

Session 2:

Local Voices, Local Change: Co-Production as a Driver of Early Years Integration




nourishing our future



Better Start Conference

Working together for Essex

nourishing
our future 



NOF Research

Research Report



NOF Impact Report



Essex County Council

Our appetite for change

Healthy Weight in Essex

A 10 year strategic approach to guide local action 2024 - 2034



1,300 EY settings

90% PVI

108 school based
2 maintained

71% of pupils achieve GLD

Lowering to 50% in deprivation

13% of children live in poverty

Rising to 25% in some areas, compared to 18.5% nationally

14% of 5 yr olds have tooth decay

1 in 5 children 4-5yrs live with overweight or obesity

17,500 families claim child tax credits
86% of families are in work

5,500 under 5s receive pupil premium

- **6 months**
Project duration
- **201 survey responses**
Representing 207 settings
- **7 workshops**
Online and in person
- **749 photos**
Food and food education
- **5 parent interviews**
Phone calls

Challenges & Opportunities

- Food on the agenda
- Food education
- Training and support
- Funding for food
- Sensory & SEND
- Support for Parents

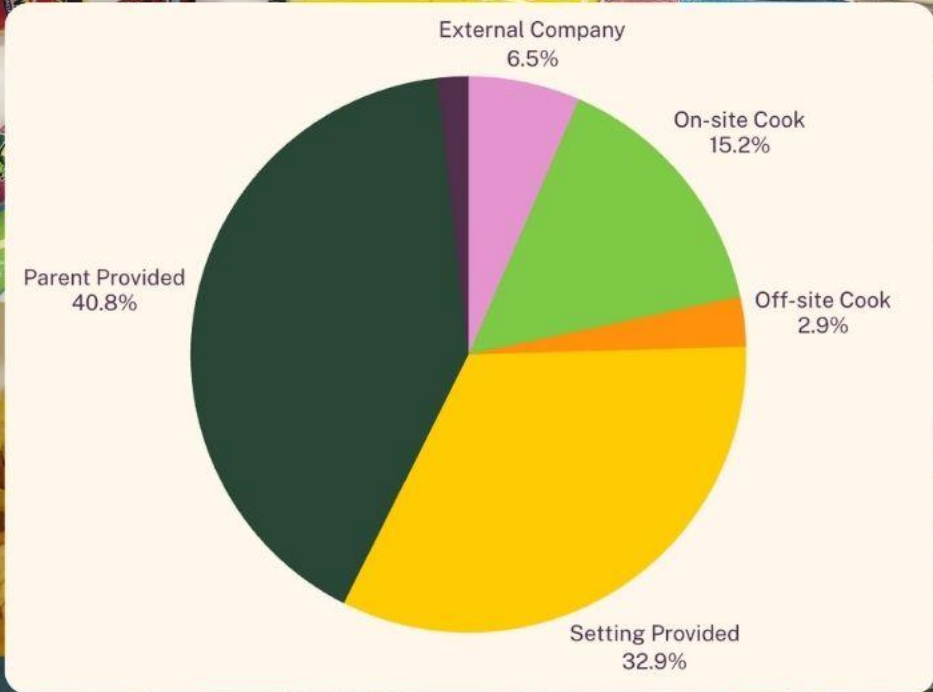


94 childminders
58 Day Nurseries
67 Preschools
5 Parents

Challenges and Barriers

- 58%** Food preferences
- 49%** Cost
- 40%** Allergies





**No funding for food in early years.
Voluntary consumable charge.**

Packaging, baby food, drinks bottles = Loss of skills

3



PROCESSED PROTEIN-RICH FOODS AND SAVOURY SNACKS



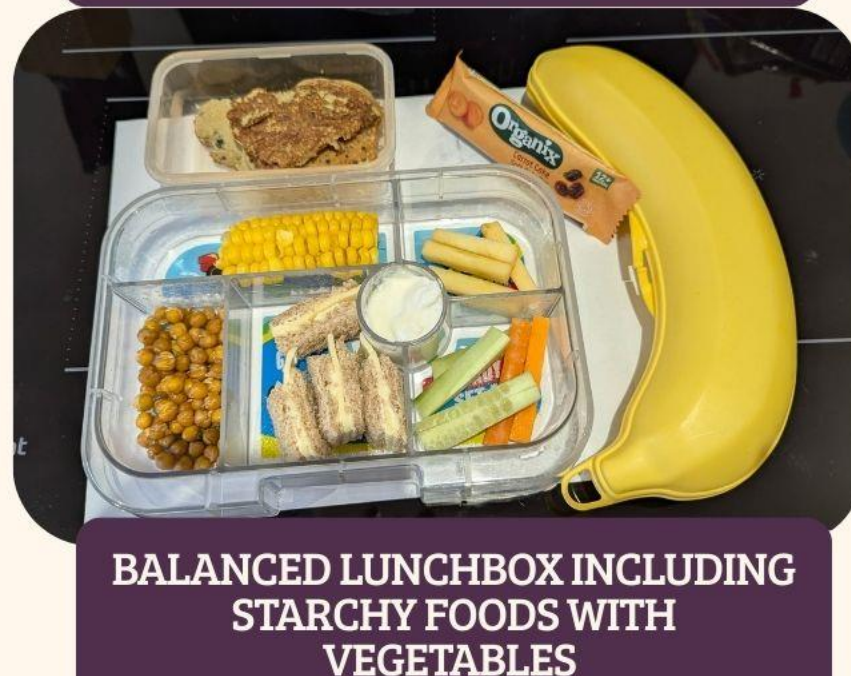
SWEET SNACKS AND CONFECTIONERY



LARGELY MADE UP OF PROCESSED SNACKS



BALANCED LUNCHBOX INCLUDING FRUIT AND FRUIT JUICE



BALANCED LUNCHBOX INCLUDING STARCHY FOODS WITH VEGETABLES



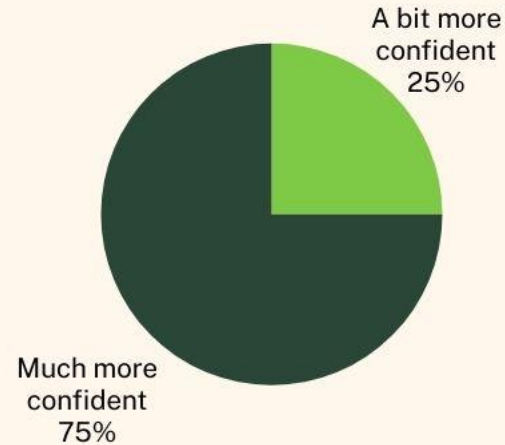
DAIRY BASED WITH ACCOMPANYING SAVOURY SNACK ITEMS

