

Children's Eating Habits - Ireland - March 2014

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“In order to gain the trust and loyalty of parents, supermarkets and restaurants should look to reinforce healthy eating messages outside of the home, be it through the removal of junk food from checkouts, offering discounts on fresh produce lines or the expansion of healthy options on children’s menus.”
– Sophie Dorbie, Research Analyst

This report looks at the following areas:

- What impact are rising overweight and obesity levels having on parents’ attitudes towards their children’s eating habits?
- What can the foodservice industry do to appeal to parents and children to encourage them to dine out more often?
- What influence do children have on grocery shopping?
- What are the key innovations in the children’s food and drink market and what opportunities exist for NPD?

Looking at Ireland as a whole, RoI parents are more likely than NI parents to promote healthy eating amongst their children, with for example, seven in 10 RoI parents encouraging their children to snack on fresh fruit and vegetables, compared to 63% of NI parents.

Scratch cooking is also more customary amongst RoI consumers, with the majority of parents going out of their way to make healthy dinners for their children compared to NI parents. In addition to this, RoI parents are also more likely to make a packed lunch for their children compared to NI parents. The increased engagement with home cooking which allows parents to control the content of meals is likely to be a contributory factor to the lower overall childhood overweight/obesity rate in RoI compared with NI.

Indicating a desire for change in Irish restaurants, the majority of RoI parents think that children’s menus need greater variety and more healthy options. If restaurants make appropriate adjustments they may reap the benefits of Irish families dining out of the home more frequently.

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