

# IT'S LUNCH TIME



Nutrition at Nursery  
School: a lunch to suit  
every child's needs





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School: a lunch to suit  
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The Municipality of Florence  
Department of Education, University and Research

Education Management  
Infant Service  
Director: Rosanna Onilde Pilotti  
HACCP Office and Goods & Service Purchasing  
Pedagogical Coordination

CENTRAL TUSCANY HEALTH BOARD (USL)  
Professional Dietetics Office (A.S.L. 10)  
Dietitians: Carlotta Benvenuti, Rita Barbara Marianelli

ITALIAN FEDERATION OF PEDIATRIC PHYSICIAN (FIMP)  
Dr Antonina Chiccoli  
Dr. Valdo Flori

Graphics and Layout Project  
Silvia Godi  
Antonella Ortolani

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## PREFACE

Dear families,

Local Administration and Infant Services have been working for some time now to ensure that lunchtime at nursery school is a moment in life that is qualitatively recognised not just from a nutritional point of view but also from an educational standpoint.

Lunchtime represents one of the most significant aspects of nursery school life inasmuch as it means experiencing conviviality, interrelations and dialogue among the children and between them and the nursery school staff. Eating is also an important opportunity to play, to stimulate curiosity and in an atmosphere of well-being and conviviality, can also become a wonderful learning opportunity.

The nursery school menu has always been formulated in accordance with LARN guidelines (recommended levels of energy and nutrient consumption for the Italian population). Some time ago, Local Administration introduced products originating from biological agriculture and/or through a short distribution chain with the objective of guaranteeing a healthy diet. They also guarantee safe food products for children who have allergies or food intolerances. After 14 years this guide is back and it details the daily menu in such a way that the diverse needs of every child and every family are met, be they related to different religions and cultures or requirements for a semi-vegetarian diet.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Italian Federation of Paediatric Physicians, the Professional Dietetics Office (ASL 10) and the Central Tuscany Health board (USL) for their collaboration. I hope that this publication, apart from representing all the hard work carried out by the team of professionals who work within the Nursery School setting, will become a useful everyday tool providing tips for a healthy and balanced diet for your children, both at school and at home.

Cristina Giachi  
Education Councillor





# 1. Objectives

THIS GUIDE WAS CREATED FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACQUAIN-  
TING FAMILIES WITH NURSERY SCHOOL MENUS IN THE MU-  
NICIPALITY OF FLORENCE, PROVIDING INFORMATION ON  
THE FOODS SELECTED, IN ORDER TO PROMOTE A CORRECT  
AND BALANCED DIET FOR CHILDREN.

FOLLOWING THE GUIDELINES PROVIDED BY PAEDIATRICIANS  
AND DIETITIANS, AND WITH THE INTENT OF PROMOTING  
THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN, LOCAL ADMI-  
NISTRATION DECIDED TO CHECK THE INGREDIENTS FOUND  
IN ITS NURSERY SCHOOL MENUS. THEY THEN INTRODUCED  
NEW INGREDIENTS IN LINE WITH THE IV EDITION OF THE  
“LEVELS OF ENERGY AND NUTRIENT CONSUMPTION FOR  
THE ITALIAN POPULATION” (LARN), CARRIED OUT BY THE  
ITALIAN SOCIETY FOR HUMAN NUTRITION (SINU) IN  
2014.

THE METHODOLOGY BEHIND PROVIDING MEALS, THE MENU  
CHARACTERISTICS AND THE DIET TO BE FOLLOWED OVER THE  
COURSE OF THE FIRST THREE YEARS OF A CHILD’S LIFE, ALL  
OF WHICH HAVE BEEN BASED ON THE NEWLY INTRODUCED  
PRINCIPLES, WILL BE DESCRIBED IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES.



## 2. Lunch at nursery school

## 2. Lunch at nursery school

Lunchtime is one of the most important aspects of nursery school life. In light of this, mealtime is a time when all the nursery school staff are constantly looking to see how they can render the situation more in line with the children's needs. Over the course of the years, our awareness has increased with regards to how significant lunchtime is in the nursery in terms of the children and adults socialising and relating with each other. With this in mind, the canteen layout is such that there is a "calm and welcoming environment" and the communication between the adults and the children is tranquil and easy-going.

In order to maintain this rapport methodology, the following educational strategies have been put in place:

- small groups of children sit with their own teacher

- the presence of all nursery school staff (teachers, operators, chef)

- attention to detail in how the table is set and how the food is presented

- introduction of rituals that help to reassure the children and establish a time-frame so that they can predict the experience.

Lunchtime in particular is one of the most significant moments of care because, apart from the nutritional aspects, there are also relational, emotional, cognitive and cultural implications. In this regard, it is essential to respect the pace and rhythms of the children, going along with the changes they face from day to day, especially at the delicate weaning stage which often coincides with starting nursery school.

A strong collaboration between the chef and the teachers, but also a rapport between the parents, teachers and the chef that is based on continuous reciprocal trust, is indispensable. For this reason, before a child starts nursery school, his/her parents are invited to have a one-to-one meeting, first with the teaching



staff and subsequently with the kitchen staff. On this occasion, the parents can explain their child's specific needs and agree on a weaning schedule together with the chef. They can also get information on the nursery school menu and become familiar with any eventual special diet that can be catered for and how to avail of the same. For the older children, eating lunch at nursery school is a wonderful opportunity to become autonomous, to experiment with their own skills, to show their "know-how" and to express their personality. Learning to eat autonomously is an important step. First, the child eats with his/her hands and then, once the "messy" phase is over, he/she moves on to use cutlery (spoon, fork, cup etc). This reinforces the child's identity and confidence.

