



"In this business there is constant change. Every day brings new challenges. My comfort is knowing I made the right choice in pasta.

*My pasta always performs."*



Insist on it.



Sign up for our Foundations e-newsletter and you could win a case of Academia Barilla 100% Extra Virgin Olive Oil!\*



For more information on Barilla® products, call 1-866-349-4386.

One winner selected each month. Limit one entry per person. Entries not selected each month will roll to the next month's selection. See official rules for details at [www.signupfoundations.com](http://www.signupfoundations.com). © 2014 Barilla America, Inc.



“When we did focus groups with 6-12 year old kids and moms we were surprised at how many kids ate salad, wanted spicy foods, and generally wanted to eat more like adults, even at younger ages.”

*-Jessica James, Executive Chef, Applebee's*

### Four Principles for Successful Kids Menu Development

We chatted with Jessica James, Executive Chef of Applebee's and creator of their hit kids menu, including their wildly popular Chicken Mac and Cheese. She also offers the following principles for kids menu development:

- **Add more choices overall**, especially with side dishes, allowing for mixing and matching for customization and variety
- **Make choices more “adult”** with more fresh and natural foods, more vegetables, and a bit more complexity
- **Balance healthy choices with “fun food”** in controlled portions, and make it easy to choose a healthier option
- **Micro-target your menu** so there are choices for younger and older kids

### Pasta on the Kids Menu

When added together, mac and cheese, spaghetti and ‘pasta’ items are the #1 item on kids menus. Pasta is a popular item with kids, and it’s also easy to use as a platform for customization and healthy menu development. As Jessica James notes, “Pasta is absolutely a mainstay – whether it’s basic items like buttered noodles or a more “grown up” mac and cheese, it’s versatile, cost-effective, and always a winner with kids.”

## How to BUILD A BETTER KIDS MENU

**Better, healthier kids menus are in high demand today**, as millennials are now bringing their kids in to dine, and with vastly different expectations than prior generations. While the top items on kids menus have stayed pretty consistent for years – chicken fingers, pizza, pasta, burgers, grilled cheese, etc. – there are signs of improvement and change on menus across the country.

Consider these facts from research firms Mintel, Datassential and Y-Pulse:

- 41% of parents want a larger variety of menu choices, and 21% want more sophisticated items. <sup>1</sup>
- 75% of parents want to see healthier sides on the kids menu <sup>2</sup>
- Kids are interested in foods that are higher in quality and healthier as well as customizing their orders. <sup>3</sup>
- 45% of parents with kids aged 1-12 prefer to feed them whole grains <sup>4</sup>
- 59% of surveyed kids aged 8-13 preferred the adult menu choices to the kids menu <sup>5</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Mintel, “Kids and Dining Out,” 2013, <sup>2</sup> Datassential, “Creative Concepts: Kids Menus,” June 2014, <sup>3</sup> Y-Pulse, “Connecting with Gen Next,” 2013,

<sup>4</sup> Datassential, “Healthy Flavors Healthy Kids,” 2014, <sup>5</sup> Y-Pulse, “Connecting with Gen Next,” 2013, <sup>6</sup> Mintel Menu Insights, 2014