

09 Standard Childcare Practice

09.7 Snack-times and mealtimes

Snack times

- A 'snack' is prepared mid-morning and mid-afternoon and is a social time (Nursery).
- A range of balanced, healthy breakfast and after school snack options are provided (OSC).
- Children may also take turns to help set the table. Small, lidded plastic jugs are provided with choice of milk or water.
- Children wash / sanitise their hands before and after snack-time.
- Fruit or raw vegetables, such as carrot or tomato, are offered in batons, which children can 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 should not be routinely offered, but toast, rice cakes or oatcakes are good alternatives.
- 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.
- Children wash their hands prior to eating.
- Staff have their lunch with children (Nursery). 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.
- 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.

- Children go to the bathroom and wash their hands after eating. Cleaning teeth no sooner than 1 hour after lunch is recommended where hygiene procedures pose no risk (see procedure 04.6 Oral health). Teeth will not be cleaned at the setting.