It is important not to rush a child in relation to his/her tastes and ability to be autonomous but instead to gradual teach him/her, without pushing it, to respect a few rules that apply when we eat together.

An important aspect of food is the psychological one which is hard to discern from the emotional one. During the weaning phase, food means the discovery of colours, flavours, smells and new consistencies but it is also a time for games, curiosity and especially pleasure. Sometimes a child can be afraid and reject something that he/she is not familiar with, a new flavour perhaps or food that has been prepared in a different way. For this very reason, it is essential that there is a strong collaboration between the person who prepares the food, the chef, and the person who serves the food, the operator or teacher.

We believe that it is important, both on the part of the nursery school and the family, not to focus solely on the quantity of food, from the start of the weaning phase, but instead on the child's healthy relationship with what he/she is eating. This will be the basis of his/her health and well-being in the future.



### 3. The criteria for creating the menus



### 3. The criteria for creating the menus

Nutrition plays an important role in everyone's life and especially so when in relation to small children. From birth, it is essential to get your child used to a healthy diet by breastfeeding and then subsequently not overlooking both nutritional and qualitative aspects. In particular, within a setting like nursery school, which also plays an educational role, these aspects must be given particular attention to detail, such as ensuring hygienic standards and guaranteeing a "safe" meal. For this purpose, every nursery school that is under the direct management of the Municipality of Florence has a set of specific rules that they must adhere to. These are listed in the HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points) Self-Assessment Checklist which is available for consultation in every nursery school and online on the 0-3 Education Portal on the Municipality of Florence website. Eating is a pleasure and this aspect must not be overlooked when preparing meals that have to both stimulate the desire to eat and educate the tastebuds. This justifies the particular care that is required in the preparation of meals and the demand to serve food that through its appearance, flavour and consistency, whets the appetite and encourages the child to discover new tastes. All of this must happen without forgetting that children's ability to digest develops gradually and when new food is introduced (weaning) it is particularly delicate. Each child will accept changes in his/her diet all in his/her own time.



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# 4. Testing the menu

## 4. Testing the menu

The menu and the dietary schedule that is adopted for nursery schools under the direct management of the Municipality of Florence have been verified by the HACCP, Goods and Services Purchasing Office. They coordinate the catering service for nursery schools with dietitians from the Professional Dietetics Office for the Florentine Area in the Central Tuscany Health Board. Together with the Italian Federation of Paediatric Physicians, the team keep in mind the nutritional parameters indicated by the Italian Society for Human Nutrition in the new LARN (Levels of Energy and Nutrient Consumption for the Italian Population - October 2014), the guidelines for school catering (Region of Tuscany - September 2016) as well as the suggestions and input provided by the catering staff in the nursery schools.

With the objective of introducing the new ingredients into the nursery school menu, the following steps have been taken:

- 1 we contacted dietitians in the Central Tuscany Health Board who then took into consideration the dietetic charts, the menus and the recipes that they received from the kitchen staff working in the nursery schools;

- 2 the dietitians verified the dietetic charts and the measurements used, based on the LARN indications. With regards to the measurements, it is essential to specify that these are indispensable for the catering service to plan purchasing. Likewise, they are benchmarks for a balanced diet from a quantitative and qualitative point of view.

- 3 therefore, the charts were modified, establishing two age groups for the children, the first being under one year of age and the other from one to three years of age;



4 the kitchen staff from the nursery schools were asked to suggest new ingredients to be added to the menu. This list of ingredients was then studied and approved both by the dietitians and by the paediatricians and were thus introduced into the menu;

5 in this way we were able to proceed with planning the menu.





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# 5. Menu characteristics

# 5. Menu characteristics

From the earliest age, a child's diet needs to be varied. It's advantageous if each food item is consumed in rotation in order to gradually and correctly introduce the necessary nutrients.

There is no food that provides all the substances that are necessary for the human body: varying the diet is crucial but it's not easy. These days, children are fed by more than one person (mother, father, grandmother, nursery school staff) and if these people don't communicate with each other, the diet can become monotonous. For this reason, it's important that the people who feed the child at home are well aware of how the nursery school diet works.

Lunch in the nursery school is prepared on a daily basis by the kitchen staff working in each establishment.

The menu is separated into 4 winter weeks and 4 summer weeks. It gets its inspiration from the mediterranean model which favours cereals, pulses, seasonal vegetables and fruit and it is integrated with protein foods like meat, fish, eggs and cheese. The menu also includes ethnic dishes from countries all over the world. These are to be found in the traditional menu on a weekly basis and have been selected based on their suitability for children.

Food items that have been produced through biological agriculture and that are part of a short supply chain are included in the menu.

