

YOUNG CHEF OF THE YEAR PILOT IMPACT REPORT



LIMERICK, IRELAND 2019



Limerick at a glance



2

schools in Limerick took part in the Young Chef of the Year Awards during 2019



53

children (aged 10-12) in Limerick took part in the Young Chef of the Year Awards during 2019



+16%

increase in hygiene awareness post-award with children **always** washing hands before touching food and **+12% always** washing hands after going to the toilet



+28%

increase in food preparation confidence post-award with children measuring ingredients **on their own** and **+8%** cutting up fruit and vegetables **on their own**



+24%

increase in food preparation confidence post-award with children making a salad and a soup **on their own**



+8%

increase in children cooking at home and a **+16%** increase in confidence to buy or ask parents/carers to buy specific ingredients



+20%

increase in children asking their parents/carers to cook their favourite vegetable



+20%

willingness to try tomatoes, **+16%** willingness to try celery and **+8%** willingness to try cucumber post-award

Welcome



The Young Chef of the Year Award

focuses on celebrating food education in the classroom and giving children hands-on practical experience alongside the message that what you eat is closely linked to your health and wellbeing.

Every child deserves to learn the basics about food, where it comes from and how it affects their bodies. When children are young we teach them how to use a knife and fork and we develop their manual dexterity. When they start school we teach them how to use scissors and write with a pen but what this award has highlighted is that many children at age 10 don't know how to cut an apple, cucumber or onion, or combine ingredients or recipes to create a healthy meal. These are basic life skills that need to become integral in our children's education and development to support their long-term health and wellbeing.

The burden of chronic disease is rapidly increasing worldwide and almost half of chronic disease death attributed to cardiovascular disease, obesity and type 2 diabetes can be reversed with nutrition and diet (1). With this in mind the Young Chef of the Year Award is extremely relevant and has the potential to impact on our children's emotional and behavioural development, school absenteeism, cognition and future health.

The 2019 pilot of the Young Chef of the Year in Ireland highlights the benefits of this award and the potential value of national roll out across Ireland.

Please read this report, talk about it and make it your personal mission to see that the Young Chef Award reaches your local school. We have a unique opportunity to change behaviours around food and nutrition and improve our children's health and long-term potential. Your involvement will make a difference to the lives of children in your schools and communities, so don't miss out!

Katharine Tate
The Food Teacher™ (Director)



The primary school setting offers an ideal environment for educating children with regard to healthy eating. We have been delivering the Young Chef of the Year in primary schools in the UK since 2017. Feedback from teachers involved has been

positive and the children that have completed the award not only loved the challenge but amazed us with their newly acquired skills, healthy food choices, planning, preparation and food presentation. This year alone, we anticipate over 4,000 children will take part.

Born in Limerick and a graduate of Mary Immaculate College, I now live and work in the UK. I have taught in both Ireland and the UK. I still have family in Limerick and am a regular visitor home.

Over the years, I have seen food culture in Ireland change with increased food choices on offer and a

prevalence to eating out or ordering food at home. I have also noticed the health implications of poor food choices and the increase in childhood obesity. Just like many things in life, the principles of healthy eating must be taught. Seeing an opportunity, I initiated the 2019 Limerick pilot.

The Young Chef of the Year award is an exciting educational resource that can make a difference where it matters. It is designed by teachers for teachers. It engages children with food and nutrition (SPHE), supporting them to make healthy choices and develop their own chef skills. It links with home and the community. It aligns with both the Healthy Eating Guidelines as set out by Healthy Ireland and it promotes actions in The Limerick Local Economic and Community Plan when addressing education, skills and learning and health and wellbeing.

We do well to remember the adage 'we are what we eat'.

