ONLY 3% OF KIDS’ MEAL OPTIONS ARE HEALTHY. IT’S TIME FOR RESTAURANTS TO SERVE KIDS BETTER™.
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Preface

Voices for Healthy Kids®, a joint initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and American Heart Association (AHA), works to create environments that support health so all young people in the United States can eat healthier foods and be more active. By engaging, organizing, and mobilizing communities across the country, Voices for Healthy Kids aims to ensure that every child has access to healthy foods and drinks at home and in school, safe streets for biking and walking, and safe places to play after school.

This toolkit is designed to help coalitions educate their communities on ways to make this vision a reality.

Voices for Healthy Kids actively supports policy changes where children live, learn, and play to help kids across the country achieve a healthy weight. Nearly one in three kids and teens are overweight or obese. While childhood obesity affects the entire country, the challenges are not the same in every community. For this reason, Voices for Healthy Kids is committed to reaching communities that are disproportionately impacted by the epidemic. These communities include communities of color; high-poverty urban, suburban, and rural populations of all races and ethnicities; and Native Americans.

State and local policy changes are effective strategies to help children lead healthier lives. Public officials have both the right and the responsibility to ensure communities have access to healthy foods and safe places to be active. Our policy priorities to achieve healthier communities are:

- Improving the nutritional quality of snack foods and beverages in schools.
- Reducing consumption of sugary beverages.
- Protecting children from unhealthy food and beverage marketing.
- Increasing access to affordable healthy foods.
- Increasing access to parks, playgrounds, walking paths, bike lanes, and other opportunities to be physically active.
- Increasing and improving opportunities for kids to stay active when they are out of school.

In this toolkit, you will find tactics to help your community improve the nutritional quality of restaurant meals marketed to and served to children. More specifically, the content will help you advocate for policies requiring restaurants to serve kids’ meals that meet nutritional standards. Voices for Healthy Kids is excited to offer this toolkit—as well as one for each of our policy priorities—to support communities striving to live, learn, and play in healthy environments.

To ensure the most successful community advocacy possible, we encourage everyone using this toolkit to engage the staff and partners of Voices for Healthy Kids. Stay connected to our work on Facebook, Twitter, and on www.VoicesforHealthyKids.org, or reach us directly at VoicesforHealthyKids@heart.org. You can also join in the conversation with others engaged in the movement across the country at PreventObesity.net.
**Introduction**

This evening, across America and in your state, thousands of restaurants will serve our children dinner that will look something like this: fried chicken tenders with a side of French fries and a sugar-loaded beverage to wash it all down...maybe a cookie or milkshake for dessert.

Greasy, high-fat, high-calorie, high-sodium, high-sugar, and LOW-nutrition. THIS is the restaurant kids’ menu in our country. The overwhelming majority of restaurants provide few healthy options and often make unhealthy options the default. One study of the top 50 U.S. chain restaurants found that 86 percent of children’s meal combinations are too high in calories, 55 percent are too high in saturated fat, and 66 percent are too high in sodium.  

It is a harsh environment for individuals and families trying to lead healthy lives. And it’s not just the menus that are the problem. Restaurants offer unhealthy menus for cheap, and then put millions of dollars into aggressively marketing those very menus to children, particularly in low income communities and communities of color. Each year, restaurants spend $715 million—nearly $2 million a day—marketing to children and youth; toy giveaways make up almost half ($340 million) of that spending; restaurant foods are one of the top food categories marketed to children. Restaurants use marketing to shape children’s food preferences and choices, including what kids think of as food.

For parents trying to show their children how to lead healthy lives, it is nearly impossible to shield against the coordinated marketing efforts of a multi-million-dollar restaurant industry, especially when there are so few healthy alternatives on the menu. As parents face increasingly busy schedules and thin budgets, restaurants and fast food chains position themselves to be the place where families can fill empty stomachs. Americans today eat outside the home much more than 50 years ago, with nearly half of all food dollars (48 percent) spent on restaurant foods, up from 26 percent in 1970.

This calls on restaurants to do their part to make sure all of us—especially children—have healthy options. And as we’ve seen, that is a responsibility they rarely live up to.

Studies link eating out with obesity, higher amounts of body fat, and higher BMIs, and increased consumption of fast food meals is associated with consuming more calories, fat, and saturated fat.  

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Typically, children eat nearly twice as many calories when they eat a meal at a restaurant as they do when they eat a meal at home.7

Pair these numbers with the startling realities of childhood obesity in the U.S., and we are confronted with a serious problem that needs to be addressed as quickly as possible: unhealthy restaurant kids’ menus. You see, while eating out has increased, so have the levels of childhood obesity in the U.S. Since the 1960s, childhood obesity has tripled,8 and among children ages 2 to 19, 31.8 percent are overweight or obese.9

All that unhealthy food will have a negative long-term impact on our children; the health consequences of being overweight include elevated blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, and glucose intolerance, which can lead to cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.10 Overweight and obese children are more likely to become obese adults, headed for a lifetime of chronic and costly diseases, disability, and premature death.11 Childhood obesity is the most dangerous public health concern facing our children today. According to the CDC, if current trends continue, 1 in 3 U.S. adults will have diabetes by 2050.12

While restaurants have made some progress toward offering healthy options on their kids’ menus by reformulating menu options and replacing sugary drinks with low-fat milk or water, that progress has been slow. Since 2008, the percentage of kids’ meals that met expert nutrition standards increased from 1 percent to just 3 percent.13

Together, we can work to reduce childhood obesity by improving the nutritional quality of restaurant children’s meals and reducing fast food and restaurant marketing to kids. Strategies include setting nutrition standards for restaurant kids’ meals, removing sugar-sweetened beverages from kids’ meals, or setting nutrition standards for restaurant kids’ meals that are sold with toys.14 By offering healthier options on children’s menus, restaurants can create an environment conducive to healthy eating that supports, rather than undermines, parents’ efforts to feed their children healthfully.

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The following list includes potential strategies that can improve the nutritional quality of restaurant children’s meals. While this toolkit focuses mainly on policy change strategies, there are other ways to advocate on and become involved with this issue.

1. **Policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals**: Ensuring that restaurant children’s meals meet minimum nutrition standards* supports parents’ efforts to feed their children healthfully. Other policy approaches may include requiring that only healthy drinks are served with kids’ meals or setting nutritional standards for kids’ meals accompanied by toy giveaways.

2. **Voluntary nutritional standards for restaurant kids’ meals**: Advocate for restaurants and chains to enact voluntary or incentive-based policies to meet specific nutritional standards* for kids’ meals. For example, restaurants could offer and advertise healthier side items such as fruit and vegetables, and healthier beverages such as low-fat milk and water with children’s meals as the default option. They could remove sugary beverages, make portion sizes reasonable, switch to whole grains, or highlight healthier options on menus.

3. **Organizational actions to promote healthier restaurant options for kids**: Local coalitions and organizations can work within their communities to influence individual restaurants to provide and promote healthier options for children by adopting specific nutritional standards* for kids’ meals.

4. **Family action**: Families can avoid restaurants that do not have a majority of options that meet specific nutritional standards.*

5. **Individual pledge**: Parents can model desired behavior by making healthy choices at restaurants themselves and for their children.

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To get started:

We have tried to make it easier to raise awareness in your community by creating model tools about why these policies are important and the different ways to address them. This toolkit includes guides to identify and recruit volunteers, spread the word online, alert local media, hold events, and meet with state and local public officials to encourage policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant children’s meals.

- **Review the contents of this toolkit** and think about the types of activities that would work best in your community. What, if any, existing state or local laws are in place?
- **Identify your core planning team** and think about the type of activity that will make the biggest difference for your state or community. Does your core planning team reflect a range of voices and the realities of the communities most in need of healthier restaurant children’s meals?
- **Work with local media and activate social media** to spread the word online. Would an event that features a well-known community member attract media attention? Or is your community better reached through a local publication? Does it make sense to activate—and educate—government leaders, parents, and other concerned community leaders through social media?
- **Consult the volunteers section** of this toolkit for specific tips on recruiting, engaging, and recognizing a diverse group of volunteers from communities and neighborhoods most affected by these issues who will help you achieve your goals.

*To be updated when American Heart Association standards are developed/finalized. In the meantime, please refer to the nutritional standards developed by the Rand Corporation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.*
Customize your materials to be reflective of the realities of your community and include any language/cultural translation of the sample outreach materials included in this toolkit for your activities.

With childhood obesity rates higher than ever just as more families are dining out, we need to ensure that what restaurants are serving is nutritious for children. It is time for restaurants to remove high-calorie, poor-nutrition foods and emphasize kids’ meals that contribute to a healthful diet. Let’s work together to Serve Kids Better™16 and urge restaurants to support a healthy environment for today’s children and generations to come.

16 Serve Kids Better™ has been trademarked by the American Heart Association and is available for use by advocates supporting its mission only by way of an executed license agreement.
A Note on Lobbying

It is always important to understand whether any activities you are planning could fall under the IRS definition of lobbying. This is especially true if you receive a Voices for Healthy Kids grant to support your efforts because no Voices for Healthy Kids funds can be used to support lobbying. Generally, any activity or communication that takes a position on specific pending or proposed legislation—for Congress, a state legislature, a city council, or a town meeting—could be considered lobbying in some circumstances. Below are some examples of communications that may be considered lobbying, as well as those that are not.

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<th>Non-Lobbying</th>
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<td>1. “Contact your legislator and ask him/her to support bill number XXX to require restaurants to serve healthier kids’ meals.”</td>
<td>1. “Ask your legislator to support healthier kids’ meals in restaurants!”</td>
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<td>2. “Click here to sign the petition asking Rep. Smith to support the bill to require California restaurants to serve healthy kids’ meals.”</td>
<td>2. “Sign the petition to advocate for more nutritious restaurant kids’ meals in California!”</td>
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<td>3. A communication to legislators that supports bills not yet introduced: “New York should adopt San Francisco’s restaurant nutrition ordinance.”</td>
<td>3. A communication to the public that supports bills not yet introduced: “As a concerned parent, I ask all my neighbors to join me in working to get New York to adopt San Francisco’s restaurant nutrition ordinance.”</td>
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Look for the following icon throughout this toolkit, which identifies areas where lobbying may come into play:

When you engage in activities that may involve lobbying, consult your legal counsel, as well as the Lobbying vs. Non-Lobbying Checklist in the appendix of this toolkit, to help determine whether you need to use lobbying funds. Lobbying efforts must be supported with other funds, and these costs must be tracked separately from non-lobbying efforts. All types of activities, both lobbying and non-lobbying, can help promote healthy lifestyles in your community; however, if your ultimate goal becomes the passage of specific legislation, you will probably need unrestricted funds to conduct some of your work.

This toolkit is written for organizations that are legally able to lobby and have lobbying and non-lobbying funds available. (Public charities are able to conduct a limited amount of lobbying, while private foundations are not. Governmental entities are subject to different rules; check with your legal counsel for details.)

In this toolkit, you will find important tips for understanding the distinctions between lobbying and non-lobbying activities, as well as when to use lobbying funds versus non-lobbying funds. We have provided examples to help you understand the distinctions between lobbying and non-lobbying activities so you can plan your activities strategically, without violating restrictions on your non-lobbying funds. Please also be aware that some states have additional rules that may be relevant to your activities, such as registration and other requirements; this guide does not address those state rules.
Pre-Campaign Planning

Prior to the start of your campaign, dedicate ample time to carefully planning your efforts. Start by thinking about what you want to accomplish, who you want to reach, and how you define success. Ask yourself these questions:

- **What is my goal?** Your goal is the foundation of your campaign, the reason why you do what you do. At the center of your goal are the people you hope to impact through your efforts, so spend time thoughtfully identifying the audiences most in need of healthier meals in your community.

- **What is the strategy I will use to reach my goal?** Identifying your core campaign strategy is crucial to the success of your campaign. Do this *prior* to planning your tactics. To ensure a cohesive, effective campaign, your strategy must inform all of your tactical decisions.

- **How does the strategy happen?** This toolkit will help you answer the “how” of your strategy by taking you through the phases of a campaign and providing examples of tactics you can use to achieve success. Choose which resonate with your community, as those are the tactics that will serve your campaign the best.

- **What resources do I need to achieve that strategy?** Resources can be anything from the right people on your campaign team to funding for your efforts. Regardless, make sure you dedicate time to predicting who and what you will need to see your campaign through to completion.
  - **Who has the decision making authority to help me achieve that goal?** You will likely need approval of your campaign plan before you begin, so make sure approvals are in place and budgets have been approved to avoid those hurdles once your campaign starts.
  - **Who in the community can help you with your campaign?** Whether it is securing a sponsor or a community partner, try to identify those opportunities ahead of your campaign and include those parties in your planning.

- **How will I know if the campaign is a success?** Establish metrics of success at the beginning of the campaign so you know what you are moving toward. Note that campaign metrics of success should be general and correspond directly to your goal. Tactical metrics for success will correspond to the tactics you plan, which are based on the goals and strategy you identify in your planning process.

**Key Takeaways**

- Identify your campaign strategy prior to planning your tactics. It should inform all of your tactical decisions.
- Dedicate time to predicting what resources you will need to see your campaign through to the end.
- Establish metrics of success for your campaign from the very beginning so you know what you are moving toward.
Campaign Phases
There are four key phases to a campaign: recruit, engage, mobilize, and evaluate. The following section outlines each of these phases; as you plan your campaign, designate time for each step.

Before executing any of the tactics in this toolkit, it is important to establish how you will measure the effectiveness of your communications: Media impressions? Likes? Comments? Open and click-through rates? Offline actions taken, such as signing up for educational opportunities or to volunteer? Media advocacy actions, such as op-ed or letter to the editor (LTE) placements? It’s also important to measure the specific outcomes related to improving the nutrition of restaurant meals for children. Set these parameters before you get started so you can measure your success throughout the campaign.

Phase 1: Recruit
In the first phase of the campaign, lay the groundwork to ensure success, and recruit key advocates to your cause. Think about these questions: Where do members of various ethnic, cultural, socio-economic, and racial groups in the community regularly congregate? What are the organizations in your community that advocate on behalf of different racial and multicultural communities? Are there doctors, dentists, dietitians, nurses, public health officials, researchers, nutrition associations, teachers, coaches, faith-based groups, PTAs/PTOs, health food groups, restaurant associations, or academics that could be explored? Who do you want to be your “everyday advocates,” the group of people who speak out on the issue regularly? Do these “everyday advocates” represent the diversity of the communities most affected by the issue? Who can be your spokespeople? Are there families in your community who would be willing to share their story through an op-ed or an LTE? Are there community members representative of different racial and multicultural experiences whose voices may be uplifted? Remember that spokespeople should be real people, relevant to the community, who can share their stories and realities. Those who are the loudest in the communities, may not be the most appropriate persons to be the spokespeople.

Consider reaching out to specific groups that would likely be in favor of improving the healthfulness of restaurant kids’ meals. In your outreach, make sure to reach out to organizations that reflect the diversity of your audience. This could take form in a couple of ways. For example, if your audience includes ethnic minorities with a strong cultural emphasis on food, consider recruiting local minority organizations whose goals include health and wellness.

Another example may be working with local children’s sports teams that have post-game celebrations at local restaurants. The coaches and parents of the children on the team may be interested in working with these restaurants to make sure the food they provide to children is healthful.

Reach out to groups via available channels: social media, minority news outlets, existing member databases, personal emails, blogs, paid advertisements, community outreach, tables at street fairs and festivals, public announcements at places of worship, etc. Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate materials, which accurately speak to your community realities, as well. Cast a wide net to recruit a diverse audience that cares about your issues.

Once you determine who is on your side, start thinking about how to garner support from public officials and other important leaders—another form of recruitment is gathering the support of your local leaders. It’s often most effective to do this through the advocates you recruit. In many cases, you can
ask your supporters to communicate your message to their representatives or key officials. You can do that through letters, e-communications, blogs, public service announcements, LTEs, op-eds, and social media, among other tactics. Learn more about mobilization in the following pages, and check the appendix of this toolkit for examples.

More information on how to implement the Recruitment Phase is found in the sections on Potential Allies, Recruitment Basics, and Recognition Plan.

Phase 2: Engage
During this phase, your introductory/educational email, initial media outreach (both traditional and social), and event planning take place.

This is the time to start building genuine relationships. Communicate regularly with your activists, keeping them engaged, informed, and ready to take action when needed. Start working with the media—they tend to respond best to people who are organized, clear, polite, and have newsworthy things for them to report. Media engagement should include multicultural and mainstream press. This toolkit provides introductory language for your social media and e-communications efforts directed at advocates and media.

Additionally, start working with the diverse group of spokespeople you recruited in phase 1. Use the media tips in this toolkit, and familiarize your spokespeople with your talking points to ensure they are confident when speaking in public or with media. When scheduling your press conferences and events, give reporters and community members ample notice.

More information on how to implement the Engagement Phase is found in the sections on Diverse Audiences, Social Media Resources, and Tips for Using Social Media to Reach Journalists.

Phase 3: Mobilize
Now that your planning is complete, it is time to act. Reach out to your advocates, spokespeople, the media, etc., and let them know your campaign is in full swing. Keep track of your metrics of success, as well as the movement of the policy at hand, to deploy different communication methods to increase mobilization as needed.

Stay in touch with diverse community members to keep them informed and engaged. You may need them to do educational outreach at local gatherings to build popular support in the community. At other times, a social media action may be best to help bolster recruitment. Advocates may need to write letters to their legislators because a vote in the statehouse is just around the corner. (The costs of planning and conducting this last type of activity will require lobbying funds.)

In this phase, leverage the relationships you established in phase 2. By this time, you have made connections with reporters and local bloggers over the phone or via email. Communicate regularly with reporters to keep them informed and give them ideas for covering your campaign.

If you are planning media events, such as press conferences, this is the time to execute. Get your spokespeople ready to lead events, and make sure those spokespeople reflect the diversity of the audience you are trying to reach—and this should be broader than race. Diversity extends across
contextual and situational realities as well. For more details on media training, take a look at the Media Training Tips section of this toolkit. Set up opportunities for new advocates to join the cause. Let media know the event is happening and give them special incentives to cover the story, such as granting them an exclusive interview with your spokespeople and photo opportunities.

More information on how to implement the Mobilize Phase is found in the sections on Action Alerts, The Value of Phone Outreach, Hosting a Media Event, Media Training Tips, Why Op-Eds Matter, Meeting with Legislators, and Days at the Capitol.

Phase 4: Evaluate
Do not forget about evaluation—it is just as important as the rest of your campaign. Start by reviewing the metrics you put in place at the beginning of the campaign to help determine what worked and what did not, so you can make adjustments for your next campaign.

Consider metrics that are specific to evaluating restaurants kids’ meals. Have you had any restaurants in your community agree to serve healthier options? Has any legislation been passed to improve the healthfulness of kids’ meals?

Share your campaign successes with your advocates and allies so you can celebrate the wins together. Advocates need to know that their efforts made a difference to the campaign, especially if they are going to help your organization or cause in the future.

Key Takeaways
- Recruiting a diverse group of advocates, especially ones that represent the communities most affected by policy change, will be key to your campaign’s success.
- Educate volunteers, the community, and the local media about the issues that are important to you.
- Communicate regularly to keep advocates and media informed and engaged.
- Establish metrics for your campaign’s success, and regularly evaluate your progress.
Recruit: Potential Allies

Your success will depend on generating support for improving the healthfulness of restaurant kids’ meals, and working with state and local partner groups is one of the best ways to build that support. Consider the list of tips below as you begin outreach to other organizations, and consult the Appendix for a detailed list of potential allies.

Who Can Help

There are many organizations working to help children reach a healthier weight by encouraging more nutritious restaurant kids’ meal options. While there may be organizations solely focused on improving nutrition for children, far more groups work broadly on health and wellness for kids. While some groups may not perfectly align with your goals to make kids’ meals healthier in restaurants, it is still worth reaching out to them—they may be valuable partners for other programs you are pursuing or other long-term organization goals.

Potential partners include leaders in the following areas:
- Social justice, civil rights, and health equity
- Food justice
- Educational justice and reform
- Faith-based
- Hunger among low-income families
- Health and wellness, including reducing childhood obesity
- Child welfare
- Civic duties
- Economic development
- Pediatric dentistry, medical, and health
- Parenting

Potential Challengers

Policies to support healthier restaurant kids’ meals may not be consistent with the political views of some organizations. The market share at stake for some companies has also drawn the attention of trade associations. As such, some organizations have spoken out against the government providing such marketplace oversight.

Although some potential allies and opponents will speak publicly, others will take a more subtle approach. Before making a decision on any potential partner or opponent, examine their goals, mission statement, programs, and current and past activities to ensure alignment with your key goals and metrics.

Key Takeaways

- Partners can come from a variety of backgrounds—from faith-based groups to groups solely committed to improving nutrition for kids. Cast a wide net to reach as many potential allies as possible.
- Understand your potential allies’ or opponents’ goals, priorities, and programs before engaging with them.
Recruit: Recruitment Basics

Deploying a campaign is not just about mobilizing your advocates to take action or rally around improving restaurant kids’ meals. It is an opportunity to draw more supporters to your cause and retain them for future campaigns to improve the health of your community. The following recruitment guidelines will help you accomplish these goals.

Note that these tips are suggestions, not requirements. Choose the approach and tactics that work best for your organization and community. Regardless of how you recruit new supporters, it is most important to dedicate abundant resources to communicate effectively with the diverse audience you hope to engage. For instance, if you are hoping to reach Latino audiences, consider the need for translators and translated materials; if your target group does not use the Internet, emphasize offline recruitment opportunities. Most of all, be considerate of cultural sensitivities, traditions, and the best corresponding ways to communicate.

Recruiting at Events

Every event your organization initiates or attends should provide an easy way for people to join your efforts to improve restaurant children’s meals. There are several ways to collect information at events; a few ideas are listed below.

- **Join with your partners.** Consider joining with your partners to share a table at an event or taking part in a larger aligned effort, such as a statewide task force interested in promoting healthy weight in children, where ensuring kids have healthy meal options at restaurants can add value to their overall objective of helping kids eat healthfully. Attending partner related activities and meetings can show reciprocity and genuine intent for partnership.

- **Communicate in your supporters’ language at the event.** If you do not speak the language, find another supporter who does.

- **Bring tablet computers.** Easy to use and extremely portable, tablet computers can be a simple and effective way to collect names and emails on-site.

- **Offer sign-up forms.** This option is easy and inexpensive to initiate. It is also a natural way to combine an opportunity to sign up with an opportunity to take action. For example, asking people to fill out a pre-written postcard to an elected official or other appropriate decision maker can provide a compelling reason for people to share their personal information. However, do not assume that a person filling out the form wants you to contact them; include a box they can check to receive more information. Remember that transcribing the names of those who do sign up into a computer-friendly format will take time.
  - If the postcard talks only generally about ensuring kids have healthy options at restaurants, it is not lobbying. However, if it refers to legislation (or to specific legislative proposals), it would be lobbying and your organization must pay for that activity with lobbying funds.

- **Try business card recruitment.** The less effort it takes to sign up, the more people will do so. For example, if you are hosting an event with key business leaders in your community, ask everyone to leave their business cards behind as a way to join the cause. You may pull in more names than with a traditional sign-up form because this business card approach is so easy for the new recruit. Later, enter their contact information into your database of supporters.
Recruiting on Issues
It is important to show potential advocates that joining your cause will make a difference. Potential recruits are much more likely to take action when they believe that doing so will have an impact.

