



## Why Your Restaurant Should Focus on Kids

Want to increase your restaurant's bottom line? Consider making your eatery kid-friendly. According to Bloomberg, Americans' spending on dining out has outpaced their spending on groceries for the first time. This includes parents taking their children out to eat in restaurants. With dining out becoming more popular, catering to families makes financial sense. Kids might not eat as much as adults, but making your restaurant kid-friendly can increase your overall volume.

### Include a Variety of Kids' Options on the Menu

Recent surveys by the [American Culinary Federation](#) show that healthy, locally grown menu items are a top choice when eating in a restaurant. This applies to parents as much as anyone else, particularly when they read news stories about the dangers of childhood obesity. Offering healthy menu items for children does not mean that you have to ditch the hot dogs, French fries and macaroni and cheese, but it does mean that adding items like sliced fruit, whole grain bread, low-fat milk and lean meats are a good idea. Parents are more likely to return to a restaurant where they know that they can feed their kids a delicious healthy meal.

### Pay Attention to Service

Remember that kids are customers, too. They should not just be an afterthought. Respect all customers, regardless of age. Warmly greet parents with children in tow and give them a larger table so that they have room to store all of their gear. A larger table also gives parents room to move items out of kids' reach if necessary. If appropriate, ask the parents if their kids would like a high chair or booster seat.

**Children, depending on age, want to be treated like adults and appreciate being asked directly what they would like to order.** Serve kids' meals quickly, even if the adult food is not ready. Parents very much appreciate speedy service. Show flexibility when it comes to food items, since many children these days have food allergies. Be ready to offer substitutions and give information about food ingredients if needed.

- Make sure every bathroom has a changing station. Put a short stool under the sink so that children can stand on it when they wash their hands.
- Offer an online menu. Parents appreciate knowing what options are available for their kids ahead of time.
- Have kids-eat-free days. Offer a free child meal for every adult meal purchased. This is a simple way to attract more families.

### Ensure that Children Have Plenty to Do

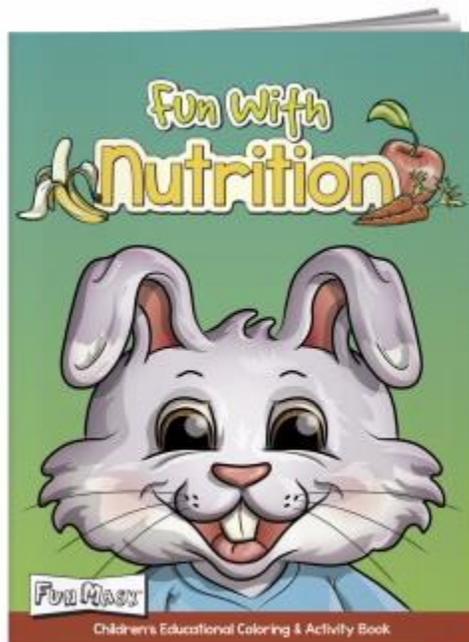
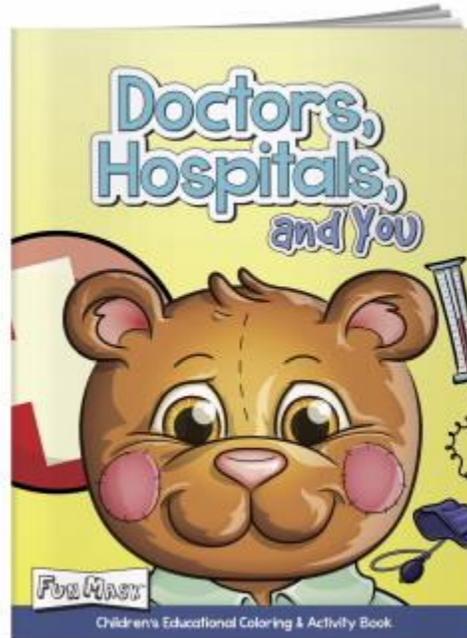
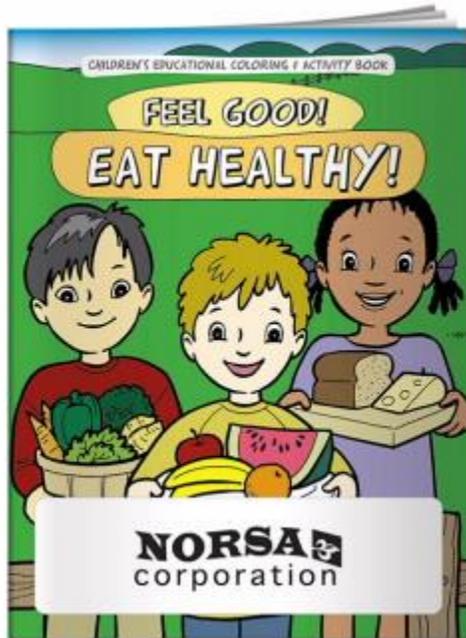
Children become bored easily and quickly. Ensure that they have plenty to do while waiting for their food to keep them from acting out. Provide child-friendly appetizers, paper tablecloths, coloring books and crayons. Make the menus colorful, entertaining and even interactive. They might have a word search game, a crossword puzzle or a fun worksheet on the back. You can also hand these out to kids and their parents while they wait for a table.

### Remember that kids are customers, too.

Consider creating a kids' corner. It should be a place that is visible from every angle in the restaurant so that parents can see their kids at all times. Add pillows, coloring books, drawing papers, Lego blocks, reading books and other kid favorites to give children a place to play while waiting for their meal. While these areas can often be tedious to manage, they serve as great ways for parents to offer their kids distractions when patience runs short. Rotate the toys out to avoid old ones getting grimy.

Making your restaurant a child-friendly place takes a little work but is worth the effort. Parents will appreciate it, and children will, too. They might even become lifelong customers. **Contact us at (410) 409-8000-FLIP OVER FOR DETAILS**

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