

Guidelines for snack and lunch provision in Early Years Centres during Covid -19

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Version Control

Version	Date Issued	Author	Update Information
1	8/6/20	Helen Lee	Original guidelines updated to reflect COVID-19
2	1/9/20	Helen Lee	Updates from new Covid-19 guidance and choking guidance added
3	10/9/.20	Helen Lee	Update on where to eat lunch
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This guidance has been devised to support staff in early years centres to provide a safe and positive snack and lunch experience for children post covid-19. It will be subject to ongoing review, as new or more up to date guidance becomes available. It should be read in conjunction with the South Ayrshire Early Years Food Handling Guidelines (2015)

This guidance is for children aged 2 to 5 years attending an early years centre. It is relevant for all staff and children attending.

Health and Social Care Standards (Scottish Government, June 17)

Standard 1: I experience high quality care and support that is right for me.

Wellbeing

Eating and drinking

- **1.33 I can choose suitably presented and healthy meals and snacks, including fresh fruit and vegetables, and participate in menu planning.**
- **1.34 If I need help with eating and drinking, this is carried out in a dignified way and my personal preferences are respected.**
- **1.35 I can enjoy unhurried snack and meal times in as relaxed an atmosphere as possible.**
- **1.36 If I wish, I can share snacks and meals alongside other people using and working in the service if appropriate.**
- **1.37 My meals and snacks meet my cultural and dietary needs, beliefs and preferences.**
- **1.38 If appropriate, I can choose to make my own meals, snacks and drinks, with support if I need it, and can choose to grow, cook and eat my own food where possible.**
- **1.39 I can drink fresh water at all times**

Children will attend the early years centres in a group of up to 30 and remain within this group during their session. Children do not need to physically distance in their group nor do children and adults need to physically distance. However adults should remain 2m apart from each other at all times. This will apply when serving/ delivering food to the groups.

Where possible it is recommended that children eat lunch within their designated space in the EYC and do not move to school lunch halls. Folding lunch tables could be used in the area if these are available and then removed.

For each group snack can be served within a designated snack area in the EYC or a snack table within the area they are in. Before and after use tables should be washed with soap and water and then sprayed with a food safe disinfectant spray (meeting **BS EN 1276** or **BS EN 13697** standard) and wiped with a paper towel. If folding tables are used these should be cleaned thoroughly before folding away. Following eating floors should be swept and cleaned. If using the snack area this should be cleaned thoroughly between groups. Chairs and all other surfaces should also be wiped down.

When preparing food staff should ensure that long hair is tied back. A disposable apron should be worn and hands should be washed thoroughly including forearms following the handwashing guidelines. Jewellery such as rings should be removed where possible. Gloves and masks are not required.

Children in a group and their key adult should wash their hands before eating. This should be managed so only children from one group are handwashing at one time. All handwashing should be supervised and where required children should be supported to hand wash. After eating hands should again be washed and faces wiped with a single use wipe or cloth.

The table(s) should be set ready for the children so they do not need to leave their seats to collect anything.

The key adult for the group should sit and eat with the children at snack and lunch times to supervise and also to encourage social interactions and conversation.

Photos of children with allergies and details of the allergy should be within the food preparation area for all staff preparing and serving food to see. Their grouping and attendance pattern should be noted as part of the information. Key adults should be made aware of allergies in their group.

Melamine or real crockery should be used with plates, bowls and glasses and real metal cutlery of an appropriate size. Partitioned lunch trays are not to be used. Crockery and cutlery must be washed in a dishwasher. Centres without a dishwasher should link with their school kitchen to organise for crockery and cutlery to be washed in their dishwasher. No early years staff will be allowed to enter the school kitchen.

Snack (including breakfast and high tea)

Snack menus should be provided in advance weekly for parents along with associated allergens.

Where possible one adult should be the designated the food preparation person for the session and prepare breakfast, snacks and high tea as required for all the groups in the early years centre. Where this is not possible one adult from a key group should prepare for their group. Food should be prepared in the kitchen/ snack area of the early years centre. SAC Food Handling Guidelines should be followed.

