

Healthy Living

Snack Time



Snack times are an important part of a child's day when they can refill with nutritious, energy giving foods that can support a child both physically and emotionally.

Settings organise their snack times in ways that are appropriate to their circumstances. Some provide a 'self-service' or 'cafeteria' style snack bar where children can access their snack at a time when it suits them during the session. Others have snack together as a whole group, small group, or key person group.

Whichever you choose it is important that snack time is planned with thought and consideration to ensure that all children have food, and a grazing culture is not adopted, as this can impact on other mealtimes.

This card will take you through some tasks that will help you to reflect on your current practice and make improvements.

Task 1

Reflect on the snacks that you have offered your children over the past 2 weeks and ask yourselves these question-

- Why is it important for children to have a snack?
- What nutritional value do the snacks offer?
- Are they balanced over the week and throughout the day?
- How do you know this?

- How could you improve on this?
- Do you offer all children a selection of fresh fruit/vegetables daily?
- How do you encourage children to become independent in making choices about their eating?
- What other healthy snacks could you offer?
- How is fresh drinking water made available to the children?
- Are they encouraged to serve food and drinks themselves?
- Do you have set times to offer snacks?
- What information do you share with parents about having a healthy snacks? What have they accessed and tried already?
- Are children involved in preparation of their own snacks?
- Do adults eat with the children, modelling healthy choices?
- For rolling snack only: How can we manage our rolling snack to avoid children grazing, but ensure all children sit to have a snack during an allotted time?

Task 2

Give each of the staff the same five ingredients and have a challenge to develop the most exciting and healthy snacks.

You could try this with older children.

To make this more of a challenge, why not give the staff a budget and give them the opportunity to make a new snack and share in a team meeting.

What are the staff's favourites?

Task 3

Have you considered a rolling snack model? Use the resource below to plan and test the concept. Use the 11 points to help you consider if your setting and children would benefit from the idea and discuss at a team meeting.

[Introducing Rolling Snack - Early Years Careers](#)

Useful links:

[Snack Time in Your Early Years Setting - Early Start Group](#)

[Healthier snacks - Food facts - Healthier Families - NHS](#)

[Early Years Foundation Stage nutrition guidance](#)