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Kids products under scrutiny

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Marketing: A new third-party endorsement company, Kids Connect, which will offer product guidelines to parents has been launched in Melbourne this week.

Started by directors Rachel Knott and Kate Evans, the infomercial brand will offer a stamp of approval on a range of products and services, including food and beverages, pharmaceuticals and baby/infant care products which will be evaluated by an independent panel of health experts, headed up by dietician Judy Appleton of Deakin University, Victoria.

The distinctive Kids Connect logo will be used as a stamp of approval on all endorsed products and will give FMCG clients the opportunity to market the health benefits of their products.

According to Knott, the Kids Connect concept was developed out of frustration at not being able to quickly get information about products that either added nutritional ben-

efit to a child's diet, or functional benefit to their safety or wellbeing.

"Product advertising and complicated labelling is everywhere but nothing tells me simply which products are a better choice for my children over others. While there is a lot of talk about childhood obesity and issues associated with being overweight, there are very few practical solutions," she said.

Evans said while there are parallels between Kids Connect and other third party endorsement brands such as Brand Power, the group would cover a wider range of media, including TV, radio, internet, licensing point of sale and publicity.

"We want Kids Connect to be as effective as the Heart Foundation's tick campaign but while their campaign focuses on one aspect of health, ours will cover a broad spectrum of issues," she said.

Prior to starting the company, Evans worked in advertising and radio, and ran her own business, Tomorrow Marketing, for three years. Knott worked in television production and licensing.