



## **09 Childcare practice procedures**

### **09.7 Prime times – mealtimes**

Feeding and mealtimes are key times in the day for being close and to promote security, as well as for exploration and learning. We understand the importance of a healthy balanced diet for young children.

#### **Mealtimes**

- Staff arrange the table before toddlers sit down; there should be no waiting time.
- Children's hands are washed clean before their meal.
- Children are given time to eat at their own pace and are not hurried to fit in with adults' tasks and breaks.
- Mealtimes are relaxed opportunities for social interaction of children with their group and the adults who care for them. It is a time of sensory learning and learning skills, as well as for the fundamental satisfaction of being fed.
- In order to protect children with food allergies or specific dietary requirements, children are discouraged from sharing and swapping their food with one another.
- 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