

## 09 Early years practice procedures

### 09.8 Prime times – Snacktimes (younger and older children) and lunchtimes (older children)

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

#### Snacktimes

- A 'snack' is prepared mid-morning and can be organised according to the discretion of the setting manager e.g. in the Nursery Hall or picnic on a blanket in the garden. (Staff are responsible for organising the snack and utensils in the kitchen which are placed onto the Nursery trolley so that it can be taken into the Hall and positioned next to the snack table.)
- Children may also take turns to help set the table. Small, lidded plastic jugs are provided with choice of milk or water.
- Cloths are used where practical and children's places are personalised with, for example, laminated name cards which they are encouraged to post in the Nursery post box just before having their snack.
- Children wash their hands before and after snack-time.
- Children are only offered semi-skimmed milk as a main drink, as long as they are eating a varied and balanced diet. (Full fat milk may need to be offered but this is discussed with the parent/carer.)
- Fruit or raw vegetables, such as carrot or tomato, are offered in batons, which children should 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.
- 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. (The Nursery sets up 'Rolling Snack' between 10.45am-11am to give children plenty of opportunity to join in should they wish.)
- Staff join in conversation and encourage children's independence by allowing them to pour drinks, butter bread, cut fruit etc. (A member of the team sits with the children during this time.)

#### Lunchtimes

- Tables are never overcrowded during lunchtimes. Some social distancing is encouraged even though it is acknowledged that children will play in close proximity for the rest of the session.
- Cloths are used where practical and children's places are personalised with, for example, laminated name cards which they are encouraged to post in the Nursery post box just before having their packed lunch.
- Children wash their hands and sit down as to have their packed lunch.
- Children are encouraged to choose what they want from their packed lunch.

- When possible, staff have their lunch with children and do not eat different food in front of 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 swopping their food with one another.
- If children do not eat their savoury course, they are not denied their treat. 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.
- After lunch children are encouraged to put containers or 'left overs' in their lunch bag so that parents/carers can check what they have eaten later in the day. Children are encouraged to help wipe the table and sweep the floor.
- Children go to the bathroom and wash their hands. Cleaning teeth no sooner than 1 hour after lunch is recommended where hygiene procedures pose no risk (see procedure 04.6 Oral health)/ It is not always recommended for groups in shared premises.
- 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