

Rhode Island Residents Support Healthy Kids' Meals Legislation

Statewide poll shows strong support for policies to increase availability of healthy items on restaurant kids' menus

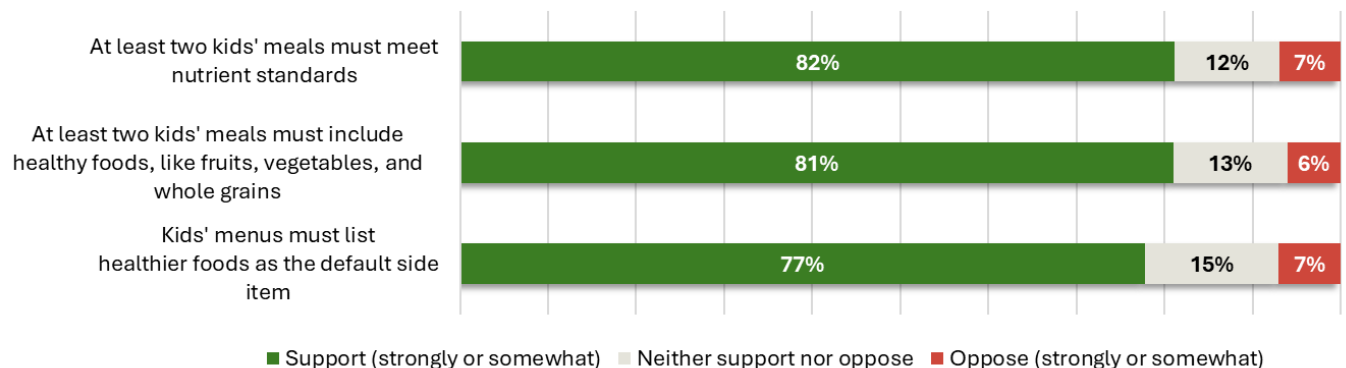
Rhode Island residents support policy efforts to increase the number of healthy kids' meals options at restaurants, according to a new survey commissioned by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). These policies include nutrient standards (e.g., limits on calories) for restaurant kids meals, requirements for the inclusion of healthy foods in restaurant kids' meals (e.g., $\geq 1/2$ 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 1,003 adults in Rhode Island 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 Rhode Island ([Appendix](#)). **The survey found that 82% of respondents support a policy requiring all Rhode Island restaurants to offer at least two kids' meals that meet nutrient standards.**

Key Findings

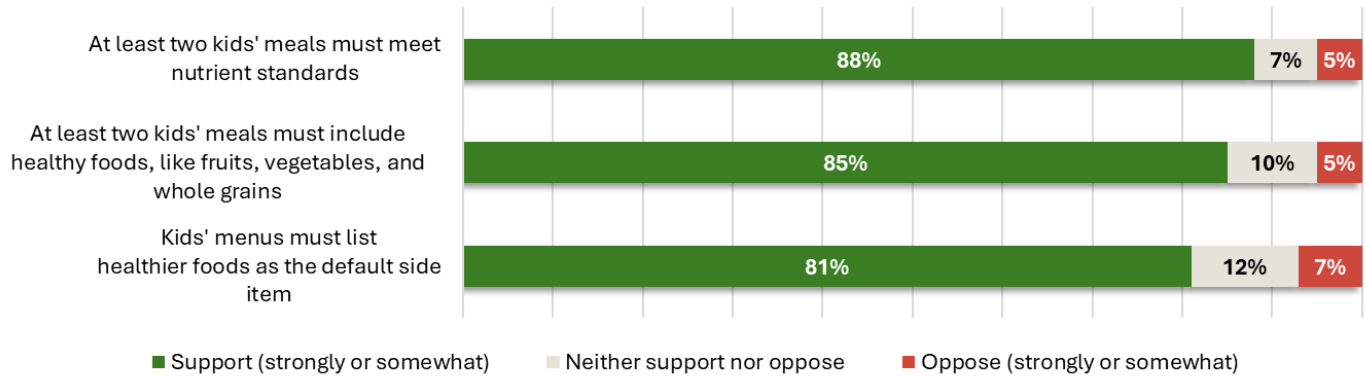
The majority of respondents also expressed strong support for policies that would require restaurants to include healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains in at least two kids' meals and require restaurants to list healthier items as the default side item in kids' meals, for example, apple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

Figure 1. Rhode Island residents' support for restaurant kids' meals policies with different types of nutrition requirements (n=1,003)



