



Blossom Nurseries have six centres throughout the UAE and are accepting registrations now. For more information, to arrange a visit or to reserve your place, call **055 NURSERY** or visit **theblossomnursery.com**

Since we are conscious of our impact on the environment, our Healthy Bites programme uses local seasonal ingredients whenever possible and our popular Thai fish dish is made with cream dory instead of the overfished hammour. Our meals please even the pickiest of eaters and help to build strong, healthy and responsible learners.

#### TOP TIPS

- Try to have regular meal and snack times each day.
- Offer your toddler a healthy, varied diet from the four main food groups, served in appropriate portion sizes.
- Sit down together for family meals.
- Involve your toddler, as much as is safe to do so, in food preparation and make meals as colourful, interesting and enjoyable as possible.
- Offer small portions as some children find big portions off putting. They can always have second helpings.
- Children's food preferences vary from day to day so keep offering your toddler new foods, alongside familiar favourites.
- Encourage your toddler to feed themselves with finger foods such as breadsticks, bits of pitta bread, fingers of toast, vegetable sticks, chopped up fruit, small sandwiches, small sausages or fish fingers. Most toddlers can regulate their own appetite so encourage them to eat but do not force them or expect them to eat if they are not hungry. Some toddlers are slow eaters so allow plenty of time for them to eat.
- ALWAYS offer a drink with meal times. Water or full fat milk are good choices.

# Nursery nutrition

Ask any teacher they'll tell you a good diet is imperative to little ones' successful learning. Chantal Ariens, centre director at Blossom Burj, explains how the kitchen can help your child get the best out of their time in class...

Food is an important part of our lives and, as the mum of a toddler, I know too well how hard it can be to get your child to eat healthy foods. Luckily, my daughter is a good eater and when she is at Blossom Nursery she get all the nutrients she needs through our Healthy Bites programme, which offers our pupils freshly cooked food on a daily basis. Learning how to eat all these different foods, and eating them together with her friends, has helped her explore her taste buds and try new things without hesitation while, as early childhood experts, we understand the importance of a balanced diet and accurate, age appropriate portion sizes.

Inadequate nutrition before birth and in the first five years of life can seriously interfere with brain development and lead to neurological and behavioural disorders as well as learning disabilities. To promote function, the brain has to

be sufficiently nourished with healthy foods and water, enabling children to participate and excel more readily.

Healthy eating habits should be encouraged at home, as well as at nursery or school, by providing children with smaller meals and snacks at three-to-four-hour intervals. Studies show that an intake of healthy glucose increases energy and focus in as little as 30 minutes if children are suffering from fatigue or stress.

At Blossom, our children are aware of the need to eat healthily and this is also reflected in our curriculum and learning goals. They are taught how to grow food in our gardens where we use compost and begin to understand life cycles and the global feedback loop, and while this is not the primary source of the food prepared, it is a valuable skill for children to learn and it is important for Blossom to provide green spaces for children to explore.