Kids’ Choice
A chef’s guide to catering for children
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This resource was developed with funding from the Ministry of Health.
If you run a food service, it’s vital that you cater to children. These youngsters are your future customers, so it pays to keep them well-nourished and excited about your meals.

Having a carefully planned children’s menu can also make you a hit with parents, as many Kiwis now actively seek out wholesome, affordable food for their kids. Offering a children’s menu could act as a major point of difference for your establishment, leading to growth in business.

This resource offers loads of great tips and guidelines for making your children’s menu healthy, appealing and affordable.

Please have a look through the guidelines and see where your current menu stands. If your menu needs some work, try to roll out a few healthy options from pages 10 - 14, and then increase the number from there.

What benefits do you receive by participating?

If your recipes meet the Kids’ Choice guidelines (pages 8 & 9) or if you’re using an existing Heart Foundation recipe, you will be eligible to use the Kids’ Choice icon. This icon tells customers which of your menu items are healthy and approved by the Heart Foundation.

If 50% of your items meet our recipe guideline criteria, and if your entire children’s menu meets the Kids’ Choice menu guidelines, you will be eligible to use the Heart Foundation Kids’ Choice lockup logo.

To earn the Kids’ Choice icon and the Heart Foundation’s endorsement, you’ll need to have your recipe/s audited by us. For more information and a copy of our terms and conditions, please email kidschoice@heartfoundation.org.nz or phone 09 5719191.
Let’s start with the sides

Many children’s menus feature ‘combo’ meals or meals that come with fixed sides, such as drinks or desserts. This is an excellent place for you to start offering healthier choices. Instead of serving fried chips, try mashed, roasted, baked or boiled potatoes. Rather than offering fizzy drinks in a combo meal, go for water, milk or a healthy smoothie.

You don’t have to make chips and soft drink completely unavailable, but neither do they need to be the default option. More often than not, parents will happily choose your healthier option.

Tips for creating a healthy children’s menu:

• Where possible, offer adult meals in smaller portions for children.
• Offer children’s meals at a competitive price (the smaller food cost margin on children’s meals can be made up for by their parents’ meals).
• Be open to suggestions from parents and allow them to ask for menu modifications to meet their children’s dietary needs.
• When children are dining in your establishment, ask them which foods they enjoy eating. Note down their answers and draw upon this list when designing your next children’s menu.
• If you don’t often sell children’s meals, prepare meals in bulk and freeze them in portions. Many simple stews, meatball dishes and bakes can be easily re-heated without affecting the quality.
• Use fresh whole foods, rather than pre-prepared processed foods.
• Prepare your ingredients in ways that use minimal added fat, salt and sugar.
• Make children’s meals bright and colourful.
Check your portion sizes

What is an appropriate meal size for children? To manage food costs and standardise your recipes, try to serve an average size that satisfies most of your young customers. Most children ordering from the children’s menu will be under 10 years old, so aim to serve about half the quantity of an adult meal. For children with larger appetites, we suggest loading their plate up with vegetables.

Standardise your recipes

We recommend you develop standardised recipes and stick to them, when preparing your children’s menu. Using standardised recipes will help you produce meals that meet your target nutrition guidelines. They’ll also help you produce food of a consistent quality, keep track of food costs, and ensure you’re serving standard meal sizes. Standardising your recipes also helps when you switch to using food-control plans in your kitchen.

This free Excel spreadsheet will get you started:
Kids’ Choice recipe branding

To qualify for Kids’ Choice recipe branding, one or more of your menu items needs to meet our guidelines on page 8. Simply submit your recipe to the Heart Foundation and we’ll assess it. If the submitted dish meets our guidelines, you can display the icon below beside the item:

![Kids Choice Icon](image)

Meals with the ‘Kids’ Choice’ icon have been developed to meet strict recipe guidelines set by the Heart Foundation.

