

ANN BELDEN READ

BOOP BABY

#harvesttohighchair

Ann Belden Read wants to build children's palates to crave the same foods adults enjoy. That's why she launched Boop Baby, her jarred baby food delivery service, to the public in June. A woman who grew up with Southern cooking, Ann noticed when she started introducing solids to her own baby that expiration dates were years away. She said of baby food jars, "They just looked all the same color and just didn't seem all that appealing." She named the company to honor her late mother's nickname for her, Annie Boop, and she categorizes her products by stages, based on a child's age. Now, she is offering a lot of winter fruits and vegetables like pears, apples, butternut and carnival squash, eggplant and butter beans, depending on availability. She starts with single purees as an introduction for babies, then goes into more combinations, like sweet potato and blueberry, or butter bean and butternut squash. "I try to do sweet and savory together," said Ann, who works out of a DHEC-approved kitchen. For babies, she incorporates spices like cinnamon and cardamom, then moves into chunkier, more complex items and starts to bring in grains from Anson Mills and Lavington Plantation, and more complex herbs like cumin. "It's very seasonal," she said. "...A lot of the flavor profiles are based on adult food. I just kind of re-engineer it." What's next: a toddler finger food line is her vision. "I certainly want to be able to accommodate as many mothers as who want the product."



Photo by Alice Keeney

One taste she can't live without?

"Basil or stinky cheese."