Marie Reynolds
The Food Teacher™ Education Consultant

Limerick case study



In February 2019, The Food Teacher™ sought funding for a pilot of the Young Chef of the Year Award in Ireland. The JP McManus Foundation provided a grant of €1000, to fund a pilot in two Limerick primary schools, namely St Patrick’s GNS and Our Lady of Lourdes. The award was co-ordinated and delivered by Evelyn Hartigan, a teacher and nutrition coach working as a Resource Teacher, across both schools, together with the class teachers. Schools started the award in April 2019 and completed by the end of May 2019.

Why Limerick/Ireland:

Ireland was identified for the pilot due to increasing childhood obesity statistics. Research has shown that eating habits are established early in life and it is therefore important that any attempts to produce long-term improvements in the nation’s diet should start with children. According to Safefood data (2), 1 in 4 children in Ireland are overweight or obese and obese children are likely to become obese adults, with long-term health problems. In addition, Safefood reports that 20% of energy intake from a child in Ireland’s diet comes from sugary drinks, biscuits, confectionary, chocolate and cake with many children not meeting the dietary recommendations for fruit and vegetables, saturated fats or sugars.

More alarmingly, the document ‘Tackling Childhood Obesity: A Written submission from the Healthy Service Executive to the Joint Committee on Children and Youth Affairs’ (3), published in May 2018, clearly states “The prevalence of childhood obesity in Ireland as currently extrapolated from both the Growing Up in Ireland Study (4) and the country’s participation in WHO Europe Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (5) report that childhood obesity in Ireland is high by international standards, with Irish seven-year-old boys and girls ranked with the fifth and third highest BMI respectively (6).” Long and short-term effects are linked to conditions such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer.

Objectives of the Young Chef of the Year Award in Ireland focused on:

- School engagement (raising school food culture and link to food for health)
- Ensuring pupils are equipped with basic chef skills (lifelong skills) and are aware of opportunities to further develop their skills and talents (potential careers)
- Ensuring pupils understand the principles of a healthy and varied diet (within the context of home and school) to improve quality of life (focused on developing the children's enjoyment of new and healthy foods, increasing uptake and therefore reducing obesity)
- Measuring the impact of the awards (changes, progress)
- Sharing good practice (national roll out in 2020)

Outcomes (hygiene, confidence, home, vegetable consumption):

Following pre and post questionnaires the following outcomes have been noted post award:

- There was a **16%** increase in children **always** washing their hands before touching food and **12%** increase in children **always** washing their hands after going to the toilet.
- There was a **28%** increase in food preparation confidence with children measuring ingredients **on their own** and **8%** cutting up fruit and veg **on their own**.
- There was a **24%** increase in food preparation confidence with children making a salad and soup **on their own**.
- There was an **8%** increase in children cooking at home and **16%** increase in confidence to get parents/carers to buy specific ingredients.
- There was a **20%** increase in children asking their parents/carers to cook their favourite vegetable.
- There was a **20%** increased willingness to try tomatoes, **16%** willingness to try celery and **8%** willingness to try cucumber.



Vision for the future:

- National roll out of the Young Chef of the Year Award across Ireland
- Young Chef Final events across clusters of schools
- Measure impact of wider Irish roll out (food choices, chef skills, confidence)
- Link with Healthcare professionals to assess long-term health impact
- Release of an Irish edition of our award-winning book 'No Kitchen Cookery for Primary Schools'
- Pilot Youngest (Nursery) and Younger Chef Programmes (2nd class) in Ireland

Who we are:



The Food Teacher™ is a group of qualified primary school teachers, a registered nutritional therapist and a health coach who work closely with schools, families and individuals to educate about food and nutrition.

The Young Chef of the Year Award was first piloted in 2017 in Fleetwood, Lancashire, UK and was initially funded by the National Health Service who recognised the impact such an award could have on the long-term health and wellbeing of the community.

About the award:



The Young Chef of the Year Award is for 4th, 5th and/or 6th classes (ages 10-12). It covers the 'Social, Personal and Health Education' (SPHE) Curriculum. Children learn chef skills, seasonality, cooking methods, food hygiene and safety, where food comes from and the importance of food for health. The teaching also incorporates other curriculum areas such as Language, Social and Environmental and Scientific Education, Maths and Art.

