



How to Work With Local Restaurants to Provide Healthy Menus for Kids

Tips from Champion Mom Susan C.

Champion Mom Susan's commitment to healthy eating came from years of working in a hospital where she saw patients suffer from nutrition-related illnesses. She is dedicated to making sure her family never endures such hardships due to poor nutrition and lack of exercise.

“Use the Champions for Change Program to your advantage to offer ideas and additional help. Keep trying, be proactive and make your voice heard.”

Being active and making healthy food changes in her home was not too hard for Susan. The real challenge was when she and her kids ate out. Susan grew frustrated that most restaurants in her area had unhealthy menu options for kids. So she made her voice heard and started working with local restaurants to create healthy kids' meals.

Susan began one restaurant at a time and each victory motivated her more. She had soon encouraged more than 75 restaurants to change their kids' menus.

“You will get some resistance, but don't give up. We must encourage healthy eating everywhere, not just at home,” Susan said.

Susan offers these tips to start working with restaurants in your area:

1. Find a local restaurant with a kids' menu you would like to help change. Start with restaurants you go to often and where the manager or employees may know you. This can help make the process easier.
2. Ask for a copy of the whole menu that you can take home. At home, look at what is offered and make note of the fruits and vegetables used in each dish.
3. Create at least two or three healthy meals for kids with ingredients you know the restaurant already has on hand.
4. Design a sample kids' menu that looks similar to the restaurant's regular menu. In addition to the restaurant logo, add the Champions for Change logo to your new menu.
5. Contact your local Champions for Change Program representative and ask to have your menu approved by the Champions for Change Program.
6. Contact the restaurant manager to plan a time to discuss your menu recommendations. Be sure you introduce yourself as a Champion for Change.
7. Send the manager Champions for Change Program materials so he/she can learn more and to establish your credibility.
8. Present your sample menu to the manager and explain your healthy menu items. Tell him/her you made these items using ingredients they already have in their kitchen. It shouldn't cost them more to make your menu items available.
9. If possible and needed, offer to print the first round of menus.

