

## 09 Early years practice procedures

### 09.8 Prime times – Snack-times and lunchtime

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

#### Snack times

- A 'snack' is prepared mid-morning and can be organised according to the discretion of the setting manager e.g. long table.
- 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 only offered full-fat milk because they may not get the calories they need from semi-skimmed milk. Children can gradually move to semi-skimmed milk as a main drink, as long as they are eating a varied and balanced diet.
- Fruit or raw vegetables, such as carrot or cucumber, are offered in batons, which children should be encouraged to help in preparing. No grapes or cherry tomatoes are given because of the choking hazard they pose.
- Portion sizes are gauged as appropriate to the age of the child.
- Biscuits should not be offered, but toast, rice cakes, crackers or oatcakes are good alternatives.
- Children all sit down together at snack time and leave when they have had enough. Children are then encouraged to put their empty cup and plate on the small table.

#### Lunchtimes

- Tables are never overcrowded during mealtimes.
- Children help staff set tables and one member of staff sits with each table.
- Children wash their hands after carpet/singing time and before lunch.
- Children take their own lunchbox off of the lunch trolley, collect their water bottle and sit where they choose/wish to. Lunchtime is a social event and children are free to set where they wish and with whom they wish.
- Children are encouraged to eat their savoury food first i.e. Sandwiches/crackers followed by their cheese/yogurt/fruit before eating their 'sweet treat' such as a biscuit or small cake.
- Staff have their lunch with children. They encourage children to attempt to open packets themselves or ask for help. They also guide children towards putting rubbish or leftovers in the rubbish bin. Staff who are eating with the children role-model healthy eating and best practice at all times, for example eating fruit and drinking water.

- 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.
- Lunchtimes are relaxed opportunities for social interaction between children and the adults who care for them.
- After lunch children are encouraged to pack up their lunchbox, put lids back on tubs etc and put it back on the lunch trolley.
- Children go to the bathroom and wash their hands after lunch.