

WARM UP

1 What characteristics would you expect to find on a children's menu nowadays?

GLOSSARY

- chicken nuggets *bocconcini di pollo impanato*
- off-putting *scoraggiante*

Kids menus

People are more likely to eat out as a family today than in the past. This might be due to parents having children later, so they have more money to spend but are less willing to change their lifestyle.

With both parents generally working full-time, there might also be less time to prepare home-cooked meals. The new generation of children's menus are becoming more creative, but still include standard children's food such as chicken nuggets and pasta, only freshly cooked and additive-free. The trend is for child-size portions of adult meals such as steak or fish; discounts and special offers on kids' meals; fresher, healthier choices, which appeal to parents, including seasonal fruit and vegetables and simple, delicate flavours, with lots of naturally bright colours, which appeal to children.

This is a welcome departure from the unhealthy children's menus of the past, which offered carbohydrate-heavy fries and pizzas packed with fatty cheeses, processed meats, dangerous additives and colourings, not to mention a lack of fresh, seasonal and tasty fruit and vegetables, making whole generations grow up with bad eating habits.

With an increase in child-friendly restaurants, there is also an increase in noise and general chaos, which can be off-putting to people without children. Solutions include providing a children's play area, so kids can have fun, whilst adults enjoy their meals in peace; having designated family nights or times; or a menu which provides children with activities such as colouring games, puzzles, cartoons and jokes to keep them occupied and amused.

The truth, say restaurant owners, is that kids' menus do not make a profit, but they are good for business, as parents who feel welcome are more likely to return, often without their children.



ACTIVITIES

READING COMPREHENSION

2 **PET** Read the text about kids' menus and decide if these sentences are true (T) or false (F).

- 1 Families eat out less often than they did in the past.
- 2 You cannot find pasta or chicken nuggets on kids' menus now.
- 3 Kids' meals are becoming fresher, healthier and more seasonal.
- 4 Children like simple, natural food with bright colours.
- 5 A lot of people developed bad eating habits from dining out in the past.
- 6 Nobody minds noisy children when they are eating out.
- 7 Activity menus can help keep children busy in restaurants.
- 8 Restaurants can make a lot of money from children's menus.

T	F
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SPEAKING

3 Work in pairs and look at the two kids' menus below and discuss which one is better and why, basing your answers on the information you read in the test.



MINI-NAMI

KIDS' MENU!

only £4.95

Tempt the kids with our handmade, free range, freshly prepared and healthy food. Includes a choice of orange, apple, or lemonade. Choose from our three specially designed dishes.

Chicken Teriyaki

free range char grilled chicken with our tasty teriyaki sauce served with sticky Japanese rice or noodles

Salmon cakes

two homemade salmon and potato cakes served with teriyaki sauce and salad

Tofu Teriyaki (v)

lightly fried organic wedges of tofu with our tasty teriyaki sauce served with Japanese sticky rice or noodles (50p surcharge for noodles)

High chairs and baby change available and lots of buggy space. Kids welcome throughout the week as well as weekends.

Adapted from www.okinami.com

PIZZA EXPRESS

KIDS MENU

Starters

Dough balls with garlic butter	2.10 €
Garlic bread	2.20 €
Garlic bread with mozzarella	2.40 €

Pizza

Margherita	3.90 €
La Reine	4.80 €
Mushroom	4.50 €

Pasta

Half spaghetti plan	2.80 €
Half spaghetti Bolognese	3.85 €
Half spaghetti Napolitana	3.70 €
Half maccheroni alla Americana	5.00 €

Desserts

Mixed ice cream	3.50 €
Chocolate fudge cake	3.80 €

Drinks

Milk shakes	3.10 €
Orange juice	1.70 €
Soft drinks	1.90 €
Glass of milk	1.20 €

Adapted from www.pizzaexpress.com

- A I prefer the Pizza Express menu because...
- B I don't agree. I think the Mini-Nami is better because...

WRITING

4 Write your own kids' menu. When you finish, display it for the rest of the class to see and decide which you think is the best kids' menu.