Principle characteristics:

- the main ingredients for the menu are indicated and then it's up to the imagination of the chef to decide on the best way to cook them

- each nursery school can organise its own weekly menu based on product supply;

- in order to to guarantee a good variety in meals and to stimulate staff



to cook new dishes, a collection of recipes based on the experience of all nursery school kitchen staff has been compiled and there is a copy of this to be found in every nursery school;

meals must be as simple as possible but it's important to remember that flavours, aromas and colours whet the appetite and encourage the children to try new foods;

the menu can be a tool to be used to propose new dishes, rich in flavour and imagination that inspire a varied diet while always keeping in mind the gradual nature in which these should be introduced in accordance with the abilities of the children;

for some time the menu has included single course meals, for example cereals combined with pulses or small quantities of animal based products (ravioli with ricotta and spinach, pizza, vegetable pie etc.) Such dishes are always served together with bread, vegetables and fruit and consist of a complete and balanced meal.

for the second course, there is a weekly dish rotation system in place that covers the basic requirements of the children with regards to nutrients, in particular with reference to calcium and iron;

in order to serve "healthy" meals we strive to prioritise products that originate from biological agriculture and those that are not G.M.O. (Genetically Modified Organisms).

In the nursery schools the kitchen staff in each establishment decide on a day to day basis what dishes they are going to prepare based on the ingredients that are available on the day. This means that all the nursery schools that are under direct management use the same ingredients every week but the dishes



that are served to the children every day can vary. This is because there is nobody better than the chef who knows what the children in his/her nursery school like and prefer and likewise, it's important to leave the decision up to the imagination, skills and organisation of each team of kitchen staff. If necessary, (in the absence of kitchen staff, the inability to use particular foodstuffs or a delay in delivery) a simple meal will be prepared and would be something like pasta or rice served with olive oil, a cold dish (with cheese and/or ham) and a side-dish that could be uncooked or cooked.

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#### BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTS THAT ARE CURRENTLY USED IN NURSERY SCHOOL KITCHENS:

- Milk
- Corn flour
- Butter
- Pasteurised Eggs
- Yoghurt
- Sirloin beef
- Stracchino cheese
- Chicken
- Mozzarella cheese
- Turkey
- Rice
- Pork
- Pasta
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Veal
- Pearl wheat
- Peeled tomatoes
- White Flour
- Fruit and Vegetables
- Soluble barley
- Honey
- Barley for soups





# 6. New ingredients on the menu



## 6. New ingredients on the menu

Based on from the work carried out by Administration staff, dietitians and paediatricians, the nursery school menu has been expanded to include the following ingredients:

- rabbit
- shelled clams
- frozen cuttlefish and squid
- beef tortellini
- wholewheat pasta
- peppers
- aubergines
- kiwis
- strawberries
- potato starch, to be used like traditional flour
- sunflower seed oil, to be used uncooked in the preparation of some ethnic dishes
- tomato purée, to be used as seasoning in sauces
- cream, to be used as a condiment

We would like to specify that:

the clams, the frozen cuttlefish and squid are served to children over the age of one

kiwis and strawberries can also be served to children under the age of one.



# 7. Special diets

# 7. Special diets

The ever prevalent frequency of problems relating to the consumption of certain foods led the Municipality of Florence to ensure specific meals for children with:

- Gluten intolerance (celiac)
- Fish allergies
- Egg allergies
- Milk and dairy product allergies
- Lactose intolerances

In addition to food intolerance issues linked to chronic pathologies such as those listed above which usually demand a permanent modification to the menu, the nursery school has to cater for other acute health problems such as vomiting and diarrhoea, or gastroenteritis.

Diarrhoea occurs when the faeces are loose (or even liquid) and frequent. In the case of small, infrequent or undigested faeces, diarrhoea is not the cause. A child with faeces that contain mucous or blood or who frequently passes liquid faeces will be asked to stay at home.

In the case of acute gastroenteritis it is not necessary for the child to fast. Often what happens is the child will refuse food or vomit immediately after eating, and this brings about a situation of forced fasting. This should not exceed 12 hours. In fact, during this fasting period there is a calorie deficit, the child's metabolism is affected and he/she burns fat for energy which in turn results in the production of ketone bodies and thus the child entering a state of ketosis. For this reason it is important to try to overcome his/her refusal of food while maintaining his/her usual diet.

In this particular scenario it is essential to avoid dehydration by giving the



child small amounts of water or rehydrating solution on a frequent basis. Therefore, the menu does not need to be changed and it's important to let the child eat what he/she wants in order to prevent him/her from developing ketones.

There is no scientific evidence that suggests a "post-gastroenteritis re-nutrition diet". Indeed, at the moment, all experts state that it is important not to vary a child's diet even with gastroenteritis.

On the other hand, it is possible to adopt a generic diet for gastroenteritis upsets (for example, dyspepsia, periodic episodes of vomiting bile) that provides the child with foods that are easier to digest and absorb.

If a child shows the initial symptoms of a gastrointestinal upset, the family can request that he/she follow a specific diet for a maximum of three days that consists of:

- pasta or rice with oil
- meat or fish
- potatoes or carrots
- grated fruit

In order to do this, the family must complete the required form, that is available from the nursery school, and give it to the nursery chef.

In relation to food intolerances or allergies, the diet takes on a role that is comparable to actual medical treatment. For this reason the family doctor, following a rigorous diagnostic procedure, will issue a certificate of "confirmed diagnosis" and prescribe appropriate dietetic therapy.

Special menus are formulated in such a way as to deviate as little as possible from the main menu in use in the nursery school. This way the child partici-



pates as normal during lunchtime and is allowed to grow in a comfortable setting that is sensitive and attentive to individual needs.

