



## 09 Early years practice procedures

### 09.8 Prime times – Snack-times and mealtimes (older children)

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 setting manager e.g. picnic on a blanket.
- Children may also take turns to help set the table. Small, lidded plastic jugs are provided with choice of milk or water.
- Children wash their hands before snack-time.
- Children are milk or water as long as they are eating a varied and balanced diet.
- 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 and choose their snack with serving utensils.

#### **Mealtimes**

- Tables are never overcrowded during mealtimes.
- Children help staff set tables which are arranged for key person groups.
- Their food is served on individual plates and brought in by staff. Dishes are not kept in the oven so will not be too hot to touch.
- Children wash their hands and sit down as food is ready to be served.

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- 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 main course, 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.
- After lunch children are encouraged to help wipe the table and sweep the floor.
- Information for parents is displayed on our Tapestry app, Social media and within setting 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