

# RESTAURANT HOSPITALITY

## Best Kids' Menus 2007

### Most Kids Prefer Adult Food

**I**f you think your younger guests have only one thing on their mind when eating in your restaurant—burgers, fries, chicken fingers and other fare typical of the “kids’ meal”—think again. The results of a recent study by a research company that specializes in reading the minds of youthful customers suggest that kids’ palates may be more mature than you expect.

According to the study, released by Y-Pulse last fall, the biggest factors influencing the choice of a restaurant for kids in grades 3 through 5 are good food, cited by 71 percent, and healthy food, cited by 56 percent. And the majority—60 percent—claimed that parental influence and peer pressure did not hold much sway in their preference for restaurants.

Most kids surveyed cited the local diner as their favorite restaurant (23 percent), followed by Mexican establishments and McDonald’s (11 and 10 percent, respectively). The older kids were more likely to prefer the diners, and preference for the Golden Arches decreased with increasing age.

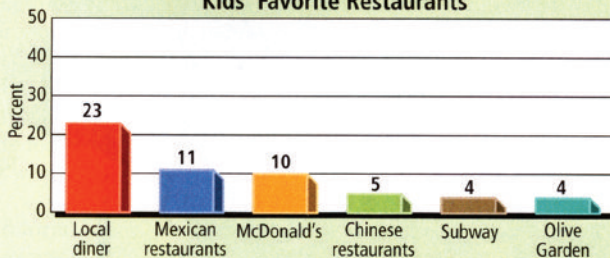
Kids in this group were most likely to order pizza (11 percent) or chicken (9 percent), followed by burgers (9 percent). Interestingly, the older the respondent, the less burgers were the top choice: 17.2 percent of third graders called it their favorite restaurant food; only 4.9 percent of fifth graders did. Pasta, on the other hand, grew in popularity with age: 1.7 percent loved it in third grade, but 9.2 percent did in fifth grade.

A few results of the study may make you rethink how you structure your kids’ menu, if you have one. The vast majority, more than ¾ of the children in this age group, said they choose their own meals instead of deferring to their parents’ choices. And about two-thirds preferred the offerings on the adult menu to the kids’ version.

When it comes to beverages, not surprisingly, soda was singled out as the favorite. But, perhaps reflecting parental guidance, slightly more than half of the group said they ordered bottled water every time they eat in a restaurant. Milk ran a close third after soda.

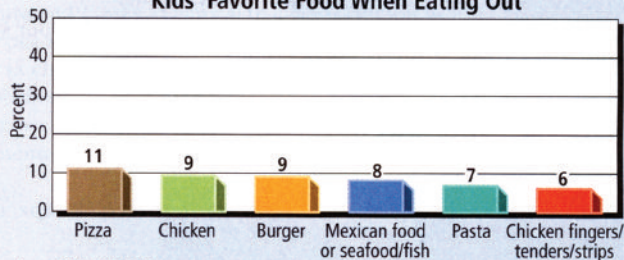
More than 350 children ranging in age from 8 to 11 in eight states participated in the survey by Y-Pulse, a youth foodservice research company based in Chicago. For more information on Y-Pulse, e-mail [info@ypulse.org](mailto:info@ypulse.org) or phone 312-280-9061.

Kids’ Favorite Restaurants



Source: Y-Pulse LLC 2006

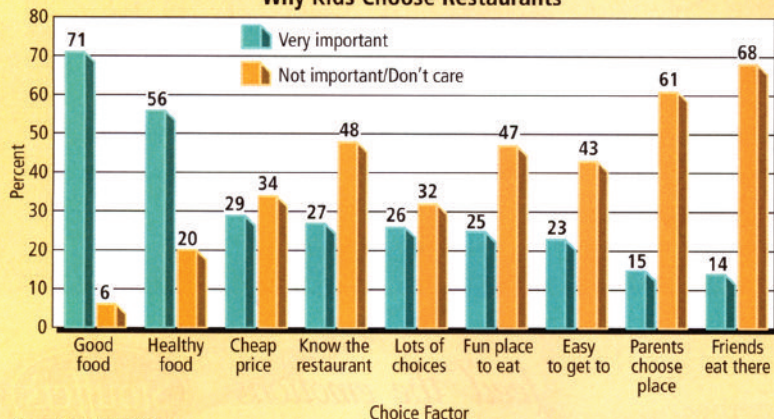
Kids’ Favorite Food When Eating Out



Source: Y-Pulse LLC 2006



Why Kids Choose Restaurants



Source: Y-Pulse LLC 2006