In relation to celiac disease, we adhere to Regional Committee Resolution n. 1036/2005 and Attachment A "Guidelines for food service providers in the careful preparation and direct supply of gluten-free food to end-consumers"

### SPECIAL DIET REQUESTS

To avail of a particular menu, the parent or guardian of any child who needs a special diet must :

- ask the family doctor or paediatrician of choice for a certificate that confirms which food items have to be excluded from the child's diet;
- immediately inform the nursery school chef by completing the required form that is available from the nursery itself, attaching to it the medical certificate.

The request for a special diet is valid for the entire period indicated by the certifying doctor.

### DIETS RELATING TO ETHICAL/CULTURAL/RELIGIOUS REASONS

Nursery school represents the first point of contact with children from other cultures and ethnicities that exist in our country. To welcome the diverse dietary requirements that are determined by cultural and/or religious reasons, there are two alternative menus available:

- 1) "Beef and pork-free menu";
- 2) "Lacto-ovo vegetarian", where priority is given to foods that derive from vegetables. Meat, fish and their derivatives are excluded.



If a family wishes to avail of one of these above-mentioned menus, they need to complete the required form that is available from the nursery and give it to the chef.

These diets follow the daily menu but exclude for example, pork and its derivatives and/or other prohibited food items. These are substituted by food items that have the equivalent nutritional characteristics.





# 8. Nutrition during the first year of life

# 8. Nutrition during the first year of life

Following birth, the long process of adapting to life outside the womb starts for every child and they have to deal with forces that we no longer consider a challenge, such as the force of gravity, changes in temperature, strong light and sudden noises. Gradually and consistently, babies get used to this world that initially seems so strange, meeting primal needs like hunger. Step by step, they progress from one basic food that is easily absorbed (milk) to more complex and elaborate ones that require more work in order to be absorbed and to satisfy nutritional demands. This process which takes place mainly in the first year of life, is often called “weaning” and it involves the child eating different foods that meet his/her energy needs but that also means tasting new foods and thus feeling a whole new variety of emotions.

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## THE WEANING STAGE

Lo svezzamento non è altro che una modifica dell'alimentazione, che solitamente si avvia a sei mesi e inizia con alimenti semplici e trattati in modo da renderli facilmente assumibili dal/la bambino/a fino ad arrivare a cibi più elaborati e a pezzettini. Per favorire la scelta delle famiglie che desiderano somministrare al/la proprio/a bambino/a il latte materno (fino al compimento del primo anno di età), il Servizio Servizi all'Infanzia ha stabilito una procedura da attivare, consultabile a p.69 del manuale pubblicato al link: [educazione.comune.fi.it/export/sites/educazione/materiali/0-3/MANUALE\\_HACCP\\_firmato\\_Pilotti.pdf](http://educazione.comune.fi.it/export/sites/educazione/materiali/0-3/MANUALE_HACCP_firmato_Pilotti.pdf)

## FIRST SOUPS AND VEGETABLE BROTHS



Vegetable broth is prepared using fresh seasonal vegetables, boiling these in unsalted water on a low-heat for about an hour. The vegetables must be washed and cut into small pieces. Cereals (rice, corn, rye, oats, mixed cereals) are then added to the broth and in this way the child is slowly introduced to different consistencies, moving from creamy to semolina, to flakes and eventually to small pasta or well-cooked rice. When the food is ready, parmesan cheese, olive oil and two to three spoons of puréed vegetables (the same vegetables that were used to make the broth) are added.

6-12 MONTHS

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FOOD TO BE CONSUMED OVER THE COURSE OF THE DAY

2° COURSE – TRADITIONAL MENU: WHITE MEAT, CHEESE, COOKED HAM (WITHOUT ADDITIVES) AND EGGS, FISH, PURÉED PULSES AND RED MEAT

2° COURSE – BEEF AND PORK-FREE MENU: WHITE MEAT, CHEESE AND EGGS, FISH AND PURÉED PULSES

2° COURSE – LACTO-OVO VEGETARIAN MENU: CHEESE AND ITS DERIVATIVES, PULSES AND EGGS



| PLAN 1 (SINGLE-COURSE MEAL)  | PLAN 2 (MULTIPLE-COURSE)   |
|--|--|
| 8 o'clock  | 8 o'clock  |
| FOLLOW-ON-MILK<br>BISCUITS   | FOLLOW-ON MILK<br>BISCUITS   |
| 10 o'clock   | 10 o'clock   |
| FRUIT  | FRUIT  |
| 12 o'clock   | 12 o'clock   |
| VEGETABLE BROTH<br>PURÉED VEGETABLES AND POTATOES<br>PARMESAN CHEESE<br>SMALL PASTA *1<br>RED/WHITE MEAT *2<br>OR CHEESE *3<br>OR FISH *4<br>OR PURÉED PULSES *5<br>EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL | ANGEL HAIR PASTA WITH TOMATO *1<br>PARMESAN CHEESE<br>RED/WHITE MEAT *2<br>OR CHEESE *3<br>OR FISH *4<br>OR PURÉED PULSES *5<br>VEGETABLES AND POTATOES<br>(PURÉED OR IN SMALL PIECES)<br>EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL |
| 4 o'clock  | 4 o'clock  |
| FULL-FAT YOGHURT<br>FRUIT  | FULL-FAT YOGHURT<br>FRUIT  |



## NOTE

These two plans are proposed as alternatives: the first is a traditional meal where all the food is served together in one single course, the second one is a meal with two servings (first course and second course)

We can choose between these two plans based on the children's dietary stage.

\*1 For the first course, we can alternate between various small pasta shapes, well-cooked rice, creamed barley, corn, oats, rye or semolina.

