulate Children into Overusing Screens**  
• Gamification: turning chores into games, giving points for completing tasks, and so on.

**Screen Addiction**  
• Reward systems: giving points, badges, or other incentives for completing tasks.

**Parental restrictions**  
• Screen time limits: setting time limits on screen time.

**Types of Screen Addiction**  
• CANN (Child Abuse Material): any visual image of sexually explicit content involving a minor (a person under the age of 18).

Members of the OHP Work Group handed them out at a rally in Washington, DC to raise awareness and hold Big Tech accountable for profiting handsomely off products they know cause dire harm to millions of children. Stay tuned for Phase II of the OHP Action Kit, which will be released in fall 2025 and include these additional topics: AI harms, eating disorders, harmful algorithms, pornography, suicide/depression/anxiety, and how to protect your child online!

The Screens in Schools (SiS) Work Group launched the Screens & Learning Action Kit, designed for parents and teachers who want to push back against the tech takeover of our classrooms. This project had the widest participation in SiS Work Group history with over a dozen members contributing. Topics covered in the kit include phone-free schools, the benefits of pencil and paper, 1:1 programs, AI in schools, parent organizing, and more.

A micro-partnership was born in our Early Childhood Work Group this year between Chair Kailan Carr and member Katie Talarico. Kailan and Katie turned Katie's brainchild "Brain POWER," a crafts-based project that encourages children to come up with screen-free activities that promote brain development, into a full service website with a curriculum, supporting research, and printable templates. The work group also helped to support Fairplay's brand new Young Children Thrive Offline program.

Our Mental Health Work Group made big strides on a one-of-a-kind, science-based guide for parents that includes the facts, signs, and symptoms of tech overuse and addiction, scripts parents and caregivers can use with their children, tools they can use to manage screen use in their household, and more.

If you are interested in getting more involved with the Action Network, connecting with people who share your passion for protecting childhood from Big Tech, and working on high-impact projects, joining a work group is a great way to do it! Apply at [screentimenetwork.org/work-groups](http://screentimenetwork.org/work-groups).



## members in action

This year our members took bold actions, stood up for children's rights, and courageously stepped out of their comfort zones to advocate against Big Tech's takeover. Here we applaud just some of the many achievements members accomplished:



**Longtime member Jenifer Joy Madden** founded a brand new organization, GAINING (The Global Alliance for Inspiring Non-Tech Infant Nurturing and Growth), an international group of developmental researchers and child health specialists committed to raising worldwide awareness of babies' crucial need for physical play and face-to-face human interaction.



**Screens in Schools Work Group Chair Matt Pulley**, inspired by Jonathan Haidt's *The Anxious Generation*, created fournorms.com, with tools to facilitate and simplify collective action.



**Many members courageously speak** in local, national, and international settings. Amy Neville and Kristin Bride, members of the Online Harms Prevention Work Group, made a significant impact at a February mental health event in Queen Creek, Arizona. Peter Ryan continues to speak about gaming addiction at churches and schools throughout the Washington, DC area.

Longtime member Cris Rowan developed her three-day Balanced Technology Management certification for educators. And members Kendra Bostick and Margot Denomme spoke in Canada and the US to education professionals eager to employ their Digital Literacy curriculum.



**Members Andy and Julie Liddel** founded the EdTech Law Center (ETLC) and wrote the white paper *EdTech Exposed*, which details the many failures and harms children may experience in today's classrooms.



**Members are also prolific authors.** We promoted their books this year and exposed our community to inspiring and scientific literature to improve their advocacy and family life. Among them, Dr. Richard Freed published *Better Than Real Life*, NextGen graduate Elizabeth Tate published *Break Up with Your Phone*, Dr. Debbie Farr is author of *ENRICH*, Jessica Elephante wrote *Raising Hell, Living Well*, and Susan Raphael authored *What's Wrong with My Teen?*.

**“Fairplay** is a paradigm-shifting, international tour de force. At the Action Network, we are subject matter experts, moms, dads, attorneys, teachers, psychologists, and researchers who have taken the control back from dirty tech vendors who are monetizing childhood. For anyone who thinks that one voice won’t make a difference, Fairplay will prove you wrong.”

