

## 09.8 Prime times – Snack-times and meal times **Snack times**

- A 'snack' is prepared mid-morning and mid-afternoon and can be organised according to the discretion of the setting manager e.g. picnic on a blanket.
- Children may also take turns to help set the table. Small, lidded plastic jugs are provided with choice of milk or water.
- Children wash their hands before snack-time.
- Children are only offered semi skimmed milk, as long as they are eating a varied and balanced diet.
- Fruit or raw vegetables, such as carrot or tomato, are offered, which children should be encouraged to help in preparing.
- Biscuits should not be offered, but toast, rice cakes or oatcakes 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 (big group) by allowing them to pour drinks, butter toast, cut fruit etc.

### **Mealtimes**

- Tables are never overcrowded during mealtimes. Some social distancing is encouraged even though it is acknowledged that children will play in close proximity for the rest of the session.
- Cloths are used where practical and children's places are personalised with, for example, snack cards that they make themselves and lunch boxes from home.
- Children wash their hands and sit down at lunch / snack time.
- Children are encouraged to choose what they want from their lunch boxes
- Children are given a sensible amount of time to eat at their own pace and are always given a 5 min warning to finish. 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.
- Mealtimes are relaxed opportunities for social interaction between children and the adults who care for them.
- 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](https://infantandtoddlerforum.org/media/upload/pdf-downloads/HR_toddler_booklet_green.pdf)

