



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **National Restaurant Association's First-Of-Its-Kind "Kids LiveWell" Initiative Showcases Restaurants' Healthful Menu Options for Children**

**More than 15,000 restaurant locations nationwide participating in initial program launch**

(Washington, D.C.) The National Restaurant Association today unveiled a new nationwide initiative that provides parents and children with a growing selection of healthful menu options when dining out. "Kids LiveWell," a program the Association launched today in collaboration with Healthy Dining, highlights how restaurants are creating innovative solutions to provide better-for-you menu options.

"Kids LiveWell" underscores that restaurants can be part of the solution to ensuring a healthier generation and providing consumer choice in dining options," said Dawn Sweeney, President and CEO of the National Restaurant Association. "More than 15,000 restaurant locations are participating in this initial launch and offering their young guests a selection of 'Kids LiveWell' choices, and we look forward to announcing additional restaurants and menu options in the coming months."

"Kids LiveWell" is a first-of-its-kind voluntary initiative that shows the restaurant industry's commitment to offering healthful menu items for children, with a focus on increasing consumption of fruit and vegetables, lean protein, whole grains and low-fat dairy, and limiting unhealthy fats, sugars and sodium.

"Kids LiveWell" empowers parents to confidently make informed decisions about their children's meals as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle," said Anita Jones-Mueller, MPH, and founder of Healthy Dining.

Sweeney and Jones-Mueller joined industry stakeholders, health advocates, parents and children at the National Press Club today to unveil the program and feature several "Kids LiveWell" choices from participating restaurants.

Inaugural "Kids LiveWell" leaders include the following 19 brands: Au Bon Pain, Bonefish Grill, Burger King, Burgerville, Carrabba's Italian Grill, Chevys Fresh Mex, Chili's Grill & Bar, Corner Bakery Cafe, Cracker Barrel, Denny's, El Pollo Loco, Friendly's, IHOP, Joe's Crab Shack, Outback Steakhouse, Silver Diner, Sizzler, T-Bones Great American Eatery and pizza.

To join "Kids LiveWell," restaurants agree to offer and promote a selection of items that meet qualifying criteria based on leading health organizations' scientific recommendations, including the 2010 USDA Dietary Guidelines. Healthy Dining's team of registered dietitians has worked with participating restaurants to identify and validate the menu choices that meet the "Kids LiveWell" criteria. The criteria include the following components:

- Offer a children’s meal (an entrée, side and beverage) with 600 calories or less; two servings of fruit, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein and/or low-fat dairy; with limits on sodium, fats and sugar;
- Offer at least one other individual item with 200 calories or less, with limits on fats, sugars and sodium, plus contain a serving of fruit, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein or low-fat dairy;
- Display or make available upon request the nutrition profile of the healthful menu options; and
- Promote/identify the healthful menu options.

Dr. Robert C. Post, Deputy Director of the USDA’s Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP), praised the new initiative.

“This is a great start to help empower consumers—kids and parents especially—with more healthier choices at restaurants,” said Dr. Post. “This could provide a great push toward more healthier offerings at restaurants; we hope this is a trend toward new items and voluntary reformulations in reducing food components and nutrients that pose health concerns. And, the program’s intent is a good complement to the Department’s MyPlate and Dietary Guidelines messages - we need more choices to help shift eating patterns to healthier ones.”

“‘Kids LiveWell’ is another example of the National Restaurant Association’s work taking a proactive role in helping the industry deal with issues related to health and nutrition,” Sweeney added. “We look forward to ‘Kids LiveWell’s’ growth and success in enhancing the health of our nation’s children and future generations.”

Parents can find “Kids LiveWell” options in their communities by visiting the “Kids LiveWell” section on [www.HealthyDiningFinder.com](http://www.HealthyDiningFinder.com). Participating restaurants can add the “Kids LiveWell” icon on their menus to indicate qualifying items, as well.

### **Stakeholders offer praise for Kids LiveWell:**

Rob Bisceglie, Executive Director of Action for Healthy Kids: “We all know the statistics – one in three children in this country is overweight or obese. Fortunately, some of the solutions to reverse this epidemic are pretty simple: kids need to get more exercise; healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy and whole grains must be offered regularly; and food portions need to be reduced. Additionally, economically disadvantaged children, who often live in ‘food deserts,’ need better access to healthy food. So, it’s wonderful news that so many restaurants have agreed to take a positive first step by signing on to ‘Kids LiveWell’ and promising to add more healthy choices to their menus. Our kids deserve options.”

Dr. David L. Katz, Director, Yale University Prevention Research Center and Editor-in-Chief, Childhood Obesity: “Eating well—especially when eating out—is the road much less traveled in America today, by children and adults alike. Instead, it should be the path of lesser resistance! With this initiative, the National Restaurant Association and Healthy Dining are helping to pave that path, and make healthful eating more accessible to all. I commend them for this important contribution.”

Bryan Silbermann, president and CEO of the Produce Marketing Association:

“With more and more attention being paid to healthy eating, from the USDA’s MyPlate and now the National Restaurant Association’s ‘Kids LiveWell,’ children will have more tasty and delicious options highlighted when dining out. PMA and its members across the fruit and vegetable sector applaud the National Restaurant Association on this outstanding new program. It’s no surprise that increased servings of fruits and vegetables top the list for the program’s guidelines. ‘Kids LiveWell’ is another boost for the Foodservice 2020 initiative we’ve created together to double consumption of fruits and vegetables this decade. What pleases me just as much is that this program really shows government and industry working together to ensure our children eat healthier and tasty meals, while providing clear guidance to parents for meals at home or dining out.”

Stephanie Silverman, senior advisor to the Campaign to End Obesity: “Today, nearly a third of America’s children are overweight or obese, and that means each of us needs to do our part to help reverse this epidemic. Having more nutritious options and clearer nutritional information about the foods we eat is one key to the kind of change that’s needed to enable Americans to eat more healthfully, and to support the nation’s journey to a healthy weight. The Campaign commends the work of the National Restaurant Association and those restaurants that are taking steps to equip American families with the tools they need to make healthful choices while dining out through the ‘Kids LiveWell’ program.”

Jill Berry, CityMommy contributor, who participated in today’s launch at the National Press Club: “As a mom, I was excited to learn about this new program that will make it much easier for my family to make healthier choices when eating out. I want to give a big thank you to the restaurants that are leading the way to help families enjoy eating out in a healthier way. Through the CityMommy network, we will be able to educate moms across the nation about the ‘Kids LiveWell’ program and the restaurants offering the healthier kids meals.”

**To learn more about “Kids LiveWell,” please visit [www.restaurant.org/kidslivewell](http://www.restaurant.org/kidslivewell).**

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Founded in 1919, the National Restaurant Association is the leading business association for the restaurant industry, which comprises 945,000 restaurant and foodservice outlets and a work force of nearly 13 million employees. Together with the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation, the Association works to lead America’s restaurant industry into a new era of prosperity, prominence, and participation, enhancing the quality of life for all we serve. For more information, visit our Web site at [www.restaurant.org](http://www.restaurant.org).