



Kids Food Reboot: Serving Our Children Better

A National Media Campaign

Background

Kids' food, or food designed exclusively for children, is a modern myth. This clever marketing concept has become a phenomenon where society believes that children eat different food from adults. Typical kids' food items have been adopted everywhere children eat: schools, restaurants and at home. This myth has pushed our culture to nearly abandon a much healthier worldwide tradition where children and parents habitually share the same meals.

Today, many steps are being taken to improve the nutritional quality of the default kids' foods. Fries may be baked and pizza dough or hamburger buns can be made with whole wheat flour, but the actual foods look the same as they have for decades. Yet research has shown that children who are served a wider variety of foods from a very young age – even *in utero* – will continue to eat a more varied diet and maintain these preference into adulthood.

At FamilyCook, we recognize that many kids and their parents have a real appetite to learn about the many types of foods in the marketplace. For the past 18 years, we have successfully used multicultural recipes in our nutritional cooking programs. It takes but one hands-on class preparing Tuscan Bean Soup, Spinach Quesadilla or Salad Nicoise for most children to happily eat it with their friends and families. Who says kids won't eat something new? It just takes some faith that they can be open to new experiences with food and an opportunity to cook with the ingredients and taste them.

Campaign Premise

Most parents and many children would love to share common meals that are good for the entire family than be constrained to a routine of serving separate meals for the children that fall into the narrow range of designated kid's foods. It shouldn't be that challenging. It is the way families ate before the industrialization and homogenization of our food systems.

Over and over, across the U.S., FamilyCook sees that kids, even those who are very picky eaters, are fascinated to learn how children, just like them, eat in other cultures. They love to be transported to exotic locales across the globe, one bite at a time. That is why we have initiated this campaign. Through **Kids Food Reboot**, we will demonstrate that there is a world of delicious food that children will be excited to explore, especially when they go to eat out with their families!

Campaign Goals:

1. Dispel the modern myth of kids' food
2. Inspire parents to serve their children the same food they themselves eat, regularly offering a wider variety of foods, and to explore foods outside the family's normal meal repertoire.

Together with a select group of notable nutrition authorities and organizations whose missions coalesce around supporting families to eat a variety of fresh, healthy ingredients, we will provide families with information, resources and participating campaign restaurants to help make this important shift.

Consider:

- All cultures have traditional dishes that everyone eats and finds nourishing
- Common meals in cultures around the globe include a starch base, often rice, with an array of vegetables, animal protein, spices and flavorings.

Partners and Resources

FamilyCook is enlisting the talents of leading chefs across the country to create children's meals, adapted from their regular menus, in appropriately sized and seasoned portions. The chefs will reduce the protein serving in proportion to vegetables and fruits on the plate and add a whimsical twist to the dish. In addition, the chefs will share their tips and tricks to serve our children better. We will use the chefs' ideas to inspire other restaurateurs and families to rethink children's meals.

We are partnering with an array of national organizations to get the word out and develop a range of resources. Organizations include: CSPI/Food Day; American Public Health Association; and Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior, among others.

To help restaurateurs and parents introduce the idea of more adventurous eating to children, FamilyCook has developed fun-food-focused activity sheets for children and a list of tips for parents. These will be available for download and in participating restaurants. Additionally, partner organizations resources will augment this campaign to ensure that parents have a wide a range of inspirational resources.

FamilyCook Productions (FCP) www.familycookproductions.com is a nonprofit organization founded in 1995 to teach nutrition through cooking to K-12 students and their families. FCP has reached over 200,000 families nationwide and spawned over 130 programs in 26 states. Along with HealthCorps and Albert Einstein College of Medicine, FCP is collaborating on an NIH funded research project to determine best practices to change behaviors that have been shown to cause obesity. FCP was founded by Lynn Fredericks, cookbook author, food activist and food and wine journalist. She is the author of *Cooking Time is Family Time* (William Morrow 1999) and, with Mercedes Sanchez, MS, RD, *Get Your Family Eating Right!* (Fairwinds Press, August 2013)

[Find Out More and Reserve Your Campaign Resources Here](#)