\*2 apart from white meat, red meat and cooked ham (without additives) can be introduced. These latter two, as well as veal, will be excluded from the beef and pork-free menu.

\*3 Cheeses include: stracchino, parmesan, ricotta and mozzarella

\*4 Fish: cod, bass, dogfish, plaice, monkfish, cuttlefish, squid

\*5 puréed pulses: initially these can only be introduced as part of the puréed vegetables. Subsequently, they can constitute an alternative to meat or cheese (puréed pulses with pasta or rice)



| ALTERNATING FOODS FOR THE 2° COURSE DURING THE WEEK   | RECOMMENDED FREQUENCY OF CONSUMPTION  | AVERAGE FOR THE 2° COURSE OF THE SEMI-VEGETARIAN MENU  | AVERAGE FOR THE 2° COURSE OF THE LACTO-OVO-VEGETARIAN MENU   |
|---|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MEAT</li> <li>• FISH</li> <li>• COOKED HAM</li> <li>• CHEESE</li> <li>• EGGS</li> <li>• COOKED PULSES</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30G, 5 TIMES</li> <li>• 40G, 3 TIMES</li> <li>• 20G, ONCE</li> <li>• 30G, 3 TIMES</li> <li>• ONE, ONCE</li> <li>• 50G, 1 TIME</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30G, 4 TIMES</li> <li>• 40G, 3 TIMES</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• 30G, 4 TIMES</li> <li>• ONE, TWICE</li> <li>• 20G, ONCE</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• _____</li> <li>• 30G, 7 TIMES</li> <li>• ONE, 3 TIMES</li> <li>• 50G, ONCE</li> </ul> |

## NOTE

Because cow's milk is high in protein, rich in minerals and low in iron, it is not suitable in terms of nutrition during the first year of life. For this reason, preference is given to follow-on milk which is rich in iron, in powder or liquid form. Cooking methods must be as simple as possible: steaming, roasting, boiling, with tomato and added seasonings.

Salt must not be used in cooking during the first year of life.





# 9. Nutrition from 1 to 3 years of age

# 9. Nutrition from 1 to 3 years of age

At the age of one year, a child can sit at the table and eat the same food as an adult, so long as some basic rules are followed. These rules can apply to the adults too:

- small amounts of salt
- small amounts of sugar
- No elaborate recipes
- Always include fruit and vegetables
- small amounts of animal fat

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## 1 - 3 years of age

### DAILY NUTRITION

4 daily meals are recommended, divided as follows in terms of calories:

- Breakfast 20-25 %
- Lunch 35-40%
- Snack 10-15%
- Dinner 25-30%



### FOOD TO BE CONSUMED OVER THE COURSE OF THE DAY

|                  |       |
|------------------|-------|
| Full-fat milk    | 150cc |
| Full-fat yoghurt | 125g  |
| Bread            | 60g   |
| Pasta/rice       | 60g   |
| Fruit            | 300g  |
| Vegetables       | 200g  |
| Jam/Honey        | 30g   |
| Parmesan cheese  | 7g    |
| Oil              | 25g   |
| Biscuits         | 10g   |

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### EXAMPLE OF NUTRITIONAL DISTRIBUTION:

| BREAKFAST   | MID-MORNING   | LUNCH  | SNACK   | DINNER  |
|---|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FULL-FAT MILK</li> <li>• BISCUITS</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FRUIT</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VARIOUS CEREALS</li> <li>• SECOND COURSE</li> <li>• VEGETABLES</li> <li>• EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL</li> <li>• PARMESAN CHEESE</li> <li>• BREAD</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FULL-FAT YOGHURT</li> <li>• FRUIT</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEREALS IN BROTH</li> <li>• SECOND COURSE</li> <li>• VEGETABLES</li> <li>• EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL</li> <li>• PARMESAN CHEESE</li> <li>• BREAD</li> </ul> |



## ALTERNATING FOODS FOR THE 2° COURSE DURING THE WEEK (14 MEALS)

| FOOD                 | TRADIZIONAL    | SEMIVEGETARIAN | LATTO-OVO-VEGETARIAN |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| • MEAT               | • 30G, 5 TIMES | • 30G, 4 TIMES | • -                  |
| • FISH               | • 40G, 3 TIMES | • 40G, 3 TIMES | • -                  |
| • COOKED / CURED HAM | • 20G, ONCE    | • -            | • -                  |
| • EGG                | • ONE, ONCE    | • ONE, 2 TIMES | • ONE, 7 TIMES       |
| • CHEESE             | • 30G, 3 TIMES | • 30G, 4 TIMES | • 30G, 7 TIMES       |
| • COOKED PULSES      | • 60G, ONCE    | • 60G, ONCE    | • 60G, 4 TIMES       |

Types of meat: chicken, turkey, rabbit, veal, tender beef, pork.

Cold cuts: cured ham and cooked ham (without additives)

Types of cheese: stracchino, ricotta, mozzarella and parmesan

Types of frozen fish: cod, plaice, dogfish, monkfish, cuttlefish, squid, bass, clams and tinned tuna in brine (the latter are used as seasoning in first course dishes ).

Types of dried, fresh or frozen pulses: beans, chick-peas, lentils, peas.

Eggs: Pasteurised eggs can be used to make omelettes, that are included in the menu as a second course. Eggs can also be used as ingredients in other dishes (meatballs, pies etc) and so on a limited basis.