- **Expand the ask.** When recruiting, ask for more than just a name. Ask your potential advocates to take part in an action, such as signing a petition or sending a letter to their legislators about healthy restaurant kids’ meals.
  - If the petition or letter talks only generally about healthy kids meals at restaurants, it is not lobbying. However, if the petition or letter refers to legislation (or to specific legislative proposals), it would be lobbying and your organization must pay for that activity with lobbying funds.
- **Address issues head-on.** Do not be afraid to use conflict or controversy when appropriate. People like to engage in topical issues.

Recruiting Online
Do not limit yourself to recruiting at in-person events only. There may be a large pool of new advocates you can reach online.

- **Engage social media friends and followers.** If you have affiliate or state online accounts, use posts to ask your followers to tell their friends about your organization and its efforts to improve restaurant kids’ meals, or ask your followers to retweet invitations to join your efforts.
- **Add a sign-up form to Facebook.** If you add a sign-up tab to your Facebook page, fans will be able to take advocacy actions without leaving the Facebook platform.
- **Use Facebook advertising.** Advertising on Facebook can be inexpensive, targeted, and effective. Studies have shown nonprofits can effectively use this medium to encourage people to sign petitions, volunteer, and/or attend free events, as well as to generate awareness for a campaign. You can even narrow the ad’s reach to the city level and localize content to improve engagement.

Recruiting via Word-of-Mouth
Are your advocates telling their friends and families about how important it is to make sure healthy foods are served to children in restaurants? Healthy living is not just a volunteer opportunity, it is a way of life—so encourage advocates to mention it to the other groups in which they participate (e.g., civic organizations, fitness classes, faith-based meetings, union meetings, etc.). Include culturally and linguistically appropriate materials for these recruitment opportunities. Again, as you approach new potential supporters, communicate in their language and be sensitive to their cultural context and lived experience. If you do not speak their language and are unfamiliar with your supporters’ cultural realities, find another supporter who does and is.

In addition to some potential advocates, such as health care professionals and educators, there are several other groups to consider.

- **Ask parents** to get their local PTA, PTO, or other parent group to support healthier restaurant menu items for kids. Other parents may see the benefit of creating healthier restaurant options for the whole family and become advocates for your cause.
- **Ask your neighbors** to mention the importance of improving restaurant children’s meals at their community organization meetings. People who are already involved in the community may be
more willing to dedicate their time to this effort, especially when they hear the message from their peers.

- **Ask faith leaders to get involved.** Engaging leaders in the faith community is a great way to connect with community members, especially in under-resourced communities.
  - Faith leaders may be willing to hold their community events or fundraisers only at restaurants and other eating establishments that offer healthier kids’ meals. They may also be willing to support local restaurants that offer primarily healthy kids’ meals through purchasing their catering for such events from those restaurants.
- **Reach out through social and civic organizations** in your community. Ask to speak at a meeting or luncheon hosted by groups such as the Junior League, Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, minority-led and mainstream chambers of commerce, Black Greek Letter Organizations (BLGO), and other minority led fraternities, sororities, and organizations.
  - For example, if you’re trying to get local organizations to support improving the nutritional value of restaurant meals served to children, you could encourage them to cater their meetings and events using restaurants that offer healthier options.
  - If they often look for sponsors for their events and fundraisers, these organizations may be willing to approach specific restaurants that are improving healthy menu selections for children.

### Recruiting via Competition

Some healthy competition among your existing advocate base can help bring new followers to your organization.

- **Challenge your existing advocates** to recruit friends and family. Then, host a celebration to welcome new advocates to your organization.
- **Offer a prize** to whoever can recruit the most new friends and followers online. Create pre-written tweets and Facebook posts in appropriate languages for your community and count shares and retweets. When possible, make sure the prize is health-related.

### Recruiting in the Community

What does your target audience like to do? Instead of creating new events, meet them where they already gather.

- **Attend community festivals.** Host booths at street fairs or carnivals, and ask attendees to sign up.
- **Partner with universities.** Host a table at school fairs and encourage students to form an on-campus group in support of childhood health, with a project to improve the healthfulness of restaurant children’s meals. Specifically, you may want to reach out to individual schools within the university where programs would naturally align with this issue. Consider reaching out to schools of nutrition or public health. For example, students who are studying pediatric nutrition may be interested in creating a group to support improving the nutritional quality of restaurant meals for kids.
- **Reach out to local places of worship.** Recruit members to attend local events and organize meetings through bulletin advertisements and in-person announcements. Places of worship offer services in different languages; make sure to bring materials that are culturally appropriate and linguistically accurate.
Recruiting via Politics
Leverage the response of your state legislators to encourage advocates to recruit more friends to the cause. For example:

- Send emails with subject lines or topics featuring legislator opposition or support, and encourage existing advocates to recruit their friends and family. For example, “Tell Senator Jones to show support for healthier restaurant kids’ meals” or “Please thank Senator Garcia for supporting improved restaurant kids’ meals.”
  - These emails would not be lobbying unless “show support for healthier restaurant kids’ meals” or “supporting improved restaurant kids’ meals” clearly refers to legislation pending in Senator Garcia’s or Senator Jones’s statehouse. Usually, general statements about restaurant kids’ meals are not lobbying, although urging the adoption of specific aspects of marketing laws may be.

Key Takeaways

- There are many different ways to recruit new advocates. Use the recruitment methods that are the most appropriate for building a diverse and strong group of supporters who can best connect with the audiences you hope to engage.
- Make the recruitment process as easy as possible for your potential supporters. Offer different ways for them to sign up and take action.
- Be sure to have materials translated into languages spoken by your potential volunteers and ensure they are culturally appropriate and relevant to communities most impacted by your issue.
- Not all potential volunteers will have regular access to the Internet, so make sure you recruit both on and offline.
- Some recruitment tactics may constitute lobbying. Make sure to check with your legal counsel before referencing specific initiatives or legislation.
- Meet people where they are. Attend existing community meetings, worship services, festivals, etc., to engage with real people and authentic leaders who may be interested in joining your campaign.
Recruit: Recognition Plan

Recognition: we all want it. It is no surprise that appreciated advocates are more likely to submit an LTE, sign a petition, or attend a rally. As you conduct your campaign, recognizing your advocates for their contributions to your efforts will be crucial in gaining and retaining your support base.

Volunteer Recognition

Recognize New Volunteers

A strong campaign starts with a strong recruitment push. By creating a foundation of supporters early, you will have them ready to activate when the time comes. Consider the following to grow your base of support and recognize new advocates.

- **Small gifts branded with your organization’s logo** (e.g., water bottles or USB drives) can be a reward for signing up. To stretch resources a bit further, consider offering incentives to the first 50 or 100 people who sign up on a specific day or giving prizes to advocates for recruiting the largest number of new supporters.

If resources for incentives are limited, collaborate with a sponsor organization who can provide giveaways or incentive approaches to recognize new advocates.

Recognize Existing Volunteers

Gaining new advocates is never the end of the story. It is also important to maintain good relationships with your existing supporters, ensuring they know how valuable they are to your cause. Consider offering the following:

- **Exclusive opportunities**, such as the chance to meet with your organization’s leadership or serve on a volunteer advisory panel.
- **Certificates or trophies**, especially when presented at a public event.
- **Invitations** to attend volunteer after-hours, receptions, or trainings. For example, invite them to lunches or dinners with your organization that are catered by restaurants in your area that provide healthy options.

Choose the Right Time

Whether you are reaching out to new or existing advocates, take advantage of specific times of the year when engagement is traditionally high.

- **Leverage local festivals**. Consider creating recognition awards for use at local street fairs or festivals with free entry or food tickets.
  - Partner with local restaurants during your city’s Restaurant Week to provide deals on their healthy kids’ meal options.
- **Speak up when it is time to vote**. If the local government is voting on measures pertaining to the food restaurants offer children, this is a key time to recognize existing and potential advocates. Use lobbying resources, if they are available to you, to ask advocates to contact their legislators, and thank them when they do.
  - Depending on the government body involved, asking advocates to contact legislators may be grassroots lobbying, because it is a communication to the public that reflects a view on legislation and contains a call-to-action. Asking the public to contact members or staff of a state legislature, tribal government, county council, city council, or town meeting is lobbying if you refer to and reflect a view on specific legislation (or a specific...
legislative proposal). Importantly, contacting school board or zoning board members or staff is not lobbying, regardless of the content of the communication. Make sure you have the resources to pay for these activities and you track them appropriately.

- **Use the calendar to inspire you.** Create recognition pieces around key health observances taking place throughout the year (e.g., National Nutrition Month) when you can spotlight and thank advocates for their efforts to improve restaurant marketing practices and menu options in your community.

Staff Recognition
Volunteers are not the only people who make a campaign a success. As you thank your volunteers for their efforts, make sure to also thank the staff members who keep the campaign running every day.

- **Celebrate staff publicly.** If you hold an annual celebration, highlight the good work the staff has done over the past year. Offering awards or opportunities to publicly acknowledge good work lets employees know their efforts have been noticed and are valued. Nominate staff (or volunteer) to be featured by PreventObesity.net and on its social media outlets.
- **Ask your strongest recruiters of new advocates to lead a call or webinar** to share their tips with other staff members.
- **Conduct a staff contest** to see which members can bring in the most new advocates over a specified period. Offer a day off or a gift card as an incentive.
- **Highlight the diversity of your staff** to demonstrate its importance in engaging all members of the community.

Key Takeaways
- Recognize and thank volunteers for their commitment to your cause.
- Reward new volunteers with small gifts to help increase sign-up rates.
- Do not forget about your staff—they deserve thanks too.
Engage: Diverse Audiences

No matter the issue or the policy goals, engaging with diverse audiences should be a core part of your campaign. The most successful campaigns are often the ones that speak to and engage with as many different people as possible. Priority populations who are at risk for obesity and obesity-related diseases are particularly important to engage as partners and advocates, including people living in high-poverty urban, suburban, and rural areas, and particularly African-American, Latino, and Native American individuals.

Below are some questions designed to help you think about who you are reaching out to and how. The following are intended to be thought-starters, not an exhaustive list.

- **Who is on your team?** Take a look at your volunteer base, your advisors, and your staff. Are your teams made up of people from different backgrounds? Do they represent the communities where you want to have the most impact—particularly if the communities are historically underserved? If not, where might there be opportunities to do more?

- **How are you recruiting and engaging?** If your teams are less diverse than they could be, consider expanding the ways you recruit and engage volunteers and staff. For instance, not everyone has access to the Internet; if your campaign is heavily based online, you may be limiting who is able to join your efforts. Pen-and-paper recruitment and offline volunteer opportunities can help ensure more people will get involved.

- **Where are you recruiting and engaging?** When it comes to getting people involved, location is just as important as technique. Are you reaching out to local faith communities and the multicultural small business community? Many faith communities have separate services in different languages. If you are not already, try setting up a table at events that draw a diverse crowd or partnering with the local multicultural chamber of commerce and other organizations.

- **Who are you talking to?** Make sure you are working with non-mainstream news outlets in your area. There may be newspapers, radio stations, or television networks geared toward diverse communities, particularly non-English-speakers and people of color. Multicultural media coverage can both provide new and different angles on your campaign and encourage diverse audiences to get involved with your work. Ensure you have appropriate spokespeople available to speak to these media outlets.

- **Is language a barrier to access?** If there are non-English-speakers in your area, consider having your materials translated and easily accessible at events and online. If you are planning on hosting phone banks, engage bilingual volunteers. Additionally, if you are planning on setting up a table at events where people are likely to speak other languages, make sure the people staffing your booth speak those languages.

- **Do your team members feel welcome and listened to?** Getting people to sign up or take action is one thing; fostering a welcoming, affirming environment is another. Listen to what your volunteers, advisors, and staff members say about your campaign, and strive for an environment where everyone has a seat at the table. Make adjustments as needed. Listen to key voices that represent the community.

- **Are you considering unique cultural and community perspectives?** Every culture and community has its own nuanced way of thinking and talking about issues, especially when it comes to food. Many cultures have preserved a deep appreciation and celebration around the food they enjoy together. Try to learn what these issues are ahead of time so you can communicate about the issues with those concerns in mind. For instance, if you are supporting efforts to improve restaurant kids’ meals, the salient issues for one neighborhood...
might not be helping children achieve a healthy weight, but rather preserving the culture around food in a specific community. By taking the time and effort to understand these concerns in advance, you will be more likely to build trust with community members.

- **What else can you do?** Throughout your campaign, keep asking yourself the types of questions listed above. There are always opportunities to open your doors wider and expand your reach further.

**Key Takeaways**

- Health equity should be a core part of your campaign, from start to finish because diverse perspectives, insights, relationships, and cultural competencies can make the difference between the success and failure of campaigns.
- Language and cultural barriers can prevent people from getting involved with your campaign.
- Think strategically about where you are recruiting and engaging. It is important to go to the communities you hope to engage and not expect people to come to you.
- There are always opportunities to create a more inclusive, welcoming community.
Engage: Social Media Resources and Tips

It is going to take broad support to achieve the goals you’ve set forth to improve the nutritional quality of restaurants kids’ meals. Fortunately, social media platforms allow you to share your message with a wider audience than traditional door-to-door advocacy work can. With a few clicks, you can access the right people at the right moment, making them aware of the issue and garnering their support. The following tips were created to help you extend your community of advocates online to grow support for requiring restaurants to serve healthier kids’ meals. National experts may already have sample resources you can model or tailor for use in your campaign. Start by checking the websites and social media pages of the organizations listed in the Potential Allies section of this toolkit.

Using Images and Videos

Posts with multimedia often drive higher engagement rates and increased reach—people like looking and clicking on images and video. Below is a quick overview of how to best use multimedia on Facebook and Twitter.

- **Ask your advocates to sign release forms.** Photos of real-life advocates resonate with the community. Just remember that anyone you spotlight online—whether in stories, photos, or videos—must sign an authorization release form. Ask your organization for the appropriate forms.

Images

- **Choose a diverse range of people.** It is important that different groups see people who look like themselves in the images you use.
- **Only use content you own.** The images, videos, or graphics you post should either be created by your team or purchased on stock photography sites. If your organization has an existing photo library, search it to see if anything can be repurposed. Getty Images offers free non-commercial use of many of its stock images on social media and blog sites when you use its embed feature. To find these images and the restrictions around their use, visit [www.gettyimages.com](http://www.gettyimages.com).
- **Use templates.** If you do not have access to graphic design services, there are free online resources you can use, such as Canva.com, which offers templates for Facebook cover pages, Facebook ads, and Twitter backgrounds, as well as free and low-cost stock images.
- **Repurpose print materials online.** The postcard, flyer, and fact sheet included in this toolkit can easily be posted or linked to on Facebook and Twitter.
  - The postcard is especially useful as a featured image to supplement your Facebook posts.
  - Invite advocates to print the flyer and post it at work or around their neighborhood.
  - Save a PDF of the fact sheet and link to it from your post, inviting advocates to read and learn more or share it with friends and family.

Videos

- **Highlight your advocates.** If you have access to a video camera or a smartphone, consider creating a video of advocates’ stories. Ask your advocates to talk about their role in the campaign and why they support improving the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals. Produce videos in the appropriate languages spoken in the community.
  - Stories of real-life advocates can be one of the most effective measures for swaying decision makers, because they represent actual constituent opinions on the policies you care about.
Create mini-documentaries. A short film featuring families as they eat out and attempt to order nutritious meals for their kids could highlight how challenging it is for families, especially children, to eat healthy at restaurants. This can emphasize the importance of enacting policies that ensure restaurants serve healthy children’s meals. Keep in mind that the most viewed and shared videos are less than 90 seconds.

Facebook
Facebook can be an excellent way to engage your existing advocates and recruit new ones, especially if you already have an established presence. Below are a few tips for spreading the word on Facebook.

- **Use your existing account.** Do not create a new page just for your kids’ meal campaign; instead, integrate the campaign into your existing Facebook page. This way, when new people “like” your page because of their interest in seeing restaurant meals made healthier for children, they will also stay informed on your other initiatives.
  - If appropriate in your community, post messages in languages other than English on your page, or create a separate page in another language, such as Spanish, if that is more relevant to your work in the community.
  - **Recruit new members right from Facebook.** Consider creating a registration app on your page so users can sign up to be a part of the effort without even leaving Facebook. You can point potential advocates to the registration app through Facebook ads and posts on your wall.

- **Highlight key posts.** Facebook allows you to select posts you would like to draw specific attention to and expand them across your page to catch your readers’ eyes. See the following graphic for an example.

- **Use images to help advocates identify with your cause.** The postcard in this toolkit can be repurposed to create an image advocates can use on their own profiles. Consider using the front side of the postcard to do the following:
  - Make it your page’s cover photo and ask advocates to tag themselves and their friends in the image. This way, their tags show up on their News Feed and in their friends’ notifications.
  - Encourage advocates to make the postcard their cover photo or profile picture as well. Advocates’ friends will see the images on their profiles, which helps raise awareness about the issue. Give advocates a caption to go with their post that directs viewers to your site.
• On Twitter, encourage advocates to make the postcard their banner picture so their followers will see the image.
• Image sizing is important. To ensure image clarity and prevent distortion when posting photographs on Facebook, use photographs that are 1200X900 with an aspect ratio of 4:3. This will also help you avoid unnecessary white space around your images.
• For image measurements for additional images on your profile page, see the picture below:

- **Share the message with decision makers.** Many decision makers have an online presence, which can be an effective venue for them to hear from advocates.
  - As advocates tag themselves in your cover photo; encourage them to tag their decision makers as well. Note that some decision makers may have set their privacy to restrict this.
  - Encourage advocates to tag their decision makers in their Facebook posts about their desire to see restaurants provide healthier kids’ meals. Check the [Appendix](#) for examples of Facebook posts.
    - A post that tags a legislator should be considered a direct communication to that legislator, so it will be lobbying if it reflects a view on specific legislation. A post that does not tag a legislator is a public communication and will be lobbying only if it reflects a view on specific legislation and includes a call-to-action. Note that if a social media post constitutes lobbying, the staff time related to writing the post is attributable to lobbying, however small the cost of that staff time may be.
- **Ask advocates for a response.** Create posts that encourage advocates to interact, such as online quizzes.
  - Ask questions: “How do you teach your children healthy eating habits at restaurants?”
  - Encourage story-sharing: “What are restaurants in your community doing to make kids’ meals healthier?”
  - Hold them accountable: “How have you helped make healthier restaurant options for kids a priority in your community?”
- **Actively manage your community.** Running a social media community successfully, particularly on Facebook and Twitter, requires a long-term investment of time and energy that goes beyond posting content. You should be devoting a significant amount of time (at least 1-2 hours) every day to managing your social media pages.
  - “Like” and reply to positive and constructive messages from your individual followers. This will enhance the community aspect of your page and give it a more personalized
feel. Plus, replies can serve as an opportunity to share resources with your audience on an individual level.

- Answer questions to create a two-way dialogue and foster constructive discussion of your issue.
- Ignore, or eventually ban, people who are posting consistently negative, inflammatory, or vulgar content. Engaging with them will only exacerbate the problem.

- **Highlight partners.** There may be other community organizations that are also working toward healthier, more nutritious restaurant environments for kids.
  - Consider working with them to highlight each other’s efforts in Facebook posts. That way, your mention will show up on their channels (and vice versa), helping you to reach their community for recruitment purposes.

- **Take online actions offline.** There are many creative ways to share several items in this toolkit — the poster, flyer, fact sheet, etc. — on Facebook and encourage people to distribute them in their communities.
  - Ask advocates to print the flyers and hand them out at events in their town or post them on community message bulletin boards in parks, libraries, or coffee shops.
    - Bring the action back online by asking advocates to post a picture of themselves putting up the flyers.
  - Post the decision maker fact sheet on your Facebook page so that it is available to advocates to use in meetings with decision makers. Ask them to come back to your Facebook page to report on what they are doing, and how their own meetings went.
  - In advance of offline activities, share the **Key Messages** with your advocates so they know how to speak about the issue.

**Ad Campaigns**

- **Promote your posts.** Promoted posts take highlighted posts one step further by elevating them in your fans’ News Feeds. Promoted posts have a nominal cost and their benefits are far-reaching. Along with this toolkit, a suggested image for a Facebook ad has been provided. Use the image and then assign corresponding text, such as: “Families are spending nearly half of their food dollars at restaurants, but the majority of kids’ meals are of poor nutritional value. By helping restaurants improve the healthfulness of kids’ meals, you can do your part to create a healthier future for children in [INSERT STATE]. To learn more and get involved, visit [INSERT URL].”
  - Promoted posts come with a range of pricing options, depending on the number of people you would like to reach with your post. You will have the option to elevate your post in your fans’ News Feeds or in both their News Feeds and their friends’ News Feeds. On top of this, you can target promoted posts by age, gender, and location.
You can promote posts directly from your Facebook page; look in the lower right-hand corner of the post you want to elevate. Click on “Boost Post,” select your dollar amount and audience reach, and then enter credit card details for payment.

- **Create an ad campaign.** You can also turn promoted posts into a wider Facebook advertising campaign, allowing you to target specific audiences in a way not feasible from your Facebook page.
  - Visit [https://www.facebook.com/ads/create](https://www.facebook.com/ads/create).
  - Select the kind of results you would like for your ads. For this example, “Page Post Engagement” has been selected.
  - Select your destination page (this should be your organization’s Facebook page).
  - Select the post you would like to promote or create a new post to promote.
  - Now you are ready to choose your audience. First, select age and gender targeting criteria, and then type in interests. Remember to include broad interest topics to reach as wide an audience as possible.
    - For targeting based on location, workplace, behavior, school, relationship status, or language, click the appropriate button and add targeting criteria. Consider groups of people who may have a natural interest in making sure every kid can achieve a healthy weight—parents or teachers, for example—and target them based on related interests, such as local parenting groups or the PTA/PTO.
    - While you cannot select ethnicities through Facebook, you can use self-identified interests to increase the likelihood that you are reaching a specific ethnicity.
You can also target audiences based on whether they are already fans of your organization on Facebook.

- Finally, select your budget. Even a small amount can generate results.

Twitter
It does not take a lot to share why restaurants need to serve kids better by making kids’ meals healthier. Even 140 characters can make a difference! Here are some tips for using Twitter to help raise awareness to improving the nutritional value of restaurant kids’ meals.
• **Set the stage with key information and creativity in your profile.** Your Twitter profile is a destination for users to learn more about your efforts to make restaurant meals for kids healthier. It is important to make use of all its features. Consider the following:
  
  o **Use your profile photo to identify your organization.** The recommended size for profile photos is 400x400 pixels. To avoid unwanted cropping, size your photo to 400x400 prior to uploading it to Twitter.

  ![Twitter Cover Image Sizing](image)

  o **Develop a prominent header image** that depicts a healthy restaurant meal for a child, such as a kids’ meal with lean protein, sides of fruit and vegetables, and a healthy beverage, such as low-fat milk or water. The recommended size for header photos is 1500x500 pixels. Note that the header photo is cropped to a 2:1 aspect ratio on mobile. As with the profile photo, make sure you size your image approximately before uploading to Twitter to avoid any unwanted cropping.
    ▪ Provide a copy of your header image, correctly sized, so that your followers can use it for their header images as well. It is another way for their followers to find out about the campaign.

  o **Write a concise Twitter bio,** up to 160 characters, explaining your organization’s connection to the nutrition of restaurant meals for children, and include a call-to-action for users to get involved.

    **VoicesForHealthyKids**
    @Voices4HK

    Voices for Healthy Kids is taking action to prevent obesity. Join @American_Heart and @rwjf by raising your voice to transform where kids live, learn & play.

    voicesforhealthykids.org

  o **Pin your most important tweet** to the top of your profile timeline to capture the attention of visitors.

