

Confusing Nutrition Labels Hinder Parents' Food Choices For Kids

(NAPSA)—What's in a label? When it comes to getting kids the right nutrients they need, the answer may be met with confusion. In fact, more than four in 10 (42 percent) parents find it easier to understand furniture assembly instructions than the contents of a nutrition label.

The reason, according to a Kelton Research national nutrition survey of parents of children ages 6 to 12, is confusion around understanding nutrition labels, appropriate quantities of nutrients and nutrition terminology. This, in turn, is causing frustration among parents when it comes to feeding their kids.

Registered Dietitian Tara DelloIacono-Thies says that confusion when looking at nutrition labels in the grocery aisle can lead to poor food choices. Parents with the best of intentions may not be giving their kids the right nutrition because they are misinterpreting nutrition labels. Uncertainty in label reading can lead to a real lack of confidence and a parent's ability to choose healthy snacks for kids.

Kids Are Not Adults

According to the survey, which was commissioned by Clif Kid®, a maker of organic snacks for kids, one of the biggest misconceptions is how much food a child should consume. Of those surveyed, 42 percent don't know that nutrition labels are based on a 2,000-calorie adult diet, which can represent 53 percent more calories than what is recommended for a 6-year-old girl. Additionally, 72 percent of parents are not aware that the American Dietetic Association's recommended daily caloric intake changes by gender at age 4.

Nutrition as a Foreign Language

One of the major contributors to parents' lack of confidence is unfamiliarity with the terms and measurements used to describe



Parents with good intentions may be misinterpreting nutrition labels.

nutrition labels. Nearly half of parents don't know what constitutes a "single serving," while 75 percent don't know how many calories are in a single gram of fat. (The answer is nine.) Just more than half surveyed said they would prefer nutrition labels be expressed in more common forms of measurement, such as teaspoons or tablespoons.

Helping Parents Navigate Kids' Nutrition

"In order to help parents make better snack choices for their kids, Clif Kid snacks are specifically made with kids' RDA needs in mind," said DelloIacono-Thies. "We make sure that each snack has the right amount of nutrients for kids up to age 12. This means that, even though nutrition labels must state the percentage of nutrients for an adult-sized diet, parents can feel secure knowing that the amounts in a Clif Kid snack are appropriate for kids' healthy growth."

The survey also revealed that 69 percent of parents feel it's important to feed their children organic or natural foods.

DelloIacono-Thies added, "Choosing USDA-certified organic foods and snacks is an easy way to keep harmful pesticides out of the environment and our bodies."