



# THE LAB FOOD + COFFEE

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## CASE STUDY

Located in Payneham in metropolitan Adelaide, The Lab Food + Coffee ('The Lab') publicly promote themselves with the mantra 'great food, great coffee, community conscience'.

The venue is connected to a medical placement facility which delivers health education and training. It features a commercial kitchen upstairs which is utilised for cooking workshops and food demonstrations.

Originally established to benefit the clients, doctors and families that visit the facility, the venue found that they began to attract the broader local community, including corporates, residents, and the 'Instagram crowd'. The venue considers themselves a family friendly café due to the facilities they provide for children which includes games, high-chairs, and a stand-alone kids menu.

The general menu is dictated by the head chef who runs his ideas past the two managers. The chef sees a part of his role as educating his clients on food and the café's ethos.

### Registering with the healthy kids menu initiative

The Lab was approached in early 2018 to register with the Healthy Kids Menu initiative. A Healthy Kids Menu team member initially met face to face with key staff on site at the venue. The team member supported the venue through the registration process by explaining the initiative, what was involved, and offering practical suggestions to help create a Healthy Kids Menu.

After some back and forth communication, a menu was created that was compliant with the Healthy Kids Menu code of practice, and the venue was officially registered by mid-2018.

It was important to maintain regular communication with the venue to confirm their new healthy children's menu, as it is not uncommon to encounter challenges when contacting venue operators who are of course busy and can be hard to reach. This also recognises that the implementation of healthy children's menu options may not be a top priority for a hospitality business.

The Lab registered with the Healthy Kids Menu initiative because it aligns with their values as a business, and furthermore staff see it as a social responsibility to provide healthy food. This was supported by the fact that the head chef had young children who were the target age for the initiative. This was beneficial as he personally understood the value in ensuring venues have healthier choices available for families.

### Implementation

The Lab promotes the Healthy Kids Menu each school holidays in various ways including via Instagram and Facebook posts which has resulted in 'good engagement' and 'likes'. Staff also reported dropping off menus at local schools to promote the new menu.

The venue desires a balance in clientele and as such do not repeatedly promote the initiative so as not to develop the perception that The Lab is solely a play café for children.

In terms of Healthy Kids Menu resources, the venue largely uses the colouring-in sheets which they found to be a good way to advertise the healthy children's options.

### Outcomes

Staff indicated that they have noticed an increase in children attending the venue since implementing their Healthy Kids Menu but are unable to determine whether it's directly related to their involvement with the initiative.

Through the partnership with the Healthy Kids Menu initiative and the Restaurant and Catering Industry Association, The Lab were shortlisted for the Healthy Kids Menu Award in the 2019 Restaurant and Catering Industry Association Awards for Excellence. The awards are held every year and are a great way to showcase local venues offering healthy menu choices for children.

### Future recommendations

The venue suggests that the Healthy Kids Menu brand could benefit from increased promotion and visibility, which would incentivise more venues to register and be seen to be associated with a valued brand.

The venue would be open to helping build the brand by utilising more in-store promotion such as Healthy Kids Menu signage, posters, stickers, or a rewards card. They also expressed that they would be willing to explore the value of a local ambassador to promote the initiative.

In summary, The Lab expressed that they found the registration process for the Healthy Kids Menu initiative easy and that it was not difficult to modify their children's menu to help improve the healthy options available for children.



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