    ![Pin to your profile page](image)

• **Link to relevant content.** Include hyperlinks to additional information in about a quarter of all your tweets.
• **Diversify your content.** Create a mix of tweets that both inform your followers about initiatives that promote healthier restaurant kids’ meals and encourage their support. Diversifying your information will help build a relationship between you and your followers.
  o Provide relevant news on restaurant marketing and nutrition standards.
  o Mention activities or news that occurred that day related to local restaurant efforts to improve the nutritional content of kids’ menu options.
  o Ask followers to answer a question.
  o Share a daily fact about restaurant marketing and nutrition and its impact on children and families.
  o Retweet interesting content or news from followers or other influencers.
  o Embed videos, images, and infographics. Infographics are one of the most shared types of content on Twitter.
  o Capitalize on real-time events. Use official event hashtags or other relevant hashtags, such as #servekidsbetter or #healthykidsmeals.
  o Monitor followers to identify new fans and leverage potential relationships with those people/organizations. You could even ask your most engaged followers to serve as spokespeople in their community.
  o Follow allies and groups you would like to recruit to the campaign, as a way to build your relationship with them and cultivate their interest in your campaign.

• **Engage with Decision Makers.**
  o To reach decision makers, include their Twitter handles in your informational tweets.
    ▪ A tweet that includes a legislator’s handle should be considered a direct communication to that legislator (because including the legislator’s handle alerts the legislator to the tweet), so it will be lobbying if it reflects a view on specific legislation. A tweet that names a legislator but does not tag that legislator is a public communication and will be lobbying only if it reflects a view on specific legislation and includes a call-to-action. Note that if a social media post constitutes lobbying, the staff time related to writing the post is attributable to lobbying, however small the cost of that staff time may be.
  o Ask followers to tweet at lawmakers, telling them to support initiatives to improve the nutritional quality of restaurant meals for children.
    ▪ Asking followers to tweet at lawmakers is grassroots lobbying if you refer to legislation (or to specific legislative proposals). Asking them to tweet at lawmakers about the general policy issue of complete streets—when the context does not refer to legislation—is a non-lobbying activity.
  o Share research and studies on nutrition for kids so decision makers can have evidence to support their stance on ensuring restaurants offer kids healthier meals or to help persuade them to support your efforts.

• **Join the conversation.**
  o Reply to messages, questions, or ideas from followers as appropriate.
  o Focus on facts and avoid entering into editorial disagreements or arguments.
  o Do not “feed the trolls”—avoid engaging professional critics or troublemakers. This wastes your time and reinforces their negative messaging.
• **Build your audience.**
  - Market your Twitter feed to your core audiences on other platforms, such as email.
  - Add your Twitter handle to other assets or websites (online and offline).
  - Begin to follow relevant influencers to stay plugged into the conversation and encourage these influencers to follow you as well.
  - If appropriate in your community, post messages in languages other than English on your page, or create a separate page in another language, such as Spanish, if that is more relevant to your work in the community.
  - Above all, create content that people want to share.

**Key Takeaways**
• Social media can be a powerful way to share your message with a broader, more diverse audience.
• People respond well to posts with multimedia, so include images and videos you own whenever possible.
• Use social media to encourage advocates to interact and support your offline activities.
• A small investment in paid advertising, such as Facebook ads, can make a positive difference for your campaign.
• By using appropriate languages you can conduct effective outreach to priority populations.
Engage: Using Social Media to Reach Journalists

With more than 6.9 million active users on Twitter every day and 552 million daily active users on Facebook, social media can serve as a powerful tool to amplify your message and reach highly targeted audiences.

Just as consumers are increasingly turning to social media for news, so are journalists. They use it to research stories, follow trends, and interact with their own networks.

Note: While many journalists use social media for news, sometimes a phone call or an in-person meeting is better. Some journalists may want to engage in more traditional ways.

Reach Media through Social Channels

- **Start with research.** Before you begin engaging with journalists, research their backgrounds to personalize your messages, including referencing relevant past articles and explaining why you have contacted them. Following journalists on social media can be a great research tool and a good way to initiate a relationship.
- **Try email.** Most journalists prefer to be contacted through email, not on social media. If you do not have an existing relationship with a journalist, a well-written email may be more effective than a tweet. You can also post a comment on the news outlet’s webpage under the online version of the news story.
- **Do not begin with a pitch.** Though it is generally not appropriate to pitch over Twitter, you can use it to get on a journalist’s radar. Start by following the reporter on Twitter and retweeting or commenting on content you find interesting.
- **Be respectful.** It is important to be mindful of journalists’ time and to remember that all interactions are public. Do not mass tweet pitches to several reporters and outlets.
- **Be careful with direct messages (DMs).** Do not ask a journalist you are not following to send you a direct message. Only people who follow one another can send each other DMs.

Sample Tweets

Below are a few sample tweets designed to build relationships with journalists and establish yourself as a thought leader on making restaurant children’s meals healthier. Included below are references to specific policies demonstrating how they could fit within a tweet. Note that you can use all of these tweets for any of the policies by slightly tweaking the language. The Key Messages in the appendix can help with that.

- In response to a journalist tweeting an article on a related topic/issue: “.@[JOURNALIST] Really interesting take on #healthykidsmeals. Love your point on [INSERT ISSUE].”
- Sharing an article by a journalist: “[INSERT QUOTE OR PARAPHRASED TEXT] via “.@[JOURNALIST] [LINK TO ARTICLE] #servekidsbetter”
- Sharing an article by the journalist and generating discussion among your followers: “Read [ARTICLE TITLE] via @ [JOURNALIST] [LINK TO ARTICLE] How can we protect kids from unhealthy restaurant meals?”
- In response to a journalist tweeting an article on restaurant marketing to kids: “.@[JOURNALIST]—Loved this piece, such an important topic! Would love to chat about our program sometime. #servekidsbetter”
In response to a journalist tweeting an article on the need for healthy restaurant meals for kids in your community: “.@[JOURNALIST]—Really interesting points! Have you heard about our campaign for healthier restaurant kids’ meals? [LINK TO SITE EXPLAINING PROGRAM]”

Social Media Engagement Tips & Tricks
- Be transparent and disclose your job/purpose/association in your bio.
- Employ a conversational tone and avoid buzzwords.
- Always begin by listening to the existing conversation.
- Identify opportunities to be current, relevant, and timely.
- Be human.
- Be prepared to carry on a conversation with your followers.
- Include hyperlinks for additional information.
- Use relevant hashtags when appropriate to help your comments show up in larger conversations.
- Use handles of people (e.g., policymaker, organization, journalist) whose attention you are trying to garner.
- Focus on facts and avoid entering into editorial disagreements or arguments.

Key Takeaways
- Begin with an email; then continue engaging with journalists on social media to build valuable media relationships.
- Make sure to research journalists’ backgrounds and tailor any messages you send to them.
- Do not start off with a pitch. Use social media to get to know journalists and engage with them, not to ask them for coverage.
- Always be transparent. Identify yourself and your campaign goals.
Mobilize: Action Alerts

The supporters in your existing database are well positioned to become grassroots activists. By joining your email list, these individuals have already indicated they want to learn more about who you are and the issues important to you. The next step is converting their interest into a deeper level of commitment to your mission by getting your supporters to complete an action, such as signing a petition, communicating directly with policymakers and other decision makers, or attending events. Remember to develop action alerts in the relevant languages spoken in the community.

As you begin a conversation with your supporters through email, keep these goals in mind:

- **Educate them** through issue updates or updated Web content. These communications allow you to:
  - Provide advocates with information and cultivate their interest in an issue.
  - Identify the message areas that resonate best with subsets of the audience to better tailor outreach.
  - Keep individuals involved and updated during periods when critical action is not required, making it easier to engage them when the time comes.

- **Engage them in efforts** to deepen their activism through surveys, “share your story” opportunities, or social media. These activities give people actions to take that help you:
  - Learn more about what type of participation they prefer.
  - Train activists to be good stewards of issue messaging.
  - Expand your reach by amplifying your message through individuals’ social networks.
  - Reach out to diverse communities by engaging trusted messengers from those communities.
  - Show activists the importance of their participation, so they are ready to respond on occasions when urgent action may be needed.

- **Activate them** with new and varied calls to action based on the way in which their unique voices can make a difference. Your advocates can reach the public by:
  - Participating in public dialogue on key issues by commenting on news articles, blog posts, or polls.
  - Recruiting of new individuals to join the cause.
  - Attending public meetings, town halls, or hearings in support of your position.
  - Contacting decision makers via email, phone, postal mail, or in person to contribute their opinions.
    - If your request reflects a view on specific legislation, asking advocates to contact their legislators will be lobbying.

Email action alerts also allow you to communicate with supporters directly, measure their interest through open rates, and track their support through clicks on the links in your email. Because email communications have the capacity to be uniquely micro-targeted to recipients, sending alerts to your audience can be one of the most powerful ways to inspire mobilization around an issue. Don’t forget to send these out in all appropriate languages.

**Key Takeaways**

- There are many different ways to engage your volunteers over email—action alerts can educate, motivate, activate, and thank people for taking action.
• Keep advocates interested by offering updates and new and varied ways to participate.
• Surveys or requests for feedback can make your email program even stronger.
• Engage trusted messengers in reaching out to diverse communities.
Mobilize: The Value of Phone Outreach

Even in today’s digital era, person-to-person contact remains one of the most effective means of relationship building. Below is an overview of how to train volunteers, as well as two different types of phone outreach: phone banks and phone patch programs.

Phone Banks

Operating a phone bank connects your organization’s volunteers with potential new advocates—people you hope will want to learn more about your issues, get involved with your campaign, and act to achieve your goals. In order to host a successful phone bank, address the steps below.

Recruit and Train Volunteers

- **Enlist your team.** Find people willing to make calls on a regular or semi-regular basis. Current staff members at your organization or existing volunteers are the best resources.
- **Work with partners.** You may find a need to extend your reach beyond your own staff or volunteers in ways that would be best done through partner organizations. This is often the case when trying to connect with diverse groups that have not yet engaged with your issues and where outreach is best done by a trusted and well-known voice.
- **Identify your manager.** Designate someone from your team to manage the call center. Train them to lead the volunteers and ensure program success.
- **Train your callers.** Brief volunteers on the issues so they can discuss these topics with callers and exercise cultural sensitivity when appropriate. Conduct a training session where they can learn your talking points and practice making calls to familiarize themselves with the process.
- **Identify any unique language needs.** Does your community include non-native English speakers? If so, be sure to recruit bilingual volunteers or enlist the help of volunteer translators.

Find a Location and Supplies

- **Decide where people will call.** Before moving forward in this process, determine if you want callers to work from a centralized location. People can make calls from their homes, but without supervision they might not stick to the script and could damage potential or existing relationships. Your offices could be a good location for local, targeted calls.
- **Equip yourself.** Ensure your call center has enough lines and telephones for volunteers.
- **Set time limits and provide refreshments.** Establish how long you want the call center to be open. If it is for a long period of time, provide food and drinks to volunteers.

Create a Call List

- **Develop your list.** A call list is essential to any successful phone bank, but like all communication it must be targeted. Target individuals based on a known or potential interest in improving the nutritional value and promotion of restaurants kids’ meals—parents, school leaders, members of partner organizations, local business leaders, local chapters of health coalitions, health department officials, members of fitness organizations, healthy food delivery programs, etc. A number of resources are available to help discover target audiences, including U.S. Census data. As you develop your list, be sure to have callers who can communicate in the relevant languages spoken in the community.
- **Start with existing advocates at your organization.** You already have their information, and they will understand why they are hearing from you because they have expressed previous interest in related issues.
Consider buying lists. It is also possible to buy lists with phone numbers and other advocate information. Prices vary based on the amount of targeting and number of people on a list, but InfoUSA (www.infousa.com), Caldwell List Company (www.caldwell-list.com), and Dataman Group (www.datamangroup.com) are good resources if you wish to purchase a list.

Develop a Script

- Prepare a script and one-pagers so volunteers can have effective and informative conversations. As you develop your message, you should test the script with someone unfamiliar with the issue to ensure it will be understood by your audience as intended. You should also develop a list of common questions and talking points for those difficult questions your volunteers may receive. Your script should include the following information.
  - **Introduction:** Provide a brief introduction of yourself and your organization. There is no need to begin explaining the issue at this point. Ask the individual if they have time to talk about the issue.
  - **Outline the issue:** If the call recipient has the time, explain the issue and why it is important. This is the point where targeting is most important. Everyone will respond to this issue differently. Many people have never thought about healthier restaurant kids’ meals before, while others face it every time they take their children to a restaurant. Know the person you are talking to, and tailor the conversation accordingly.
  - **Request for assistance:** Following the explanation of the issue, ask the call recipient for another point of contact, e.g., their email or mailing address. Having this information will allow you to follow up later and provide further details about the issue.
  - **Closing:** If someone declines to hear about the issue, ask if there would be a better time to call back. Always thank them for their time.

- Below is a sample phone banking script. You may need more than one script depending on your intended reach. Feel free to customize it to include any cultural variations for particular audiences of interest, and be sure to enlist and prepare materials for your bilingual volunteers.
  - Hi [ADVOCATE NAME]. My name is [YOUR NAME], and I’m calling on behalf of [YOUR ORGANIZATION].
  - We’re working to improve restaurant kids’ meals in [ADVOCATE CITY]. Do you have a few minutes to talk about how this initiative could help your family and others in our community?
    - **IF YES**
      - Great! Families are eating out a lot more than they used to, but unfortunately, most kids’ meals don’t meet even the most basic nutritional standards. We believe that sends the wrong message to children, and we’re working to make sure kids can get healthier food when they go out to eat. There are lots of ways restaurants can create healthier eating environments for kids, such as offering healthier default side options like carrots and apples, offering reasonable portion sizes, or offering healthier drink options. Your support would go a long way in making these a reality.
      - **The Ask:** If you join us, we will keep you up-to-date on the issue and progress being made in your community and nationally. Will you join us in this mission?
o **IF YES**: Wonderful. Let me get your [EMAIL, MAILING ADDRESS, ETC.], so we can keep you updated.

o **IF NO**: Well, thanks for your time, and if you want to learn more about the program, you can visit [WEBSITE]. Have a great [DAY, EVENING].

- **IF NO**
  - Is there a more convenient time I can call you back? *(If yes, write when to call back and make a note. If no, then skip to...)*. Thanks for your time, and if you want to learn more about the program, you can visit [WEBSITE]. Have a great [DAY, EVENING].

- **IF ANSWERING MACHINE**
  - Hi [ADVOCATE NAME]. My name is [YOUR NAME], and I’m calling on behalf of [YOUR ORGANIZATION]. We’re working to help improve the health of families in [ADVOCATE CITY] by encouraging restaurants to offer more nutritious kids’ meals.
  - *The Ask*: Please call us at [PHONE NUMBER] or visit our website at [WEBSITE] to learn more and to help support healthier restaurant kids’ meals.
  - Thank you and have a great day!

**Compile Data**
- Track the data garnered from these phone calls—who you are calling, how many people you reach, how many volunteers sign up, how often people are called, etc.
  - Set standards and guidelines for recording data, and be sure volunteers are trained on the proper way to record information.
  - Create a template in Excel for volunteers to record the data. Determine what you want to know about each person. You should at least have first name, last name, phone number (home or mobile), as well as whether they picked up or you left a message, what language was spoken, whether they wanted to talk, and whether they were supportive or not. If possible, try to record their email address and mailing address.

**Maintain the Relationship**
Phone calls are the beginning of a relationship, not the end. To keep working with these advocates, you must follow up with them, either with another call or via email.

**Phone Patches**
A phone patch, as opposed to a phone bank, connects advocates with their elected officials. In order to host a phone-patching program, you will work with a third-party organization that calls advocates, explains the issue, and asks if the advocates would like to be connected with his or her representative to voice support for a cause or issue. This is a supplemental method to the phone bank program and should target existing advocates, not new ones.

If you ask advocates to contact a legislator to support or oppose specific legislation, your phone patch calls will be considered grassroots lobbying. Make sure you budget lobbying funds to cover these costs. You can use non-lobbying funds for phone patches by avoiding references to any specific legislation, but that may dilute the impact of the calls.
Select a Vendor
- Find a company that will call individuals on your behalf. Make sure to verify the vendor has the capacity to provide services in languages other than English if needed in your community. Some companies that can assist in the program implementation include:
  - Mobile Commons
  - Winning Connections
  - Stones’ Phones
  - Strategic Consulting Group

Create a Call List
As with phone banks, you will need to create a list of contacts to provide to the vendor for use during outreach.

Develop Scripts for Messages
- When individuals answer their phones, they will hear a pre-recorded message and will be connected to a representative by pressing a designated number. A script that highlights the importance of the initiative should be written to serve as this recording. There should also be an option for non-English speakers to press a number to hear the message in their language.
- An additional message could be written to record on an answering machine if the person misses the call.
  - **Script for Initial Recording**—use this message to include an area-specific fact, issue, or need related to the nutritional quality of children’s meals.
    - Hi! I’m calling on behalf of [YOUR ORGANIZATION]. Si quiere continuar en español, oprima el numero dos. We are facing a serious health crisis—did you know that a third of our country’s kids are overweight or obese? As part of a solution, we’re asking restaurants to promote and serve healthier menu options to children. We’ve made some progress, but there is still much work to do. With the involvement of people like you, we can help every child achieve a healthy weight. If you’d like to learn more about this issue and how you can get involved in this effort, please press one.
  - **Script for Leaving a Message**
    - Hi [ADVOCATE NAME]. My name is [YOUR NAME], and I am calling on behalf of [YOUR ORGANIZATION]. We’re working to improve the nutritional quality of restaurant children’s meals across the country, including in [STATE]. Please call us at [PHONE NUMBER] or visit our website at [WEBSITE] to learn more and to find out how you can help ensure restaurants make healthier meals available to kids. Thank you and have a great day!
  - **Script for Phone Operator**
    - Hi. How are you? Thanks so much for agreeing to help ensure that restaurants do their part to give kids a healthier future by providing healthy kids’ meals.
    - To achieve this, we need people to talk with their representatives about supporting efforts to ensure restaurants serve healthier children’s meals. Before I connect you with your legislator, what questions can I answer for you about these policies or about the process? *(Note: Advocates will have varying degrees of knowledge about this issue, so at this point it is a good idea to let them ask questions.)*
Script for Connecting Advocates with Representatives

- Now that you have some background information, I can connect you with your representative. Just so you are aware of the process, I will transfer you to your legislator [LEGISLATOR NAME], and someone on [HIS/HER] staff will talk with you. You will need to tell the person who answers the phone your name, that you live in the representative’s district, and that you support efforts to improve the nutrition of restaurant children’s meals in [STATE].
  - As written, this phone script is not lobbying, because it does not refer to a specific legislative proposal. If, instead of referring to the general issue of nutrition of restaurant meals, the script urged people to tell their legislators to support specific legislation requiring restaurants to serve healthier kids’ meals, the calls would be lobbying and would need to be paid for with restricted funds.
  - Note: Your phone bank operator will need to be trained to answer frequently asked questions and know where to refer people with questions he/she is unable to answer.

Record the Results
Typically, a phone patch operator will provide a daily report with the results of the program. Collect that data and keep it for your records to strengthen future outreach efforts.

Additional Things to Consider
Whether you are phone banking or phone patching, below are some tips to help your process run smoothly.

- Avoid using computer or auto-dialing systems, as some states prohibit these, and federal rules restrict autodialed calls to cell phones. Instead, have people dial numbers by hand. Hand-dialed phone banks also have a higher completion rate (50 percent compared to 15 percent with automated dialing systems, according to The Voices of America).
- Hybrid systems also exist. These systems allow you to download data to the phone so that you just hit “dial.” Volunteers can record the answers to the survey on the phone, which can then be downloaded to a computer. It also allows you to record a voicemail, so the volunteer can push a button that automatically plays your recorded message after the beep without having to stay on the line. However, keep in mind that these systems may be subject to state restrictions on autodialed calls, as well as the federal ban on auto-dialed calls to cell phones.
- Try to make your calls between the hours of 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends, as these are the hours you will most likely find people at home.
- Make sure volunteers know how to react in different situations (e.g., leaving a message on a machine or speaking with a hostile individual).
- Be sure the efforts of the campaign are not limited by do-not-call lists.
  - Typically, these apply only to telemarketing sales calls. At the federal level, the do-not-call provisions do not cover calls from political organizations, charities, telephone surveyors, or companies with which a consumer has an existing business relationship.
  - Most states follow the standard set by the federal government, but state laws can vary. Check state government websites to ensure compliance with these laws.
Key Takeaways

- There are two different types of telephone programs: phone banking and phone patching. Phone banking is for recruiting volunteers, while phone patching is for connecting advocates with elected officials.
- To ensure a well-organized phone bank, brainstorm all potential questions and responses volunteers may receive, and build a script to equip your volunteers with the best ways to react.
- If your community includes non-English speakers, recruit phone volunteers who speak the relevant languages.
- Consider the hours between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends as the best times to make these calls in order to reach the highest number of people.
- Check your state’s laws on phone outreach to ensure you comply with all do-not-call provisions.
Mobilize: Hosting a Media Event

Working with local media is a key way to raise awareness about your campaign and achieve your goals. Media coverage can help you educate members of your community and policy makers, frame your message, create conversation, and recruit new advocates. It should be a key component of your campaign strategy. To begin, you must first thoughtfully develop and carefully plan how you want to present the issue to reporters. Building relationships with media and pursuing media advocacy well in advance of hosting a media event will help to ensure that your message is understood and the cause is well-positioned by reporters.

Start by thinking about what you want to accomplish and who you want to reach. Do you have news to release, such as a report or study? If not, what media hook might be effective? Does the nightly news highlight stories of local restaurants and their health impact on the community? What about your local paper? Would you be better served by engaging with community bloggers? Be sure to include multicultural media in this outreach, as well as other media outlets your target audiences turn to for trusted information. Keep in mind the stories in your community concerning your issue. Could one of your advocates have a compelling story that would be a good fit for local media? It is important to consider ways to give those in marginalized communities a voice on the issue. As you recruit advocates, listen for those opportunities to put a face on the issue through real people willing to share their experiences. Once you decide on your goals and strategy, you can start identifying media opportunities that match.

One way to engage members of the media is by inviting them to an event. A well-run media event—one with compelling speakers, stories, clear facts, and easily explained goals—will give reporters the tools they need to amplify your story in newspapers, on-air, and online. Note that the most successful events are built upon existing media relations, so thoughtfully consider the timing of your event as it fits with the rest of your media strategy.

Where and Who?

To give your message more impact, choose a location for your event that will reinforce the importance of improving the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals. For example, hold your event at a public location such as in a food court. Other options include a meeting room in a city hall or other municipal building, or in a place of worship where leaders are calling for healthier food environments for the community’s kids.

Consider speakers who can talk persuasively about the importance of children’s nutrition. Consider individuals who have a stake in the initiative, are knowledgeable about the topic or can share a compelling story. Consider bringing in a local mother who feels undermined by restaurants that provide incentives for purchasing unhealthy food to her children, or a local doctor who can speak about the impact healthier kids’ meals could have on the community’s health. A diverse mix of speakers who can speak fluently in all languages spoken in the community and/or are familiar with other cultures will provide your media attendees with a range of perspectives on improving the nutrition of restaurant kids’ meals. If your speakers are not bilingual, consider having a translator available to facilitate interviews with the press.
Event Tips
The following tips cover some of the basics of event hosting. However, the list below is not comprehensive—every event is different, and you will need to adapt your planning to each event’s unique requirements.