## SNACKS

These are usually:

bread and jam, fruit, fruit smoothie, biscuits and yoghurt, biscuits and milk, bread and olive oil, bread with tomatoes, pizza-bread with olive oil and a half portion of fruit, a slice of cake, fruit ice-cream.

## ADVICE FOR PARENTS

### Integrating lunch/dinner

Following the recommended frequency plan for the 2° course meal, it will be easy to integrate this with dinner plans when you know the nursery school menu

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## CONSUMPTION FREQUENCY OF THE SECOND COURSE MEAL

| ALTERNATING FOODS FOR THE 2° COURSE DURING THE WEEK  | CONSUMPTION FREQUENCY AT NURSERY SCHOOL (OUT OF 5 MEALS/WEEK)   | CONSUMPTION FREQUENCY AT HOME (OUT OF 9 MEALS/WEEK)  | TOTAL MEAL FREQUENCY (WEEKLY 7 LUNCHES + 7 DINNERS)   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MEAT</li> <li>• FISH</li> <li>• PULSES</li> <li>• CHEESE</li> <li>• COOKED HAM</li> <li>• EGGS</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1-2 times</li> <li>• Once</li> <li>• Once</li> <li>• Once</li> <li>• 1 EVERY TWO WEEKS</li> <li>• 1 EVERY TWO WEEKS</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2-3 TIMES</li> <li>• TWICE</li> <li>• /</li> <li>• 3 TIMES</li> <li>• 1 EVERY TWO WEEKS</li> <li>• 1 EVERY TWO WEEKS</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 TIMES</li> <li>• 3 TIMES</li> <li>• ONCE</li> <li>• 4 TIMES</li> <li>• ONCE</li> <li>• ONCE</li> </ul> |



Varying meals as much as possible is very important.

The use of cheese is quite frequent (4 times per week) because calcium requirements at this age are high. Remember however that cheese is also found in a lot of prepared hot meals: pizza, ricotta and spinach ravioli and vegetable pies.

In terms of the measurements to apply when cooking at home, you can use the indicated gramme guidelines that are used at nursery school. To facilitate the realisation of a balanced and varied diet, the foods have been divided into groups. Each group consists of foods that are equal in terms of nutritional value.

From time to time, each food item can be substituted with another food from the same group:

- Cereals and tubers (pasta, bread, rice, corn, barley, oats, wheat, potatoes). These foods constitute the most important source of starch and energy. Recommended consumption: 2-4 portions/day.
- Fruit and Vegetables This group represents the main source of fibre and Vitamin A and C.

It is important that the foods in this group are always varied and served in abundance. Recommended consumption: 3-5 portions/day

- Milk and dairy products (Milk, yoghurt, cheese and dairy products). This group provides calcium, protein and Vitamin B2 and A. Recommended consumption: 1-2 portions/day



- Cooking oils.

This group consists both of vegetable and animal fats. Preference is given to extra virgin olive oil. Recommended consumption: 1-3 portions/day



## FRUIT AND VEGETABLES SEASONALITY CHART

|                          | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>Vegetables</b>        |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Garlic                   |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |
| Asparagus                |     |     |     |     | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Beetroot                 |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |
| Chard                    | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |
| Broccoli                 | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   |
| Artichokes               | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |     | x   | x   |
| Cardoon                  |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   |     |
| Carrots                  | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |
| Cabbage                  | x   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   |
| Cauliflower              | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   |
| Brussels sprouts         | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   |
| Cucumber                 |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |
| Chicory                  | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |
| Broccoli raab/<br>Rapini |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     |
| Spring onions            |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     |
| Onions                   |     |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |
| Beans                    |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |
| French beans             |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |
| Broad beans              |     |     |     |     | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Fennel                   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   |
| Endives                  | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   |
| Lettuce                  | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |
| Aubergines               |     |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |
| Potatoes                 |     |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |
| Tomatoes                 |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |
| Peas                     |     |     | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     |
| Leeks                    | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   |
| Rapini leaves            | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   |
| Radishes                 | x   | x   |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |
| Courgettes               |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |
| Butternut squash         | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   | x   |

## FRUIT AND VEGETABLES SEASONALITY CHART

|                     | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| <b>Fruits</b>       |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Apricots            |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     |
| Oranges             | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   | x   |
| Mandarins           | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   |
| Strawberries        |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |
| Apples              | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |
| Melons              |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |
| Pears               | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |     | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   | x   |
| Peaches             |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |
| Plums               |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |
| Kiwis               | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   |
| Grapes              |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   |     |
| Cherries            |     |     |     |     | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Loquat              |     |     |     |     | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Watermelon          |     |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |
| Persimmon           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   |     |
| Grapefruit          | x   | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   |
| Figs                |     |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |
| Fruit of the forest |     |     |     |     |     |     | x   | x   | x   |     |     |     |

Garlic, carrots, onions, beans, potatoes, celery, lemons and bananas  
are available all year round



# 10. Parties at Nursery School

# 10. Parties at Nursery School

Lunchtime is an important moment in nursery school life. It's part of the routine and it represents a lot of different aspects such as nutrition, education, socialising as well as helping children to get into a schedule. It becomes a "reassuring" point of reference in the child's day.

A party on the other hand is an event, something new, an occasion for joy and games to be shared with other children and adults. It breaks the routine and leaves its mark on the children's memories.

At nursery school, we celebrate Christmas, Carnival, end of the year and birthdays, sometimes with the families and sometimes with other children.

