



Early years practice procedures

Snack-times and mealtimes

Children are supervised during mealtimes and always remain within sight and hearing of staff and where possible are sat facing children whilst they are eating so they can make sure children are eating in a way to prevent choking and also 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 snack and 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 Pre-school headteacher e.g. picnic on a blanket.
- Children may also take turns to help set the table. Jugs are provided with milk and the children collect their water bottles.
- Children wash their hands before and after snack-time.
- 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.
- Children must have eaten the food in their mouths before they leave the table. Children are not made to leave their play if they do not want to have a snack.
- Children are always within sight and hearing of staff at snack times and where possible sat facing them while they are eating. Staff join in conversation and encourage children's independence by allowing them to pour drinks, serve their food, and so on.
- There is a Paediatric First Aider present at children's snack times

Mealtimes

- Tables are never overcrowded during mealtimes.
- Children are always within sight and hearing of staff at mealtimes
- There is a Paediatric First Aider present at children's meal times.
- Children help staff set tables.

- Cloths are used where practical and children's places are personalised with, for example, mats that they make for themselves and have laminated.
- Children wash their hands and sit down as food is ready to be served. .
- Children are always within sight and hearing of staff at snack times and where possible sat facing them while they are eating. Staff have their lunch with children and do not eat different food in front of children. Staff who are always eating with the children role-model healthy eating and best practice, 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 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 adults.
- After lunch children are encouraged to scrape their plates and help wipe the table and sweep the floor.
- Children go to the bathroom and wash their hands after lunch.
- Information for parents/carers is displayed on the parent/carers notice board.

-