- **Establish a point of contact.** Your event point of contact should coordinate logistics. This person could be a paid staff member or a trusted volunteer. Whomever you choose, make sure he or she has experience with event coordination and execution.

- **Send invitations.** For some media events, such as salon dinners or press conferences where you will focus on specific issues, make sure key influencers are in the room. Even if they are not speakers, their presence can lend an air of credibility to your efforts. Issue personal invitations to these influencers and follow up with them if necessary to secure their confirmation.
  - If someone on your staff has an existing relationship with these influencers, ask that person to call them on the phone or send a personal email. People are more likely to respond to messages from names they recognize.

- **Pull together background materials.** Prior to the event, you will want to share background materials with media and key influencers who will be in attendance. Consider sharing your organization’s policy position statement on restaurant kids’ meals, the fact sheets from this toolkit, the ads from this toolkit as a visual, a list of your partners, an explanation of where your coalition receives its funding, and relevant news articles from other media markets. Create a list of common questions and key talking points that include responses to opposition arguments for your speakers and coalition partners.

Media Engagement

- **Research recent media stories**—newspaper articles, TV segments, radio shows, etc.—to determine which media figures or outlets might be friendliest to healthier restaurant kids’ meals. Be sure to include multicultural media. Based on this research, reach out to the media you would like to cover your campaign.

- **Think about what makes your story “newsworthy.”** Reporters have several criteria for determining which stories they want to cover. It can vary depending on the nature of an issue, but the following are example “hooks” that will help you pitch your story and make it more interesting to reporters.
  - **Timeliness:** the issue is being talked about, reported on, and/or action is being taken
  - **Conflict or controversy:** there are strong opposing opinions, or alternatively, opposing groups have come to surprising and unexpected agreement.
  - **Proximity:** the issue is affecting the local community
  - **Prominence:** public officials or celebrities have weighed in
  - **Significance:** a large number of people are impacted, supportive, or taking action
  - **Human interest:** the issue is engaging because it draws emotion from the viewer, is often relatable, and is told by feature stories that really “hit home”
  - **Bizarre:** there is a strange, odd, or unbelievable tie-in

- **Once you have established your media list, you can begin pitching editorial board meetings.** Since the editorial board makes significant decisions on which stories the outlet will cover, meeting with them in advance of major stories can ensure your story is not only included, but is elevated for greater reach. This work should start at least one month prior to the event.

- **Distribute a media advisory to all of your selected media outlets and pitch print and radio two weeks out from the event.** While some reporters may be slow to respond to your pitch, do not
be discouraged; keep following up with them until you receive a confirmation. Some will not confirm until the day of the event.

- Distribute a press release in the days leading up to the event and include an embargo date to ensure that media do not release their story before your event date.
- If you have secured interest from a TV station, follow up with the producer two days prior to the event and the morning of the event. Also reach out to unconfirmed print reporters two to three days prior to and the morning of the event.
- Visuals, such as a large banner or poster that are compelling and eye-catching, are great resources to bring to events to improve the quality of media coverage. Consider bringing props that demonstrate the changes you want to make, such as restaurant kids’ menus, “before and after” photos of kids’ meals from restaurants, or display actual kids’ meals, showing both healthy and unhealthy examples. Compelling visuals may encourage print media to feature your issues above the fold or on their homepage and are important to help television reporters tell the story.
- Depending upon media interest, coordinate media interviews on-site before or after the event.
- Prepare an op-ed to submit to a target newspaper about the event and the news you are releasing. Take a look at the sample op-eds provided in this toolkit for ideas on how to shape yours, but also include information that is relevant to your community.

**Blogger Engagement**

- If you have bloggers in your town or city, consider inviting them to the event, especially if they write about topics relevant to improving the nutritional quality of kids’ menus at restaurants, such as nutrition, parenting, healthy living, or restaurants. Provide them with fact sheets and other appropriate background information.
  - Consider reaching out to parents who blog about healthy living for their family or neighborhood leaders who blog about happenings in the community. If your efforts involve engaging local restaurants, a post from a well-known blogger could be a great help. A post has the potential to be even more powerful when the blogger is representative of communities where obesity and health challenges exist.
- As with any other media, develop an outreach plan and engage bloggers accordingly. Make sure your outreach is personal and calls out direct reasons why that specific blogger should come to the event.
- Track confirmations/declines and shape your outreach accordingly.
- Monitor and report on mentions of the event by bloggers, both leading up to the event and after.

**Database Growth**

- If your event is not only for media, set up a table on the day of your event where people can sign up to learn more about your child nutrition efforts. Because they are attending the event, they may want to join your kids’ meal campaign.
  - Consider using the sign-up opportunity for a dual purpose. For example, at the end of the event, attendees may be motivated to make some sort of commitment to help encourage healthier restaurant meals for kids in their community. Combine the sign-up with a pledge where attendees can share the specific way they will help the cause.
• This will also help you keep track of the types of people in your database and the specific ways in which you can engage them based on their stated interest in making restaurant kids’ meals healthier.
• As you add new members to your database, segment them into areas of interest so that you can quickly deploy customized messages or action requests based on their diversity of interest and skills.
• Transcribe the sign-up forms and upload your new advocates to your organization’s database. Send them a follow-up email welcoming them to your email list, thanking them for their attendance and asking how they want to be involved in the future.

Post-Event Activities
• Leverage the event by posting the speeches, photographs, and videos to relevant websites and social media platforms as appropriate.
• Follow up with local influencers and potential advocates as appropriate to gauge their interest in further involvement.
• If there are media, including bloggers, who could not attend the event, provide them with information and an event synopsis with photos so they can cover the event retroactively.

Key Takeaways
• Start working on your event early. Between identifying diverse speakers, inviting journalists, and coordinating a run-of-show, a well-executed media event can take weeks to plan.
• To get the right people in the room, research journalists and their beats before inviting them to your event.
• Be sure to include multicultural media.
• The location of and speakers at your event are important to its success. Hold your event in a community striving for healthier restaurant meals for kids and host compelling speakers on the subject.
• Once your event is over, follow up by sharing photos, speeches, and videos through your website, social media, or other means.
Mobilize: Media Training Tips

Speaking to the media can seem a bit daunting, but it is a prime opportunity to tell a compelling story that brings home the importance of creating environments in your community that can help kids achieve a healthy weight and the role of restaurant children’s meals in improving child nutrition and health. Unlike any other tactic for your campaign, an interview with key media could provide access to a wide audience.

In many cases, you will have pitched the kids’ meals and restaurant nutrition story to local media, offering your spokespeople as experts who can weigh in on this topic. Remember to reach out to media who have natural connections with the issue at hand (e.g., restaurant and dining section reporters, food section reporters, health section reporters, statehouse reporters, etc.) because they are more likely to respond to your pitch. You will have a better chance of success with targeted mainstream and multicultural audiences when you create a pitch specifically targeted to those outlets.

With the appropriate preparation and practice, your speakers will become comfortable with your messaging and be able to speak articulately and passionately about the issue. The guidelines below will help you prepare speakers for success.

Choose Spokespeople

Develop a small cadre of spokespeople whose perspectives are especially important to the cause and who the media might be interested in interviewing. Strive for diversity that represents your community and be sure to include spokespeople who can speak in other languages as it makes sense for your community.

- Senior executives from your organization are always important faces to add to your campaign. They can speak specifically about your efforts to urge restaurants to improve the nutritional quality of kids’ meals.
- Advocates with real-life stories—especially parents and youth—who know first-hand the challenges of being faced with unhealthy restaurant kids’ meals.
- Doctors who see the impact of obesity-related diseases on their patients will add credibility.
- Researchers who can share data on the impact high percentages of children with an unhealthy weight on your city or state will add quantifiable evidence to the story.
- Community organizations that are committed to a healthy environment in their neighborhoods, such as the Neighborhood Association.

Reach out to these types of spokespeople, ask if they would be interested in speaking on behalf of your campaign to improve the nutritional quality of foods sold to kids at restaurants, and begin preparing them for the task.

Develop Content

Begin preparing your speakers for interviews as soon as possible. The more your speakers prepare, the more comfortable they will be and the better their delivery will be. Before you prepare your media talking points, answer the following questions.

- **Who is your audience?** Before developing your messages, it is important to consider the audiences you will be reaching through the media outlet conducting the interview.
  - To what media outlet will your speaker be presenting?
What is the media outlet’s readership or viewership?
What are the demographics of the readership or viewership?

What should you say?
Speakers will need to be armed with talking points about nutrition and restaurant kids’ meals, but these core messages are just a starting point. Make your content more relevant by considering the following questions.

- Are there specific facts you want to highlight during the interview?
- What is the central theme you want to discuss—the core statement you return to over and over?
- Are there any cultural sensitivities or community dynamics to be aware of when you are developing your core messages?
- What would success look like? Provide numbers, statistics, and milestones of nutrition standards for restaurant kids’ meals in your state.
- Can you make your messages more tangible? Consider adding comments about specific kinds of restaurants in your community that need to change their practices or that already are making positive changes voluntarily (for example, several fast food chains have dropped sugary drinks from their children’s menus).
- Are there other groups, individuals, or companies taking part in the interview? What are their positions likely to be, and will you have to comment on them?
- How would you respond to the concerns of your opponents?
- Do you need to tailor messages to specific populations or communities?

What matters most?
Spend some time thinking about how your speakers can best portray themselves and the issue.

- How should the interview begin and end? The most important parts of an interview are the introduction and conclusion because they are what your audience is most likely to remember.
- Journalists include “sound bites” in stories—short sentences that communicate your message briefly and memorably. It helps them keep up the pace of their story so they can keep an audience or reader engaged. When you write talking points, use short sentences and simple language. Craft punchy lines that grab attention and tell your story passionately.
- Are there other ways to restate the main goal of the campaign? People need to hear things at least three times to remember them, so keep bringing the messaging back to your core points.
- Is this still relevant? Reread talking points the day before the interview to be sure your talking points are still relevant. Read local news of the day and reference anything that is topical.

What questions do you expect?
Spend some time anticipating questions and developing direct responses or ways to turn the conversation back to your key message. Consider those opposition or “gotcha” questions, since reporters often want to cover both sides of the debate.

Where and how will the interview be held?
Determine in advance if your interview will be held in person, over the phone, over email, or some other medium, so you can plan responses that fit best. For television and radio, find out ahead of time if the interview will be live or taped and how long it will be. Preparing for a two-minute live interview is different than a one-hour talk show or a taped interview from which producers will use just one or two short sound bites.
Rehearsal
No matter how familiar spokespeople are with your talking points, it is important to have them rehearse multiple times before the interview. Ask your spokespeople to rehearse the talking points in the following ways—and work alongside them as they do.

- **Read the text alone silently.** Read the content with a critical eye. Do all the talking points support the overall story? Is the central theme clear?
- **Read aloud alone.** Spokespeople might be surprised to hear themselves speaking aloud, especially if it is their first time participating in an interview. Suggest to your speakers that they read aloud to themselves, and make note of places where they should take natural pauses or where they get tripped up on words.
- **Stand and read in front of a mirror (if the interview is on television).** When spokespeople read the content aloud standing, they will begin to get a feel for their natural body movement and non-verbal cues that will help bring the content to life.
- **Stand and read in front of peers.** Gather your colleagues to listen to the spokespeople deliver their talking points. This can help increase a speaker’s confidence and provides a safe place for feedback. At this point, they should be able to deliver their content without reading directly from papers.
- **Record their delivery and learn from it.** One of the best ways to rehearse is to make a video recording of your spokespeople presenting. This allows them to see what the interviewer sees and will make speakers aware of any distracting movements or phrases they may unknowingly use.
- **Rehearse in a comparable setting to where the interview will be held.** You may not be able to take your spokespeople to the actual interview location, but try to create a setting that feels similar. Spokespeople can practice their movement in this similar space, developing a sense of how to move and talk effectively when they are in the interview.

Interview Delivery
When your spokespeople arrive for the interview, they should be friendly and engaging, greeting reporters and producers confidently. This confidence is especially important if any of the spokespeople are top-level executives from your organization.

- **Own the space.** When you are on-site in the room, remind your speakers of the movements they practiced. If it is an appropriate setting, encourage them to move around.
- **Engage the interviewer and the audience.** Remind spokespeople to maintain eye contact with the reporter as often as possible. They are the window to the viewers who are watching or listening. If there is an audience present, make sure your spokespeople speak directly to them. Unless you are speaking from a remote location, look at the reporter, not the camera.
- **Relax and enjoy.** By this point, your spokespeople will have mastered their text and be comfortable with their delivery, so remind them to relax and enjoy their time in the interview.
- **Say thank you.** Thank the reporter at the end and suggest meeting with them at a later date for a follow-up interview.

Key Takeaways
- Identify a diverse core group of spokespeople who can consistently speak with the media about your campaign in all relevant languages.
• Develop smart, punchy talking points and customize them to be relevant for each interview. Prepare for questions about opposition to your campaign.
• Practice makes perfect—ask your spokespeople to rehearse their speeches or talking points to get comfortable with their comments before they speak with journalists.
Mobilize: Why Op-Eds Matter

Public commentary has long been a powerful way to broadly communicate ideas. You will be able to convey your campaign’s essential messages to legislators, journalists, and the community through a published op-ed.

In the past few years, competition from expanded news and information sources like blogs and social media has made publication easier but competition for attention tougher. This means you will have to offer your best thinking and most influential voices to maximize your chances of having a newspaper print your op-ed—and have people notice and care about who you are and what you have to say.

Op-Ed Tips and Tricks

- **Choose your signer carefully.** To ensure the best chance of earning placement on a news platform or gaining people’s attention, enlist a high-profile influencer to sign and submit your op-ed. Ideally, this influencer should be well-known within your community and by the audience of the publication, such as a doctor, researcher, teacher, restaurant-owner, or politician.

- **Choose a good subject line.** Unless you have had other contact with the editorial page editor, your subject line functions as the pitch. Be sure it communicates the importance and timeliness of your op-ed.

- **Ask yourself: “Who cares?”** Make sure your piece will clearly resonate with or be meaningful to the public. Start by writing from the reader’s point of view, and express a clear opinion.

- **Keep things tight.** News outlets have limited space, so keep your op-ed to approximately 500 words. Some outlets have even shorter limits, while a few will accept up to 700 words, so check your paper’s requirements before submitting.

- **Speak conversationally.** Avoid jargon, fancy words, and slang. Your op-ed must be comprehensible to the general public, including people with no knowledge of how high-calorie, low-nutrition restaurant meals impact kids’ health.

- **Get to the point.** Make your key points early and often, and back them up with facts and examples.

- **Offer a short, snappy headline.** A good headline gives readers a preview of what your op-ed has to say. (Keep in mind that some news outlets will write their own headlines, regardless of what you submit.)

- **Be prepared to be edited.** Op-ed submissions are subject to revisions, editing, and fact-checking. Editors usually do NOT need your approval to make revisions or edits to accommodate space limitations, provided they do not change the context of your position. Sources for factual statements should be listed at the bottom of your op-ed to expedite review and placement processes.

- **Include your contact information.** Be sure to include your name, title, organization (as needed), email, and phone number in case the editors want to contact you.

- **Try again.** If your op-ed is rejected, send it elsewhere or publish it on your organizations’ own blog.

Two samples of op-eds are available in the appendix. A rational op-ed appeals to reason; an emotional version appeals to the heart. For example, if you choose to write an op-ed about a policy for healthier restaurant children’s meals, you could ask a representative from the local chamber of commerce to sign an op-ed on the benefits that policy will provide for the local restaurant industry or ask a community leader to write an op-ed that focuses on the numbers behind environmental obstacles families face.
when trying to eat healthy in restaurants; this would be considered a rational op-ed. On the other hand, if your goal is to encourage families in your community to eat out at restaurants that offer and promote nutritious kids’ meals, you could ask a local father to write about how he tries to educate his children about nutrition when eating out by choosing meals that include fruits, vegetables, and low-fat milk; this would be considered an emotional op-ed.

**Key Takeaways**

- Choose your signer thoughtfully. Having a local leader’s signature on your op-ed can help increase its chance of being published.
- Be brief and to the point. Five hundred words is a good target.
- Op-eds can be either rational or emotional, depending on the story you want to tell.
Mobilize: Meeting with Legislators

Some advocates may be willing to visit elected officials. Whether you meet with representatives in local home offices or take a trip to the state capitol, you can have a strong impact when you can look legislators in the eye and answer their questions about why it is a problem that most restaurants don’t offer healthy kids’ meals, as well as proposed solutions. Decision makers want to know what’s important to their constituents, so when your representative is available, take advantage of that time by scheduling an in-person meeting.

What follows are some tips to make the most of your meetings.

Save the Date

Making an appointment is easy—simply call your legislators and talk to the office scheduler. Here are a few things to keep in mind.

- Be flexible with the date and time. Legislators have busy schedules and meetings usually last 15 to 45 minutes.
- You may end up meeting with a staffer rather than a legislator. Meetings with staff are worthwhile. Many legislators rely heavily on staff to keep them informed and make decisions about issues.
- Choose one or two issues to discuss so you can talk about them comprehensively in even a short amount of time.
- Bring a colleague or another community member who can also offer their insight on the issues, such as a constituent who would benefit from the change in that community—perhaps a parent, health professional, or a supportive restaurant owner. Be cognizant that bringing an advocate to demonstrate diversity can come across as a token appearance. Be sure to have a strong role for each person engaged in the meeting.
- Research your representative’s stance and voting history on the issues you plan to discuss, as well as opposing viewpoints, to help frame your talking points. Some local representatives are known for frequenting specific restaurants and enjoying certain foods. If you’re able to find out this information, keep it in mind when talking to them. It could either be knowledge that supports your argument or is a potential hurdle.

Essentials for Success

Nervous about how the conversation will go or what to say? Bring these essentials to the meeting to help it run smoothly.

- A pen and pad of paper to take notes during your meeting.
- A business card to leave with your representative.
- Laptops or tablets for sharing photos that depict the unhealthy kids’ menu options some restaurants serve.
- A camera so you can take a picture with your legislator while you are visiting his or her office to share through your social media or website.
- A customized version of the decision maker fact sheet in this toolkit.
- A clear “ask” for the meeting—for instance, a site visit, newspaper column, or op-ed—to move the issue forward.
Each of these could be a non-lobbying request, if your communication with the legislator focused on the general policy goal of enacting healthier restaurant kids’ meals and nutrition laws, and the various ways this could be achieved, rather than discussing specific legislation. If a bill is pending and it makes strategic sense to ask for the legislator’s vote on the bill, you should do so, provided you have lobbying funds available to pay for the costs related to the meeting.

Make the Most of Your One-on-One
- Dress professionally when visiting your representative.
- Introduce yourself and talk about your position on the issues you are there to discuss.
- Share personal stories and examples to illustrate how the issues affect you and your community.
- Listen to your legislator’s response and be prepared to answer questions. If you can’t answer his or her questions, jot a note down and get back to him or her.
- Even if you do not see eye to eye, always be respectful and polite.

Thank Your Legislator
- Thank your legislator in the meeting. In addition, send a brief note or email after the meeting to thank him or her for taking time out of his or her busy schedule.
- Remind them of the stories you shared, your stance on the issues you discussed, and how their actions affect people in your community.
- Based on the response to your request or “ask,” determine the appropriate steps for following up with your legislator.

Key Takeaways
- Come prepared for your meeting with fact sheets, business cards, pen and paper, camera, and—most importantly—a clear “ask.”
- Always be respectful and polite.
- Remember to thank your legislator or a member of their staff and use your thank you note as an opportunity to reiterate your “ask.”
Mobilize: Days at the Capitol

Individual meetings can go a long way toward making a difference with your legislator—but sometimes you need the strength of numbers. If you are looking to combine a media event and a legislator meeting, you may consider hosting a day at the state capitol where advocates hold a rally and then attend scheduled meetings with decision makers.

Here are some things to think about as you plan your action day at the capitol. Note that these suggestions apply whether you are visiting your state capitol, or you have organized something at a different level of government, such as a visit to the city hall.

Choose the Right Day

Planning a day at the capitol takes a lot of time and work—it is a large investment for one short day. Therefore, it is important to make sure you schedule the day for when it will be most effective.

- Schedule the day when your issue is under review by the legislature. If you know when a vote is coming up or a particular committee is viewing the bill, law makers may be more focused on your issue. By talking to them at this point, you can grab their attention and remind them why this issue matters to you. If you talk about the legislation with a law maker and reflect a view on the bill, it will be lobbying.
  - If you choose to express a view on specific legislation in this type of meeting, make sure you have ample unrestricted dollars to cover the costs of both planning and hosting such an event. These activities will be a lobbying expense, since they involve communicating directly with legislators about specific legislation.
- The legislative calendar lends itself to slightly different opportunities for meeting. Try to attend at a time when things are slower at the capitol, not at the start of a new legislative session, so that you may be able to secure more quality face-to-face time with your legislator. If there is an opportunity to connect your visit to an awareness day (for example, National Nutrition Month or your city’s Restaurant Week), this could lend emphasis to your visit.
  - If you focus your message more generally on improving the nutritional quality of restaurant meals for children, it may be possible to use non-lobbying funds for this activity. When using non-lobbying funds, you must stick to educating legislators on the impact of unhealthy restaurant meals on kids. You can also secure legislators’ general backing for your issue, obtain support for non-legislative projects, such as a workshop educating local kids and their parents about how to make healthier choices when eating out, ask the legislator to contact the CEO of a particular restaurant chain, or request their support for a particular grant application to support these items. Alternatively, if you want to use your visit to influence legislators to introduce or support specific legislative initiatives directing restaurants to improve kids’ menus, you must use lobbying dollars to pay for these activities.
- During your day at the capitol, consider planning an activity or event that would attract the attention of the media.

Invite the Right People

When you schedule these types of events, remember that legislators and their staff want to hear from constituents and people who have direct experience with the issues at hand. It is important to bring advocates who have an understanding of, and are passionate about, improving the nutritional quality of foods served to children in restaurants. And do not forget to bring people who can talk about the
positive fiscal impact, perhaps a local restaurant owner who has voluntarily made these changes without negative financial consequences.

If you have existing relationships with your advocates, try to choose those who can effectively tell engaging stories that reflect diverse perspectives. If you plan to include youth in your day at the capitol, be sure to have signed parental permission slips and chaperones. Consider consulting legal counsel if you need assistance developing this plan.

Help Advocates Attend
- If you have the resources, make plans to help your advocates get to the capitol, especially those with financial limitations. Consider offering gas money or assistance in paying for their plane ticket. An investment to get the right people involved can help ensure a successful visit. If the capitol is within reasonable driving distance, identify who can drive and who would like or need to carpool with others.
- If overnight travel is necessary, settle on a hotel and send out the booking information well in advance of the day at the capitol so people can get the cheapest rates (this may be another opportunity to help individuals out with the costs, if you are able). Always ask the hotel if it has group discount rates.
- Make sure your accommodations are pleasant and have sufficient space for group training meetings. They should also not be too far from the capitol. Consider visiting the hotel in advance to make sure it is suitable for your advocates. Remember, you want people coming back next year, and comfort—even modest comfort—is important.
- Ask advocates if they have any barriers to participating, such as transportation or child care, and brainstorm ways to help overcome these challenges to ensure full participation.
- Keep in mind, however, that if you are organizing a lobbying event, the travel costs also must be paid for using lobbying funds.

Create a Schedule
Plan a clear itinerary that you distribute to advocates when they arrive; you can even place it in their hotel rooms with a welcome gift bag. An itinerary will communicate that this trip is important, purposeful, and they are going to get something out of it. On the itinerary, note the key message for advocates, and emphasize what the common “ask” is, and outline next steps for follow-up. Schedule time at the end of the day to receive immediate feedback and debrief on key conversations.

