

HEALTHY KIDS MEALS IN RI RESTAURANTS



Legislation Overview

Our legislation would apply uniform nutrition standards across all Rhode Island restaurants, requiring kids' meals to meet straightforward caloric, ingredient, and food requirements set forth by the Center for Science in the Public Interest and the American Heart Association.

Nutritional Element	Requirement
Calories	<600 calories
Calories from Saturated Fat	<10% of calories
Added sugars	No more than 10% of total calories
Sodium	<700 mg
Food Group	Serving Size / Criteria
Fruit	≥1/2 cup (Does not include fruit juice)
Non/Low-Fat Dairy	≥1 cup
Whole Grains	1/2 serving

WHY THIS LEGISLATION MATTERS:



- Childhood obesity has serious, long-lasting health consequences and disproportionately affects marginalized communities.
- In Rhode Island:
 - 1 in 3 children were obese in 2022.
 - 41% of Latinx and Black children in RI are overweight or obese compared to 32% of White children.
- Childhood obesity is associated with costly chronic conditions like diabetes and heart disease.
- Rhode Island spends nearly \$8 billion on annual healthcare expenditures.
- 1 in 4 Rhode Islanders are impacted by diet-related chronic diseases like high blood pressure and diabetes.
- In the United States:
 - Diet-related conditions are the leading cause of death and disability.
 - The combined healthcare spending and lost productivity due to suboptimal diets cost the U.S. economy \$1.1 trillion each year.

Program/Policy

- **Kid's LiveWell:** Voluntary, optional nutrition standards restaurants can participate in. Provided healthier menu standards for restaurants in the industry to include with their kids' meals. Included standards for side dishes and beverages.
- **Municipal and Statewide Default Beverage Policies (2015-2022):** Implemented policies to reduce the availability of sugary drinks on kids' restaurant menus.
- **Countrywide Nutrition Standard Policies (2020-2022)** mirror Kid's Live Well and CSPI standards in counties like Santa Clara County, CA, Prince George's County, MD, and Montgomery County, MD.

Results

- **Kid's LiveWell:** Ordering patterns of kids' meals in KLW-participating restaurants demonstrated effective results. However, some evidence suggests that the original campaign could have provided more progress in improving children's nutritional intake at restaurants.
- **Municipal and Statewide Default Beverage Policies:** The percentage of the top 50 restaurant chains offering sugary drinks on their kids' menus dropped from 93% in 2008 to 61% in 2019.
- **Countywide Nutrition Standard Policies:** were shown to enhance dietary quality, increase fruit/vegetable consumption among students, and correlate with improved student weight status under statewide healthy school meal policies.