— Lisa Cline, Co-Founder, Student Data Privacy Project





## meeting up, leveling up

At the Action Network, we like to say that we are grateful for Zoom, which allows our team to connect with members all over the country and the world, but there is a certain magic that happens when we gather in person. This was borne out during our regional meetups in Austin, Denver, and Boston. We joined members in these cities for days filled with brainstorming, solutioneering, and connection.

The Austin meetup connected members who later testified together to support phone-free schools legislation. Another member was inspired to organize a viewing of “Screenagers” and a

discussion at her school. The group proposed a need for an EdTech-focused conference to bring together independent researchers, practitioners, thought leaders, and policymakers to counter the many industry-dominant conferences where EdTech companies push their products onto schools.

In Boston, Action Network advisor Dr. Richard Freed flew out from California to present on his groundbreaking book *Better Than Real Life*, and attorney Andy Liddell presented on the great work

he's doing at the EdTech Law Center. We crowd-sourced solutions to wicked problems and then went out to break bread and continue the conversation. Connecting with those of you who could make one of our in-person meetups was a highlight of our year. ■



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**“The Screens in Schools Work Group** is working to restore a healthy, far less screen-based approach to education that truly promotes human flourishing, community, and real learning, instead of nonstop screen time, AI, chatbots, and gamification-filled toxic tripe that line the pockets of Big Tech and in the long run truly harm education and kids.”

— Peter Ryan, Co-Founder,  
Center for Responsible Technology





## Remembering Dr. Alvin Poussaint

by Fairplay Founder Dr. Susan Linn

Dr. Alvin Poussaint, emeritus Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, died on Feb. 24 at the age of 90. Media outlets across the country celebrated his lifelong dedication to fighting against racism, including — but not at all limited to — putting his life on the line by providing medical care to Civil Rights workers in Mississippi during the 1960s.

Fairplay is deeply indebted to Dr. Poussaint. In fact, we would not have come into being without him, and our work still embodies his influence. Twenty-five years ago, when he was my boss at Judge Baker (a children's mental health center affiliated with Harvard Medical School), I came to him with an idea that some — if not most — distinguished, Ivy League professors would certainly dismiss as harebrained.

"There's a company hosting a conference at the Grand Hyatt in New York City. They're giving awards to companies that advertise directly to children," I said. "Let's go down there and organize a demonstration outside the hotel." I'm still amazed not only that he agreed to my proposal, but that he was enthusiastic about it. People from all over the country joined us in New York, and the organization we now call Fairplay was launched.

Ten years and many campaigns later, we had a huge win when our efforts to discredit the marketing of "Baby Einstein" videos as educational for babies resulted in Disney offering refunds. As a result of pressure from Disney, Fairplay's staff was forced to leave Judge Baker. Dr. Poussaint stood by us and — in protest — left the center where he had worked for decades.

Dr. Poussaint's work was needed 65 years ago at the start of his career. And now, as so much of what he worked toward is being ruthlessly dismantled, it's up to us to continue.

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*Read Susan's full remembrance at [fairplayforkids.org/alvinpoussaint](http://fairplayforkids.org/alvinpoussaint). ■*



## Retreat to Move Forward

In April, Fairplay staff gathered from all over the country for three days of learning, strategizing, and team building at our Boston office. During the retreat, we began our strategic planning process by working together to define the advocacy landscape, identify trends, and reflect on our strengths as an organization.

Staff left the retreat energized, connected, and with a solid foundation with which to continue our planning process! Several staff met in person for the first time, and we all enjoyed simply being present together in real life. Plus, we bonded and learned new skills during a pasta-making session! ■

## Fairplay is Growing!

Over the past year, Fairplay has welcomed two new staff members and created an entirely new team to address early childhood screen time!

In November, Rene Mejia joined the brand new Young Children Thrive Offline team as the Early Childhood Advocacy Campaign Organizer. And in July, our first-ever Development Director, Michelle LeMay, made her debut!