Build Time for Fun
Beyond meeting with their decision makers, this is an excellent time for advocates to connect. Connected advocates are often more committed and inspired to support the issue at hand. Although your advocates are connecting online, they may have few opportunities to connect in person and learn from each other. Make sure to schedule intentional times for this to happen, such as longer meeting breaks and meals, as well as fun outings.

Create a Leave-Behind
Arm your advocates with tools that will help further drive the point home to decision makers. These could be the decision maker fact sheet in this toolkit, plus something else, such as a petition from people in their community, photos of healthy and unhealthy restaurant kids’ meals, or a sticker, button,
magnet, stress ball, or other give-away as a token to help them remember the need to improve the nutritional quality of the foods restaurants serve to kids and families. If your visit is a lobbying visit, materials you create specifically for the visit are likely to be considered lobbying materials; developing and printing the materials must be paid for with lobbying dollars. Before you create your leave-behind, check your state’s gift restrictions for elected officials to ensure you are not in violation.

Follow Up with Successes
After the day at the capitol, follow up with advocates about the meetings, reporting both successful and challenging interactions or resulting legislative movement. Let advocates know their efforts were worth it and appreciated, so they will continue to be active for your cause.

Key Takeaways
- Look at the legislative calendar and pick a day that makes sense for your visit.
- Think about who would be willing to attend your action day. Especially seek out people with direct experience with the issues at hand.
- Do what you can to make the process of traveling to the capitol easy and enjoyable for your advocates.
Appendix

Note: The materials provided in the following pages are meant to be general examples for you to learn from as you create your own pieces. For each tactic, please refer to the Key Messages outlined in the following pages, and craft your messages according to the specific policies most applicable to your community.
Key Messages: Pursuing Solutions to Ensure Environments Support Health for All Children

We outlined the policy objectives and action items related to increasing support for healthier restaurant children’s meals at the beginning of this toolkit. Take some time before starting your campaign to map out the specific objectives that are right for you, according to the policies outlined.

After you determine which specific policies and improvements to pursue, it is important to fold those solutions into the communications you produce so you can establish a congruent voice across all outreach.

Because you speak to different audiences at different times, the following are suggestions on how to speak about improving the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals and why it is important to speak to various audiences. Meanwhile, you may advocate for different solutions at different times, and in accordance with the needs of your community, so we have bundled potential messaging for each policy level here. You can then use these messages in the various communications templates—including op-eds, action alerts, and blog posts—that follow.

Overarching message for encouraging policies to improve the healthfulness of restaurant kids’ meals: Serve our kids well

The below is your “go-to” messaging or your “elevator pitch” for speaking about improving the nutritional value of restaurant foods created for and promoted to children in your community. Use it to succinctly and clearly communicate your mission.

Sound Bite

A sound bite should be the shortest articulation of your mission—short enough to be recorded by the media, while detailed enough to accurately tell your community about your objectives.

Sample sound bite:

Families should be able to take children out to eat without worrying that their children’s health will be at risk. The overwhelming majority of restaurant kids’ meals are unhealthy. Restaurants should offer healthy foods that will serve our kids well and support parents in their efforts to feed their children healthy meals.

Key Message

The key message is the center of your campaign. It encompasses the issue you are working to resolve and who you are enlisting to help you achieve that resolution.

Sample key message:

Eating out is an increasingly routine part of life, whether grabbing a meal on the run or as a special occasion on a Friday night. That’s why it’s so important that restaurants offer healthy options—especially for children. But the majority of restaurant kids’ meals are packed with calories, salt, and fat, making it hard for families to feed their children healthfully. It’s time for our community’s leaders to implore restaurants to serve our kids better by improving kids’ meals.
Visualizing Impact
At the heart of our campaigns, we want supporters to visualize the impact. We want them to picture a community that has been improved by their efforts so they know what they are working toward. That is what the “visualizing impact” will help them do.

Sample visualizing impact:

When families walk into a restaurant, they should see a kids’ menu full of tasty and healthy options. These options would allow families to build a balanced and wholesome meal together—like one they might make at home for their children. Through efforts to improve restaurant kids’ meals, community leaders and restaurant owners can help parents feed kids healthfully.

Audience Matters: How to Message to Different Audiences
For each of the policy objectives outlined in the beginning of this toolkit, there is a corresponding audience that should be targeted by your efforts. The following descriptions outline why and how each audience can be involved in your campaign. Keeping these perspectives in mind as you communicate will help you craft language that will most resonate with your audience.

Decision Makers
Why: Decision makers have a duty to use their influence to promote health and prosperity within their communities—and making it possible for their community to eat well is a part of that duty. They should use local policy to foster healthier kids’ meal options in order to protect and safeguard our community’s youngest and most vulnerable members.
How: Decision makers can support policies that improve the nutrition of kids’ meals, such as setting standards for fat and sodium content and healthy default beverages so families can choose food that nourishes their children when eating out.

Restaurants
Why: Restaurant meals have become a staple in the lives of American families. Restaurants know they are feeding kids every day, and many promote meals specifically for children. They should support, rather than undermine, parents in feeding children well.
How: Restaurants can enact voluntary or incentive-based policies to meet specific nutritional standards for kids’ meals. They can take initiative to remove sugary beverages, make portion sizes reasonable, switch to whole grains, or offer fruits and vegetables as the default side dishes.

Community Organizations and Coalitions
Why: Many communities in our state rely on the hard work local organizations or coalitions do to improve the health and well-being of residents. And such organizations hold influence that can play a powerful role in local efforts to improve the food served to kids in restaurants.
How: When these groups rally together to encourage healthier restaurant menu options for kids, it is an opportunity to serve kids, parents, and the entire community better. Local organizations can talk with local restaurants and encourage them to create healthier menus for kids, or petition decision makers to make nutrition standards for restaurant kids’ meals a policy priority.
Families
**Why:** When families model healthy behavior together, they support and encourage one another in making healthy decisions.

**How:** At restaurants that offer few healthy kids’ meal options, families can discuss the menu and pick the healthiest items together, teaching children how to make healthy choices when eating out. Alternatively, families can commit to avoiding restaurants that do not offer ample healthy options for kids.

Individuals
**Why:** Parents set the ultimate example of healthy living for their children; if parents make healthy eating a priority, so will their children. Parents also can be some of the most passionate advocates for healthy restaurant meals for their kids.

**How:** Parents can show kids how to choose the healthiest option on a menu by talking about why nutrition is important to their health and what’s good for them. When kids see parents making healthy choices with them and for them, it helps them learn to make those better decisions. Parents can also stay attuned to and participate in local conversations around the movement for healthier kids’ meals.

Specific Policies: Sample Messaging
The following paragraphs are meant to guide you as you begin to write your own content to help you achieve your policy objectives. While every geography and group will approach policy objectives differently, these are strong examples of how you should consider messaging each level of the pyramid. Remember: These are examples; you should create messaging that is unique to your community.

Each example follows the same basic structure, which has proved effective in communicating campaign objectives. The structure is as follows.

1. **Context for conflict** — establishes an understanding of how things should be
2. **Conflict** — describes the conflict; things are not as they should be
3. **Resolution** — instructs the corresponding audience in how they can resolve the conflict

**Message to community leaders/decision makers:** Improve your community by advocating for policies requiring restaurants to improve the nutritional quality of kids’ meals

People are eating out more than ever. In fact, nearly half of all food dollars are spent on restaurant meals. That means kids in our community are eating many of their meals outside the home, positioning restaurants as a prime source of their nutrition. That’s why it’s so important that restaurant kids’ meals be healthy.

But right now, most restaurant children’s meals are too high in calories, fat, salt, and sugar, with too few whole grains, fruits, and vegetables. And when children eat out often and the options are unhealthy, kids are conditioned to eat poorly and assume eating unhealthy options is the norm and acceptable. A lifetime of eating unhealthy food can lead to serious health consequences such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.

Thankfully, as the leaders of our community, you can do something about this. You can enact policies that set nutritional standards for restaurant children’s meals. But time is of the essence; in the face of the obesity epidemic, we want our kids to be healthy now. With policies in place to ensure kids’ meals include healthy options, restaurants, the state, and families can work together to serve kids better.
**Message to local restaurants: Work with parents by improving your kids’ meals**

Each day, you serve meal after meal to hungry kids. Those kids are growing and need nutritious food to fuel their bodies. When families come through your door or drive-thru, they rely on you to offer a menu with nutritious options for children that will help them grow up healthy.

Yet the vast majority of restaurant kids’ meals contain too much fat, salt, and sugar and too few fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. That means kids aren’t getting the nutrition they need, and over time, it can impact their health.

But you can help by improving the nutritional value of kids’ meals. By serving kids better, you demonstrate your commitment to the health and wellbeing of this community and its children.

**Message to local organizations: Team up with us and ask restaurants to serve healthier meals**

Organizations like yours work tirelessly to improve the quality of life in our community. This is especially important when it comes to the health of our children—and that’s not just about ensuring they have a good education or get enough physical activity; it’s about making sure they’re getting healthy food to fuel the quality of life they deserve.

Ensuring children eat healthfully—including when outside the home—is one of the most important things our community can do. But that objective becomes difficult when our local restaurants offer predominantly unhealthy kids’ meals. By serving junk food, children get conditioned to prefer it and make it a habit, and parent’s ability to teach healthy habits is undermined. Also, what community organizations like yours are trying so hard to create is jeopardized.

Your influence and credibility in the community is so crucial in the pursuit of a healthier community. Your organization has the power to help make restaurant kids’ meals healthier. We need your voice to tell restaurants that the food they serve has an impact on kids’ health.

Join us in encouraging restaurants to serve kids better.

**Message to families: Make decisions together: Choose healthier restaurants and kids’ meal options**

When making decisions as a family, some choices are easier than others. Picking a restaurant that caters to your entire family’s tastes can be tough, but finding one that offers healthy choices should be easy.

Unfortunately, it’s not. Most restaurant kids’ meals are full of greasy, salty, sugary junk food. And we all know that’s not healthy.

It’s not always easy to teach your children to make healthier choices at restaurants, but discuss with them the benefits of picking the apple, low-fat milk, or carrot sticks over fries and soda. And if a restaurant doesn’t offer wholesome kids’ meals, encourage them to offer healthy options, and until they do, find another restaurant that does.
Message to parents: Set an example of healthy eating for your kids

Every day, kids pick up bits of knowledge from you. One important lesson is how to eat well. When you unload groceries, place your order at a restaurant, or cook a meal, you communicate what kind of foods are acceptable and desirable to eat—an important step in making health a priority.

Whether at home or at a restaurant, be aware that your own food choices affect your children’s food preferences. If you order an unhealthy meal—one that’s high in fat, salt, and sugar, without a fruit or vegetable—it tells your kids it’s okay to do the same.

But you can set a good example, and turn a restaurant menu into a learning opportunity. Model healthy food choices and share with your kids why the meal you have chosen is nutritious. When it is difficult to find healthy choices on a restaurant menu, voice your concern. Ask restaurants to serve kids better.

Key Facts: How to use evidence effectively

Facts can be a powerful way to communicate the importance of improving restaurant children’s meal options. By demonstrating the impact that healthier restaurant children’s meal options can have on the community’s children and families, you can communicate your goal in a concrete, logical way.

However, it is important to remember that facts are not always convincing to everyone. One person might more easily connect with a personal story of a struggling mother trying to instill a preference for healthy foods in her child, while another individual may just want to see the numbers. In a chat with your neighbor at the grocery store, it could be helpful to share a personal example of improved nutrition in kids’ meal options, while a city council member might appreciate hearing details demonstrating how improved nutritional standards can help both families and local businesses. Learn the facts that support healthier restaurant kids’ meals, but also find stories to share so you can adjust your message to your audience.

Where you are able, try to provide the state-specific version of the following facts. Just as a personal story helps make the issue more relatable, facts that correlate to your region will help drive the point home, especially for lawmakers who are focused on their own state or community.

As you share facts related to improving the nutritional quality of restaurant food for kids, be mindful of the order in which you tell them. As with the alerts above, share the facts in such a way to explain the context of the conflict, the conflict itself, and the resolution. In the case of improving the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals, the context facts outline the state of kids’ health in today’s junk food environment, the conflict facts detail how restaurants contribute to the poor state of children’s health, and the resolution facts highlight how improving the nutritional value of restaurant foods for kids can aid in bettering the health and wellness of our children.

The following facts are listed in this sequence to help you make your case for improving the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals in the most powerful way.
Context

1. Americans today eat out much more than 50 years ago, with nearly half of food dollars (48 percent) spent on restaurant foods,\textsuperscript{17} up from 26 percent in 1970.\textsuperscript{18} The vast majority of kids’ meals are high in calories, saturated fat, salt, and sugar, with too few whole grains, fruits and vegetables.\textsuperscript{19} In addition, the majority of top restaurant chains feature soda or other sugary drinks with kids’ meals, despite the health risks associated with sugary drink consumption.\textsuperscript{20}

2. The increased regularity of restaurant and fast food consumption has coincided with increasing rates of unhealthy weights among adults and children.\textsuperscript{21} Since 1980, childhood overweight and obesity rates have tripled, and now nearly one in three children is overweight or obese.\textsuperscript{22} This puts our youth at risk for serious health problems, such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and stroke.\textsuperscript{23}

Conflict

1. Studies link eating out with an unhealthy weight, higher amounts of body fat, and higher BMIs, and increased consumption of fast food meals is associated with consuming more calories, fat, and saturated fat.\textsuperscript{24} Typically, children eat nearly twice as many calories when they eat a meal at a restaurant as they do when they eat a meal at home.\textsuperscript{25}

2. Approximately 96 percent of entrees served in restaurants still fail to meet basic USDA nutrition standards.\textsuperscript{26}

3. A study conducted in 2013 found that only 11 of 4,695 possible children’s meal combinations from fast food chain restaurants met all of the established nutrition criteria for pre-schoolers and only 19 meals met all nutrition criteria for older children.  

4. Restaurants also aggressively market fast food to children and youth. Each year, restaurants spend $715 million—nearly $2 million a day—in marketing to children and youth; toy giveaways make up almost half ($340 million) of that spending.

Resolution

1. While restaurants have made some progress toward offering healthier options on their kids’ menus, the progress has been slow. Since 2008, the percentage of kids’ meals that met expert nutrition standards increased from 1 percent to just 3 percent. Setting nutrition standards for restaurant children’s meals is needed to speed progress.

2. A 2013 study examined 21 national restaurant chains to determine whether offering healthier, lower calorie menu items resulted in improved business performance. The study determined that the restaurants that increased the number of healthier choices exhibited greater same-store sales and experienced growth in traffic and servings. In addition, a majority of parents would be more likely to purchase children’s meals if they met nutritional guidelines.


Lobbying vs. Non-Lobbying Checklist

The following questions may help you determine whether your efforts might be considered lobbying under the IRS rules, and therefore, must be paid for with separate, lobbying-approved funding. Each organization’s lobbying requirements (and the registration rules that may apply to them) can be slightly different, so make sure you consult your legal counsel to share your plans and address any questions. In general, the IRS lobbying rules apply to communications with members of Congress, state legislators, city council members, and potentially other elected officials and their staff. In some cases, communication with the general public is considered lobbying too.

✓ Will you be communicating directly with a legislator—or to legislative branch staff, or any executive branch officials or staff involved in formulating particular legislation?
   
   *Note:* Communicating with school boards and zoning boards does not qualify as lobbying.

✓ If so, will your communications reflect a point of view on specific legislation, such as the following?

   • Bills or ballot measures that have been introduced
   • Specific legislative proposals not yet introduced (e.g., “New York City should adopt San Francisco’s marketing and nutrition in restaurants law”)
   • Budget bills
   • *Think strategically:* If you are not conveying a viewpoint on specific legislation, your communications with public officials or their staff are not lobbying. For example, telling a legislator that you want all restaurant kids’ meals to meet nutritional standards is not lobbying, unless it is clear that you are referring to a specific legislative proposal (e.g., a bill for mandatory nutrition standards for restaurant chains).

✓ Will you be communicating to the general public about a view on a particular ballot measure or piece of legislation—through op-eds, social media, email newsletters, advertisements, speeches, etc.?

   o Any communication to the public that reflects a view on a particular ballot measure is lobbying, even without a call-to-action.

✓ If so, will your communications to the general public include a call-to-action, such as the following?

   • Asking the public to contact a legislator
   • Identifying someone’s legislative representative
   • Providing contact information for a legislator
   • Providing a vehicle for contacting the legislator (e.g., form email, petition)
   • Identifying a legislator’s position on the legislation as being neutral or opposed to your organization’s position, or identifying the legislator as sitting on the voting committee
   • *Think strategically:* In most circumstances, if communications to the general public do not include a call-to-action, they are not lobbying unless the legislation discussed is a ballot measure. For example, it would not be lobbying to publish an op-ed or distribute a press release that says, “Our state needs to pass HB 63, the marketing and nutrition in restaurants law, to help our kids grow up healthy.”
Sample Emotional Op-Ed

Note: This op-ed has been crafted from the perspective of a mother in the community. However, it is just an example; please create op-eds that are unique to your community and choose a signer accordingly.

As a single, working mom with three young kids, my day is full of responsibilities both inside and outside the home. Between my job, homework, soccer practice, and loads of laundry, my time is so limited that preparing a good meal at home can be challenging. More often than I would like, the easiest option is to take my kids to a restaurant or pick up takeout on my way home from work.

But the other night, during a rare moment of calm at our favorite neighborhood restaurant, I was struck by something truly troubling: virtually nothing on the kids’ menu was healthy. It was a litany of burgers, pizza, and deep-fried chicken nuggets, along with fries and soda. And as I thought about the many meals we get on the run, I realized that more often than not, that’s the case.

Restaurants simply don’t provide the healthy choices I wish they did—and that my kids deserve. When I researched it further, I found it was even worse than I thought. 96% of entrees served at restaurants don’t even meet basic USDA nutrition standards. That makes finding a healthy option for my kids when eating out like finding a needle in a haystack.

And it’s contributing to an epidemic of preventable, chronic disease. The effects of all this unhealthy food on the long-term health of my children is not just a concern in my household, but nationwide. I learned that eating out is linked to increased calorie intake, poorer diets, and obesity.

It doesn’t take a long, hard look at the menu to understand why. Hiding between the cheeseburgers, chicken nuggets, French fries, and soda is a clear truth: parents like me in [STATE] are facing a constant uphill battle when it comes to helping our kids eat healthy outside our homes. With the amount of money families spend at restaurants each week and an epidemic of childhood obesity, restaurants should work with parents to serve kids better and support healthy food options for children.

That’s why I’m taking a stand and asking our local leaders to put families first by requiring restaurants to include more healthful options on kids’ menus. It’s an important step forward for [STATE]’s physical—and economic—health. It’s pro-business because restaurants that increase their sales of lower-calorie menu items enjoy greater sales growth and more growth in traffic and servings. It’s pro-parent because it would make it possible for more moms and dads like me to find healthy choices when we need or choose to eat out. And it’s pro-child because it means that our children get the nutrients they need to grow up healthy. Given the high rates of childhood obesity, our kids can’t wait any longer.

To all my fellow parents out there who are trying to do the best you can for your children: unhealthy menu options are a part of the problem, but we can be part of the solution. Please join me in asking local leaders to demand that restaurants serve healthier kids’ meals in [STATE]. Visit [INSERT URL] to learn how.

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Note: In the last two paragraphs, we chose language that made this a non-lobbying communication. By referring to “local leaders” instead of “legislators,” the request is not a “call-to-action” under the definition of lobbying, because there are a broad variety of people who fit the role of “local leaders.” Further, there is no mention of specific legislation; instead, the op-ed refers generally to the policy solution of requiring more healthful options on restaurant kids’ menus. If a legislative vote were imminent, and you had sufficient unrestricted dollars to do so, you could make a strategic decision to spend lobbying funds on an op-ed that explicitly urged readers to contact their legislators to ask them to vote for the bill. Alternatively, you could save lobbying dollars by writing an op-ed like the one on the previous page, which promotes a policy without including a call-to-action, or by writing one that advocates for specific legislation without including a call-to-action.
**Sample Rational Op-Ed**

*Note*: This op-ed has been written from the perspective of a community leader. However, it is just an example; please create op-eds that are unique to your community and choose a signer accordingly.

Fifty years ago, a family trip to a restaurant may have been reserved for a special occasion—a celebration, reunion, or rare indulgence. Today, things are much different: families in our communities have turned to restaurants to help them feed their children in the midst of their busy lives. In fact, Americans spend nearly half of their food dollars on restaurant foods. With so many families eating out for their daily meals, restaurants now face a new responsibility: to do their part to make sure all of us—especially children—have healthy menu options.

Unfortunately, it’s a responsibility very few of them are living up to.

Most restaurants offer so few healthy options for children that it is almost impossible for parents to help their kids make healthy choices outside the home. Studies link eating out with an unhealthy weight, higher amounts of body fat, and higher BMIs. Increased consumption of fast food meals is also associated with consuming more calories, fat, and saturated fat. In fact, 96 percent of food offered by restaurants fails to meet basic USDA nutritional standards for children.

This is especially bad because our children now consume, on average, a quarter of their daily calories at fast food and other restaurants. And when eating out, they consume nearly twice as many calories as they do when eating a meal at home.

Given these troubling numbers, it’s not surprising that at the same time eating out increased, something else increased: unhealthy weights in children. One in three American children is overweight or obese. The rate of obesity among U.S. children has tripled since the 1960s, and it stands as one of the most significant public health issues of our time.

What is surprising is that restaurants are doing so little to correct their course. In fact, they’re doing the opposite: spending nearly $750 million a year marketing meals—most of them high in calories, salt, fat, and sugar, and low in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains—to our kids. If kids are eating out more, and restaurants offer almost no healthy options (and then emphasize the unhealthy options through marketing), kids and parents don’t stand a chance.

Restaurant kids’ meals are contributing to a big problem that deserves our close attention. Right now. As a first step, I urge our local leaders to pursue policies that make restaurant children’s menus healthier. Families need to see healthy options on the menu, and our local leaders can drive the change.

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from greasy, salty, sugar-filled kids’ meals to healthy choices that include fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. I hope you’ll join me in improving the nutritional quality of kids’ meals by asking local leaders to adopt policies that require restaurants in [STATE] to serve healthier kids’ meals.

**Note:** In the last two paragraphs, we chose language that made this a non-lobbying communication. By referring to “policymakers” and “local leaders” instead of “legislators,” the request is not a “call-to-action” under the definition of lobbying, because there are broad variety of people who fit the role of “policymakers” or “local leaders.” Further, there is no mention of specific legislation; instead, the op-ed refers generally to the policy solution of requiring more healthful options on restaurant kids’ menus. If a legislative vote were imminent, and you had sufficient unrestricted dollars to do so, you could make a strategic decision to spend lobbying funds on an op-ed that explicitly urged readers to contact their legislators to ask them to vote for the bill. Alternatively, you could save lobbying dollars by writing an op-ed like the one above, which promotes a policy without including a call-to-action, or by writing one that advocates for specific legislation without including a call-to-action.
**Action Alerts**

When reaching out to your advocates about a new issue area or campaign, your first message should be educational. Instead of asking people to get involved right away, spend some time sharing the facts. By laying this groundwork, you’ll ensure that people understand your campaign—and people who “get” your goals are more likely to take specific actions later, such as signing petitions or meeting with decision makers.

