



Old Court Community Pre-School

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09 Early years practice procedures

09.08 **Snack-times and mealtimes (Age 2+)**

Children are supervised during mealtimes and always remain within sight and hearing of staff. A member of staff with a valid first aid certificate is always present at mealtimes and there is a named person responsible for ensuring that the food provided meets each child's needs.

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 and after snack-time.
- After the age of two, children can gradually move to semi-skimmed milk as a main drink, if they are eating a varied and balanced diet.
- Portion sizes are gauged as appropriate to the age of the child.
- 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

- Tables are never overcrowded during mealtimes.
- Children are always within sight and hearing of staff at mealtimes
- There is a Paediatric First Aider present at children's meal and snack times.
- Children help staff set tables which are arranged for key person groups.
- Staff have their lunch with children and do not eat different food in front of children. Staff who are always eating with the children role-model healthy eating and best practice, 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 encouraged to try new foods slowly.
- To protect children with food allergies or specific dietary requirements, **staff prevent children 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 adults.
- There are sometimes opportunities for children to eat with friends on other tables. Children may be invited to the 2-3's room for lunch, to join a sibling or be with their previous carer if they have just moved up into the older group. There should also be opportunities for toddlers to join the older children for lunch, providing they do not find this unsettling or distressing.
- After lunch children are encouraged to tidy their belongings and help wipe the table and sweep the floor.
- Children go to the bathroom and wash their hands after lunch in their key groups.
- Information for parents/carers is displayed on the parent/carers notice board, including:
 - Ten Steps for Healthy Toddlers https://infantandtoddlerforum.org/media/upload/pdf-downloads/HR_toddler_booklet_green.pdf
 - [Recipes and meal ideas - Best Start in Life - NHS.](#)