



What is Little People's Plates?

Little People's Plates (www.littlepeoplesplates.co.uk) is a new education initiative aimed at parents and carers of children aged one to three years that seeks to highlight the importance of the correct nutrition this age group needs. Its objective is to provide parents with practical tips and guidance to help them to make the right food choices for their toddlers.

Current Government guidelines suggest parents should feed 'family foods' once their child is weaned. However, in a society where more convenience foods high in salt, sugar and fats but low in key nutrients are consumed, the nutritional needs of toddlers are at risk. The under 3s need nutritious food during this period of rapid growth and development and while there is a wealth of advice for weaning and nutritional guidance for school age children, it can be difficult to find reliable and practical nutritional advice for the under 3s. If the careful nutritional balance is not achieved at this early age, toddlers can become deficient in key nutrients such as iron, zinc and vitamin A with possible effects on health, growth and development. A diet with excess salt, saturated fat and sugar can increase the risk of obesity and subsequently developing conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes.

Launching in April 2009, Little People's Plates has been created by the Infant and Toddler Forum - an independent multi-disciplinary team of specialists in child nutrition and development.

The cornerstone of the initiative is an independent report, '*Food and Nutrition for the Under 3s*'. The report discusses the importance of toddler nutrition and its relation to long-term health consequences and highlights the lack of clear guidance for parents and health and child care professionals.

At the heart of Little People's Plates will be a dedicated online resource for parents – www.littlepeoplesplates.co.uk. Here parents can find practical tools and tips to help make informed food choices for their children. Andrea McLean of ITV1's Loose Women is supporting the campaign and, as a busy mum of two, will be talking to the media about her experiences of feeding toddlers.

Ends

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Notes To Editor

Infant & Toddler Forum:

Set up in 2005, The Infant & Toddler Forum (I&TF) brings together a multi-disciplinary team of eight experts and practitioners who share a common professional interest in infant and child health, growth and nutrition.

The primary goal of the Forum is to improve the access of Health Care Professionals to reliable, evidence-based nutritional information relevant to their practice, so that they can advise and support the parents of infant and young children (from birth to three years). More information can be found at www.infantandtoddlerforum.org.

For the first time in 2009, the I&TF will broaden its reach to communicate directly with parents via the Little People's Plates initiative.

The Infant & Toddler Forum and Little People's Plates are supported by an educational grant from Nutricia Ltd. The views and outputs of the Forum, however, remain independent of Nutricia and its commercial interests.