*Please note: these materials are examples; please create action alerts that are unique to your effort, and translate them into the relevant languages for your community.*

**Issue Introduction**

Dear [NAME],

If you’re a parent, you know just how busy life is. Between juggling work schedules and children’s activities, our families are eating out more than ever. But too often, restaurants are treating us to meals that are high in calories, sodium, and saturated fat, with too few fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Troublingly, the kids’ meals are some of the worst offenders. In fact, on average, kids are getting 25 percent of their daily calories from restaurant meals, most of which fail to meet basic USDA nutrition standards. In the face of a serious childhood obesity epidemic in the United States, we believe something must be done to make it easier for parents to make healthier choices for their kids when eating out.

**Will you help get restaurants to improve the nutritional quality of kids’ meals in [your state]?** Click here to learn how you can help.

One-third of children in America are overweight or obese—childhood obesity is one of the greatest public health dangers facing our country. And restaurants are contributing to that number by selling high-calorie, low-nutrition kids’ meals and spending more than $714 million a year on marketing to children.

Restaurants have the opportunity work with parents to reverse this trend. By providing healthier kids’ meals, restaurants can play a role in supporting our children’s health. Instead of selling unhealthy meals, restaurants can serve kids better and help parents by offering healthy menu items, substituting unhealthy default sides for healthier options such as apples or carrots, incorporating more whole grains, and taking soda off the menu.

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Our kids deserve to be served well in restaurants, so they can learn healthy habits that will serve them for a lifetime. Please join us as we look to make restaurant kids’ meals healthier in our community.

Thank you,

[ORGANIZATION LEADER OR MAIN POINT OF CONTACT]

Contact Your Legislator Action Alert
If you want regulations or legislation on nutritional standards of kids’ meals implemented in your state, your elected officials need to know these policies are important to their constituents. The following message asks supporters to send letters to their legislative representatives encouraging them to ensure restaurant meals for children meet nutritional standards.

If legislation addressing the nutrition of restaurant kids’ meals is pending in the legislature, the following alert would be grassroots lobbying because it is a communication to the public that reflects a view on specific legislation and includes a call-to-action. If there is no pending bill and the email is simply asking legislators to support a sensible policy, then it would not be lobbying and you could use non-lobbying dollars to pay for all related costs.

Dear [NAME],

We have an opportunity to improve child health and nutrition in [STATE]—but we need your help!

One-third of American children are either overweight or obese. And restaurants are only contributing to this number by selling and promoting high-calorie, low-nutrition meals to kids.

Thankfully, there is a solution. By offering healthier kids’ meal options, restaurants can support children’s health and parents’ ability to feed their children well. But we need your help to make this a reality.

**Contact your legislators to ask that they stand with us to ensure that in [STATE], restaurant children’s meals meet basic nutritional standards. [INSERT LINK TO ACTION].**

With your support, we can create healthier restaurant environments that serve kids better.

Thank you,

[ORGANIZATION LEADER OR MAIN POINT OF CONTACT]

**Subject Lines**
The subject line of your email can help catch your supporters’ attention and encourage them to open your email. Here are some suggested subject lines to try with your audience:

- Every child deserves a healthy meal

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• We want to hear from you
• Let restaurants know that kids’ meals matter
• Should restaurants improve their kids’ meals?
• Tell restaurants to serve kids better
• Help improve restaurant children’s meals
Social Media Sample Messaging

The following sample messaging can help you spread the word about your campaign on Facebook and Twitter. Some examples are considered non-lobbying messages; however, others may fall under the definition of lobbying and will need to be paid for out of your lobbying funds. Be sure to use eye-catching images to get their attention and include appropriate and useful links for readers to learn more or get involved. Remember: These are examples; please create posts that are unique to your community.

The examples below assume the links in the tweets and Facebook postings bring users to a web page that provides information about the issue, but is not primarily a vehicle for users to contact their legislators. If a landing page urges users to contact their legislators about specific legislation, then a tweet or post that drives users to that landing page may itself be a lobbying communication. Due to the low cost of posting a message on social media, many organizations will choose to use their lobbying funds on social media messages that encourage supporters to contact legislators about legislation.

Twitter
Non-Lobbying Messages

- There’s nothing great about unhealthy kids’ meals. Help us make #healthykidsmeals to #servekidsbetter: [INSERT LINK]
- 1 in 3 children in America are overweight/obese. Policies that make #kidsmeals healthier are a way to curb that. [INSERT LINK]
- RT if you agree: Restaurants should provide #healthykidsmeals to #servekidsbetter: [INSERT LINK]
- Let’s #servekidsbetter and tell restaurants to provide kids’ meals that are healthy. Learn more: [INSERT LINK]
- Restaurants have been MIA when it comes to our kids’ health. It’s time for them to #servekidsbetter: [INSERT LINK]
- Kids consume 1/4 of their daily calories at restaurants. Let’s make sure they’re served healthy foods. [INSERT LINK] #servekidsbetter
- Restaurants should #servekidsbetter by providing healthy kids’ meals. RT this if you agree! [INSERT LINK]
- Kids are eating 25% of calories at restaurants. Not good considering 97% of kids’ meals are unhealthy. [INSERT LINK] #servekidsbetter
- Most kids’ menus are dominated by fried chicken fingers, cheeseburgers, pizza, French fries, and soda. [INSERT LINK] #servekidsbetter
- Restaurants need to get serious and cut calories, salt, fat & add fruits, veggies, whole grains to kids’ meals to #servekidsbetter.

Lobbying Messages

The following tweets may be considered lobbying messages if they’re sent while the legislature is considering a bill related to restaurant kids’ meals, or if the communication refers to a specific law from another state.

- In a [STATE] with so many kids with unhealthy weights, we’re so glad @[INSERT LAWMAKER’S TWITTER HANDLE] supports the healthy kids’ meal bill.
- @[INSERT LAWMAKER’S TWITTER HANDLE], we can’t stand on the sidelines when it comes to our kids’ health. We need restaurants to #servekidsbetter. [INSERT LINK]
Facebook

Non-Lobbying Messages

- We all have a role to play in improving children’s health. Urge restaurants to do their part and serve kids better by improving their kids’ meals. [LINK TO WEBSITE]
- Our kids eat, on average, a quarter of their daily calories at fast food and other restaurants. Too often, that food is low in nutrition but high in calories. Learn how we can curb unhealthy children’s meals in [STATE] restaurants, and share this post with your Facebook friends. [LINK TO WEBSITE]
- Millions of children in America are overweight or obese, and the meals restaurants provide to them are part of the problem. It’s time to serve kids better and ensure that restaurant children’s meals support kids’ health! [LINK TO WEBSITE]
- How can our community serve kids better? By urging your decision makers to support healthier restaurant children’s meals in [STATE] today. [LINK TO WEBSITE WITH PLACE TO TAKE ACTION]
- Are you spreading the word about improving restaurant kids’ meals? This flyer can help. Print it and pin it up around your community! While you’re at it, snap a picture of yourself in action and come back here to share it. [LINK TO FLYER]
- Help bring healthier kids’ meals to [STATE]. Make this your cover photo and ask your friends to support efforts to ensure restaurant kids’ meals are healthier. [INCLUDE SAMPLE COVER PHOTO]
- Americans spend more than half of our food dollars at restaurants, meaning kids eat out a lot. Support efforts to improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals in our community. [LINK TO WEBSITE]

Lobbying Messages

The following Facebook posts may be considered lobbying messages if they’re sent while the legislature is considering a bill related to nutritional standards for restaurant kids’ meals, or if the communication refers to a specific law from another state.

- Ask [DECISION MAKER] to serve kids better by supporting [BILL NAME] to improve the nutritional quality of children’s meals in [STATE] restaurants. [LINK TO WEBSITE]
- If restaurant kids’ meals met nutritional standards, it could make a real difference in helping America’s children lead a healthy life. Send a letter to [INSERT DECISION MAKER] to support making the kids’ meals in [STATE] restaurants healthier! [LINK TO WEBSITE WITH LETTER TO DECISION MAKER]
Newsletter Blurbs

Newsletters can keep your advocates engaged and up-to-date about the issues that matter to your organization. If you currently send out a newsletter on a regular basis, use it as a platform to help promote your work to improve restaurant children’s meals.

The following are two sample newsletter blurbs to give you ideas for creating your own content. Please create content that is unique to your community.

Blurbs like these should serve as teasers for the more detailed information about the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals located on your website. Depending on the familiarity of your audience with this topic, you may want to provide some basic education on the issue of children’s diets, childhood obesity, and the importance of healthy kids’ meals.

Childhood Obesity and Eating Out? (informational)

It used to be that dining out was a rare, special occasion for families. Today, however, we’re spending nearly half of our food dollars at restaurants, which means our kids are getting more of their daily calories from restaurant meals. Unfortunately, often those foods are high in calories, fats, sodium, and sugar, but low in nutrients, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Many restaurants offer menu items created specifically for and marketed to their youngest diners. Given that a third of kids in America are either overweight or obese, what restaurants serve to children can play a huge role—for better or for worse—in their overall health.

Click here [INSERT URL] for more information about how to help children achieve a healthy weight by improving the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals.

Take action—help make restaurant children’s meals healthier! (advocacy)

Today, we’re in the midst of a public health crisis, with a third of kids in America either overweight or obese. Our youngest generations are at risk of developing high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. It doesn’t help that when children go to a restaurant, their options on the kids’ menu are high in fat, salt, and sugar, and contain too few fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

When it comes to safeguarding the health of our nation’s children, we need to make sure that what restaurants serve today will serve kids better now and in the future. Contact your local leaders today [LINK TO PAGE FOR CONTACTING COMMUNITY LEADERS], and urge them to support healthier restaurant children’s meals.

Several strategies can have an impact, from restaurants’ adoption of incentive-based or voluntary nutrition standards to ensure that healthy foods and beverages are provided as the default option for kids, to efforts that ensure all restaurants offer healthier kids’ meal options on their menus.

But changes like this won’t happen unless we ask our local leaders to support them. Send a letter to them today, and ask them to do more to serve kids better. [LINK TO PAGE FOR CONTACTING COMMUNITY LEADERS]
Note: These two newsletter blurbs would be non-lobbying because they talk about supporting healthier kids’ meal options generally without referring to any specific legislation. Further, the example refers only to “local leaders,” not to “legislators,” so there is no “call-to-action”—there is a broad variety of people who fit the role of “local leaders.” However, if there were pending or proposed legislation regarding kids’ meals, and the message referenced legislators instead of the more general “leaders,” it would be a communication to the public that reflects a view on specific legislation and includes a call-to-action—and thus, would be grassroots lobbying.
**Sample Blog Post: Letters to the Editor**

**FEATURED ACTION:** Support healthier restaurant kids’ meals by submitting a letter to the editor (LTE)

*If your organization has its own blog, customize the post below and use it as part of your campaign. The sample post below asks advocates to write letters to the editor of a local newspaper, but you can substitute any action you would like advocates to take. Remember: This is an example; please create blogs that are unique to your community.*

Today’s kids get about 25 percent of their daily calories from fast food and other restaurants. As kids are developing food preferences and long-term dietary habits, restaurants are aggressively promoting to kids meals that are high in calories, sugar, fats, and salt and contain few fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Obesity is one of the most critical public health challenges of our time. Overweight and obese children are more likely to become obese adults, which puts them at greater risk of developing life-threatening diseases, such as type-2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

This is absolutely a preventable epidemic. While many factors are at play, eating out is linked to eating more calories, poorer diets, and obesity. It’s time we ask restaurants to serve kids better.

Restaurants can help children attain a healthy weight by improving the nutritional quality of their kids’ meals. By ensuring that the foods restaurants promote and serve to children are nutritious, restaurants can support parents’ efforts to cultivate healthy food preferences and behaviors in their children.

**You can help by writing a Letter to the Editor**

If you support efforts to make fast food and other restaurant kids’ meals healthier, please consider writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. It has the chance to reach hundreds, if not thousands of people—and it’ll help draw in new supporters for improving restaurant kids’ meals.

Let’s help our community improve children’s meals at restaurants. To get involved, you could:

- Post information about why it’s important to make restaurant kids’ meals healthier on your blog, Facebook, or Twitter.
- Email your friends and family and ask them to support this effort.
- Write to your key community leaders and public officials. [LINK TO AN ACTION ALERT]
- Write a letter to the editor (LTE) of your local newspaper—don’t forget about multicultural media in your community! Newspapers can reach thousands of people, so your LTE could help create new supporters of improving the nutritional quality of kids’ meals in [STATE].

If you would like to draft an LTE, here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Visit your local newspaper’s website to learn how to submit your LTE. If necessary, give the editor a call, and ask how he/she prefers to receive letters.
- Make sure you provide your name and contact information (including phone number) when you submit your letter. The newspaper will need to contact you before publication to verify you truly submitted the letter.
LTEs should be short. Try to keep your message to around 100 words. Some newspapers may have specific length guidelines.

Share your story! If you have a story about how your local restaurants improved the nutritional quality of their children’s menus, consider sharing it here so you can make a personal connection from the start. A before and after story of a community that has made this change would be a powerful message.

Make sure you include the purpose of your letter: to get public officials and other community leaders to support efforts to improve restaurant kids’ meals.

Back up your intent with facts about restaurant kids’ meals and the health outcomes of a poor diet.

Make sure to direct readers to [YOUR WEBSITE URL] so they can learn how they can get involved.
Case Studies

The following case studies spotlight successful initiatives dedicated to improving the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals around the country. They can help serve as models for your own program or provide inspiration for new ways to approach your work.

Food Marketing: Using Toys to Market Children’s Meals

Healthy Eating Research: Building evidence to prevent childhood obesity

Issue Brief, August 2014

In July 2011, McDonald’s announced that it would improve the nutritional quality of Happy Meals by reducing the portion size of French fries, which had long been the default side dish, and adding a side of apple slices to all Happy Meals. This decreased the calorie content of the typical Happy Meal by 110 calories. In addition, it announced that fat-free chocolate milk would be a beverage option. In June 2011, Jack in the Box announced it would no longer offer or market toys with its children’s meals. Recently, McDonald’s also agreed not to market sodas to children via in-store or external advertising or list them on the children’s menu. Taco Bell also announced in July 2013 that it would eliminate children’s meals and toys/premiums from its menu over the next year.

Impact of San Francisco’s Toy Ordinance on Restaurants and Children’s Food Purchases, 2011-2012

Jennifer J. Otten, PhD, RD; Brian E. Saelens, PhD; Kristopher I. Kapphahn, MS; Eric B. Hekler, PhD; Matthew P. Buman, PhD; Benjamin A. Goldstein, PhD; Rebecca A. Krukowski, PhD; Laura S. O’Donohue, BS; Christopher D. Gardner, PhD; Abby C. King, PhD

Preventing Chronic Disease, Public Health Research, Practice, and Policy

Introduction

In 2011, San Francisco passed the first citywide ordinance to improve the nutritional standards of children’s meals sold at restaurants by preventing the giving away of free toys or other incentives with meals unless nutritional criteria were met. This study examined the impact of the Healthy Food Incentives Ordinance at ordinance-affected restaurants on restaurant response (eg, toy-distribution practices, change in children’s menus), and the energy and nutrient content of all orders and children’s-meal-only orders purchased for children aged 0 through 12 years.

Methods

Restaurant responses were examined from January 2010 through March 2012. Parent-caregiver/child dyads (n=762) who were restaurant customers were surveyed at 2 points before and 1 seasonally matched point after ordinance enactment at Chain A and B restaurants (n=30) in 2011 and 2012.

45 Satran J. Jack In the Box Pulls Toys From Kids’ Meals. Huffington Post. June 22, 2011.
46 McDonald’s Corporation. 2013 Clinton Global Initiative Commitment to Action. Partnership with Alliance for a Healthier Generation and Clinton Foundation; 2013.
Results
Both restaurant chains responded to the ordinance by selling toys separately from children’s meals, but neither changed their menus to meet ordinance-specified nutrition criteria. Among children for whom children’s meals were purchased, significant decreases in kilocalories, sodium, and fat per order were likely due to changes in children’s side dishes and beverages at Chain A.

Conclusion
Although the changes at Chain A did not appear to be directly in response to the ordinance, the transition to a more healthful beverage and default side dish was consistent with the intent of the ordinance. Study results underscore the importance of policy wording, support the concept that more healthful defaults may be a powerful approach for improving dietary intake, and suggest that public policies may contribute to positive restaurant changes.
Content Articles
The following articles are examples of media coverage around making restaurant kids’ meals healthier. Read on to learn more about these programs, as well as the types of articles some journalists have written about the ways restaurants have offered healthier menu items for kids.

Wendy's Takes Soda Out Of Children's Meals
Tech Times
January 16, 2015

Appeasing advocates for child health, Wendy's has agreed to take down soda from its children's meals. Though it has yet to enforce a new policy for its Happy Meals, McDonald's has pledged to do the same in 2013, leaving just Burger King out of the "big three" fast-food chains in the U.S. to continue selling soda on its children's menu.

Effective immediately, Wendy's will no longer be offering soda alongside food options for children although parents are more than free to order the beverage if they want to. Taking soda out as the default drink option just makes it easier for a parent to make healthier food choices for their kids.

"Ensuring that our children can make healthy choices is an important part of raising them. When restaurants offer up sugary drinks as the default choice, it undermines those efforts," said Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, CEO and executive director for MomRising, adding her organization and its members are very delighted in what Wendy's is doing as it supports parents making healthier choices for their children.

Jessica Almy, senior counsel for nutrition policy at the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), said that while parents are ultimately responsible for making healthy food choices for their children, restaurants can also pitch in to the effort by taking away obstacles, which is in this case soda with children's meals.

Read the rest of the article here.

McDonald's Clarifies Plan to Remove Soda from Happy Meals
Center for Science in the Public Interest
October 11, 2013

Today, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and McDonald's released an updated agreement that clarifies that the chain will indeed phase out listing soda on the kids' meal section of its menu boards. Taking soda off the Happy Meal section of menu boards at McDonald's is an important step toward healthier kids' meals and healthier children. It is a step that should be immediately adopted by Burger King, Wendy's, and other restaurants. Soda and other sugar drinks are leading promoters of obesity and diabetes, and one day it will seem crazy that restaurants ever made this junk the default beverage for kids.

On September 26, McDonald's, in partnership with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, announced that it would cease featuring and promoting soda as a beverage option with kids' meals. The fine print of
their agreement, however, disclosed that while McDonald’s would not depict soda through graphics on the Happy Meal section of the menu, it would still list soda as a Happy Meal option on menu boards.

CSPI issued a statement on September 27 stating that McDonald’s had misled the public and the media about the true extent of the change in policy -- because continuing to list soda on menu boards as a Happy Meals option is featuring soda on the menu and is a promotion of sugar drinks to children.

Read the rest of the article here.

Councilman Ben Kallos wants to set stricter nutrition standards for kids' meals that come with toys
New York Daily News
August 20, 2014

City officials want kids’ fast-food meals to be not just happy — but also healthy.

Councilman Ben Kallos is set to introduce a bill Thursday that would set stricter nutrition standards for kids’ meals that come with toys.

The proposed legislation would bar fast-food joints from offering free toys, coupons and other incentives with a kids’ meal if the food served contains more than 500 calories and more than 600 mg of sodium.

They want to require the meal to also contain at least half a cup of fruit, vegetables or a serving of whole-grain products.

“Throughout the fast food industry, you’re seeing that toys are being linked to meals,” said Kallos (D-Manhattan). “And as a result, we have a very high obesity rate.”

Less than 1% of all kids’ meal combinations met recommended government nutrition standards, according to a study from the Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity.

Read the rest of the article here.
Index of Potential Allies

The American Heart Association has volunteers and advocates in communities across the nation who may be working on this issue. Connect with your local American Heart Association office by visiting heart.org or calling 1-800-AHA-USA-1.

Berkeley Media Studies Group
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Advancement Project
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Diabetes Association
American Public Health Association
Asian and Pacific Islander Obesity Prevention Alliance
Bipartisan Policy Center
Bridging the Gap
The California Endowment
Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood
Center for Science in the Public Interest
ChangeLab Solutions
Corporate Accountability International
Healthy Eating Research
Hip Hop Public Health
MomsRising
NAACP
National Council of La Raza
National PTA
The Praxis Project
Prevention Institute
Public Health Law Center
Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity
Salud America!
YMCA of the USA
Potential Allies

Berkeley Media Studies Group

Berkeley Media Studies Group (BMSG) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding advocates' ability to improve the systems and structures that determine health. BMSG is a project of the Public Health Institute. BMSG conducts research to learn how the media characterize health issues. Through media advocacy training and consultation, BMSG helps advocates harness lessons from that research and develop the skills they need to shape journalists' coverage of health issues so that it illuminates the need for policies that improve the places where people live, learn, work, and play.

2130 Center Street, Suite 302
Berkeley, CA 94704
(510)204-9700
www.bmsg.org

Positioning

BMSG stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on healthy restaurant kids' meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to nutrition, childhood obesity, and public health
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids' meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely public health officials, community leaders, and state and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - Developed toolkits to help advocates fight junk food marketing to kids
  - Co-convened the Food Marketing Workgroup, a network of 200 organizations and experts who are concerned about the proliferation of marketing of unhealthful foods that targets children and adolescents
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

Mixed Progress Made by US Government And Schools to Improve Food Marketing Influencing Children’s Diets
Science Newsline Medicine
By Elsevier Health Sciences
The evaluation showed that extensive progress was not made by any public-sector group. For example, the report recommended that government partner with the private sector to create a long-term, multifaceted, and financially sustained social marketing program to support parents, caregivers, and families to promote a healthful diet. No progress was found. In a commentary accompanying the article, Lori E. Dorfman, DrPH, of the Berkeley Media Studies Group in Berkeley, CA, notes, "Our government is ceding education about nutrition to the food and beverage industry, which spends $2 billion annually – more than $5 million every day – inundating children with enticements to eat and drink high-fat, sugary and salty foods, and sugar-sweetened beverages."

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Founded in 1917, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (AND) is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. Today, the Academy has more than 75,000 members — registered dietitian nutritionists, dietetic technicians, registered, and other dietetics professionals holding undergraduate and advanced degrees in nutrition and dietetics, and students — and is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education, and advocacy. As a leader in food and nutrition issues, the Academy provides expert testimony at hearings, lobbies Congress and other governmental bodies, comments on proposed federal and state regulations, and develops position statements on critical food and nutrition issues.

120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2000
Chicago, Illinois 60606-6995
(800) 877-1600
www.eatrightpro.org

Positioning

AND stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to nutrition, food access, and disease prevention
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely Congress, USDA, and state health policymakers
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and healthy restaurant kids’ meals
  - [Kids Eat Right Initiative](#) provides RDNs additional resources to educate children and families about shopping smart, cooking healthy, and eating right
SERVE KIDS BETTER™.

- **Weight Loss** portal provides in-depth resources for healthcare providers, parents, and children that explain the causes of obesity, provide approaches to weight loss, and offer healthy eating plans to help keep the weight off.
- **Legislative and Public Policy Committee** advocates on behalf of nutrition professionals to support policies that center on disease prevention and treatment, lifecycle nutrition, healthy food access, and quality healthcare.

**Media Coverage**

**Eating Out with Kids**

*By Carolyn O'Neil, MS, RD, LD*

*Kids Eat Right*

*January 21, 2014*

Use smart-eating strategies: plan ahead, consider the menu and choose foods carefully to keep you on your plan.

