



FINE dining ... Owen and Harrison sample chef Emma Hendry's work.

Picture: Glenn Barnes

Fighting fat in a food-friendly habitat

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ASSISTANT EDITOR

AN upmarket Brisbane childcare centre has engaged a chef to provide restaurant quality meals to its 120 children.

Children at the Habitat Early Learning Centre at Ferny Grove feast on dishes such as lamb tagine and cous cous, fishcakes and rice, beef hotpots, pasta, risotto and lightly curried sausages.

However, chef Emma Hendry insists it is all part of a nutritionally balanced diet of dairy, meat, seafood, fruit and vegetables, and legumes.

Mrs Hendry, 23, who completed her apprenticeship at one of Brisbane's leading restaurants, Era, in South Brisbane, said she accepted the job at Habitat to help fight childhood obesity.

She has two kitchens of restaurant standard to feed children aged up to five years.

The centre also caters for children up to 12 in after-school care.

"We will only serve food of a high nutritional value," she said.

"And I like to think I can come up with dishes they might not get at home."

Habitat describes itself as Queensland's first five-star,

"private school" quality, early-learning and care centre.

Mrs Hendry said the centre appealed to professional couples who demanded a high standard of food.

As well as cooked food there are daily platters of fresh fruit.

She said the centre even provided breakfast for children of busy parents who started work early.

Habitat public relations manager Liz Andrews said: "If we can assist busy parents by ensuring their children are learning good food lessons early on, we're playing a role in tackling the obesity epidemic."