Your support allowed us to hire these new employees and enhance our efforts to address young children's screen time and raise vital funds. We're excited to see where these new team members will take us! ■



# Q&A: Fairplay Founder Dr. Susan Linn

## FP: All heroes need a good origin story. Tell us Fairplay's origin story.

SL: Fairplay came into being 25 years ago rooted in a deep commitment to the rights of all children to thrive, a recognition that greed is a fundamental threat to their well-being, and the historical truth that positive social change is rarely initiated by those in power. It was formed amid the rise of increasingly unchecked corporate power and the rapid evolution of sophisticated and omnipresent media technologies. Kids were being inundated with marketing for everything from junk food to junk toys — despite mounting evidence that children are harmed when corporations target them unfairly with alluring and omnipresent advertising.

Three events led directly to Fairplay's formation. The first was in 1999, when Dr. Alvin Poussaint and I published an article in *The American Prospect* calling out PBS for deceiving parents by importing the show *Teletubbies* from Britain and marketing it as educational for babies with absolutely no evidence that was the case. To make matters worse, the show arrived with huge numbers of licensed products, including toys, clothes, bedsheets and more. That's when we began hearing from other people concerned about the increasing incursion of commercialism in children's lives.

Some months later, I was invited to speak at a conference that brought together a diverse and interdisciplinary group of activists, academics, educators, and healthcare providers all concerned about corporate influences on children. I discovered that organizations were forming, and turning their attention to, a variety of harms related to immersing kids in a media-saturated commercialized culture — youth violence, school commercialism, sexualization, childhood obesity, the erosion of children's play, excessive materialism and more. I realized that what was missing was an activist organization addressing the underlying issue that tied these groups together — the corporate practice of unfairly targeting children with advertising and marketing.

Luckily, we had an opportunity to make that happen. In the summer of 2000, I was horrified to discover that toy and junk food companies were actually getting awards for exploiting kids. *Kidscreen Magazine* was hosting the Golden Marble Awards, kind of like Oscars or Emmys, except these prizes explicitly celebrated companies for advertising to children. I went to Alvin and said, "This would be a great focus for a demonstration." He agreed, and so we organized a protest on 42nd Street, outside the Grand Hyatt in New York City, where the awards ceremony was being held. Psychologists, educators, activists, and concerned parents came from as far away as California and Alabama to join in. The protest generated press coverage, which provided a larger platform for spreading the message that children should not be exploited for profit — and the organization we know as Fairplay was born. As they say, the rest is history.

## FP: Today, Fairplay has a growing staff. Back then, you had just a few people. What was it like in those early years of Fairplay?

SL: It was intense, exciting, and often a lot of fun. Fairplay began as a project of The Media Center at Judge Baker Children's Center (now that's a mouthful!). In addition to me, Alvin was the Media Center's director, and Barbara Sweeny was our amazingly talented



administrator. I had the good sense to hire Josh Golin a few years later. We did everything ourselves — planned and executed campaigns, wrote press releases, raised funds, and built relationships with key organizations around the country. And we had remarkable successes for such a small organization, such as ending the Golden Marble Awards and preventing Hasbro from marketing a sexualized set of dolls based on the actual *Pussycat Dolls*, a burlesque troupe turned singing group.

### **FP: Over 25 years of Fairplay history, what are you proudest of?**

SL: Of course, I'm proud of our wins. I'm particularly proud that we forced Disney to offer refunds on *Baby Einstein* videos and that our FTC complaint ended the false and deceptive marketing of *Your Baby Can Read* videos (they can't!).

Even more, I'm proud that Fairplay continues to grow — not just in size, but in influence. In 2000, we were one of the few voices arguing for the need to limit the tech and media industries' unfettered access to children. That's no longer the case — as evidenced by the popular movements to institute phone-free schools and to limit how social media companies target children. I'm especially proud that Fairplay is accomplishing all this while maintaining our original policy of refusing to accept corporate funding.

### **FP: What's your favorite memory of your time at Fairplay?**

SL: Wow, it's hard to pick just one. I'm grateful to have had the opportunity to do work so aligned with my values, to collaborate with people I respect and admire, and to stand up for children in a world that so often neglects their needs.