- Choose a restaurant that caters to children and has a healthy children's menu that includes smaller portion sizes and meals designed to provide ample nourishment for smaller bodies.
- For kids’ meals, opt for milk as a beverage and fruit for dessert.
- Order kids plain foods with sauce on the side.
- Substitute healthier "sides" in place of fries, like carrots or apple slices.
- Choose two or three suitable menu items, then let your child pick one.
- Let kids order their familiar favorites when they eat out. For new foods, offer a bite or two from your order.
- Calcium is important at all ages, but especially for growing bones. To get more calcium, drink low-fat or fat-free white or chocolate milk or add a slice of cheese to their sandwich. Choose dairy-based treats like yogurt, a milkshake or frozen dairy dessert.

**When It Comes To Nutrition, Chain Restaurant Meals Still Leave A Lot To Be Desired**

*By Amanda Chan*

*The Huffington Post*

*January 9, 2014*

A new study in the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior shows that the entrees at some of the most popular chain restaurants leave much to be desired in the nutrition department, with many entrees being too high in sodium and too low in fiber.

The findings fall in line with those of a previous study last year in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, which showed that average calories and sodium in U.S. chain restaurant meals has stayed largely the same, despite additions of "healthier" menu options, between 2010 and 2011. The same researchers, from RAND Corp. and the Institute for Population Health Improvement at UC Davis Health System, had found in a previous study that nearly all chain restaurant entrees don't follow recommendations for saturated fat and sodium from the USDA.
Advancement Project

Advancement Project is a multi-racial civil rights organization. Founded by a team of veteran civil rights lawyers in 1999, Advancement Project was created to develop and inspire community-based solutions based on the same high quality legal analysis and public education campaigns that produced the landmark civil rights victories of earlier eras. Advancement Project works to help organized communities of color dismantle and reform inequitable policies that undermine the promise of democracy.

1220 L Street NW, Suite 850
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 728-9557
www.advancementproject.org

Positioning

Advancement Project stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to civil rights and equity issues in underserved communities
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely local school districts
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and healthy restaurant kids’ meals
  - Healthy City program strengthens community voice and action, increase resources in underserved communities of color, and advance equitable public policies using advocacy, strategic research, customized web tools, and workshops and trainings
  - Community Research Lab shares best practices and methods for community based organizations interested in supporting their strategies with research around a number of topic areas, including civic engagement, education, and community health

Media Coverage

State of the Neighborhood Report offers proposals for surrounding communities

By Eddie North-Hager
USC News
April 21, 2015
The report, a baseline used to measure impacts and outcomes going forward, focused on the current state of the communities surrounding UPC and HSC in five key areas: economic stability, education, health and health care, neighborhood and built environment and social capital. It examined such disparate measures as access to child care and the number of banks in the area, as well as a host of other community issues that will take the entire community to solve.

“We are all trying to get it right,” said Provost Professor William Vega, executive director of the USC Edward R. Roybal Institute on Aging at the USC School of Social Work, who was a senior adviser on the report. “This is all part of a larger movement, a revolution on how health is related to the community.”

The report is the product of an 18-month effort led by Hortensia Amaro, the lead author and associate vice provost for community research. Amaro enlisted the nonprofit civil rights organization Advancement Project and convened a community advisory board and faculty task force to examine the state of USC’s neighborhoods.

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Academy of Pediatrics

The mission of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is to attain optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents, and young adults. To accomplish this, AAP supports the professional needs of its members. AAP works to advance child health and well-being with the understanding that pediatricians are the best qualified to provide child health care.

141 Northwest Point Blvd.
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
(847) 434-4284
www.aap.org

Positioning

AAP stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to healthcare, health education, and children’s health
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely pediatrics and healthcare industry leaders
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
With high levels of childhood obesity, it is important to feed children a healthy diet starting early in life. However, a new study found that a significant amount of commercial toddler meals and foods sold in the U.S. are high in sodium or sugar. In the March 2015 Pediatrics study, “Sodium and Sugar in Complementary Infant and Toddler Foods Sold in the United States,” (published online Feb. 2), researchers examined the sodium and sugar content of 1,074 infant and toddler dinners, snacks, fruits, vegetables, dry cereals, juices and desserts. Out of 79 infant mixed grains and fruits, 41 contained at least one added sugar, and 35 of these foods contained more than 35 percent calories from sugar. Seventy-two percent of toddler dinners were high in sodium, containing more than 210 mg consumed per meal. On average, dry fruit-based snacks contained 60 grams of sugar and 66 percent of calories from total sugars. The most commonly used added sugars were fruit juice concentrate (56 percent), sugar (33 percent), cane (20 percent), syrup (15 percent), and malt (7 percent). Study authors conclude that many types of infant and toddler foods had high sugar or sodium content. These results are concerning, and parents are advised to read nutrition labels and choose products lower in added sugar and sodium. Reducing sodium and sugar intake early on can help set taste preferences and help children make healthy food choices later in life.

Menu Labels Can Ensure Kids Eat Less and Move More
American Academy of Pediatrics
January 26, 2015

A few preliminary studies suggest that labeling fast food menu items with calorie counts and the amount of physical activity required to burn the calories in the food may reduce the number of calories adults purchase for a fast food meal. A new study, “Potential Effect of Physical Activity Calorie Equivalent Labeling on Parent Fast Food Decisions,” appearing in the February 2015 issue of Pediatrics (published online Jan. 26), examined whether fast food menu items labeled with calories and the amount of exercise needed to use up those calories would affect parents’ menu choices for their children. The study gave parents four types of menu labels: no labels, calories only, calories plus minutes or calories plus miles needed to walk to burn off the calories. The authors found that while any labels showing calories reduced the amount of calories parents ordered for their children, the labels with the calories and physical activity needed to burn off the calories were effective in reducing calories ordered and motivating parents to encourage physical activity in their children. If such a strategy proves successful in real-world settings, the resulting combination of fewer calories and more physical activity could be a step toward curbing childhood obesity.
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan sister organization to the American Cancer Society. ACS CAN works to make cancer a national priority. Specifically, it advocates for better access to care, cancer prevention, and early detection programs, cancer research funding, regulation of tobacco, better quality of life for cancer patients, and attempts to raise awareness of, and reduce, cancer disparities. Members include cancer survivors, caregivers, patients, volunteers, and students, including Colleges Against Cancer.

555 11th Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 661-5727
www.acscan.org

Positioning

ACS CAN stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to physical activity, childhood obesity, and public health
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely health care professionals, community leaders, and state and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - Advocated for increased nutrition labeling and increased regulation of food marketing to children
  - Submitted written testimony to support the Interagency Working Group proposed principles for nutrition standards on food marketed to children
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Owned Media

Food Marketing and our Kids
By Christopher W. Hansen
Cancer Candor
January 14, 2013
Perhaps more important than how much food and beverage companies spend on marketing is what they are marketing. The FTC’s report analyzed the types of foods the industry is marketing to our kids. Thanks to increased efforts by many food, beverage and entertainment companies, the food marketed to youth is somewhat healthier than it has been in the past. For example, cereals marketed to children have less sugar, and fast food marketed to children and teens is lower in calories, saturated fat, sugar and sodium than in previous years. The industry is moving in a positive direction with these improvements. Yet, there is much room for continued progress. The majority of cereals marketed were not whole grain, and most beverages marketed were still high in sugar.

National Nutrition Month
By Christopher W. Hansen
Cancer Candor
March 21, 2012

In addition to work on implementing the Healthy, Hungry-Free Kids Act, ACS CAN is working on the following:

- Strong voluntary nutrition standards for foods and beverages marketed to kids. Proposed voluntary nutrition standards were developed by four government agencies last year, and we continue to advocate for the release of strong final standards and for the industry to voluntarily limit their marketing on unhealthy foods and beverages to youth.
- Menu labeling and vending machine labeling requirements in the Affordable Care Act. We hope that strong final regulations will be released soon
- Key nutrition and health provisions in this year’s reauthorization of the 2008 Farm Bill

American Diabetes Association
The American Diabetes Association (ADA) strives to end diabetes and its deadly consequences, and fights for those affected by the disease. The Association funds research to prevent, cure, and manage diabetes; delivers services to hundreds of communities; provides objective and credible information; and gives voice to those denied their rights because of diabetes. Founded in 1940, the Association’s mission is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes.

1400 16th St NW #410
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 331-8303
www.diabetes.org
Positioning

ADA stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to disease prevention, disease treatment, and public health
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely local, state, and federal health policymakers
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and healthy restaurant kids’ meals
  - Cardiometabolic Risk Initiative provides healthcare providers with resources to help identify at-risk patients, integrate evidence-based risk management strategies to target modifiable risk factors, and provide education to patients
  - American Diabetes Association Guide to Healthy Restaurant Eating provides detailed nutrition information on the foods that are available at the nation’s most popular restaurants, and offers tips and facts to promote healthier restaurant eating
  - Eat Out, Eat Well offers strategy guides for consumers with diabetes, pre-diabetes, and cardiovascular disease to identify healthy options at restaurants

Owned Media

**Fast Food and Restaurants**

**American Diabetes Association**

In today’s world, eating out is a frequent activity. It is faster and easier for us. But the truth is - eating at home is usually a much better choice. Research shows that we consume more calories, fat, and sodium and less nutritious foods when we eat out instead of at home. We have more control over what goes into our food when we are in our own kitchen. Portion sizes are usually larger away from home too. Try to limit yourself to eating out no more than 2 times each week.

That said, when you do eat out, it doesn’t have to be a health disaster. Whether you are eating at your favorite restaurant or grabbing a quick meal at the local fast food place, you can still eat well away from home.
American Public Health Association
The American Public Health Association (APHA) works to advance the health of all people and communities. As the nation’s leading public health organization, APHA strengthens the impact of public health professionals, and provides a science-based voice in policy debates too often driven by emotion, ideology, or financial interests. APHA is at the forefront of efforts to advance prevention, reduce health disparities, and promote wellness. The mission of the APHA is to improve the health of the public and achieve equity in health status.

800 I Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001
(202) 777-APHA
www.apha.org

Positioning
APHA stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to research, education, and public health
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely the Health Resources and Services Administration
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, across affiliates in many states, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - National Public Health Week addresses topics of interest to childhood obesity, including nutrition standards for food marketed to children in schools and fast food restaurants
  - APHA Annual Meeting & Exposition convenes national public health professionals to share research and information, promote best practices, and advocate for public health issues and policies, including those that concern nutrition standards of fast food meals marketed at children, adolescents, and young adults

Owned Media
Have fast food restaurants become healthier for children? progress, purchases, and public relations
American Public Health Association Online Program
November 2, 2014
In 2010, 15 of 3,039 kids' meal combinations met nutrition criteria for children and restaurant employees automatically provided an unhealthy side dish in 84% of kids' meal orders. Since then, major fast-food chains have announced further improvements in nutrition quality and healthy defaults for kids' meals. This presentation evaluates these changes and their potential to increase purchases of healthy options for children in fast-food restaurants.

Asian and Pacific Islander Obesity Prevention Alliance
The Asian and Pacific Islander Obesity Prevention Alliance (APIOPA) is a division of Special Service for Groups. SSG is a Los Angeles based non-profit organization that provides community-based solutions, encouraging community involvement and self-sufficiency, to the social and economic issues facing those in greatest need. SSG serves as a bridge between people with common needs across traditional ethnic, racial, and other cultural boundaries to identify ways to pool resources by developing and managing programs which serve many communities.

950 E 8th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90021
www.apiopa.org

Positioning
APIOPA stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids' stance on healthy restaurant kids' meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to health and obesity prevention, particularly within the Asian/Pacific Islander community
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids' meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely state and local departments of health
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - Rethink Your (Asian) Drink campaign seeks to analyze and document the lack of nutritional value of traditional boba drinks to help consumers make educated decisions about the foods they consume
  - Fresh HIFI program partners with small businesses and food retailers to introduce healthy and culturally-relevant foods, especially fresh fruits and vegetables, to Pilipino and Latino communities
Roots Community Supported Agriculture program seeks to bring fresh, sustainably grown, and culturally relevant produce into Asian and Pacific Islander communities who lack access, while reducing carbon emissions and other environmental impacts.

Participation on the Asian Pacific Diabetes Coalition steering committee, a collaborative of local nonprofit agencies and community groups interested in fighting diabetes in Asian communities throughout San Gabriel Valley through awareness, education, collaboration of services, and advocacy.

Media Coverage

**From bok choy to daikon: Fresh, affordable produce to suit Asian tastes**

*JPCC Radio*
*January 29, 2014*

Tsukahira helps to run the Roots C.S.A — short for community-supported agriculture. The goal is to bring affordable, fresh Asian produce to Asian communities around southern California while at the same time, supporting Asian-American farmers.

Tsukahira pulled out a long root vegetable called daikon grown by Cha Her, a Hmong-American farmer from Fresno.

"It’s basically white radish," Tsukahira said. "Koreans like to use this for kimchi. Japanese like to grate this and put it on things like soba."

The program is the brainchild of the non-profit Asian and Pacific Islander Obesity Prevention Alliance. Subscriptions - which are open to everybody - are $60 for three months' worth of vegetables to be picked up every other week. The two other pick-up spots are in Garden Grove and Monterey Park.

**CDC ramps up study of Asian-American health**

*KPCC Radio*
*January 20, 2014*

"I think this is a really good move in the right direction," said Scott Chan, program director for the Asian and Pacific Islander Obesity Prevention Alliance.

He’s pleased the study distinguishes between foreign-born and US-born Asians. The data show, for example, that foreign-born Asians have a lower body mass index average. On the other hand, they also have lower levels of HDL, a type of cholesterol that may reduce risk of health disease.

But Chan noticed the data were not differentiated by ethnicity, which would be helpful to him as an educator.

"In the Filipino community and the Cambodian community, we know there are higher obesity rates there, but this data set doesn’t necessarily say that," Chan said.
The more data he has, Chan said, the better he can target his health strategies.

Bipartisan Policy Center
The Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) is a non-profit organization that drives principled solutions through rigorous analysis, reasoned negotiation, and respectful dialogue. With projects in multiple issue areas, BPC combines politically-balanced policymaking with strong, proactive advocacy and outreach. The BPC Nutrition and Physical Activity Initiative seeks to enhance physical activity and nutritional opportunities for all Americans. Led by a bipartisan group of former U.S. Cabinet Secretaries, the initiative brings together key experts, policymakers, and stakeholders to identify opportunities for collaborative action in four priority areas: investing in children’s health, creating healthy schools, improving the health of communities, and developing healthy institutions.

1225 Eye Street, NW, Suite 1000
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 204-2400
www.bipartisanpolicy.org

Positioning
BPC stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in nutrition, children’s health, and food policy
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely Congress, the FDA, and leading food manufacturers
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - Lots to Lose program provides stats and recommendations to overcome marketing practices that promote unhealthy food to children and young adults

Owned Media
Super Bowl Ads Highlight Need for Increased Promotion of Healthy Foods
By Laura Zatz
Bipartisan Policy Center Blog
January 28, 2013
While industry has taken positive steps toward reducing their marketing of unhealthy products (such as the Children’s Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative), too many messages continue to promote unhealthy food without adequate balance from messaging that promotes healthy foods. Certainly food and beverage companies will and should continue to advertise, but given the broad reach of their messages – particularly on the big game day – there is an opportunity here not to be missed. In our report, Lots to Lose, we called upon industry leaders in the food sector to use a greater share of their ad budget to communicate clear and consistent messages about the importance of a healthy diet and portray healthy foods in a positive way--where you can be appreciated (not “hated”) for taking control over your health by choosing nutritious options.

bridging the gap
Research informing Policies and Practices for Healthy Youth

Bridging the Gap
Bridging the Gap (BTG) was created in 1997 to assess the impact of policies, programs, and other environmental influences on adolescent alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use and related outcomes. BTG examines these factors at multiple levels of social organization, including schools, communities, and states. In recognition of the high rates of obesity among children, adolescents, and adults, BTG expanded its efforts in 2003 to include research on the policies, programs, and other factors that contribute to physical activity/inactivity, dietary behaviors, and obesity.

1747 West Roosevelt Road
Chicago, IL 60608
(312) 413-2367
www.bridgingthegapresearch.org

Positioning
BTG stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to research, education, and public health
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and academia
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely local schools, and state and local governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - Released research on the nutritional content of food and beverage products in television advertisements aimed at children
  - Published research on exposure to food advertising and snacking
Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

**Own Media**

**Nutritional Content of Food and Beverage Products in Television Advertisements Seen on Children’s Programming**

By Lisa Powell, Rebecca Schermbeck and Frank Chaloupka

Bridging the Gap

March 2014

TV ratings data for children 2-5 and 6-11 years of age were used to examine the nutritional content of food and beverage products in advertisements seen by children on all programming and children’s programming. A total of 46.2% of 2-5 year-olds’ and 43.5% of 6-11 year-olds’ total exposure to food and beverage TV advertising was for ads seen on children’s programming. Most food and beverage products in TV ads seen by children do not meet the IWG nutrition recommendations and less than half of such ads are covered by self-regulation.

**Youth-focused Food Marketing: Examining the Spending Trends**

Bridging the Gap Issue Brief

August 2013

U.S. food and beverage companies spend nearly $2 billion each year to market their products to kids, and most ads promote unhealthy foods and drinks. Research shows that marketing influences what children eat and drink and links the marketing of unhealthy products to overweight and obesity.

**The California Endowment**

The California Endowment is a private, statewide health foundation with a mission to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health of all Californians. The Endowment supports strong nutrition standards for school meals and snacks. As a matter of principal, the Endowment believes that schools should never serve or sell junk foods or soft drinks.

1000 N. Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 928-8800
www.calendow.org

**Positioning**

The California Endowment stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in children’s health and school food policy in the state of California
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely the California state legislature
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - **Junk Drinks and Junk Foods** initiative aims to raise awareness of the harms of bad food and drinks, help make fresh water available instead of sodas, and protect children and young people from misleading advertising claims

**Owned Media**

**Water and Junk Drinks**

**Calendow.org**

Soda is big business and a big problem in our communities. Health studies and food mapping research show direct links between poverty, food access, the proliferation of junk food and junk drinks (including soda), and elevated rates of chronic and life-threatening diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, obesity, and heart disease.

This year, the food and beverage industry will spend approximately $2 billion marketing to children. That’s a huge problem.

The California Endowment is committed to helping communities combat the insidious promotion of junk drinks to kids, many of whom reside in low-income neighborhoods with the least access to fresh, healthy foods and affordable alternatives to junk drinks.

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Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood

The Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood (CCFC) is a national coalition of health care professionals, educators, advocacy groups, parents, and individuals who care about children, and is the only national organization devoted to limiting the impact of commercial culture on children. CCFC helps support parents’ efforts to raise healthy families by limiting commercial access to children and ending the exploitive practice of child-targeted marketing.

89 South Street, Suite 403
Boston, MA 02111
(617) 896-9368
www.commercialfreechildhood.org
Positioning
CCFC stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to children’s health and food industry advertising practices
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely the USDA, FTC, and restaurant industry leaders
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - Consuming Kids Summit convenes researchers, parents, educators, health professionals, and activists committed to reclaiming childhood from corporate marketers
  - Published a fact sheet on the effects of marketing on children

Owned Media
Happy Meal Makeover: How a Healthy Food Coalition Defeated a Fast Food Icon
By Michele Simon
CommercialFreeChildhood.org
November 11, 2010

On election day, while most of the nation was distracted with the mid-term election, another vote was taking place in San Francisco City Hall. The Board of Supervisors approved an ordinance to place limits—based on specific nutrition criteria—on how toys are marketed by restaurants in the city and county of San Francisco.

Center for Science in the Public Interest
The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) is a health advocacy organization whose mission is to conduct innovative research and advocacy programs on food and nutrition, and to provide consumers with current, useful information about how to safeguard their health and well-being. CSPI’s primary goals are to provide useful, objective information to the public and policymakers, and to conduct research on food, nutrition, and health; and to represent citizen’s interests before regulatory, judicial, and legislative bodies on food, nutrition, and health issues.

1220 L Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 777-8352
Positioning
CSPI stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to nutrition, food safety, and public health
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, policy makers, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, including Congress, the FDA, USDA, the FTC, and state and local policy makers
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - Co-founded and co-leads the Food Marketing Workgroup, which is dedicated to eliminating harmful food marketing, especially marketing that is targeted towards children and other at-risk populations
  - Publishes Nutrition Action Healthletter, the nation’s largest-circulation health newsletter with 900,000 subscribers
  - Published analysis of impact of restaurant kids’ meals: Kids’ Meals: Obesity on the Menu
  - Published Report Card on Food-Marketing Policies, analyzed industry policies regarding food marketing to children
  - Publishes research that investigates the types of children’s menu items and the nutritional quality of kids’ meals at the largest restaurant chains in the United States
  - Produces factsheets on restaurant children’s meals and beverages, and the importance of healthier default options

Media Coverage

**Consumer group: Majority of restaurant kids' meals fail to make nutritional cut**
By Michelle Castillo
CBS News
March 28, 2013

"One out of every three American children is overweight or obese, but it's as if the chain restaurant industry didn't get the memo," CSPI nutrition policy director Margo G. Wootan said in a press release. "Most chains seem stuck in a time warp, serving up the same old meals based on chicken nuggets, burgers, macaroni and cheese, fries, and soda."

**Most restaurant kids' meals packed with calories**
By Nanci Hellmich
USA Today
March 28, 2013
Most kids' meals at the USA's top chain restaurants are still failing to make the grade when it comes to good nutrition, a new analysis finds.

Fried chicken fingers and nuggets, fries and soda are the most common items offered to children, and some kids meals contain more than 1,000 calories and are high in sodium and fat, according to the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). The government's dietary guidelines recommend that children ages 4 to 10 eat 1,200 to 2,200 calories for the entire day.

"This is really disappointing," says Margo Wootan, director of nutrition policy for CSPI. "Restaurants should be doing better."

**Owned Media**

**Commentary: Families Need More Help to Make Healthy Choices**

*Margo G. Wootan, CSPI*  
*February 2012*

“Helping families make healthier choices when eating out is important because eating out is a growing and significant part of Americans’ diets and eating out is associated with obesity. Although a number of restaurants have announced improvements recently, many restaurant children’s meals remain high in calories, saturated fat, and sodium, and default options are often fries and sugary drinks. Behavioral economic interventions that make default options healthy make healthy choices easier and mean that individuals must actively work to engage in less desirable behaviors. Providing healthier default options for children’s meals supports parents by reducing barriers to feeding their children healthfully. This article outlines a number of ways to help families make the healthy choice the easy and the default choice for children when eating out.”

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**ChangeLab Solutions**

ChangeLab Solutions believes that, to achieve the common good, everyone must have nourishing food; safe places to live and play; opportunities to bike, walk, or take transit; fresh water, and clean air. Throughout the nation, ChangeLab Solutions works with neighborhoods, cities, and states to transform communities with laws and policies that create lasting change. ChangeLab’s unique approach, backed by decades of research and proven results, helps the public and private sectors make communities more livable, especially for those who are at highest risk because they have the fewest resources.

2201 Broadway, Suite 502  
Oakland CA 94612  
(510) 302-3380
Positioning
ChangeLab Solutions stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to nutrition, childhood obesity, and public health
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely state and local school districts, and governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - National Policy and Legal Analysis Network (NPLAN) to Prevent Childhood Obesity is a project of ChangeLab Solutions that provides leaders in childhood obesity prevention with focused legal research, model policies, fact sheets, toolkits, training and technical assistance to explain legal issues related to public health. NPLAN’s goal is to create strong childhood obesity policy interventions that will reverse the epidemic by 2015.
    - Model Ordinance for Toy Giveaways at Restaurants helps local governments steer restaurants toward providing healthier options for children by implementing nutrition standards for meals accompanied by toys or other prizes
    - Digital Food Marketing to Children and Adolescents report details new digital marketing tactics being used by fast food companies to target adolescents, and provides research on their impact on teenagers’ behavior
  - Created briefs, workshops, and other tools in support of improvements to the nutritional quality of food marketed to children in schools and restaurants
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Owned Media
San Francisco Proposes a Law Linking Kids’ Toys to Healthier Food
ChangeLab Solutions
August 13, 2010

Fast food restaurants spend millions of dollars to attract young consumers. Toys and other giveaways packaged with meals are a major marketing tactic: in 2006, fast food restaurants sold more than 1.2 billion children’s meals with toys to children ages 12 and younger. Cities and counties can take an important step to promote children’s health by breaking the link between toys and unhealthy restaurant food.

