

must-tries

By Jessica Laird

Meals for Munchkins

Food-subscription boxes have already simplified meal prep for grown-ups. Now, new companies are serving up similar options for tots.

We asked working moms across the country to tell us if the services *really* deliver.



Nurture Life

nurturelife.com

Serves: Ships to 22,000 cities, including Atlanta, Chicago and Dallas.

Ages: 6-month-olds to teens.

Cost: Plans for babies range from \$45 to \$89 for eight or 14 meals a

week, while plans for toddlers and up range from \$47 to \$119 for five or 10 meals a week (\$5.63 to \$12.40 per meal). Shipping is an additional \$6 to \$12 per week.

About: Nurture Life's pediatric dietitian and team of chefs create balanced pre-made meals, without preservatives, refined

sugars or the most common allergens. They offer

three stages of purees and finger foods for babies, and meals for toddlers and kids based on the USDA's MyPlate guidelines. The meals arrive cold (but not frozen) and can be reheated in the microwave or oven.

All packaging is recyclable and BPA-free.



Little Spoon

littlespoon.com

Serves: The East Coast.

Ages: 6 months and up.

Cost: Parents can choose from three plans: one meal a day at \$4.99 per meal, two meals a day at \$4.49 each, or three meals a day at \$3.99 each. Shipping is free.

About: Born out of the frustrations of a new working mom, Little Spoon gets you biweekly shipments of nutritious purees that are USDA Organic Certified and non-GMO Project Verified. The lineup consists of single-ingredient purees, multi-ingredient blends, and chunkier combinations made with superfoods and grains. Each one is individually packaged with a small spoon for easy snacking. You can tailor a meal plan to your little one's age and favorite flavors, and you can pause, change or cancel your delivery at any time.



"Each package clearly identified the ingredients as well as preparation instructions. Teriyaki salmon with brown rice and veggies, and chicken meatballs with spaghetti were both huge hits with my 12-year-old son and 7-year-old daughter, but my kids didn't love the mac and cheese or salmon cake. Overall, the food was delicious, and the portion sizes were spot-on." —*Celissa Kunder, Coral Springs, FL, Director of Behavioral Health Management*



"The meals arrived at our house on time, in cute packaging and, most important, fresh. The portions seemed large for my 6-month-old, so we got to enjoy each one a few times. Fresh mango was our favorite, with apple a close second. It's more expensive than cooking everything myself, but the prices feel fair, and the flexible subscription options make me want to order more." —*Frances Hayes, Boston, Director of Sales*

Once Upon a Farm


uponafarm.com

Serves: The subscription is available nationally through the brand's website.

Ages: Recipes cater to four nutritional stages: 5-plus months, 7-plus months, 9-plus months, and 18 months and older.

Cost: Each subscription box of 24 pouches is \$59.95, (\$2.50 per pouch) with free shipping. Deliveries arrive every two, three, four or five weeks.

About: This mom-created company offers a selection of non-GMO blends made with USDA Organic whole fruits, veggies and superfoods, free from any concentrates or preservatives. The blends are cold-pressed using high pressure to preserve nutrients. Choose up to eight flavors, which are added to your shipment in multiples of three, for a total of 24 pouches.



"I could tell the ingredients were fresh because of the color alone. The biggest hit with my 3-year-old was the Sun-Shiny Strawberry Patch pouch, but the veggie flavors weren't as well-loved. I wish there were more combos where the veggies were more subtle. But for only \$1 more than store-bought pouches, these are a great pick." —*Minh Vy Ngo, New York City, Creative Designer*



Raised Real

raisedreal.com

Serves: Arizona, California, Nevada, Oregon and Washington.

Ages: 4 months and up. The meals can be prepared as purees or as finger food.

Cost: A subscription gets you 20 meals every two weeks for \$95 (\$4.75 per meal). For a limited time, subscribers also receive a complimentary Meal Maker, which is a pureeing and steaming appliance.

About: Raised Real is a baby-food cooking system that offers pre-portioned meal packs filled with whole fruits and veggies from certified-organic farms, an accompanying Meal Maker and access to a 24/7 helpline. With two first-time parents on its co-founding team—one of whom holds a doctorate in nutrition—the company sends organically sourced, preservative-free raw ingredients that are washed, peeled, diced, and flash-frozen to retain nutrients. When it's time to eat, simply empty the contents of a pack into the Meal Maker, then steam and blend to the desired texture, or steam and serve as finger food.



"The Meal Maker is super easy to use and comes with a clear, step-by-step instruction manual. I quickly figured out how to pop in the food packet, start steaming, and then switch to puree mode. The recipe card

that comes with each packet is informative too. The meal was delicious; I liked it as much as my 10-month-old son did. One downside is that the food comes out hot and needs a few minutes in the freezer to cool. That's not efficient when you're rushing in from work and facing a hungry baby. Also, the plan works out to about \$4.75 per meal, which is too high to make me stray from batch cooking." —*Julia Breyer, Oakland, CA, attorney*