



8.6 Snack and Meal Times

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. picnic on a blanket. For the majority of sessions this will be a rolling snack, for children to come and help themselves too when they feel hungry (staff will remind them that it is available).
- Children are also given the independence of serving their snack, buttering their toast and washing up their own plate and cups.
- Children may also take turns to help set the table. Jugs of water or milk are available.
- 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.
- Portion sizes are gauged as appropriate to the age of the child.
- Toast, rice cakes, bread sticks etc oatcake are good alternatives.
- 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

- Parents/carers provide their child with a lunchbox if they are staying for lunch, they are advised of our healthy eating policy and the importance of adhering to this.
- Tables are never overcrowded during mealtimes.
- Children wash their hands before sitting for a meal
- Children are encouraged to help place the lunchboxes on the table, and find their seat.
- Staff have their lunch with children and use this as a learning/bonding opportunity to engage in conversations. Staff who are eating with the children role-model healthy eating and best practice at all times.
- 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.
- After lunch children are encouraged to tidy up their area, and pack away their lunchboxes.
- 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

This policy was adopted by _____ *(name of provider)*

On _____ *(date)*

Date to be reviewed _____ *(date)*

Signed on behalf of the provider _____

Name of signatory _____

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner) _____