



Brought to you by ConAgra Foodservice

## KID DISH *The Next Generation*

More than any generation before them, kids today have enormous spending power with strong influence on household purchases in general and foodservice purchases in particular. Kids are increasingly knowledgeable, independent and savvy consumers. As foodservice consumers, they are becoming more sophisticated, with evolving taste buds.

Foodservice occasions that involve kids can be quite different from adult-only occasions. For one thing, dining decisions are made by both adults and kids, who are often approaching the occasion from very different points of view. In most cases moms tend to put their own preferences aside and choose a restaurant they know their kids will enjoy.

However, kids do not have the final word on away-from-home dining. Mothers are still the key adult decision-makers, but they strongly take into account their kids' tastes and needs. Often a woman's desire to be a good mother dictates a certain pattern of foodservice usage. Many moms use quick-service restaurants as a way to provide a treat to their kids. While decisions to dine at full-service restaurants are more likely based on adult preferences such as the menu options available to them, like healthy or "better for you" choices with a nod to those restaurants that they consider "kid friendly."

Regardless of the segment there are three critical attributes that must be up to par:

- Food quality
- Value
- Atmosphere – including service and cleanliness

Once these needs are satisfactorily met, the kids' needs come into play. Some additional key attributes moms seek from a restaurant experience can be found on Table 1.

**Table 1**

How Moms Make Dining-Out Decisions	
	%
<b>Need to have items kids will like</b>	87
<b>Want my kids to enjoy the overall experience</b>	78
<b>Seeking available kids items that are healthful</b>	70
<b>Desire a kid-friendly atmosphere</b>	65

Source: Nation's Restaurant News, June 17, 2010

Not surprisingly, value drives more away-from-home dining decisions today than it did two years ago. Almost nine out of 10 moms (88%) consider "value

for the money" when making a restaurant choice. But fewer than half of moms (42%) are drawn to restaurants that offer "kids eat free" programs and coupons. For moms, a "kids eat free" night is an added bonus, but it's only relevant if the restaurant offers a strong value proposition overall.

### Better for You – Better for the World

Today's kids are clearly more health-savvy, and the nutrition education they receive from school and in the media impacts their choices. Kids of all ages know healthful foods from those that aren't: Nearly nine out of 10 kids surveyed by Technomic said that fresh vegetables and fresh whole fruits are healthy. Other foods kids identified as healthy include salad (78%) and steamed vegetables (76%). According to Mintel Menu Insights, "Our research shows parents want more nutritious options for their kids, and kids are open to fruits, veggies and healthier versions of standard fare. The generic kids' menu really doesn't meet the needs and desires of today's families."

Mintel found kids will eat fruits and veggies. More than three in four kids (77%) are open to ordering foods with vegetables, and six in seven (86%) would order items containing fruit.

Older kids are also at an age where they start to care more about food quality. They're picking up more information about fresh and natural foods and are likely to equate those with being "better for you."

### 'I'll Have What Mom's Having'

While younger kids (6-10 years old) strongly prefer conventional chicken fingers as an entrée, older kids are far more adventurous. Kids 10 & over prefer steak almost as much as chicken, and vote for pizza and shrimp by a good margin as well. However, parents still have a need to make every dining dollar count so reduced portions of adult menu options would appeal to both kids and parents.

Older kids are also the ones most likely to respond favorably to bolder flavors or those with an ethnic or international influence. Kids of all ages will likely become brand-loyal to operations that provide them with an experience and foods that allow them to grow, learn and experiment within their own comfort level.<sup>1</sup>

### Fun Parents

- Age 21-44
- Married couples with families
- Homeowners have moderate incomes and live in mid-size cities and smaller towns
- Family is important but they still like to have fun
- Dining out is a treat and health is on their minds, but it is not a decision driver

### Fretful Parents

- Age 35-44
- Married couples with families, but skews more female
- Primarily homeowners who live just about everywhere
- Taking care of those who need them is most important
- They are health-oriented, for both themselves and their kids

SIDE DISH

Source: ConAgra Foodservice proprietary Food Away From Home Study, 2009

## Patron Key Issues

Moms and kids are an important market. The needs and behaviors of moms evolve as their kids grow up. Kids' preferences also evolve as they become older and absorb new experiences and ideas. To this end, the entire family and the varied age ranges must be considered to successfully attract this important segment and gain their long-term loyalty.

Especially in the current marketplace, it is more important than ever to know your target audience. By understanding today's kids and families, what motivates their dining-out decisions and how that has changed over the last several years, and foodservice operators can adapt and develop strategies that satisfy these motivations. For more insights and action tips on this segment, please use our ConAgra Foodservice P.A.T.R.O.N.<sup>®</sup> profile report.

*For more targeted recommendations to grow your business ask your ConAgra Foodservice representative for a customized P.A.T.R.O.N. profile report.*



## Winning With The Next Generation – Top 5 Actions

1. Offer at least one healthy meal option such as grilled chicken breast and veggies with an array of dressing options to choose from for dipping. This lets kids have choices and feel more adult/independent.
2. Menu kid-friendly appetizers such as breadsticks or mozzarella sticks, and train your servers to point them out on the menu. This is an opportunity to increase check averages through kid appeal.
3. Feature at least one or two reduced-portion-size options from the adult menu of more popular dishes so older kids can have the ability to order a more adventurous dish to suit their taste buds and maintain value appeal for mom and dad
4. Offer to have the children's meal prepared as soon as possible, before the adults get their food. Paying attention to the little ones can go far with mom and dad.<sup>2</sup>
5. Provide entertainment by bringing your menu to life. Make a pizza toppings bar, offer fresh fruit dipped in chocolate fondue or make a muddled or shaken kid-friendly mocktail tableside. It makes a memorable impression, keeps kids occupied and provides a sense of independence.<sup>3</sup>



to go...

#### Sources:

- (1) Technomic Consumer Food Trends, Issue No. 5, 2009
- (2) MonkeyDish November 18, 2010
- (3) Pizza Today, March 2010

For more information on ConAgra Foodservice products, insights and support, call 1-800-357-6543 or visit our website at [www.conagrafoodservice.com](http://www.conagrafoodservice.com)

**ConAgra  
Foodservice**

From morning rush to close<sup>SM</sup>