CENTER FOR Science IN THE Public Interest

New Yorkers Support Healthy Kids' Meals Legislation

New York City-wide poll shows strong support for policies to increase availability of healthy items on restaurant kids' menus

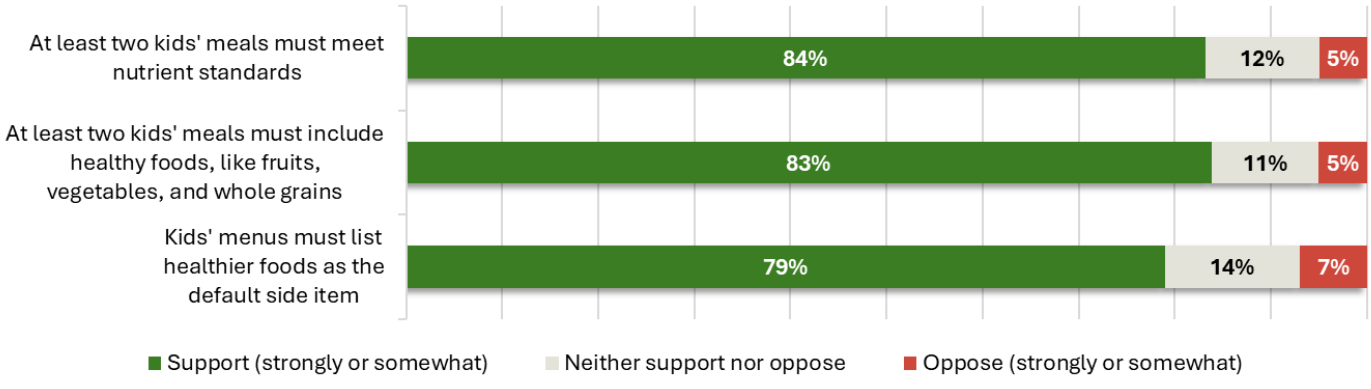
New York City residents support policy efforts to increase the availability of healthier kids' meal options at restaurants, according to a new survey commissioned by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). These policies include nutrient standards (e.g., limits on calories) for restaurant kids meals, requirements for the inclusion of healthy foods in restaurant kids' meals (e.g., ≥1/2 cup of fruit), and requirements that restaurants serve healthy beverages with kids' meals by default (e.g., a kids' meal automatically comes with water, but other beverages are available upon request).

In April 2024, Big Village's CARAVAN survey was administered to 1,505 adult residents in New York City to evaluate their support for policies to improve the nutritional quality of restaurant kids' meals. Survey respondents were weighted to accurately reflect the population demographics of New York City (Appendix). The survey found that 84% of respondents supported a policy requiring all restaurants to offer at least two kids' meals that meet nutrient standards.

Key Findings

Respondents also expressed strong support for policies that would require restaurants to include healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains in at least two kids' meals and require restaurants to list healthier items as the default side item in kids' meals, for example, apple slices instead of French fries (Figure 1).

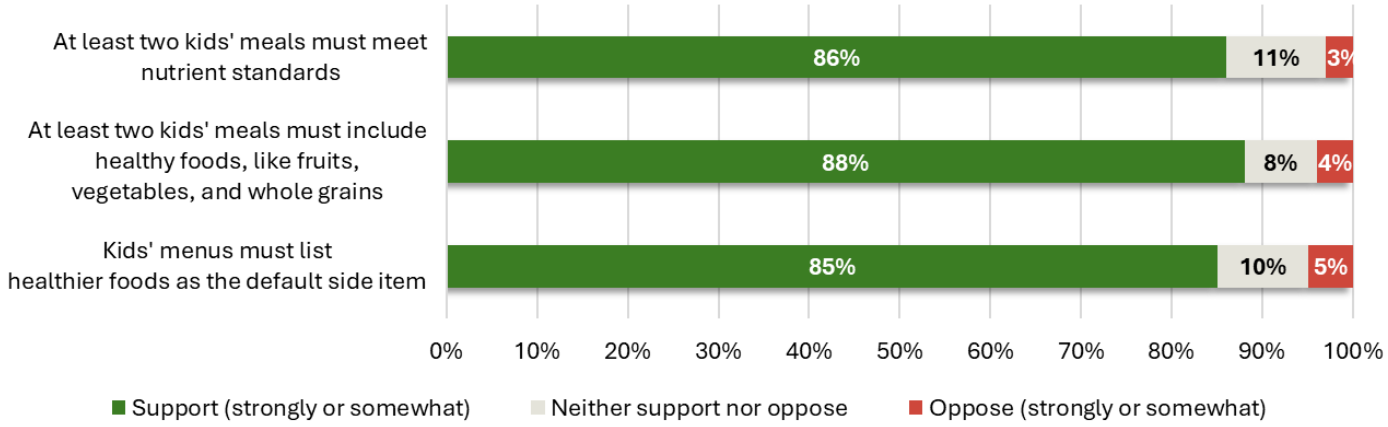
Figure 1. Support for various restaurant kids' meals policies among New York City residents (n=1,505)



Support for these policies is even higher among respondents with young children. Over 85% of respondents with children under the age of 13 expressed support for policies requiring restaurants to