The award is a 6-week challenge that requires 2 hours of teaching and practical time each week and focuses on pupils designing and creating a 'Meal for their Hero'. The meal includes a soup, main course, dessert and drink within a €10 budget. The outcomes to date have been outstanding and pupils readily rise to the challenge.

When schools sign up, teachers are equipped with all the resources required for delivery of the award including access to a web-based programme which includes teaching videos with Michelin Star Chef Aidan McGrath, a scheme of work, lesson plans and letters to parents. Schools also receive printed pupil journals for pupils to record their progress and pupil certificates. The website also contains a link to 'Cook at Home' with recipes pupils can access to engage their parents/carers.

As the award has evolved many schools have adapted the plans and content for their pupils. Some schools connect with their local secondary schools for the final cooking challenge, whilst other schools choose small groups to complete the challenge and some may opt to ask pupils to do their final cook at home.

In some areas of the UK, clusters of schools have completed the awards and have held grand finals across areas, which has also engaged the wider community.

Quotes:



Dr Mark Spencer (GP), Healthier Fleetwood—“The Young Chef of the Year is essentially about improving nutritional knowledge and cookery skills for the children that take part. Cookery is a life skill and, coupled with healthier eating choices, will bring lifelong health benefits for our children. Much more than that though it’s also about raising children’s aspirations, opening their minds to new experiences and to new possibilities.”



Amanda Lewis, Corporate Director for People, Luton Council—“The council is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people, so we fully support the Young Chef of the Year Award. We know that eating the right food can bring about major health benefits both physically and mentally and this award is a fantastic way of encouraging children to eat healthier foods and ultimately adopt healthier lifestyles.”

Network and Links:

We have established links with a number of key partners including:

Education – St Patrick’s GNS and Our Lady of Lourdes in Limerick, University of Central Lancashire, University of Bedfordshire, Professor Martin Carragher (Professor of Food and Health Policy) City University London, Herts Grid for Learning, Food for Life (Soil Association)

Catering – Chef Harry Lomas, Lead Association for Catering in Education, Springboard FutureChef, Craft Guild of Chefs, Chef Aidan Mc Grath

Healthcare – Healthier Fleetwood (NHS), CCG East Lancashire, Christine Gurnett, Senior Community Dietician in Limerick (HSE and Healthy Limerick)

Corporates – DairyLink Ltd, The Restaurant Group Ltd, JP McManus Charitable Foundation, Go Wild Magazine, The Savoy Educational Trust

Councils – Stevenage Borough Council, Luton Borough Council, Dr Pat Daly, Director of Economic Development and Planning for Limerick City & County Councils, Patricia O’Sullivan of Innovate Limerick

Policy makers - Tim Baker (Member of the London Obesity Taskforce, London Food Board Member, School Food Plan Alliance Member and National Childhood Measurement Program Panel member), Lead Association for Catering in Education, All Party Parliamentary Group on School Food chaired by Sharon Hodgson MP

References:

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5. Anon, (2019). [ebook] Available at: http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/378865/COSI-3.pdf?ua=1 [Accessed 23 Sep. 2019].
6. Heinen, M., 2014. The Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI) in the Republic of Ireland: Findings from 2008, 2010 and 2012. Health, 1, p.03.



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A huge thank you to the following individuals/organisations for their dedication and support for the 2019 Limerick Pilot: Marie Reynolds (The Food Teacher™ Education Consultant - Ireland Lead), Ellen Tuck (The Food Teacher™ Education Consultant), Evelyn Hartigan (Teacher and Health Coach at Heart Nutrition), JP McManus Charitable Foundation, Joseph Reynolds, Healthier Fleetwood, GP Mark Spencer, St Patrick's GNS and Our Lady of Lourdes School.