Kids’ Choice menu branding

Want to go all the way and offer a comprehensive healthy menu to children? If 50% or more of the items on your children’s menu meet the recipe guidelines (page 8) and if the remainder of items meet the broader menu guidelines (page 9) you’ll be eligible to use our Kids’ Choice logo next to healthier items, and the following combination of the Heart Foundation Kids’ Choice lockup logo at the bottom of your children’s menu:

![Heart Foundation Kids Choice Logo](image)

This menu has been developed to meet the Heart Foundation’s Kids’ Choice menu guidelines.
### Kids’ Choice recipe guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the menu item comply?</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A (not applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salt/sodium</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Low amounts of salt used. If salt is added to the dish, there is considerably less than would feature in an adult version of this recipe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Salty ingredients such as olives, cheese, processed meats, soy sauce, fish sauce and oyster sauce are limited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deep frying</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No items in the dish have been deep fried</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vegetables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- At least half of the dish is made up of non-starchy vegetables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lean meat, poultry, fish and alternatives</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Where meats are offered they are lean and minimally processed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low or reduced fat dairy products</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Recipe uses reduced-fat versions of dairy products or smaller quantities of full-fat dairy products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Small amounts of cheeses (less than 30g/ serve) used</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Small amounts butter or cream (not both) used</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Less than 1 tsp butter/serve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Less than 2tsp cream/ serve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pastry</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If pastry is used in a dish, it is filo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Desserts</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Desserts offered are fruit-based or contain fruit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Added sugars* are limited to less than 10g/serve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The dessert also follows the guidelines stated above, where applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Added sugars include: sugar (sucrose) golden syrup, treacle, honey, molasses, maple syrup, agave syrup, malt extract, corn syrup, rice bran syrup, invert syrup, fruit juice concentrates.
Kids’ Choice menu guidelines

To meet the Heart Foundation’s criteria and receive the Kids’ Choice menu branding, your entire menu must meet these guidelines below, and 50% or more of the menu items must meet the specific recipe guidelines on page 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beverages</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A (not applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Water is freely available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Energy drinks are not offered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No drinks offered have added sugars* (e.g. regular soft drinks, cordials, fruit drinks)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Where 100% fruit juice is served, it is diluted by half with water or soda water</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Processed meats</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A (not applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• No more than one menu item is based on processed meat (e.g. sausages, frankfurters) and/or deli meat (e.g. salami, ham, bacon)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deep fried foods</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A (not applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• No deep fried items are offered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetables</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A (not applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• All dishes are served with vegetables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desserts</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A (not applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• All desserts are fruit-based or contain fruit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Added sugars* are limited to less than 10g/ serve</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Confectionery</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A (not applicable)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Confectionery is not offered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Added sugars include: sugar (sucrose) golden syrup, treacle, honey, molasses, maple syrup, agave syrup, malt extract, corn syrup, rice bran syrup, invert syrup, fruit juice concentrates.

**Combo meals**

To earn the Kids’ Choice menu branding on a combo meal, the main and dessert/beverage must meet the criteria above. For example, a main and dessert will both need to meet the recipe guidelines, and the drink will need to meet the menu guidelines.
Recipes for all the following menus are freely available on the Heart Foundation website: [www.heartfoundation.org.nz/recipes](http://www.heartfoundation.org.nz/recipes)

**Antipasto platters**

**Ideas for antipasto:**

- Cherry tomatoes
- Boiled eggs
- Carrot or cucumber sticks
- Fruit kebabs
- Meatballs
- Chicken and apple meatballs
- Vegetable/legume-based dips (e.g. onion dip, roasted garlic and white bean dip, hummus, minted pea and soybean dip)
- Sliced roasted meats
- Falafel
- Quiche slices
- Sushi
- Steamed dumplings
- Thai fish cakes
- Edamame (boiled soy beans in pods)
- Baby carrots, radish, green beans, celery, snowpeas, fresh peas
Menu options

