



## A Parent's Guide to Healthy Eating for the Under Fives

### Nutritionally Balanced Meals

At **kidsunlimited** we recognise the importance of providing all those children in our care with tasty, nutritionally balanced meals throughout the day.

We are introducing a **new four weekly menu cycle** that has been designed to meet children's nutritional needs as they grow and develop, as well as recognising their favourite foods and introducing new flavours and textures.

Children develop many of their attitudes and approaches to what's around them during their early years, including the food that they eat. A nutritious diet for young children is vital to their health and development, and should lead to a healthy attitude to food for the rest of their lives.

Good nutrition for children is essential to support mental and physical development, and also because their attitude to choices, tastes and behaviour is rapidly forming at this time and will be the foundation of their approach to food as an adult.

As with all children, it is essential that under the age of five have a varied and balanced diet. However, it must also be remembered that a balanced diet for such young children is markedly different from that of a healthy diet for older children or adults.

*For example, a diet which is low in fat and high in fibre may not supply enough energy for a young child, and 'whole' cows' milk is recommended for young children over the age of 12 months as a main drink, because it is a rich source of a number of nutrients.*

Our new menus meet these requirements by providing milk, not only as a drink, but also by introducing this in desserts, custard and yoghurts, as part of the main meal.

Young children's energy requirements increase rapidly because they are growing quickly and becoming more active. They have a high energy requirement for their size. Good supplies of protein, calcium, iron and vitamins A and D are essential for children younger than five years.

Portion size is also important to ensure that children have sufficient food to sustain their energy levels between meals as this reduces the tendency for snacking between meals. To support this we have included a wide variety of fruit and vegetables to be eaten with the main meal.

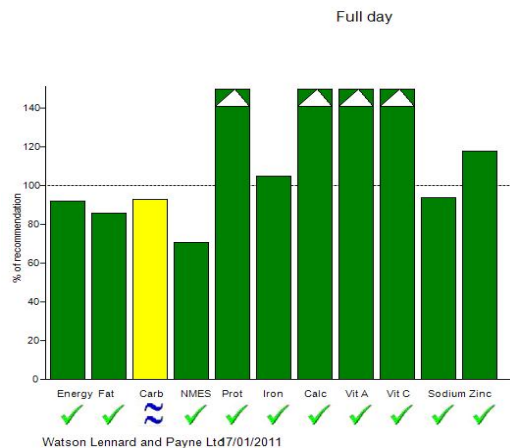


Recent research into feeding for the Under 5s in nursery care sets out new evidence for the importance of providing a detailed rationale for nutrient based standards for nursery age children.

In the absence of formal government guidelines our four weekly menu cycle has been nutritionally analysed in line with the **Caroline Walker Trust Guidelines** for the under 5s, comparing the levels of 11 key nutrients:

- Energy
- Fat
- Carbohydrate
- Non-milk intrinsic milk sugars (NMES)
- Protein
- Iron
- Calcium
- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C
- Zinc
- Sodium

Our cooks and chefs are able to balance each week's menu and new recipes in accordance with these guidelines. We analyse every menu to ensure your child has the choice of a nutritionally balanced diet whilst at nursery.





## Special Diets

At **kidsunlimited** we recognise the importance of special dietary requirements.

Our four weekly menu cycle provides a **daily vegetarian option** and each nursery has a portfolio of recipes to support the needs of those children with **food allergies** and **intolerances**. Should your child have special dietary requirements please discuss these with your Nursery Manager.

We are able to adapt our menus to suit the weaning programme of your child and again our staff can always offer help and advice. We welcome your comments so please do not hesitate to **contact us** should you have any queries regarding your child's dietary requirements.

Kind Regards,

*Michelle Nicholson*

**Food Standards and Quality Assurance Manager**  
**kidsunlimited**