The food preparation area should be cleaned paying particular attention to worktops, taps and the hand wash sink(s) between preparations of food for groups.

Food should be plated up for each child by the food preparation person and brought to the table so each child gets their own individual plate. There should be no buffets or sharing plates and no rolling snack. Children should be encouraged to taste foods but allow them to leave unwanted food. The snack menu should be discussed with children to allow them to make choices.

Encourage the use of independence skills such as spreading or chopping but on an individual basis. For example provide children with their own piece of fruit to chop or butter to spread on their toast.

After eating crockery and cutlery will be collected by the food preparation person and should be washed immediately in a dishwasher. There should be no handwashing of dishes.

For children in full days a morning snack should be provided and a drink and small snack offered to any child wishing this in the afternoon. When deciding on the snack menu consideration should be given to what the children are having for lunch.

Lunches

School lunches

A free lunch will be provided for children in the early years centre who are in for a full day. Staff should ensure that any special dietary requirements for children and themselves are highlighted to catering staff and a suitable alternative will be organised e.g. vegetarian,vegan.. The lunch menu should be sent home to parents with the associated allergens.

Lunches can be eaten in the playroom, in a lunch room or area within the EYC/school or the school dining hall. Where to have lunch will depend on individual circumstances. Where the dining hall is not being used the lunches will be delivered by the school kitchen to be plated up. One member of staff should be on rota to organise and plate up lunches one key group at a time. For the moment children will not be allowed to serve themselves. After lunch all dishes should be put back on the trolley for collection.by the school kitchen.

Staff should work with parents to promote lunches and healthy eating.

Numbers of meals should be clearly communicated to catering staff for each day by 9.30am.

Consideration should be given to how lunches will be transported from the kitchen to the playroom.

Packed lunches from home

Where children bring a packed lunch from home this should be decanted into a clean plastic bag or equivalent and clearly labelled for storage in a fridge or cool box. A reusable zippy pocket can be used. Consideration will need to be given to cross contamination.

Children should only get milk or water to drink with their packed lunch and it is advised that centres provide this rather than children bringing in their own drinks.

At lunch time packed lunches should be set out and served to the children on a plate.

Healthy packed lunches should be promoted with parents.

Choking Guidance

All snacks and lunches should be provided in accordance with the [Good practice guidance: prevention and management of choking episodes in babies and children](#) (December 2019). All staff should ensure they are familiar with these guidelines. Raw carrots and popcorn should NOT be provided, Small fruit and vegetables like cherry tomatoes, grapes and blackberries should be quartered (length ways) and large fruits cut into slices rather than chunks. This guidance also applies to packed lunches from home.

Consideration during meals and snacks should be given to the following -

Space

The environment where children eat can have an impact on positive eating experiences. A quiet, peaceful area with appropriate tables, chairs, cutlery, and crockery, serving opportunities, and the number of staff available at mealtimes are all important factors in providing a positive experience for children. Planning and managing mealtimes, therefore, should also consider the space and set-up for eating as well as the food that is provided. (Setting the Table p.102)

Consider the daily routines to ease the transition from play to snacks and meals. What changes need to be made to area.

Experience

A quality snack and meal experience will support children's developing social skills –

- conversation between children and adults
- learning to use cutlery correctly
- developing good table manners
- tasting and trying different foods

Children need to be given time to finish eating and drinking with Setting the Table recommending at least 30 minutes for children to eat lunch. It should be a relaxed and unhurried experience.

To encourage children to eat, a chart could be used for children to rate their lunch to determine likes and dislikes. See appendix 1 for template.

Interactions

Providing good role models: staff can provide that positive role model. Sitting with children at meal and snack times can enhance social interaction both between children and with staff, turning meal and snack times into a positive learning experience. (Setting the Table p.102)

The adult role would be to –

- Set a good example at mealtimes
- Introduce and model good manners
- Role model conversations
- Support children to eat
- Promote independence
- Encourage children to try new foods
- Monitor portion sizes

The key adult should be seated at each table with the children, as far as possible, eating alongside them. All supervising adults will be provided with a free meal. It is not necessary for the adult to wear aprons and/ or gloves as they are not preparing food.