Light meals

Onion dip  Bean dip  Minted pea dip

Tortillas  Oven-baked tortilla chips  Thai fish cakes

Jiaozi pork dumplings  Cauliflower croquettes  Omelette spring roll
Menu options

Main meals

- Pork hot dogs
- Spaghetti carbonara
- Smoked fish kedgeree
- Salmon and potato cakes
- Chilli bean quesadillas
- Chilli beans
- Fish burgers
- Oven-baked crumbed fish and chicken
Menu options

**Desserts and sweets**

- Banana fritters/pikelets
- Chocolate ‘ice cream’
- Coconut jelly with berry topping
- Apple and feijoa crumble
- Flourless carrot cake
- Banana and oat cookies
- Chocolate, fruit and nut truffles
- Cocoa rice
- Banana and berry slice
Beverages

Fruit smoothies  Avocado or spinach and banana smoothies  Frozen fruit slushies

Fruity ice cubes  Otai watermelon smoothie
Ocean View Restaurant
Children’s Menu

Chicken Burrito ................................................................. $10.00
Grilled chicken with capsicum and avocado in a soft wrap

Fish and Chips ................................................................. $10.00
Battered fish with fries and tomato sauce

Hot Dog and Chips ......................................................... $8.50
Battered hot dog with fries served with tomato sauce

Hamburger ........................................................................ $8.50
Served with fries and tomato sauce

Chicken Tenders ............................................................. $8.50
Served with fries and tomato sauce

English Muffin Pizza ...................................................... $8.50
Topped with ham, cheese and a poached egg

Dessert

Banana Boat ................................................................. $4.50
Banana split with vanilla ice cream and chocolate sauce

Pick and Dip ................................................................. $4.50
Finger-sized pieces of seasonal fruit with a yoghurt
dipping sauce

Ice Cream Sundae ....................................................... $4.50
Chocolate and vanilla ice cream with sprinkles

Meals with the Kids’ Choice icon have been developed to
meet strict recipe guidelines set by the Heart Foundation.
# Ocean View Restaurant

**Children’s Menu**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Burrito</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
<td>Grilled Chicken with capsicum and avocado in a soft wrap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish and Crispy Potatoes</td>
<td>$10.00</td>
<td>Oven-baked crumbed fish with crispy potatoes and vegetable sticks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamburger</td>
<td>$8.50</td>
<td>Beef patty with beetroot, lettuce, tomato, cucumber and cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken Tenders</td>
<td>$8.50</td>
<td>Baked chicken with stir-fried vegetables and steamed rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Muffin Pizza</td>
<td>$8.50</td>
<td>Topped with ham, rocket, cheese and a poached egg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Dessert

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banana Boat</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
<td>Banana split with vanilla ‘lite’ ice cream and chocolate sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pick and Dip</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
<td>Finger-sized pieces of seasonal fruit with a yoghurt dipping sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh Fruit Cups</td>
<td>$4.50</td>
<td>Seasonal fruit served with toasted almonds and vanilla custard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Menu has been developed to meet the [Heart Foundation’s](https://www.heartfoundation.org.au) Kids’ Choice menu guidelines.
At the Heart Foundation, we lead the fight against New Zealand’s biggest killer - heart disease. But we can’t do it alone. We rely on the generosity and goodwill of everyday Kiwis to support our work. The Heart Foundation provides support, care and advice to help people and their families affected by heart disease. We also fund leading-edge research and specialist training for cardiologists, while our education and prevention programmes tackle heart disease head-on in the community.

Through our work with young children, we create a foundation for keeping hearts healthy into the future.

We want every New Zealander to live a long, healthy life and enjoy precious moments with their loved ones.

To make a donation, please go to www.heartfoundation.org.nz/donate or contact us at:

Heart Foundation, PO Box 17160, Greenlane, Auckland 1546
T 09 571 9191  F 09 571 9190  E info@heartfoundation.org.nz
www.heartfoundation.org.nz

As a charity, we thank our generous donors for helping bring this resource to life.