### **FP: The world today is a much different place than it was 25 years ago, and much scarier for kids. How do you maintain your optimism in these challenging times?**

SL: It's hard these days! But I keep remembering those 12 Quakers in England who decided to end the African slave trade. It took them about 70 years, but they did it. It may not be easy to stand up for children against tech conglomerates like Google or Meta — but persistent, collective activism is the only possibility for holding them in check.

### **FP: What's one thing you want Fairplay supporters to know about the importance of our work?**

SL: That Fairplay's work is essential for children, but also for all of us. Given that lifelong values and attributes are formed in childhood, the world is better off when the dominant forces in children's lives are people who prioritize their well-being, and not tech conglomerates that — by law — prioritize profits over anything else. ■

**Dr. Susan Linn and her good friend Audrey Duck.**



## Donor Support Lifts Fairplay

In December, Christy and John J. Mack hosted Fairplay's 6th annual holiday fundraiser at their home in New York! The evening's host committee included Michele Brown Blumberg, Ellie Manko Libby, Gayle Perry, Nick Silvers, and Katie Zorn. The intimate evening raised over \$340,000 to support our mission to enhance children's well-being by eliminating the exploitative and harmful business practices of marketers and Big Tech.

Attendees heard from Fairplay's Policy Counsel Haley Hinkle, who spoke about the significance of KOSA and how the survivor parents have been integral to our work on Capitol Hill. She recounted a meeting with Sen. Ron Johnson's, R-Wis., staff and Wisconsin survivor parent Annie McGrath the day the Senate voted on KOSA and how emotional everyone felt when they learned that Annie had successfully persuaded him to vote "yes."

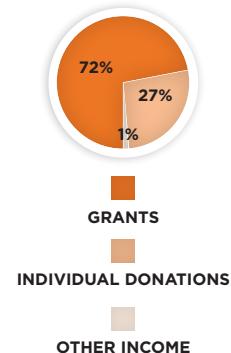
Kristin Bride, whose son Carson died by suicide after being horrifically bullied on an anonymous app, described working with Fairplay to successfully petition the FTC to sanction NGL, an app whose design encouraged anonymous bullying and then scammed victims by charging for worthless hints about who their perpetrator was. And our Executive Director Josh Golin recounted how much Fairplay has grown in influence and impact since the Macks began generously hosting the fundraiser in 2019.

The evening was inspiring and left several guests, who were parents themselves, determined to transform kids' relationship with technology and advocate for systems-level change. ■

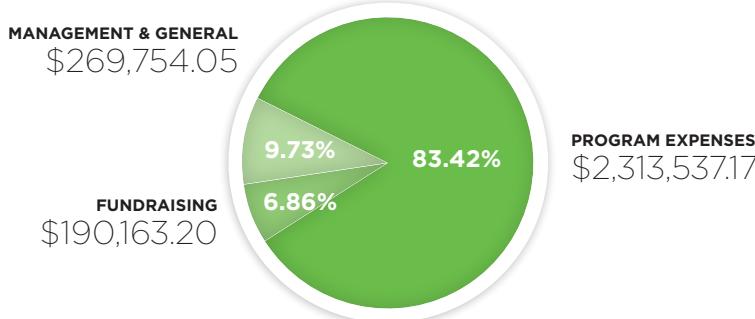
# Fairplay Financials as of June 30, 2025

## INCOME

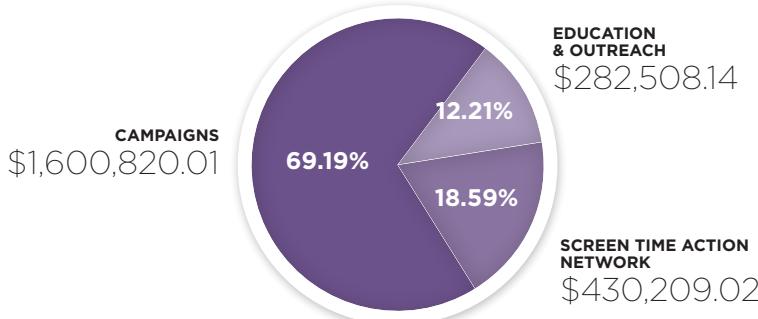
Grants	\$ 1,803,154.00
Individual Donations	\$ 667,471.00
Other Income	\$ 29,792.00
Total FY25 Income	\$ 2,500,417.00
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 2,773,454.42</b>
Net Increase/(Decrease)	\$ (273,037.42)
Beginning Reserves	\$ 2,066,117.94
<b>Net Assets FY25</b>	<b>\$ 1,793,080.52</b>



