

## 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).
- Children may also take turns to help serve their peers. Small, lidded plastic jugs are provided with choice of milk or water.
- Children wash / sanitise their hands before 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.
- 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 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 swapping 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.
- Cleaning teeth no sooner than 1 hour after lunch is recommended where hygiene procedures pose no risk (see procedure 04.6 Oral health).