This proposal follows passage of a similar law in Santa Clara County in April. That law was based on a model ordinance developed by the National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN), a program of ChangeLab Solutions (PHLP).
Corporate Accountability International

Corporate Accountability International (CAI) challenges corporations to halt abusive practices that threaten human rights, public health, the environment, and democracy. The organization leads campaigns that challenge the world’s most powerful industries in food, agriculture, water, and tobacco. CAI is highly regarded as a force for change among national decision makers and global governing bodies, and is considered a recognized leader in the corporate accountability movement.

10 Milk Street, Suite 610
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 695-2525
www.stopcorporateabuse.org

Positioning

CAI stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to public health, human rights, and corporate advertising
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely local governments and food industry leaders
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - Countering Fast Food’s Health Effects call to action calls for fast food industry leaders to end the practice of marketing unhealthy food to children
  - Slowing Down Fast Food policy guide documents ways in which city and county policymakers can address community health, and offers specific solutions to curb overconsumption of unhealthy food and ubiquitous fast food marketing to children

Media Coverage

**A New Mascot in Old Fight Over Fast Food and Kids**

By Tom Gara and Julie Jargon
The Wall Street Journal
May 20, 2014

Sara Deon, director of the Value the Meal campaign at Corporate Accountability International, said the new character continues a pattern of child-focused advertising by the burger giant. “There is no food corporation that has written the playbook on marketing to children like McDonald’s has,” she said. “What you see with this new character is McDonald’s continue to market an unhealthy brand to kids.”
Bloggers, activists take issue with McDonald's marketing
By Corilyn Shropshire
Chicago Tribune
May 21, 2014

A group spokesman said McDonald's markets to children, particularly in minority communities hardest hit by diet-related disease. “We've seen a disproportionate rate of diet-related disease, obesity and Type II diabetes in black and Latino communities,” said Jesse Bragg, spokesman for Corporate Accountability International, the non-profit that organized the demonstration.

Last year, the group launched a social media campaign called “Moms Not Lovin' It,” against McDonald's marketing strategies.

Healthy Eating Research

Healthy Eating Research is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The program supports research on environmental and policy strategies with strong potential to promote healthy eating among children to prevent childhood obesity, especially among low-income and racial and ethnic populations at highest risk for obesity. Findings will advance RWJF's efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015. Technical assistance and direction are provided by the University of Minnesota. Healthy Eating Research is housed in the School of Public Health and is directed by Mary Story PhD, RD and key program staff with input from senior program advisers.

University of Minnesota School of Public Health
1300 South Second Street, Suite 300
Minneapolis, MN 55454-1015
(800) 578-8636
www.healthyeatingresearch.org

Positioning
Healthy Eating Research stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to nutrition and childhood obesity
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely researchers, and state and local policymakers
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and healthy restaurant kids’ meals
Menu-Labeling portal hosts research that evaluates the impact of menu labeling policies on consumer awareness of labeling in fast-food restaurants and on calories actually purchased and consumed, and examines whether food outlets make changes to their menu offerings as a result of menu labeling.

Food & Beverage Marketing portal examines how the elements of marketing—including product, price, placement, and promotion—influence the food and beverage preferences and choices of children and youth, as well as their weight status.

Food Marketing: Using Toys to Market Children’s Meals issue brief examines the evidence related to restaurant marketing practices using toys and discusses policy implications.

Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids.

Owned Media

Barriers to Equity in Nutritional Health for U.S. Children and Adolescents: A Review of the Literature
By N. Larson and M. Story
Current Nutrition Reports
January 2015

This review summarizes growing evidence of disparities in the social and physical environments of U.S. children and adolescents that likely contribute to increased risk for obesity and poor nutrition. The review examines literature on disparities in nutrition and healthy food access in school, child-care, and residential neighborhood environments, food production and marketing practices, and cultural norms and discrimination, according to socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, and urbanization.

Changes in Awareness and Use of Calorie Information After Mandatory Menu Labeling in Restaurants in King County, Washington
By R. Chen, et al
American Journal of Public Health
January 2015

In 2009, King County, Wash., implemented a menu-labeling regulation that requires chain restaurants to provide calorie, saturated fat, carbohydrate, and sodium information. This study examines population-level changes in menu-labeling awareness (i.e., seeing calorie information) and use (i.e., using calorie information) before and after policy implementation in King County.
**Food Marketing: Using Toys to Market Children’s Meals**

By J. J. Otten  
Healthy Eating Research  
August 2014

Nearly $2 billion is spent yearly by U.S. food and beverage companies to market products to children, with the majority of expenditures promoting less healthful foods and drinks. For restaurants, including toys with children’s meals is the leading form of food marketing directed at children. The practice of child-directed marketing by pairing toys with children’s meals has been targeted as a potential policy focus to improve the nutritional quality of restaurant children’s meals and help parents in their efforts to purchase healthy options while eating out.

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**Hip Hop Public Health**

The Hip Hop Public Health Education Center at Harlem Hospital was established in response to a need to create innovative and culturally tailored health literacy programs for high risk communities. Founded in 2006, Hip Hop Public Health (HHPH) seeks to foster positive health behavior changes among children and their families through music. The cornerstone of HHPH programming is the use of hip hop music, short animated features, and health video games as part of a multimedia curriculum designed to motivate healthy behaviors among children and their families.

506 Lenox Avenue  
MLK 16th Floor- 156  
New York, NY 10037  
(212) 939-4241  
[www.hiphoppublichealth.org](http://www.hiphoppublichealth.org)

**Positioning**

HHPH stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to public health and childhood obesity
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely entertainment industry leaders and the Administration
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals

- Hip Hop Health Eating and Living in Schools (Hip Hop HEALS) program incorporates Hip Hop music into multi-media health messaging, including short animation films, to enhance a didactic curriculum designed to reduce the incidence and prevalence of childhood obesity by educating and inspiring children to live healthier lives

Media Coverage

Using M.C.s and M.D.s to Promote Healthy Eating for Youths
By Wayne Hu
The New York Times
July 8, 2014

Mr. Harris, calling himself a “health M.C.,” aims to reach children who might otherwise tune out nutrition lessons. His vegetable rap is part of a growing public health campaign that has enlisted hip-hop artists such as Doug E. Fresh, Chuck D and DMC of Run-DMC to work alongside doctors and nutritionists in fighting obesity and related illnesses in poor communities.

The campaign is being rolled out this year in 18 cities, including Atlanta, Chicago, Memphis and San Antonio, after being tested in dozens of schools, community centers and summer camps in New York City. It was developed by Hip Hop Public Health, a nonprofit group that has also used hip-hop to call attention to strokes and Alzheimer’s disease.

Hip-hop health, a 'party with a purpose'
By Stephanie Smith
CNN
September 27, 2013

It’s using hip-hop in a positive way, to have real impact,” Doug E. Fresh said. "We use beats that make you really wanna move. You’re not just gonna sit there; you wanna get up and do something."

As it turns out, the programs for healthier eating and exercise are doing much more than simply making children move.

Peer-reviewed studies conducted by Williams and colleagues found that immediately after caloric literacy interventions, children changed their food purchases.

"We found that caloric purchases declined by about 25%," Williams said. "So they were buying more healthy items as a result of the intervention."

The lingering question for this intervention -- and for the Hip Hop Public Health program more generally -- is how to sustain this change.
MomsRising
MomsRising is a transformative online and on-the-ground multicultural organization of one million members and more than 100 aligned organizations working to increase family economic security, to end discrimination against women and mothers, and to build a nation where both businesses and families can thrive. MomsRising addresses critical issues facing women, mothers, and families by mobilizing massive grassroots actions. The group strives to bring the voices and real world experiences of women and mothers straight to the nation’s leaders, and to amplify women's issues in the national dialogue, as well as the media. MomsRising also accelerates grassroots initiatives on Capitol Hill and at state capitols across the country and is committed to holding corporations accountable for fair treatment of women and mothers, and for ensuring the safety of their products.

1010 Grayson Street, Second Floor
Berkeley, CA 94010
(917) 407-3018
www.momsrising.org

Positioning
MomsRising stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to nutrition, childhood obesity, and healthy food access
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely local school districts, state school districts, and regional governments
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - Good Food Force! coordinates volunteers to take action in schools, communities, and online networks to educate others on healthy school foods, junk food marketing to kids, and strategies to reduce childhood obesity
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Owned Media
No Surprise but Shocking: junk food marketing hurts older kids too!
By Karen Showalter
MomsRising
March 24, 2014
If you’re a mom, you know well enough that companies target your kids with ads for everything from sports drinks to sneakers. Sixty-five percent of parents believe the fast food industry has a negative influence on their children’s and teen’s eating habits. And it’s no surprise really – US teens spend about 20% of their money on food.

New research confirms what we’ve always sensed: kids don’t have the ability to interpret marketing, making them particularly vulnerable targets.

**Food Marketing to Kids: Real Progress Requires Better Protections**

By Lori Dorfman
MomsRising Blog
October 31, 2013

Researchers examining the progress agree that it’s been too slow. Professor Dale Kunkel, a national expert on children and media, has said that if we continue at this rate, we won’t see the right balance of food ads until 2033. If you are a sixth-grader this year, you’ll be 31 in 2033, probably with kids of your own. Food marketers shouldn’t make us wait that long.

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National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. NAACP brings its voice to assist in the eradication of racial and ethnic disparities, with a focus on disease prevention, and the social and environmental factors that affect health and wellness. In addition, the NAACP is engaged in the workforce development movement to increase the number of minorities represented in the medical and public health profession, and a leading presence on governmental advisory workgroups and national coalitions developed to provide counsel on cultural competency in the health care system.

4805 Mt. Hope Drive
Baltimore, MD 21215
(410) 580-5777
www.naacp.org

Positioning
NAACP stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:
- High impact in policy related to childhood obesity and public health in communities of color
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely Congress, state and local departments of health, and communities of color
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and healthy restaurant kids’ meals
  - NAACP Childhood Obesity Advocacy Manual endorses policies that aim to develop the food environment in communities of color in an effort to end childhood obesity
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

**Media Coverage**

*Bill looks to put healthy drinks in kids' meals*

By Andrea K. McDaniels

The Baltimore Sun

March 12, 2015

Nearly a dozen people testified in favor of the bill, including physicians; Baltimore's health commissioner, Dr. Leana Wen; and a leader of the NAACP, who said black people drink more soda and have worse health outcomes than their white counterparts.

Obesity in children has more than doubled in the past 30 years, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In Baltimore, one in three children are overweight or obese, and one in four school-age children drink at least one soda a day, according to the city Health Department.

Some health advocates came armed with 8-ounce cups to illustrate how a small amount of soda can create havoc on a child's health, over time leading to diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity. The problem is getting worse as families eat more of their meals outside of the home.

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**National Council of La Raza**

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans. Through its network of 300 affiliated community-based organizations, NCLR reaches millions of Hispanics each year in 41 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. NCLR develops and implements health education and prevention programs, and conducts health advocacy activities in partnership with its affiliate network to protect the health and well-being of the Latino community. NCLR works to improve nutrition in the Latino community by increasing access to federal food assistance programs, resources, and education to ensure families can meet at the dinner table for a healthy meal.
Positioning
NCLR stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to education, health, and nutrition in the Latino community
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely Congress, the FDA, and leading food manufacturers
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - Received a grant by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to fund efforts to improve access to affordable foods, and to reduce exposure to unhealthy-food marketing in the Latino community to fight childhood obesity
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Owned Media

**With Obesity Rates in Decline, It’s Time Reduce the Risk for Latinos**

By Carla Plaza

NCLR Blog

April 7, 2014

We are also interested in how food and beverage advertising can reduce childhood obesity rates. There is considerable scientific evidence demonstrating that marketing and advertising to children has definitive effects on taste, preferences, and consumer behavior. For example, in 2005, the Institute of Medicine conducted a literature review examining the impact of food and beverage marketing on youth. The ensuing report held that marketing and advertising not only shape children’s direct spending on food and beverages but also indirectly influence their parents’ and family members’ purchasing decisions. Furthermore, it was identified that high-calorie and low-nutrient food and beverage products are predominantly advertised and marketed to youth.

Given that one in five children in the United States is Hispanic and that Hispanic children are the fastest-growing segment of the child population, it is important to understand how the advertising and marketing of products are influencing the health of our children. NCLR applauds the Children’s Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative, which has developed category-specific nutrition criteria for 10 different product types that governs the foods and beverages marketed to children under the age of 12. Eighteen companies participate in this initiative, many of which are NCLR’s corporate partners.
National PTA

National PTA comprises millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, businesses, and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools. PTA prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. The goal of PTA’s health and safety programming is to be a resource for PTA leaders in partnering with schools to create safe environments that encourage healthy choices, social support, and emotional support for all students.

1250 N. Pitt Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 518-1200
www.pta.org

Positioning

National PTA stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to childhood health, nutrition, and education
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely Congress and the U.S. Public Health Service
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - Healthy Grocery Shopping Tips address how to make better food choices while shopping and educate children about food marketing
  - Member of the Food Marketing Workgroup committee, which takes efforts to reduce children’s exposure to marketing of unhealthy food

Media Coverage

Selling Food
Arizona Department of Health Services Blog
January 16, 2013

Food marketing to children and teens is a major public health concern. Earlier this year, the Walt Disney Company announced it will no longer accept advertisements for junk food on its child-directed
television, radio, and online sites. Disney also updated its nutrition standards for foods that can be advertised to children.

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**The Praxis Project**

The Praxis Project is a nonprofit movement and an institution of color that supports organizing efforts and change work at local, regional, and national levels. Focused on movement building for fundamental change, the Project’s mission is to build healthy communities by changing the power relationships between people of color and the institutional structures that affect their lives.

7731 Alaska Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20012  
(202) 234-5921  
[www.thepraxisproject.org](http://www.thepraxisproject.org)

**Positioning**

The Praxis Project stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - Member of the [Food Marketing Workgroup committee](http://www.thepraxisproject.org), which takes efforts to reduce children’s exposure to food marketing
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids
Prevention Institute
Prevention Institute is committed to preventing illness and injury, to fostering health and social equity, and to building momentum for community prevention as a component of a quality health system. Prevention Institute synthesizes research and practice; develops prevention tools and frameworks; helps design and guide interdisciplinary partnerships; and conducts training and strategic consultation with government, foundations, and community-based organizations nationwide and internationally.

221 Oak Street
Oakland, CA 94607
(510) 444-7738
www.preventioninstitute.org

Positioning
Prevention Institute stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to community prevention and public health
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely local governments and national public health advocacy organizations
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - Strategic Alliance Promoting Healthy Food and Activity Environments shifts the public debate on eating and physical activity away from a focus on personal responsibility to shine a light on the role that corporate and government practices have on the food and activity environments where people live, work, play, and learn

Media Coverage
We’re Not Buying It: Stop Junk Food Marketing to Kids
By Larry Cohen
The Huffington Post
October 10, 2011

The fact is, food companies have a poor record when it comes to monitoring themselves. Prevention Institute’s study, "Claiming Health: Front-of-Package Labeling of Children's Food," looked at packages with front of package labeling -- symbols that identify healthier products and could be marketed to kids -- and found that 84 percent of products studied didn't meet basic nutritional standards.
Public Health Law Center
The Public Health Law Center (PHLC) is a national non-profit organization of law and policy specialists that help health leaders, officials, and advocates use the law to advance public health. Founded in 2000, PHLC is a preeminent authority in U.S. public health policy and a respected legal resource for local, state, national, and international health organizations. The Public Health Law Center’s mission is to improve public health through the power of law.

William Mitchell College of Law
875 Summit Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105
(651) 290-7506
www.publichealthlawcenter.org

Positioning
PHLC stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to public health, nutrition, and obesity
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely local, state, and federal health policymakers
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and healthy restaurant kids’ meals
  - Network for Public Health Law provides legal technical assistance and resources on a wide-range of public health topics, kids’ meals
  - Five Steps to Food and Beverage Success is designed to support healthier food and beverage options for users of recreational centers, parks, and other community facilities
  - Tips for Better Vending provides guidance on selecting healthy vending options at schools, parks, and other locations that are frequented by school-aged children, and provides best practices for marketing healthy snack options to make them more appealing
Using Local Authority to Create Healthier Child Care Settings case studies demonstrate how local communities leverage regulatory authority over child care services to improve nutrition and physical activity standards within child care settings.

Owned Media

**PHLC and PHLP Comments to Interagency Working Group on Food Marketed to Children**

Public Health Law and Policy
By Julie Ralston Aoki
July 14, 2011

With the obesity epidemic threatening to make the youth of this generation the first to have shorter lifespans than their parents, and the food marketing industry thus far unable to develop uniform and effective guidelines for marketing to children, there is great urgency to the work of the IWG. This is no time for chasing chimeras. The First Amendment and antitrust law clearly do not stand in the way of the IWG’s work on voluntary principles for food marketing to children. The questions may, and should, be put to rest.

**Promoting Fruits and Vegetables in Schools**

A Policy Options Brief by the Public Health Law Center
January 2009

Until momentum builds for statewide solutions, it will remain incumbent on school districts to rein in competitive foods. In addition to the policy approaches noted above, school districts, and some states, have pursued other options, including: allowing only healthy foods to be sold or served at fundraising events; eliminating open campus policies; limiting or banning commercial advertising, and prohibiting the use of foods or beverages as rewards. Whether enacted at the state level or implemented by school districts, the elements of sound policies are much the same.

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**Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity**

The Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity is a non-profit research and public policy organization devoted to improving the world’s diet, preventing obesity, and reducing weight stigma. The Center serves as a leading research institution and clearinghouse for resources that add to our understanding of the complex forces affecting how we eat, how we stigmatize overweight and obese people, and how we can change. We are a leader in building broad-based consensus to change diet patterns, while holding industry and government agencies responsible for safeguarding public health. The Rudd Center pursues its bold goals through strategic science; interaction with key players in media, industry and government; and mobilization of grassroots efforts. Standing at the intersection of science and public policy, we develop innovative measures to combat obesity and improve health.
Positioning
The Rudd Center stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to research, education and public health
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely Congress, the FDA, and the FTC
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - Rudd ‘Roots Parents Website provides information on ways in which parents can advocate and take action to stand up to unhealthy food marketing to their children
  - Conducted a comprehensive analysis of more than 5,000 kids’ meal options to determine which ones meet the nutrition standards set by the Institute of Medicine
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage
Improving fast food meals for kids
By Deborah Kotz
The Boston Globe
November 7, 2013

A new analysis from the Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity found that fewer than 1 percent of all kids’ meals—33 out of 5,427—met the recommended nutrition standards set by the Institute of Medicine. (Only 3 percent met the standards set by the food industry itself.)

That hasn’t changed since the Yale Rudd Center did its last evaluation in 2010.

But the nutritional quality of specific items offered in kids’ meals has improved. Most fast-food chains now offer at least one healthy side dish in their kids’ meals, and three-quarters have increased healthy beverage options such as unsweetened teas, water, and milk.

“To be honest, it was pretty disappointing,” said Jennifer Harris, director of marketing initiatives at the Yale Rudd Center, who presented the new analysis on Tuesday at the American Public Health Association meeting in Boston. “Most of the main dishes in kids’ meals still have a lot of fat and sodium, so they’re not healthy choices at all.”
**Salud America!**

Salud America! is a national online network of researchers, community group leaders, decision-makers, and members of the public working together to support healthy policy and environmental changes that can help reverse the Latino childhood obesity epidemic. Salud America! serves as a clearinghouse—with news, research, maps, videos, resources, and successful stories of change—on making healthy changes in Latino communities across the nation.

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**Positioning**

Salud America! stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to education, health, and nutrition in Latino communities
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely Latino communities and organizations
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and healthy restaurant kids’ meals
  - Quit Pushing Sugary Drinks Care 2 Petition calls for fast food restaurants to remove sugary sodas and frozen drinks from the menu
  - Growing Healthy Change provides links and resources for communities to implement changes that improve access to healthy foods and reduce exposure to unhealthy food marketing
  - Member of the Food Marketing Workgroup, which takes efforts to reduce children’s exposure to food marketing
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

**Owned Media**

*Study: 70% of California Latino Kids Eat Fast Food Regularly*

Salud Today Blog
November 27, 2013

A surprisingly large percentage of very young children in California, including 70% of Latino children, eat fast food regularly, according to a new research brief, News-Medical.Net reports.
The study by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research examined survey data to examine kids’ dietary behaviors and the impact of parents on food choices.

The study found that:
- 60% of all kids between the ages of 2 and 5 had eaten fast food at least once in the previous week.
- 29% of all kids had eaten fast food two or more times in the previous week.
- Only 57% of parents reporting that their child ate at least five fruit and vegetable servings the previous day.
- Latino and Asian parents say they have less influence over what their child eats than other groups.

**99% of Kid’s Meals Are of Poor Nutritional Quality**

**Salud Today Blog**

**June 19, 2012**

Given the importance of helping children eat healthier food, we wanted to share with you a brief report on the nutritional values of kid’s meals at America’s top chain restaurants that involved research by Salud America! advisor Dr. Mary Story.

The report, published in the journal *Childhood Obesity*, evaluated restaurants such as Arby’s, Burger King, Chick-fil-A, Chili’s, McDonald’s, Sonic, Subway and more.

Of the 22 restaurants that had kid’s menus and available nutrition information, researchers found that 99 percent of 1,662 children’s meal combinations were of poor nutritional quality, based on key nutrition recommendations in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
Positioning
The Y stands to support the Voices for Healthy Kids’ stance on healthy restaurant kids’ meals based on the following:

- High impact in policy related to childhood wellness, nutrition, and public health
- Proponent of policies that improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids’ meals
- Activism aimed at improving the nutritional quality of foods marketed to children, adolescents, and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, including 21 million members, thought leaders, and the media
- Ability to impact critical stakeholders, namely Congress, the FDA, and food industry leaders
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support of improving restaurant kids’ meals
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the link between childhood obesity and restaurant kids’ meals
  - “Healthy Eating Strategy #9: Increase and Promote Healthy Food Options in Restaurants” offers strategies on how to promote healthier food options in restaurants
  - “Healthy Eating Strategy #14: Reduce Advertisements of Unhealthy Foods and Beverages” explores the correlation between exposure to food advertising on television and higher caloric intake
  - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Owned Media
Healthy Eating Strategy #6: Reduce Availability of Less Healthy Foods and Beverages
YMCA
Fall 2010

Research has shown that removing unhealthy items from schools increases the likelihood that children will consume healthier beverages and foods. An increasing number of schools have adopted nutrition guidelines for competitive foods. Studies show that school food policies that restrict the sale of unhealthy foods and beverages lead to decreased availability of unhealthy food and beverage items and increased availability of healthy options. In turn, this change can result in healthier snack, food, and beverage consumption and can be effective in reducing childhood obesity. A study predicted an 18 percent reduction in prevalence of overweight or obesity in schools that prohibit the sale of unhealthy food during school meals.

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