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ONLY HEALTHY BEVERAGES CAN BE MARKETED WITH KIDS' MEALS AT RESTAURANTS UNDER NEW ORDINANCE

The ordinance would make the default drink served to kids at restaurants the healthy choice.

CHICAGO – The Chicago City Council passed an ordinance today from Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot and the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) wherein CDPH can now enforce a new state law that says only healthy, non-sugary beverages can be marketed as part of kids' meals at restaurants. Parents will be able to ask for sugary drinks if they wish, preserving consumer choice.

The Serve Kids Better Act was signed by Governor Pritzker last year. For CDPH inspectors to have authority to enforce it, the Municipal Code of Chicago must mirror the state law.

"We are pleased to carry out this new menu standard for kids' meals," said Mayor Lightfoot. "The health community and restaurant and beverage industries came together to back legislation that pairs healthy marketing with parental choice."

"Forming healthy habits early is so important for lifelong health," said CDPH Commissioner Allison Arwady, M.D. "This ordinance will help ensure the healthy choice is the default choice for kids."

Under the ordinance, the beverage standards allow for unsweetened still or sparkling water, 100% fruit or vegetable juice, or dairy and non-dairy milks (including chocolate milk) that meet certain calorie requirements in kids' meals. Parents may ask for a substitution.

"This is a pragmatic public health policy, as it provides options and flexibility for both families and restaurants," said Sam Toia, President & CEO of the Illinois Restaurant Association.



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"The beverage industry and our restaurant partners support this important policy to ensure parents and families can continue to choose low- and no-calorie beverage options," said Illinois Beverage Association Executive Director Rob Nash.

Many children consume between two and three times the daily recommended amount of sugar. This extra sugar intake, especially prevalent among Black and Latino children, often results in tooth decay and excess weight gain. The result over time can be increased chronic disease, the biggest cause of the nine-year life expectancy gap between Black and White Chicagoans.

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