



09 Standard Childcare Practice

09.8 Prime times – Snack-times and mealtimes

Children are supervised during mealtimes and always remain within sight and hearing of staff **and where possible should be sat facing children whilst they are eating so they can make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking, to prevent food sharing and be aware of any unexpected allergic reactions.** A member of staff with a valid paediatric first aid certificate is always present at mealtimes and there is a named person responsible for ensuring that the food provided meets each child's needs.

Snack times

- A 'snack' is prepared mid-morning and mid-afternoon and can be organised according to the discretion of the Nursery manager e.g. picnic on a blanket.
- 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 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 and after snack-time.
- Children are offered semi-skimmed milk or water as a main drink.
- 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.
- Biscuits are not routinely offered, but toast, rice cakes or oatcakes are good alternatives. Birthday celebrations are the exception, and a child will be offered a biscuit with their fruit.
- 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 – Lunch Club

- Tables are never overcrowded during mealtimes.
- Children are always within sight and hearing of staff at mealtimes and where possible sat facing them while they are eating.
- There is a Paediatric First Aider present at children's meal and snack times.
- Children wash their hands, and the children collect their lunch boxes from the storage box and sit at the table where their drinks bottle has been placed.

- 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.
- 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 eating lunch the children return all items and rubbish to their lunch box and return it to the main storage area.