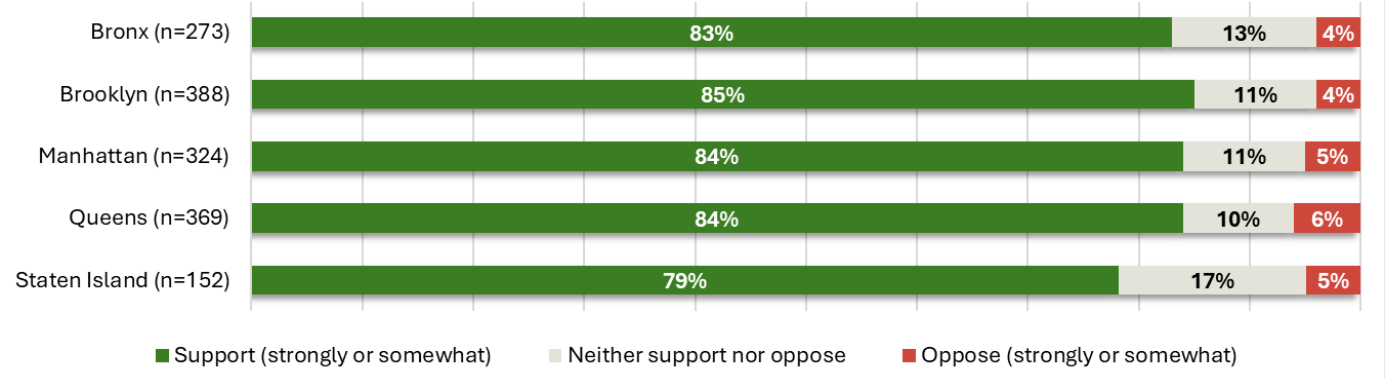
serve at least two kids' meals that meet nutrient standards, requiring restaurants to include healthy foods in kids' meals, and requiring restaurants to list healthier items as the default side item in kids' meals (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Support for various restaurant kids' meals policies with different types of nutrition requirements among caregivers of children 13 years and younger (n=392)



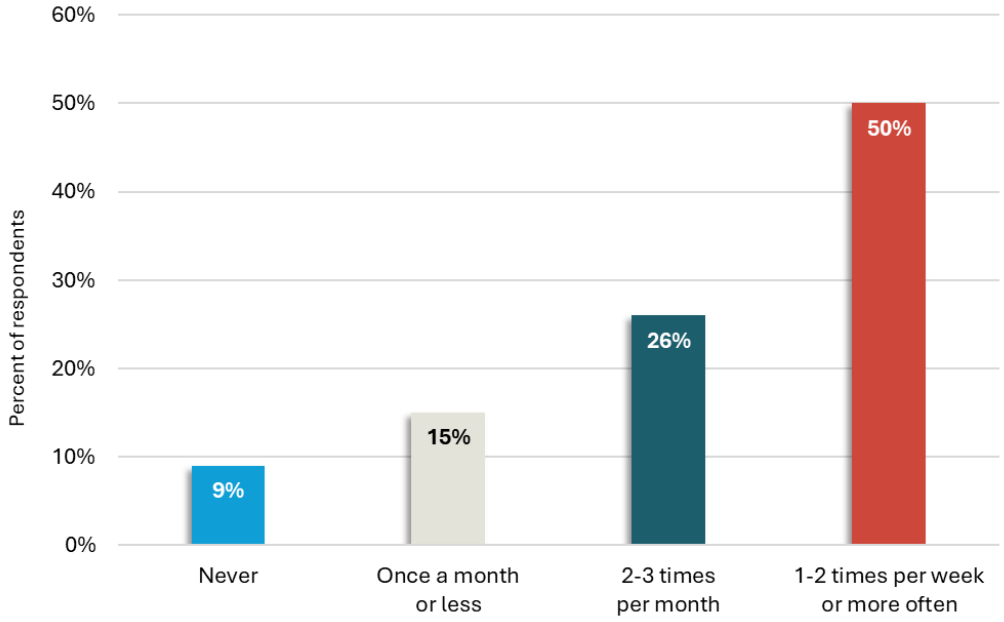
Support for a policy that would require all restaurants to serve at least two kids' meals that meet nutrient standards was strong across respondents in all five New York City boroughs. Over three-quarters of respondents in each of the five boroughs were supportive of this policy (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Support for a policy requiring all restaurants to include at least two kids' meals that meet nutrient standards by borough



This comes at a time when many respondents are purchasing kids' meals for their children. Fifty percent of respondents with children under the age of 13 reported ordering a kids' meal for themselves or others one to two times a week or more (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Frequency of restaurant kids' meals purchasing among caregivers of children 13 years and younger (n=392)



Appendix

Survey Methodology:

Big Village conducted this CARAVAN survey among a sample of 1,505 New York City residents ages 18 and older. Respondents were selected from among those who have volunteered to participate in online surveys and polls. The survey was conducted in English, Spanish, and Mandarin with translation services provided by Big Village.

The survey was fielded from April 9, 2024, through April 21, 2024. Respondents completed an online survey that included questions related to their opinions on restaurant kids' meals, restaurant meal sustainability, and food marketing to kids.

Completed surveys are weighted by four variables: age, sex, income, and race to ensure a reliable and accurate representation of the total New York City population, 18 years of age and older. The raw data are weighted by a custom designed program which automatically develops a weighting factor for each respondent. Each respondent is assigned a single weight derived from the relationship between the actual proportion of the population based on U.S. Census data with its specific combination of age, sex, income, and race and the proportion in the sample.