**TOTAL EXPENSES: \$2,773,454.42**



**PROGRAM EXPENSES: \$2,313,537.17**



# Our Supporters

We are incredibly grateful for Fairplay supporters who are actively building a world where all kids get the commercial-free time and space they deserve. Below are our donors for FY25 (July 2024 - June 2025), without whom our work would be impossible!

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### \$250,000+

Anonymous • The Christy and John Mack Foundation  
Oak Foundation • Waltons Trust

### \$100,000+

Tides Foundation

### \$25,000 - \$99,999

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Ranae DeSantis Foundation  
Elaine Golin • Omidyar Network

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Janet Kahler • Alice Kocis • John Mack • Melanie Manko  
Milner Family Foundation • Nicholas Silvers

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Cheryl Cahill  
Angela Campbell  
Kathy and David Kreider  
The Estate of Nancy Marsden  
McDowell-Levin Charitable Giving Fund  
Nicolas Rohatyn  
Watson Stone Family Foundation

### \$2,500 - \$4,999

Gaia Bernstein  
Michele and Laurence Blumberg  
Barb Brock  
Kevin Hepner  
Velma LaPoint, in honor of children, families, and Fairplay staff  
Kathy and Chip Masarie  
Sarah and Dan Rappoport  
Steve Seaborg  
Danielle Oristian York and Brian York

### \$1,000 - \$2,499

Margaret Phillips and Mack Abbot  
Fernando Alvarez  
Julia Backoff  
William Beardslee, in memory of Alvin F. Poussaint, MD  
Nicole Perrotta and Jeb Belford  
The Scott and Ky-Van Benson Charitable Fund  
Patricia Blais and Chad Elis  
Kristin and Tom Bride, to Carson Bride, who is changing the world!  
Julia Chen  
Clementina Arts Foundation, Inc.  
Monica and Stefano Corsi  
Jeff Cygan, in memory of Carson Bride  
Sarah Dodds-Brown  
Anne Ellsworth  
Laura Graves  
Joanna Hess  
Susan Hopkins

Carl and Susan Ingrao

Andrew Strom and Pico Kassell

Lauren and Dave Kopans  
Henry Labalme

Kathleen Lauster  
Susan E. Linn  
John Lippitt  
Georges Makhoul  
Ginny Margolies

Maurine Molak, in memory of David Molak

Hollis Russell and Anne Prosser

Nancy Ross  
Howard and Rheta Rubenstein  
Jean Rystrom

Lauren Salem  
Becca Schmill Foundation

David J. Simon  
Samira Sine

Denise Tinguely  
Dora Vardis

Joseph Wolnick  
Lloyd Zuckerberg

# Friends

## \$500 - \$999

Leslie Barrett  
Criscillia Benford and William Softky  
Samuel Chapman, in memory of Sammy Chapman  
Bruce A. Clark, in memory of Natalie Shay Clark  
James Comer, in memory of Alvin F. Poussaint, MD  
Charles Fox  
Alice and Steve Golin  
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Martha Sibert  
Jonathan Spack  
Jennifer Sullivan  
Joann Terranova  
Amy Warren  
Janet Weathers  
Maud Winchester  
Rinny and Len Yourman, in honor of the Action Network and its leadership, activists, and volunteers