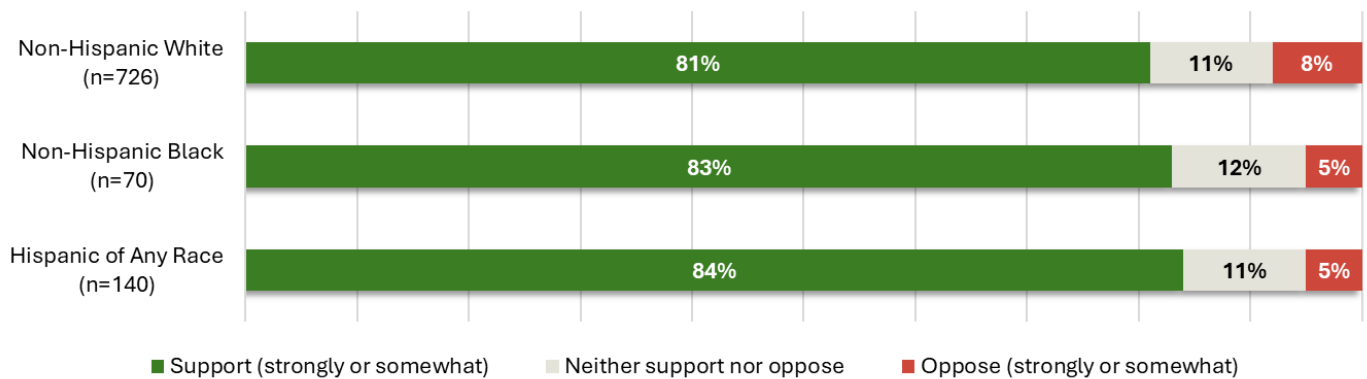
Support for these policies is even higher among respondents with young children. Over 80% of caregivers with children under the age of 13 expressed support for these policies, with as much as 88% expressing support for a policy that would require restaurants to serve at least two kids' meals that meet nutrient standards (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Support for restaurant kids' meals policies with different types of nutrition requirements among caregivers of children 13 years and younger (n=264)



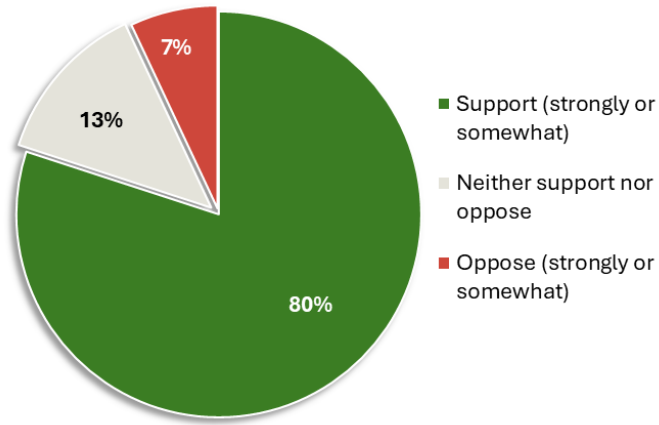
Support for a policy that would require restaurants to serve at least two kids' meals that meet nutrition standards is high among Non-Hispanic White residents, Non-Hispanic Black residents, and Hispanic residents of any race across the state. Over 80 percent of survey takers from each demographic group 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 race and ethnicity



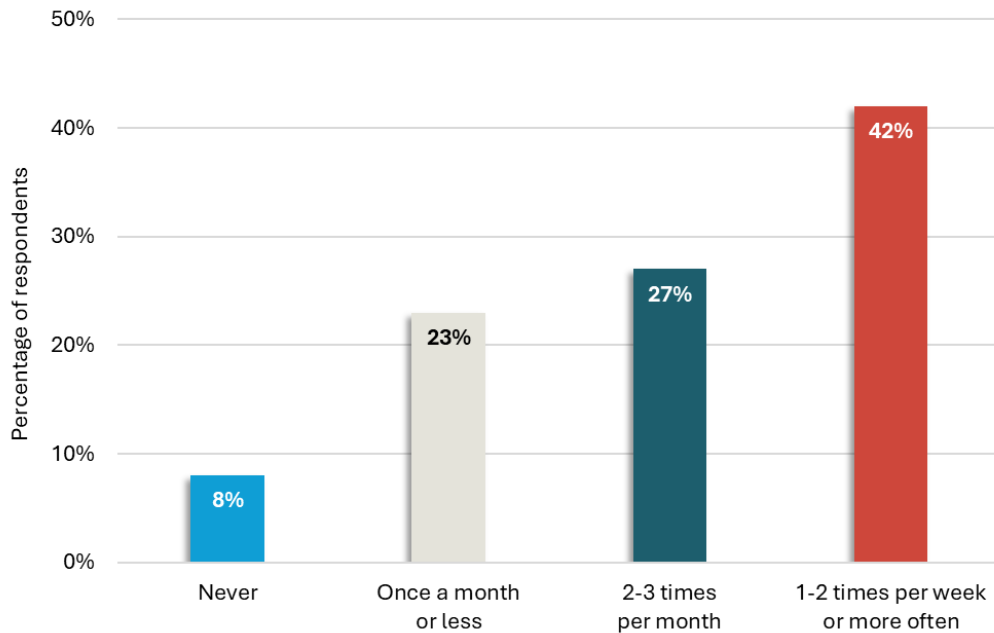
Residents were also supportive of a policy that would require Rhode Island restaurants to automatically include a healthy beverage option with their kids' meals. For example, instead of a kids' meal automatically being served with soda, the default beverage offering may be water or non-fat milk. More than three-quarters of respondents support this policy. (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Respondents' support for a policy to require Rhode Island restaurants to serve healthy default beverages with kids' meals (n=1,003)



