

## 09 Early years practice procedures

### 09.08 Prime times - Snack-times and lunchtime

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.
- Children wash their hands before and after snack-time.
- Fruit or raw vegetables, such as carrot, tomato, bananas, grapes and others are cut lengthways or into sticks to minimise choking hazard.
- Portion sizes are gauged as appropriate to the age of the child.
- Biscuits are not offered, but toast, rice cakes or breadsticks 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.**

#### **Lunchtime**

- Children wash their hands and sit down with their lunchbox.
- Staff have their lunch with children. 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.
- 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.