**\$250 - \$499**

Jennie Abbingsole  
Kathleen Barlow  
Myron Belfer  
Alice Brofman  
Mitchell Brooks  
Cheryl Brown  
Marie Cheney  
Lisa Cline  
Richard and Carol Daynard  
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Nancy Gruver and Joe Kelly, in honor of Dr. Susan Linn  
Mona Harley  
Sean Hecht and Rebecca Weiker  
Lincoln Hess and Anna Miari  
Robert Horwitz  
Jason Huitrado  
David Jay  
Allen Kanner  
Joanne and Tom Kyritz, in honor of our grandchildren  
Kecia Lifton  
Rebecca Masterson  
Victoria Mills  
David and Lindsey Monahan  
Samantha Morse  
David Naumann  
Daniel Slosberg and Lin Ng  
Mark Noltner, in honor of Siena Noltner  
Luisella Pistidda  
Erin Popolo, in memory of Emily Murillo  
Jenny Radesky  
Leslie Salmon-Zhu, in memory of Margaret Salmon Price  
Palak Shah  
Daniel Smith  
Ruth Smullin  
Kentaro Toyama

**\$100 - \$249**

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Linda Barnes, in memory of Clifford Craine  
Mary Barzee  
Madeline Daniels Benderev  
Barbara Bennett  
Ritu Bhatnagar  
Constance and Gann Bierner  
Dee Bireddy, in honor of Baba  
Susan Bogar and Steven Rasch  
Lawrence Brown  
Patricia and Alan Cantor  
Rebecca Cantor  
George Caplan  
Hilarie Cash  
Beth Clarke  
Richard Cohen  
Kristin Cotts  
Sandra Crawford  
Anne and Robert Deysher

Marc Engel, in honor of Criscillia Benford and Rachel Franz  
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Ingrid Espinosa  
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Jeremy Joseph  
Kathy Keller Jones  
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Ramon Monras-Sender  
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Mary Beth Roche  
Jon Schumann  
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Erika Weber  
Sabrina Weiss  
Enid and Steve Wetzner  
Sharon Winkler, in memory of  
Alex Peiser, forever 17  
Sheli Wortis