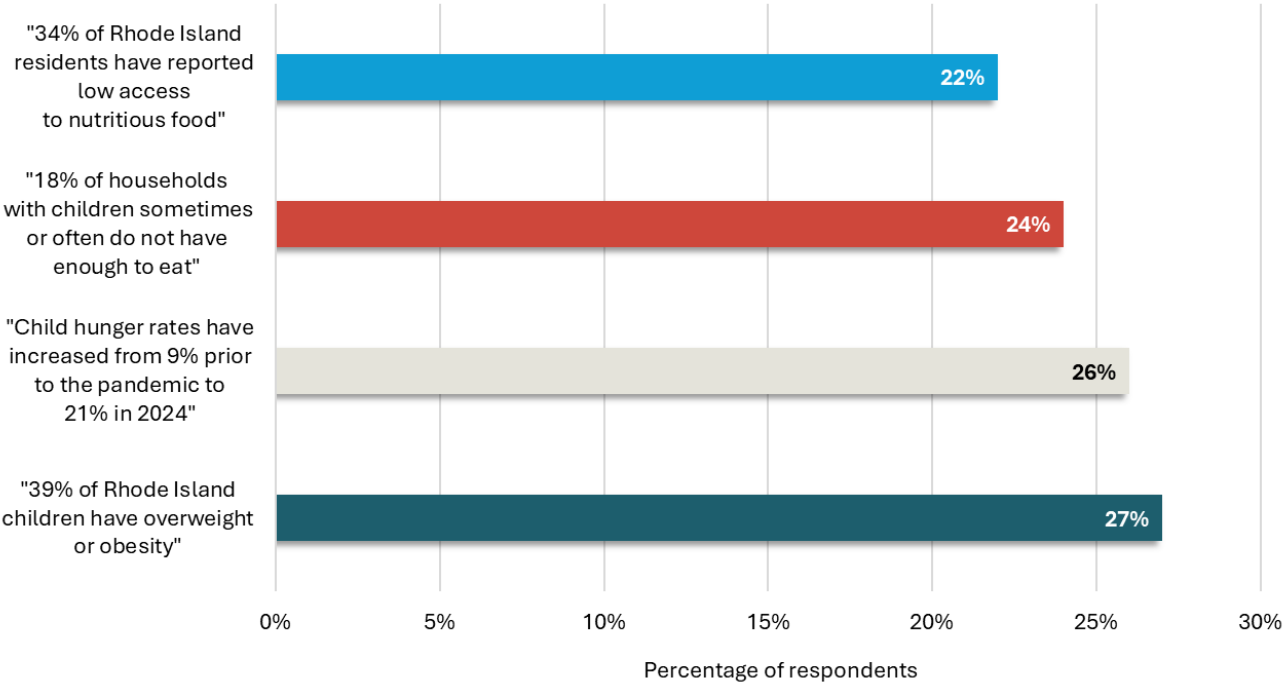
This comes at a time when many Rhode Island caregivers are purchasing kids' meals for their children. More than 40% of respondents with children under the age of 13 reported ordering from the kids' menu for themselves or others one to two times a week or more (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Frequency of restaurant kids' meals purchasing among caregivers of children 13 years and younger (n=264)



Children’s health is top of mind for Rhode Island residents. When asked about four different food and nutrition issues, respondents were almost equally concerned about all four issues, although a greater amount were concerned about the proportion of RI children with overweight or obesity and increased rates of child hunger in the state (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Which of the following food and nutrition issues in Rhode Island are you most concerned about? Select one answer (n=1,003)



Appendix:
Survey Methodology

Big Village conducted this [CARAVAN survey](#) among a sample of 1,003 Rhode Island 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 and Spanish, with translation services provided by Big Village.

The survey was fielded from April 23, 2024, through May 7, 2024. Respondents completed an online survey that included questions related to their opinions on restaurant kids' meals, restaurant meal sustainability, warning labels on restaurant menus and packaged foods, food marketing to kids, health issues facing Rhode Island, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program incentives, and sugary drink taxes.

Completed surveys are weighted by four variables: age, sex, income, and race to ensure a reliable and accurate representation of the total Rhode Island 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.