

(TINY TOTS, BIG PALATES)

An artisanal baby-food delivery service for raising healthy and happy eaters



Boop Baby flavors include such combinations as (left to right) blueberry, sweet potato, and cinnamon; English pea and mint; and yogurt and blackberry and are delivered in sterilized, reusable glass jars. (Inset) Founder Ann Belden Read with daughter, Louise

Ann Belden Read believes in cultivating a child's taste for fresh, local foods at an early age, before the babe has even seen a handful of growing seasons. And her line of fresh-to-order purees, launched in June,

has families positively cooing over South Carolina produce. Sourcing mainly from GrowFood Carolina, a distribution center for some 75 state farms, Boop Baby transforms regional harvests into flavorful, nutrient-dense infant grub delivered weekly to Tricounty highchairs.

Subscribers can customize menus for children with reflux or food allergies and choose from a

intense flavors like rosemary and cumin. As the company matures, Read, who works out of a DHEC-certified kitchen in North Charleston, plans to include a toddler line.

The Mount Pleasant mom cooked up the baby-food concept some three years ago when she began hand-making fare for her daughter, Louise. "My mom stayed home and always had time for

"Louise enjoys healthy food and has the beginnings of a well-developed palate." —Ann Read

smorgasbord of seasonal purees categorized by complexity: Stage One includes single-ingredient basics that can be paired with yogurt from partner Lowcountry Creamery. "The cantaloupe and yogurt combo tastes exactly like an old-fashioned push pop," says the Boop Baby founder, who also dons maker, marketer, and deliverer bonnets. Stage Two swaddles creative mash-ups like blueberry and sweet potato or eggplant and tomato with softer herbs and spices such as cinnamon and cardamom. In Stage Three, chunkier textures are paired with more

me. As Louise got older, I realized that if I stayed in my previous line of work, I wasn't going to be that mom," explains Read, who spent 21 years in the fundraising industry. When her mother passed away in February 2015, she decided to stir things up. The brand, inspired by Read's childhood nickname, "Annie Boop," nurtures the blossoming taste buds of her clients' kids in much the same way it did her own little nugget's. "The proof's in the pudding," notes Mom. "Louise enjoys healthy food and has the beginnings of a well-developed palate." —**Lauren Johnson**

