



Small but Mighty: How Crayons Give Restaurants a Big Bang for Their Buck

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f Crayons are a perfect symbol of the joys of childhood: creating, playing, learning. They're classic; they're inexpensive ... They are timeless. As basic as they may seem, crayons bring so much to the table for families in restaurants.

t We at C3 know all about crayons—from formulas, production and distribution to doodles on kids' menus. We've been crayon pros for over 30 years, ever since we started partnering with the fast-growing casual dining restaurant chains of the 90s. It was during this time that restaurants experienced a rise in visits from families, and they took the opportunity to make those families feel welcome.

Read on to learn more about crayons—the unsung heroes of casual dining.

How do crayons save the day?

Crayons Make Kids-and Parents-Happy

In a recent [C3 survey](#), we found that, not only do parents like when casual dining restaurants provide crayons to their kids, but 75 percent of parents actually expect them to. Moreover, 62 percent of kids are disappointed when sit-down restaurants don't have crayons.

"I went to [a restaurant] recently that didn't have a kids' menu or crayons given out and my daughter kept asking for them. We finally found a receipt paper and a pen." – Minnesota mom of one.

Why are crayons so important to families? Parents told us that the top two benefits of restaurants providing crayons and coloring activities for kids are:

1. They're a wait-buster—they give kids something to do while they wait for their food (therefore keeping the peace at the table for parents).
2. They're fun for kids, plain and simple!

"Every time we go to our favorite restaurant, they will give my children a paper and crayons so they can color while waiting for our food. I love this kind of restaurant!" – Michigan mom of three.

"[A restaurant is kid-friendly when they] offer little goodies like crayons and coloring pages or games for the kids to play." – South Carolina mom of two.

Crayons Encourage Childhood Development and Creativity

Crayons aren't all fun and games—they're also [important for kids'](#) physical and cognitive development. They help children as young as 18 months develop fine motor skills like grip and hand strength, spatial awareness, hand-eye coordination, focus and color identification. Older kids get to practice drawing, handwriting and spelling. And, for kids of all ages (including adults!), crayons encourage creativity and self-expression.

These physical and tactile benefits are particularly relevant in our digital age. As kids spend more and more time each day on devices, whether for distanced learning or leisure time, restaurant brands have an opportunity to offer a meaningful respite from screens. Your restaurant can be a place where families come to unplug, where kids can unleash their creativity and where coloring can be a chance to bond and make memories. Crayons have an important role to play in giving families the feel-good dining experiences they crave.

Crayons Build Your Brand, In and Even Outside the Restaurant

Crayons may seem like a small consumer touchpoint, but they have a way of traveling outside the restaurant in purses and pockets, all the way back home! Two out of three parents surveyed said they take crayons with them when they leave the restaurant.

That's not the only way to see your brand welcomed into your customers' homes, either—including crayons in delivery or to-go orders is a surefire way to surprise and delight young kids' meal connoisseurs, and keep them asking for your restaurant by name.

Kid-friendliness is critical for families—74 percent of parents say that it's very important to them that the restaurants to which they take their families be kid-friendly. Offering crayons is a foolproof way to make your brand feel more relevant to the family consumer target, and given that 24 percent of casual dining restaurant traffic is from families with children 12 and under, catering to them is a smart business decision.

Crayons are Good for Your Bottom Line

Operationally and financially, crayons are a great solution for restaurants:

- They are cost-effective
- They are virtually mess-free
- They are kid-safe
- They are easily ordered, shipped and stored, and have a long shelf life
- They can even be contact-free when you opt for them to be boxed or cello-wrapped (which parents prefer.)
- They help make your restaurant feel kid-friendly, driving visits from families

Parents consistently tell us how important the perception of kid-friendliness is when they're deciding on a restaurant, so the humble crayon's importance to the casual dining restaurant industry is no small matter.

Are you ready to learn more about how crayons fit into your kids and family strategy?



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Jennifer Loper is the president of [C3 Brand Marketing](#). She started back in 2006 as an account manager and has risen to her presidential role not only through her kind and unwavering leadership of the account management department, but also a talent bordering on super-powerful for building meaningful, lasting relationships with clients that truly see C3 as partners. C3 is known for building fully custom family and kids' programs for its partners—from strategy and brand positioning, to experiential design, to designing and producing product and getting it where it needs to go.



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