



## 09 Early years practice procedures

### 09.8 Prime times – Snack-times and mealtimes

Children are supervised during mealtimes and always remain within sight and hearing of staff.

#### Snack times

- A 'snack' is prepared mid-morning and mid-afternoon and can be organised according to the discretion of the Pre-school lead e.g. picnic on a blanket.
- Small, plastic jugs are provided with choice of milk or water.
- Children wash their hands before and after snack-time.
- Children are only offered semi-skimmed milk as a main drink, along with a varied and balanced diet.
- Fruit or raw vegetables, such as carrot or tomato, are offered in batons. Bananas and other foods are not cut as rounds but left as chunks to encourage biting and chewing in order to minimise a choking hazard.
- Portion sizes are gauged as appropriate to the age of the child.
- Children arrive as they want refreshment and leave when they have had enough. Children are not made to leave their play if they do not want to have a snack.
- Staff join in conversation and encourage children's independence by allowing them to pour drinks, butter toast, cut fruit etc.

#### Mealtimes

- Tables are never overcrowded during mealtimes. Some social distancing is encouraged even though it is acknowledged that children will play in close proximity for the rest of the session.
- Tablecloths are used where practical and children's places are personalised with their own sip cup and lunch box.
- Children wash their hands and sit down.
- Children are encouraged to eat their sandwiches, crackers first then followed by their choice of what they want.
- Staff have their lunch with children. Staff who are eating with the children role-model healthy eating and best practice at all times, for example not drinking cans of fizzy drinks in front of the children.
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and are not hurried to fit in with adults' tasks and breaks. They are not made to eat what they do not like and are only encouraged to try new foods slowly.

- In order to protect children with food allergies or specific dietary requirements, children are discouraged from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- Mealtimes are relaxed opportunities for social interaction between children and the adults who care for them.
- After lunch children are encouraged to throw any unwanted food and wrappers in the containers on the table.
- Children wash their hands after lunch.
- Information for parents is displayed on the parent's notice board, including:
  - Ten Steps for Healthy Toddlers [https://infantandtoddlerforum.org/media/upload/pdf-downloads/HR\\_toddler\\_booklet\\_green.pdf](https://infantandtoddlerforum.org/media/upload/pdf-downloads/HR_toddler_booklet_green.pdf)
  - Daily menus including identification of any foods containing allergens.