



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

- All children have a photo to be used at snack time, with all dietary requirements written on the back.
- There are displays on the wall with photos of children and their dietary requirements
- Advice on healthy food choices is included in the newsletter.
- Children are to bring a filled water bottle every day which they can access throughout the day.
- A healthy snack consisting of fruit, vegetables or breadsticks is provided by the preschool.
- Children may 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 until they are at least two years old because they may not get the calories they need from semi-skimmed milk. After the age of two, children can gradually move to semi-skimmed milk as a main drink, if they are eating a varied and balanced diet.
- Children with dietary requirements are offered alternative milks such as soya or oat.
- 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

- Tables are never overcrowded during mealtimes. Some social distancing is encouraged even though it is acknowledged that children will play in close proximity for the rest of the session.
- Children help staff set tables.
- Children wash their hands and retrieve their own lunch box and drink from the trolley before choosing their seat.
- Children are encouraged to make healthy food choices first leaving treats until the end.
- Staff have their lunch with 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.
- To protect children with food allergies or specific dietary requirements, children are discouraged from sharing and swapping 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 scrape their plates, wash and dry them.
- 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