



9 Early Years Practice and Procedures

9.8 Prime times – Snack-times and mealtimes (older children)

Children are supervised during snack times and 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 setting staff e.g. picnic on a blanket.
- Children have the opportunity to help set the table.
- Children wash their hands before and after snack-time.
- Children are only offered semi-skimmed milk or water.
- Fruit or raw vegetables, such as carrot or tomato, are offered in batons, which children may be encouraged to help in preparing. Bananas and other foods are not cut as rounds, but are sliced to minimise a choking hazard.
- Portion sizes are gauged as appropriate to the age of the child.
- Biscuits are not be offered, but toast, rice cakes or oatcakes are good alternatives.
- 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.
- Children are always within sight and hearing of staff at mealtimes
- There is a Paediatric First Aider present at children's meal and snack times.
- Children may help staff set tables.
- Cloths are used where practical and children's places are personalised with, for example, mats that are laminated displaying their name, photo and any allergens.
- Packed lunches are placed at the child's place setting by staff. Staff assist with opening vessels, packets etc.
- Food provided is brought to the room in serving dishes on a trolley. Dishes are not kept in a food warmer or oven so will not be too hot to touch.
- Children wash their hands and sit down as food is ready to be served.
- Children are encouraged to choose what they want and to take their own helpings.
- 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 prevented from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- If children do not eat their main course or main lunch box item, they are not denied pudding. Food is not used as a reward or punishment.

- Mealtimes are relaxed opportunities for social interaction between children and the adults who care for them.
- Children sit at tables to eat, children are not permitted to wander around eating.
- After lunch children are encouraged to close their lunchboxes, place their lunch boxes / bags on the lunch trolley and place their cups in the bowl for washing up.
- Children go to the bathroom and wash their hands after lunch.
- Snacks and food provided is advertised to parents. Pre-School snacks provided are detailed on the parents noticeboard. Snack provided for after school club are detailed in the weekly newsletter for the following week together with any foods containing allergens.