Essex Early Years Nourishing Our Future (NOF) Award

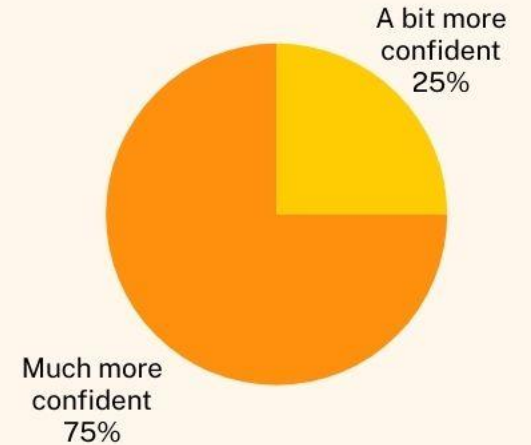
The NOF Award Toolkit

“Staff now have a clearer understanding of recommended sugar intake for young children and appropriate portion sizes. This has led to more mindful planning of snacks and meals, as well as more confident conversations with children and families about healthy choices.”

Toolkit



Increased Confidence



Increased Knowledge



110 settings subscribed
10% of settings from IMD 1 or 2
5344 children supported

Calls to Action

Requirements and guidance



Support settings to implement the new DfE EYFS nutrition guidance by providing funded training and resources.

Nutrition and portion size



Establish ongoing public health nutrition support for parents, from pre conception onwards. Develop tailored guidance and resources to support families.

Food environment



Establish a national, positive healthy food environment by reducing the targeted marketing and availability of unhealthy, processed foods high in fat, salt, and sugar to children.

Food access



Extend access to free early years meals (FEYM) to all, beyond maintained, early years settings. Consider local pilot to scope and evaluate.

Food education



Provide resources and funding for settings to implement effective food education. Share best practice guidance.

Sustainable food



Prioritise sustainable food packaging and support children to try new foods minimising food wastage.

“Early years nutrition is our future”

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Nourishing Our Future Conference 2026!

 Saturday 14th March
9am - 4pm

 Anglia Ruskin University,
Chelmsford Campus,
CM1 1SQ



Join us for an inspiring day of speakers, workshops, great food and networking. It starts in the early years!

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