At every party, big or small, food is the symbol of us "being together". Considering the age of the children and the fact that we can't overlook community health and safety regulations, aimed at safeguarding health standards, if a family wishes to bring food items such as cakes or baked goods into the nursery for the purpose of celebrating a birthday or a special event, it is important that:

- advise the nursery school kitchen staff in advance and they will guide the family in terms of the most suitable food items to buy;
- buy food items that have easily identifiable origins and can be easily traced;
- Choose products that do not contain, overall or in the mixture, filling or decorations, the following items: liqueurs, cream, zabaglione, butter cream, chocolate or any other product that contains potentially allergy-inducing components.

Products bought by the family must be given to the school together with the corresponding purchase receipt, a list of the ingredients and the expiration



date. If the kitchen staff detects the presence of potentially allergy-inducing ingredients, they are obliged to refuse the said product.

### **POTENTIALLY ALLERGY INDUCING PRODUCTS**

In line with EU Regulation 1169/2011, the following potentially allergy-inducing products could be present in the menu adopted by nursery schools:

1. cereals containing gluten (flours, pasta and bread) and other derivative products;
2. crustaceans and derivative products;
3. eggs and derivative products;
4. fish and derivative products;
5. peanuts and derivative products;
6. soya and derivative products
7. milk and derivative products;
8. nuts and derivative products;
9. celery and derivative products;
10. mustard and derivative products;
11. sesame and derivative products;
12. products containing sulphur dioxide and sulphites;
13. lupin and derivative products;
14. shellfish and derivative products;

We invite parents to bring any allergy to the attention of the kitchen staff by using the designated form that is available in the nursery.



### **FOODS TO BE CAREFUL WITH:**

**Dark chocolate:** The percentage of cocoa found in this type of chocolate is very high. Consuming dark chocolate results in an excess of theobromine (a substance similar to caffeine) which stimulates the central nervous system and releases a considerable quantity of histamine, a mediator of allergies and inflammation. In milk chocolate the percentage of cocoa is much lower which renders it preferable.

**Processed meats** (sausages, salami, mortadella) are to be avoided because they contain preservatives or high percentages of other additives. Cooked ham and cured ham are not processed meats allowing them to be used.

**Mixed vegetables marinated in oil and tuna marinated in oil** Being preserved in airtight conditions can bring about the proliferation of anaerobic bacteria (these bacteria live without air)

**Pickled foods** are to be avoided because the vinegar always contains some alcohol.

**Sugary drinks** are to be avoided because they don't quench thirst and they cause weight issues and tooth cavities. The best drink possible is water, even sparkling if preferred.

**Alcohol-based syrups** Syrups based on sugar and alcohol, into which some compact-style cakes are immersed, are to be avoided because of the considerable damaging effects of alcohol on the central nervous system. These can easily be substituted with fruit juice, milk or sieved fruit gelatine.

**Colourings and flavourings** their role in baking is simply to reinforce and they do not play any nutritional role so for this reason, it's better to avoid them.



### **ALSO PAY ATTENTION TO:**

**Desserts with cream:** In such desserts, there is a high chance of proliferation of germs that cause serious food poisoning (e.g. botulism). Cream can be eaten without any problem if the dessert in question is cooked and then eaten as quickly as possible.

**Seed oil:** The use of raw oil other than olive oil is allowed but they are not recommended for cooking due to their low “smoking point”. In other words, given that seed oils are less suited to cooking, we can only use these as crude oils, while fritters for example, should be cooked in olive oil.

**Butter:** There is no recommended limit with regards to the use of butter as long as it is kept at the correct temperature and used within a short period of time, so as to avoid it going rancid. This however does not apply to the creamy mixture that we get when we mix cold butter with other ingredients. The elevated possibility of the mixture going off combined with the proliferation of microbes mean that its use is not recommended. Eating cakes with fillings of this type is not allowed.

**Pesto:** It is believed that the use of raw basil is not 100% safe with regards to the possibility of germ infection (listeria). Such an eventuality is eliminated through pasteurisation. Sterilisation also achieves the same result but it does alter to a considerable level the sensory characteristic of the product. We would like to point out that in the nursery schools, particular care is given to cleanliness and properly washing the basil during the preparation of pesto which is then eaten immediately. In this way, the risk of infection is almost zero.

**Citrus fruits:** These must be well washed and scrubbed before being used for freshly squeezed juice or in desserts because their skins are often covered in wax or benzoates for preservation purposes. force and they do not play any nutritional role so for this reason, it’s better to avoid them.



# The Winter and the Summer menu

# THE WINTER MENU

WEEK 1

WEEK 2

MONDAY

MONDAY

PASTA ROSÉ/PASTA WITH SWISS CHARD,  
SPINACH AND RICOTTA  
PULSES COOKED WITH OLIVE OIL OR  
AMATRICIANA PASTA  
PULSES COOKED WITH OLIVE OIL

PASTA WITH CREAM/BUTTER  
PEAS WITH BACON  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

TUESDAY

TUESDAY

VEGETABLE RISOTTO  
BONED RABBIT  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

VEGETABLE SOUP  
SQUID/CUTTLEFISH  
POTATOES OR  
HULLED WHEAT WITH SQUID/CUTTLEFISH  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

