09 Standard Childcare Practice

**9.6 Snack-times and Lunch time**

**Snack times**

* A ‘snack’ is prepared mid-morning and can be organised according to the discretion of the setting manager or team leader e.g. picnic on a blanket or snack outside.
* Children may also take turns to help, handing out drinks etc. Small, lidded plastic jugs are provided with choice of milk or water.
* Children wash their hands before and after snack-time.
* Fruit or raw vegetables are cut or sliced to minimise a choking hazard.
* Portion sizes are gauged as appropriate to the age of the child.
* Biscuits are rarely offered at snack time, but toast, crackers, 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. But it is monitored to make sure they have had a drink during the session.
* 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 at the tables.
* The children are given their lunch boxes by the staff to avoid any mix ups.
* Children are given time to eat at their own pace and are not hurried to fit in with adults’ tasks and breaks. They are encouraged to eat as much as they can but are not forced to eat it all.
* In order to protect children with food allergies or specific dietary requirements, children are discouraged from sharing and swopping their food with one another.
* The children are not denied eating anything in their lunch bag. Food is not used as a reward or punishment.
* Parents are asked to only include healthy items in the lunch box.
* Mealtimes are relaxed opportunities for social interaction between children and the adults who care for them.
* Children go to the bathroom and wash their hands after lunch.