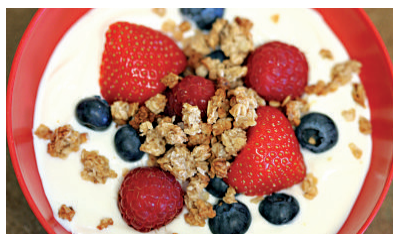


Nursery food award



Winner Little Monkey's Nursery, Windsor, Berkshire

The judges were impressed by the welcoming and relaxed family feel of, not just the dining area, but the whole nursery. Meal and snack times are social occasions where the children sit in small groups with their key people. Staff encourage children to eat different foods and encourage their independence.

Co-owner and trained chef Janis Crutch is assisted by two on-site cooks and devises a new menu every week. Meals include a variety of dishes from around the globe, made from scratch each day with fresh, organic ingredients. Janis takes time to source healthier ingredients, while ensuring the food is appealing. For instance, she uses wholemeal couscous and has found a sugar alternative called agar nectar which is slightly lower in sugar by weight compared to sugar and also has a lower GI.

Daily menus include a vegetable and fruit total so parents can see how many different

types children are being offered. Care is also taken to offer different sources of protein and a range of carbohydrates.

Meals are flavoured using a diverse selection of herbs and spices rather than by adding salt.

Where children are given an alternative meal to what is on the menu, due to dietary requirements, preference or allergy, the chefs aim to create a dish that looks as similar as possible to the food that the other children are eating.

A well-rounded food education includes children growing their own vegetables and herbs in a small garden that also includes fruit trees.

'Dishes made from scratch each day, with fresh, organic ingredients...'
Judge

Children have visited the allotments next to the nursery and have looked at chickens and helped to collect their eggs.

Highly commended Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nursery, Islington, London

The nursery's food provision was declared 'creative, nutritious, varied and tasty' by the judges. Staff work with the children on food preparation and cooking, including making smoothies, pitta pockets and other bread.

Tall Trees Kindergarten, Frome, Somerset

Local, organic and sustainable ingredients are used to produce nutritious, well-balanced meals. Judges found the nursery's food sourcing policy to be 'exemplary' and a model of excellent practice.

Finalists

Kids Allowed, Manchester
London Early Years Foundation, London
Willow Cottage Nurseries, Oxford

Criterion

Open to early years settings promoting healthy eating