WEDNESDAY

WEDNESDAY

SMALL PASTA IN VEGETABLE BROTH  
HAM  
POTATO PURÉE

VEGETARIAN BAKED PASTA  
OR  
VEGETARIAN LASAGNA  
TRIO OF COOKED VEGETABLES

THURSDAY

THURSDAY

PASTA WITH CLAMS/TUNA  
FISH  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

TORTELLINI IN VEGETABLE BROTH  
TURKEY  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

FRIDAY

FRIDAY

CREAM OF VEGETABLES WITH PASTA/CROSTINI/RICE/  
HULLED WHEAT/BARLEY  
CHEESE  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES OR  
VENETIAN BEAN AND PASTA SOUP  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

VEGETARIAN RISOTTO  
EGGS  
MIXED SALAD

# THE WINTER MENU

WEEK 3

WEEK 4

MONDAY

MONDAY

RAVIOLI WITH TOMATO SAUCE  
GRATED VEGETABLES

RICE WITH YOGHURT  
PULSES COOKED IN OLIVE OIL OR TOMATO  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES *OR*  
CONGRI (RICE, BEANS AND PORK)  
POTATO PURÉE

TUESDAY

TUESDAY

VEGETABLE SOUP  
FISH  
POTATOES  
*OR*  
COUS COUS WITH FISH, PULSES AND VEGETABLES

TORTELLINI WITH TOMATO  
CHEESE  
MIXED SALAD

WEDNESDAY

WEDNESDAY

POLENTA WITH MEAT RAGU  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

SMALL PASTA IN VEGETABLE BROTH  
SQUID/CUTTLEFISH  
POTATOES

THURSDAY

THURSDAY

PASTA WITH FRESH SEASONAL VEGETABLES  
CHICKEN  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

PASTA WITH OLIVE OIL  
EGGS  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

FRIDAY

FRIDAY

CREAM OF VEGETABLE SOUP  
PIZZA/TOASTED BREAD/FILLED FOCACCIA

BARLEY SOUP WITH FRESH VEGETABLES / BREAD  
SOUP WITH VEGETABLES  
ROAST PORK  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

# THE SUMMER MENU

WEEK 1

WEEK 2

MONDAY

MONDAY

BARLEY/HULLED WHEAT PESTO  
CHEESE  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

PASTA WITH SEASONAL VEGETABLES  
RABBIT  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

TUESDAY

TUESDAY

SMALL PASTA IN VEGETABLE BROTH  
TURKEY  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

GNOCCHI WITH TOMATO  
PULSES COOKED IN OLIVE OIL  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

WEDNESDAY

WEDNESDAY

PASTA WITH FRESH TOMATO  
PULSES COOKED IN OLIVE OIL  
MIXED SALAD

PASTA WITH OLIVE OIL/BUTTER  
SQUID/CUTTLEFISH  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

THURSDAY

THURSDAY

CREAM OF FRESH VEGETABLES WITH TOAST  
FISH  
POTATO PURÉE

"PAPPA AL POMODORO"  
EGGS  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

FRIDAY

FRIDAY

RICE IN OLIVE OIL  
HAM  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES  
OR  
CANTONESE RICE

HULLED WHEAT/  
BARLEY SOUP WITH FRESH VEGETABLES  
TENDER BEEF  
POTATO PURÉE

# THE SUMMER MENU

WEEK 3

WEEK 4

MONDAY

MONDAY

PASTA WITH PESTO  
HAM  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

RICE WITH OLIVE OIL  
CHEESE  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

TUESDAY

TUESDAY

SMALL PASTA IN VEGETABLE BROTH  
VEAL AND RICOTTA MEATBALLS  
POTATOES

SMALL PASTA IN VEGETABLE BROTH  
PULSES COOKED IN OLIVE OIL OR TOMATO  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

WEDNESDAY

WEDNESDAY

PIZZA/FILLED FOCACCIA /  
BREAD WITH MOZZARELLA AND TOMATO  
MIXED SALAD

PASTA WITH TOMATO AND BASIL  
EGGS  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES OR  
PASTA WITH TOMATO AND BASIL  
RICOTTA AND COURGETTE MOUSSAKA

THURSDAY

THURSDAY

VEGETARIAN RISOTTO  
PULSES COOKED IN OLIVE OIL OR TOMATO  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES  
OR  
PAELLA WITH PULSES AND VEGETABLES

WHOLEMEAL PASTA WITH VEGETABLES  
FISH  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

FRIDAY

FRIDAY

PASTA WITH CLAMS/TUNA  
FISH  
RAW/COOKED VEGETABLES

CREAM OF FRESH SEASONAL VEGETABLES  
CHICKEN  
POTATO PURÉE





# Further Information

# Per saperne di più

- Italian Society for Human Nutrition (S.I.N.U.). LARN – “Recommended levels of energy and nutrient consumption for the Italian population”. IV Edition. 2014, without quantitative portion standards
- Italian Society for Human Nutrition (S.I.N.U.). – “Quantitative portion standards”. IV Edition. 2014
- “National Guidelines for School Catering”. Ministry for Employment, Health and Social Policy (as outlined by Article 8, clause 6 of Legislation n° 5, dated June 2003, n° 131 – act sanctioned by Unified Conference on April 29th 2010).
- Region of Tuscany Resolution n° 898/2016, Attachment A “Regional Guidelines for School Catering” Update of R.T.R. 1127/2010”
- Region of Tuscany Resolution n° 1026/2005 and Attachment A “Guidelines for food service providers in the careful preparation and direct supply of gluten-free food to end-consumers”

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