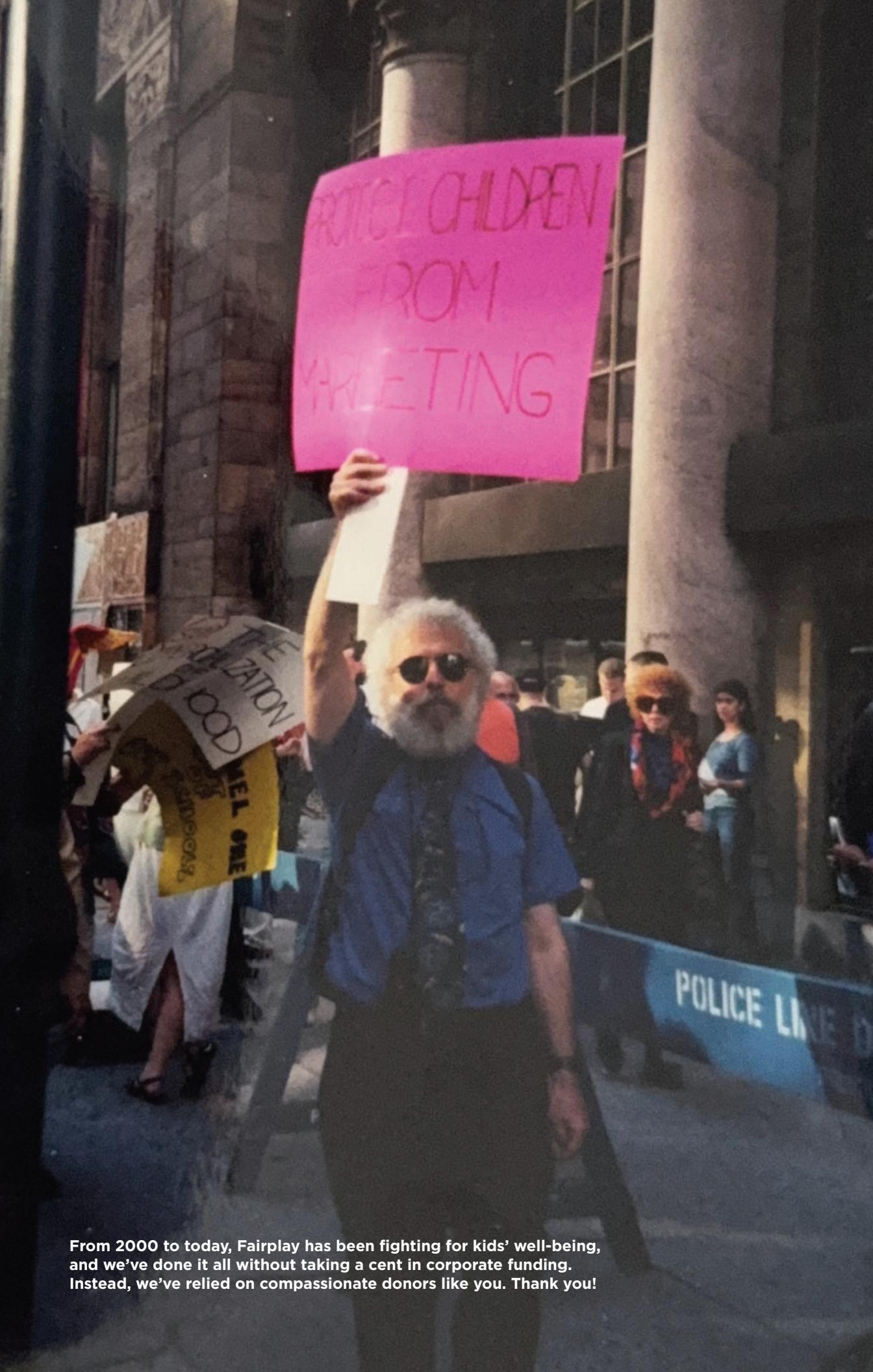
**Up to \$100**

Giridhar Alamuri  
Anonymous (3)  
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in honor of Flossie Arend  
Nicole Auckerman  
Eric Bashirian  
Sarah Batcheler  
Ellen Bates-Brackett,  
in honor of Susan Linn  
Christine Biskey  
David Black  
Faith Boninger  
Ivy Branin  
Geralyn Bywater  
Kay Calkins  
Anne Marie Cole  
Jeannette Cosby  
Will Craig  
Susan Danewitz

Rob Dewis  
Julie Dobrow  
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Diane and Lowell Dodge  
Niles Donegan  
Andrea Doukas  
Judith Doyle  
Ben Dunlap  
Jean Fahey, in memory of  
Alvin F. Poussaint, MD  
Jenny Gamson  
Faith Garfield  
Howard Gelman  
Jennifer Haefeli  
Leonie Haimson  
Madhura Halasgikar, in memory  
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Sabina Johns  
Sara Kahn, in memory of  
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Lauretta Freeman  
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Kenneth Reardon  
Paula Rees  
Anelle Rodríguez Martinez  
Marilyn Roselius  
Naomi Roswell, in honor of  
Fairplay staff, past and present!  
Susan Ruocco  
Christopher Ryan  
Donna Sawyer  
Michael Scippa and Sara Haynes  
Chrysteen Shafer  
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Ian Silverberg  
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Lisa Thorne,  
in honor of Ross Turner  
Lynn and Robert Thurrell  
Ashwin Verghese  
Abigail Weidmer  
Kevin Whelan  
Edward Zaron

*Thank you*  
for your support!



PROTECT CHILDREN  
FROM  
MARKETING

POLICE LINE

From 2000 to today, Fairplay has been fighting for kids' well-being, and we've done it all without taking a cent in corporate funding. Instead, we've relied on compassionate donors like you. Thank you!

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**Amy Hendershot**, Operations Director  
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**Rene Mejia**, Early Childhood Advocacy Campaign Organizer  
**David Monahan**, Campaign Director  
**Lauren Paer**, Action Network Project Manager  
**Jean Rogers**, Screen Time Action Network Director  
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## Our Mission

Fairplay works to enhance children's well-being by eliminating the exploitative and harmful business practices of marketers and Big Tech.



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