

Chef Neven Maguire Supports Top Childcare Group's Healthy Eating Campaign

Over 300,000 overweight children in Ireland says Department of Health and Children

Award-winning chef, Neven Maguire is demonstrating a range of nutritious family meals to parents in Dublin today to support The Park Academy Childcare Group's healthy eating programme for the children in their care. The nutrition of the children they care for in their 5 premium childcare facilities in South Dublin and Wicklow has always been a priority to the Group, who created Ireland's first purpose-built crèche in 1995 and continue to be a leader in Irish childcare today.

The World Health Organisation has found that most young children (aged between 2 to 6 years) are not consuming the recommended number of servings from the vegetable, fruit, grain and meat groups and the Department of Health and Children says there could be as many as over 300,000 overweight children in Ireland, a figure that is rising at a probable 10,000 per annum*.

Neven Maguire, who shares The Park Academy Childcare Group's ethos of providing tasty, nutritionally balanced meals for children, is very happy to be supporting its healthy eating programme which he believes represents a model of best practice for the industry.

"The Park Academy Childcare's healthy eating programme is really superb and I think an inspiration to other childcare services and schools", says Neven Maguire. "I know they also teach the children how to cook which is fantastic. If children learn a bit about food and how to cook the interest will stay with them."

The Park Academy Childcare Group, who provide premium childcare services in South Dublin and Wicklow, is also announcing the appointment of Jill Bridgeman for the newly created position of Catering Manager, believed to be first post of its kind in the childcare industry. Jill has extensive knowledge of the nutritional requirements of children and will direct the Group's in-house chefs, as well as researching and providing a programme of tasty, varied and nutritional meals for children.

"All our crèches have their own in-house chefs who prepare daily menus of nutritionally balanced meals, made with the freshest seasonal and, where possible, local ingredients", says Mary McGibney, Partner of The Park Academy Childcare Group. "However to facilitate our expansion of daycare, playschool and after-school services into 2008, we have created the role of catering manager to research and plan our daily menus as well as source the best ingredients for our children".

Physical activity also plays an essential role towards helping children stay healthy and The Park Academy Childcare Group provide fully-equipped outdoor play areas with regular exercise and play time. Having researched childcare practices throughout Norway, Scotland, the UK and Denmark, the Group are implementing new playground and play concepts in their new childcare facilities opening in Beacon South Quarter, Sandyford and Thornwood, Booterstown in Dublin and Eden Gate in Wicklow in 2008.

The Park Academy Childcare Group was established by partners Mary McGibney and Geraldine Cobbe in 1995 and through its ongoing programmes of research, innovation and best practice, continues to be a leader in the Irish childcare industry today. The Group has premium childcare facilities in Cabinteely, Cherrywood, Beacon Court, Sandyford and Bray and is expanding in 2008 with the opening of two new state-of-the-art purpose-built crèche's in Beacon South Quarter, Dublin and Eden Gate, Wicklow as well as one of Ireland's first dedicated after-school and playschool facilities in Thornwood, Booterstown.

For further information, please call 1890 273 243 or see www.theparkacademy.ie.