

Menu

Teaching Kids to Cook

Papa Murphy's Mini Murph program educates kids on cooking, nutrition.

BY AMANDA BALTAZAR



Vancouver, Washington-based Papa Murphy's is hoping to help kids learn about cooking and nutrition with its new Mini Murph offering.



Mini Murphs are child-sized pizza-making kits that are similar to the chain's other take-and-bake products, except assembled at home. Parents simply need to pick up a base and toppings at a Papa Murphy's store.

The company rolled out the Mini Murph program in February to its more than 1,200 units.

Ken Calwell, CEO of Papa Murphy's, says the company hopes parents will use the Mini Murph opportunity to spend time with their kids and help teach them about the individual ingredients that go into their meals.

"There's the pride of the creative process versus going through a pickup window," he says. "This naturally brings the family together. It's important to teach kids about healthy eating, as well as about the decisions that you make and appropriate portion sizes."

Bringing kids into the kitchen, he adds, ties into

the bigger picture of childhood obesity problems because it "helps start an awareness of nutrition."

Christen Cooper, founder of Cooper Nutrition in Pleasantville, New York, says teaching kids how to cook is indeed a good way to help combat obesity.

"Research shows that hands-on experiences with food, including preparing and cooking it, are great ways to get kids comfortable in the kitchen and willing to try new, healthy foods," she says.

Calwell says the Mini Murph program should be popular for everyday eating, but also for events like birthday parties, when a group of children can decorate their dinner together.

This makes the Mini Murph an extension of Papa Murphy's positioning, he says, because the chain's pizza is well known as a party offering. It also aligns with the company's other creative products, such as its Valentine's Day HeartBaker pizza.

Promotions for the Mini Murph program, which focus on a Mini Murph character, launched in March. Stores feature signs at children's level that invite them to be a pizza chef.

Operations

A FRIENDLY NEW COBRAND?

Full-service chain Friendly's opens new cobranded unit with Burger King.

Full-service burger and ice cream chain Friendly's recently introduced its Friendly's Scoop Shop, a new limited-service concept.

The first Scoop Shop opened in December, cobranded with a new Burger King in Jackson, New Jersey, where the two brands operate side-by-side counters. The Scoop Shop offers a limited menu that includes milkshakes, ice cream cones, and sundaes.

Friendly's officials, who recently navigated the company through Chapter 11 bankruptcy, plan to expand the Scoop Shop concept through cobranding or in nontraditional spaces.

By expanding in the quick-service arena, the 500-unit Friendly's is able to bring its products to markets that don't have enough demand for full-service locations, says Jim Sullivan, senior vice president and chief development officer.

"For us, it's taking what our basic fundamental is all about and incorporating it into a smaller footprint," Sullivan says.

The new concept allows Friendly's to operate with lower overhead costs and have a flexible footprint, from a kiosk to a full cobranded store, Sullivan says.

Dave Stone, managing partner with the New England Consulting Group, says the fact that Friendly's is largely a seasonal product could make it a strange fit for Burger King units.

"It's an interesting play, but I think there are a lot of questions they need to work through before we find out if it's going to be successful," he says. *By Kevin Hardy*