



2025-2026
**ANNUAL
REPORT**





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Throughout 2025 and into 2026, the National Restaurant Association's Kids LiveWell (KLW) program expanded its national impact, helping families more easily find balanced, better-for-you kids' meals when dining out. With 20 national and regional brands joining, including Anna Maria's Oyster Bar, Arby's, Burton's Grill & Bar, Café on St. Armands, Chick-fil-A, Dunkin', Jamba, Jason's Deli, Jimmy Johns, Konala, McAlister's Deli, Moe's Southwest Grill, QDOBA Mexican Eats, Schlotzky's Deli, Sonic, T-BONES Great American Eatery, Ted's Montana Grill, The Catch, Wendy's, and Whataburger, the program demonstrates how voluntary, science-based industry leadership can support children's nutrition at scale. KLW also offers consistent national framework that brings diverse participants together around shared nutrition criteria.

With the addition of 20 new brands, KLW now represents nearly 75,000 restaurant locations nationwide.

As the 2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans shift focus toward nutrient-dense foods, protein, and reduced added sugars, KLW provides a ready-made, science-based framework that helps restaurants align with evolving expectations while maintaining operational flexibility.

KLW continues to demonstrate that voluntary, industry-led approaches can scale nationally, support public health goals, and provide a consistent alternative to a fragmented state and local policy landscape.

ABOUT KIDS LIVEWELL

KLW helps restaurants create and promote better-for-you kids' meals that meet strong, evidence-based nutrition criteria. Restaurant companies submit their children's meals for review by third-party dietitians and all approved KLW meals and sides meet precise thresholds for calories, saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars. Each meal must also provide at least two food groups such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein, and dairy.

The program is voluntary, scalable, and designed to reflect real-world restaurant operations while maintaining credibility with families, health professionals, and policymakers. Participation is free, and the program now reaches nearly 75,000 restaurant locations nationwide, with new brands and tools continuing to be added.

If you're interested in joining the movement, please reach out to KidsLiveWell@restaurant.org.





2025-2026 HIGHLIGHTS

Creation of Consumer Tools for Families

In 2026, the National Restaurant Association launched KidsLiveWell.com, a consumer-facing website designed to help parents and caregivers easily identify participating restaurants and locate qualifying meals, sides, and beverages.

Expanding Tools and Resources for Operators

This year, the Association launched three new operator resources designed to make it easier for brands to meet KLV standards and communicate their participation to guests:

- **Sides Inspiration Guide:** Showcases simple, nutritious sides that meet KLV criteria, highlighting fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain options.
- **KLV Approved Beverages Guide:** Clarifies compliant beverage choices, default beverage requirements, and labeling best practices.
- **KLV Logo Placement Best Practices Guide:** Provides visual guidance on proper logo use across menus, packaging, and digital channels.

These tools build upon existing resources like the Getting Started Guide, Healthy Recipe Swaps, and the KLV Recipe Booklet, creating a comprehensive and practical support system for operators.



GROWING BRAND PARTICIPATION

The KLV community expanded again in 2025-2026 with 20 new members: Anna Maria's Oyster Bar, Arby's, Burton's Grill & Bar, Café on St. Armands, Chick-fil-A, Dunkin', Jamba, Jason's Deli, Jimmy Johns, Konala, McAlister's Deli, Moe's Southwest Grill, QDOBA Mexican Eats, Schlotzky's Deli, Sonic, T-BONES Great American Eatery, Ted's Montana Grill, The Catch, Wendy's, and Whataburger.

These additions represent significant momentum in restaurant industry engagement and affirm the growing recognition that better-for-you kids' meals are both achievable and in demand.



METRIC	2024	2025-2026
Participating Brands	19	39 (20 new members)
Total Locations Represented	60,000+	74,500 (nearly an 25% increase)
KLV-Approved Meals	~1,172	~1,246
KLV-Approved Sides	95+	135
KLV-Approved Default Beverages	60+	90

MEETING THE MAHA MOMENT

KLW reflects growing national focus on practical, food-based approaches to improving children's nutrition. The program emphasizes balanced meals that include protein, fruits and vegetables, and limits on added sugars, particularly in beverages.

KLW's default beverage approach prioritizes water, milk, and 100% juice, supporting reduced added sugar intake while maintaining options that work for both families and operators. In addition, whole milk and reduced-fat (2%) milk have been added as allowable default beverage options to reflect current federal policy and the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The program also encourages increased availability of fruit and vegetable sides and highlights protein-forward meals that are satisfying and nutrient-dense.

Importantly, KLW recognizes the realities families face. When cooking at home isn't feasible, restaurants play a critical role in providing accessible, affordable options. KLW helps ensure those options remain balanced, practical, and aligned with evolving nutrition guidance.



SPOTLIGHT ON OPERATOR ENGAGEMENT

The National Restaurant Association continues to provide direct technical support and training for participating brands:

- Menu certification and recertification for existing participants.
- Customized onboarding calls for new brands joining the program.
- Nutrition and marketing guidance to help operators highlight their K LW offerings effectively.
- Ongoing collaboration with registered dietitians, public health partners, and member companies to share best practices.

K LW's collaborative model remains a cornerstone of its success, helping brands of all sizes participate without major operational disruption.





NEXT STEPS



As expectations around children's nutrition continue to evolve, KLW will remain a consistent, national, framework that helps restaurants demonstrate leadership while preserving flexibility.

In 2026, the Association will advance a coordinated marketing and media effort to increase program visibility, anchored by the new [KidsLiveWell.com](https://www.kidslivewell.com) consumer-facing website highlighting KLW participating brands.

The Association will continue to recruit and recognize participating brands, expand consumer-facing communications, and highlight the role restaurants play in providing balanced, accessible options for families.

In parallel, the KLW criteria will be reviewed to align with the 2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, ensuring the program remains current, credible, and responsive to the evolving nutrition science and policy expectations.

The Associations will also explore strategic partnership to support the program's long-term growth, credibility and impact.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The National Restaurant Association thanks all participating restaurant brands for their leadership in supporting children's health and balanced dining options.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

Restaurants interested in joining Kids LiveWell or learning more can visit:

restaurant.org/kidslivewell

For questions or support, contact:

kidslivewell@restaurant.org



NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION