



# The EYA Menu Parent Guide

in collaboration with Tiny Tums from The Health Kick



# Nutritional Benefits

The Early Years Academy are working with Tiny Tums from The Health Kick to enhance our Spring/Summer menu and ensure that every item on there is supporting early childhood development.

This guide explains the vital link food has on early childhood development, outlines the main changes and exciting approach we have to support your child's food taste experiences with us.

For your peace of mind, we have also outlined the care and attention we take with food safety, allergens and weaning. All of which are fully explained in our policy documents.



# Nutritional Benefits

The Early Years Academy are working with Tiny Tums from The Health Kick to enhance our Spring/Summer menu, ensuring that every item on there is supporting early childhood development. To help make this visible we are using the following images on our recipes, this shows how different dishes support the important areas of early childhood development.



Building  
Bones



Building  
a Brain



Oral  
Health



Emotions



Eating a  
rainbow



The role  
of Protein

The key areas are:

- Building strong bones
- Supporting brain development
- Helping with emotional regulation
- Protein's role in early childhood development
- Supporting oral health
- The importance of 'eating a rainbow'

# Nutritional Benefits

These nutritional benefits are displayed on the recipe cards alongside the allergen information.

## Recipe Card

Rainbow Noodles



Supporting



Supporting



Supporting



Supporting



Supporting



### Allergies

Gluten (noodles)

Sesame

Soy

Sulphites (poss lemon juice if bottled)

Check labels for cross contamination

Chop & blend according to age and stage

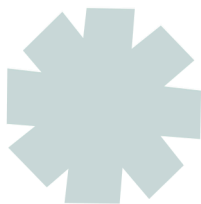
RECIPE DEVELOPED FOR THE EARLY YEARS ACADEMY BY  
TINY TUMS FROM THE HEALTH KICK

This makes it easy to see at a glance how different recipes support areas of early childhood development.

# Allergy Awareness

The Early Years Academy are working with Tiny Tums from The Health Kick to enhance our Spring/Summer menu and reiterate the message of how we carefully handle allergies. We have updated our policies to reflect the upcoming changes to the EYFS.

The known allergens will be displayed in this image for an easy visual reference.



## Allergies

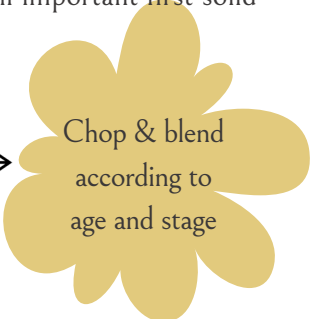
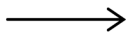
Dairy Fish Sesame  
(hummus) Sulphites  
(olives) Check  
labels for cross  
contamination

Like this example here. Allergens can sometimes be harder to spot in some prepacked items so always check labels and for any risk of cross-contamination especially if you change brands or have a replacement item in your shop

# Weaning Awareness

The Early Years Academy are working with Tiny Tums from The Health Kick to enhance our Spring/Summer menu and reiterate the message of how we carefully handle weaning and the safe introduction of those all important first solid foods.

This visual will be displayed on each recipe as a key reminder



Chop & blend  
according to  
age and stage

## Policy & Recipes

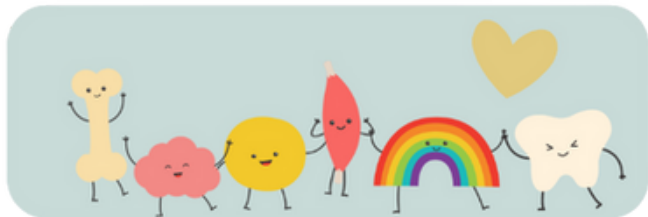
We have enhanced our policy on weaning to mitigate the risk and reinforce our emergency response plan should the need arise.

In each recipe created we have a reminder within the recipe methodology to ensure safeguarding and mitigate risks.

# Cultural Days

The Early Years Academy are keen to encourage foods from many different cultures and to take into account the family recipes and preferences which our children may have.

We ensure that we have one day in our three week menu to embed these dishes into our menu and encourage our families to share recipes with us for all of our children to enjoy.



# Oral Health



Brushing teeth is important but so is looking after the whole mouth via the foods and drinks that we consume.

We are keen to promote foods which support the whole of the mouth which includes having (for those who are able) plenty of foods which require chewing, as this helps to promote Saliva, which helps to keep our mouths healthy by neutralizing acids made by bacteria.

We will serve fruit with something else such as cheese as fruit as a stand-alone snack can be detrimental to the delicate enamel on milk teeth (whilst still being very healthy in every other way).



# Sugar



Lots of grown-ups think that sugary foods are ok for children and even associate them as 'treats' and 'rewards'. Here at The Early Years Academy we recognise the negative impact that sugar has in formative development and have taken the decision to not include any added (free sugars) on our menu.



Babies and children have weaker enamel on their teeth so any sugar (even fruit) can damage. Serving food specifically for early development helps to mitigate this risk.



The 0-5 window is crucial for early brain development. Sugar can alter palate development, taste preferences and food behaviours via sugar intake during this early development.

# Hydration



As we head into the warmer months keeping children hydrated becomes increasingly important. We have changed our menu for a more seasonal focus ensuring that more foods are included with a higher water content for our children who ‘forget to drink often’.



Keeping hydrated helps children’s brains as being hydrated helps us to concentrate and remember things.



Keeping hydrated also helps with emotional regulation. When we are dehydrated (which children may not recognise) we can be irritable, feel tired and anxious.

# Starters & Desserts



It's important to remember that everything in the early years creates patterns, associations and habits.

When we provide a dessert each day we are creating an expectation that something sweet will always follow a meal.

This expectation becomes a habit and can become a food addiction.

By breaking up the dessert days with starters we are preventing the habit-forming expectation of something sweet.

The sweet options on the menu all offer nutritional benefits such as vitamins and fibre without the addition of free (added) sugars.

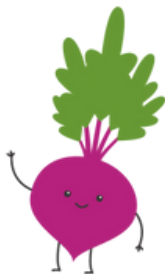
Starters can be a great way of exploring new flavours to expand on palate development, shaping healthy taste preferences.

Starters can be used as snacks too.



# Health Benefits

Let's look at some of the new menu items and how they support your child's health and development.



## Beetroot Hummus

Our parents suggested Hummus so we have introduced a Beetroot Hummus as Beetroot is a great source of B9, Iron and the phytochemical Quercetin which all support brain health and function. Beetroot is a good source of the flavonoids; Anthocyanins which give them their colour. These have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits

## Eggs

Our parents suggested scrambled eggs, we have thought of the best way to include eggs and now have two exciting Frittata dishes. Mexican Frittata & Rainbow Frittata. These are filling ways to explore new tastes whilst getting a good dose of Omega 3 Fatty Acids and are a complete protein source



# Health Benefits

Let's look at some of the new menu items and how they support your child's health and development. **Lentil Bolognese** Full to the brim with hidden veg - using our hidden veg sauce, this dish packs a nutritional punch! Not just for the veggies either, we encourage this dish for all our children to ensure a wider intake of plant proteins and get the nutritional benefits of lentils;

Lentils are a great source of fibre  
Lentils are a good source of Iron and Vitamin B9  
Lentils have a strong amino acid profile



Hidden Veg  
sauce contains  
9 veggies

# Health Benefits

Let's look at some of the new menu items and how they support your child's health and development.

## Jacket potato Station

We have some exciting new toppings for children to explore with our Jacket Potato station, including cheese, carrot and apple and hummus crunch. These all pack in protein, healthy fats and a colourful range of vitamins, minerals and fibre.



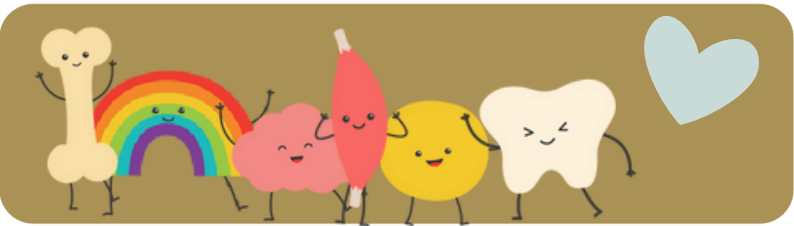
## Build your own Burrito

Our parents suggested Fajitas but as the sizzling can be a H&S risk we have opted for BYO Burrito. Colourful and ever so tasty, children can gain independence as they explore the different tastes in our BYO Burrito lunch. Choose from brain-boosting fish & avocado or plant powered beans all topped with rainbow veg and tasty toppings.



# Summary

We truly value the role of food in early childhood development and will continue to enhance our nutritional message and menu to ensure that every child gets the very best start in life with their food journey at The Early Years Academy.



This Spring Summer 2025 menu design and launch, with all of the supporting documents have been lovingly prepared to support the health, wellbeing and development of each and every child in our settings.