

Inspection Top Tips

Managing Meals and Snacks

January 2026



Children's Homes Regulations



(1) The health and well-being standard is that -
(a) the health and well-being needs of children are met;
(b) children receive advice, services and support in relation to their health and well-being; and
(c) children are helped to lead healthy lifestyles.



Regulation 10



Children's Homes Guide

3.8 The registered person should ensure that children are provided with nutritious meals suitable for each child's needs. Where appropriate, children should be involved in choosing and preparing meals and opportunities to sit together and eat should be promoted.

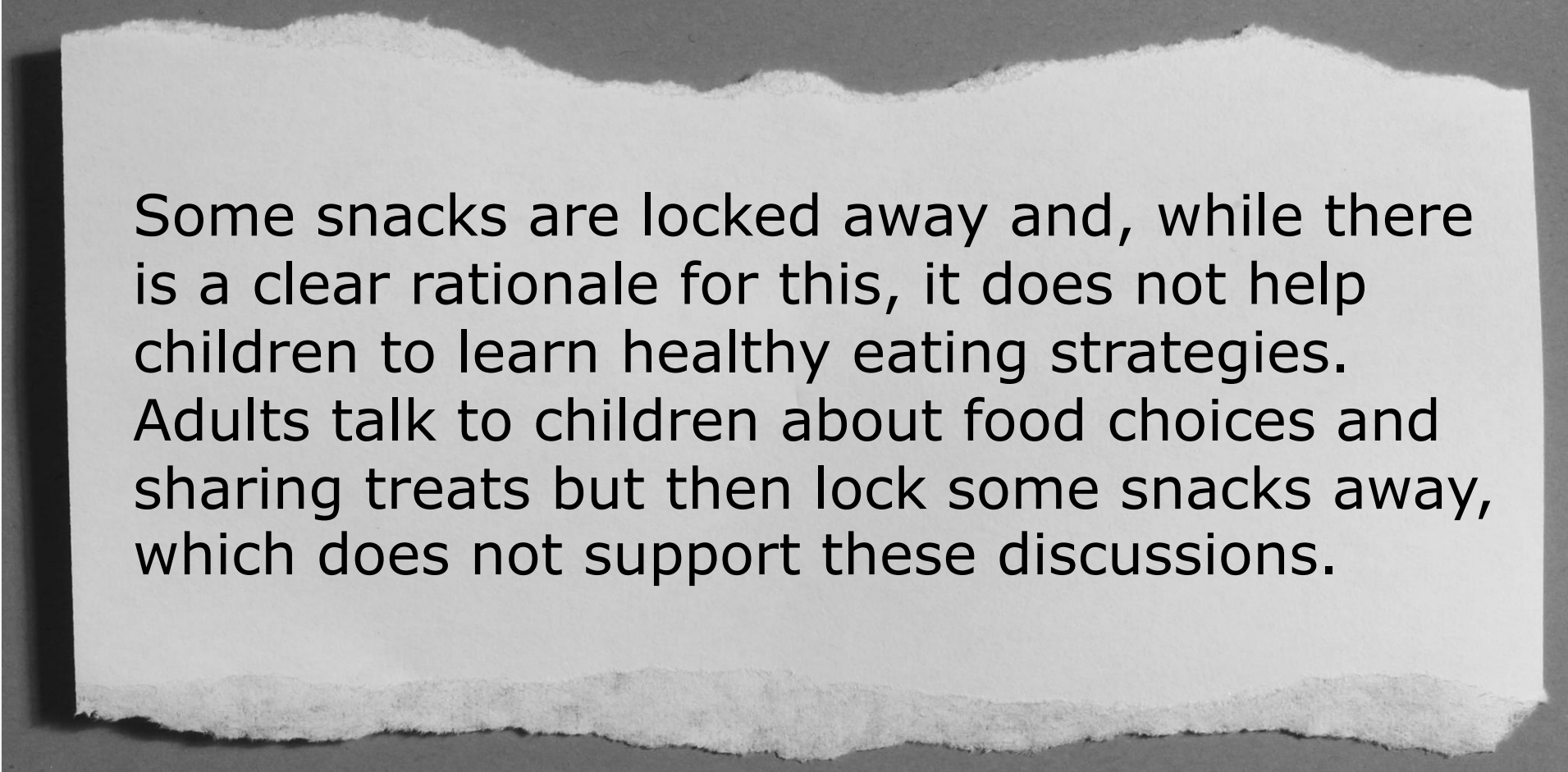


Children's Homes SCCIF Key Elements

- Staff always place the well-being of individual children at the centre of their practice.
- Their day-to-day needs are met, such as routine, privacy, personal space, nutritious meals and enjoyable mealtimes.
- The inspector will have discussions about how regular routines are established for children around mealtimes, bedtimes, school and weekend activities

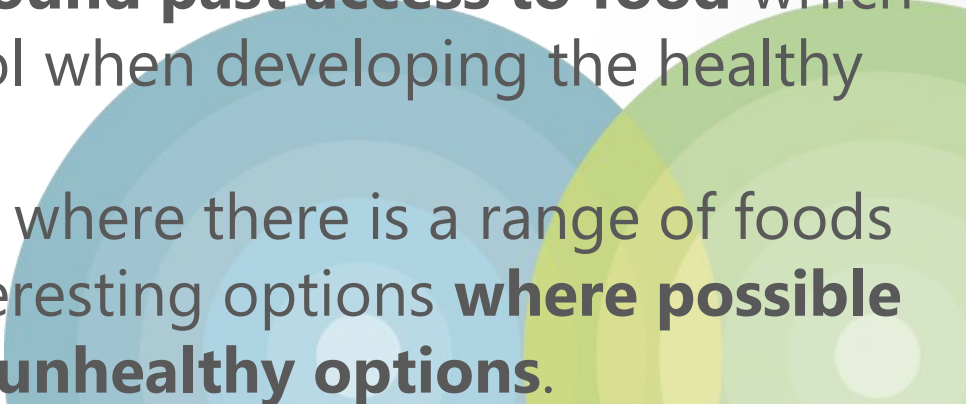


Ofsted comment from inspection – Requires Improvement

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Some snacks are locked away and, while there is a clear rationale for this, it does not help children to learn healthy eating strategies. Adults talk to children about food choices and sharing treats but then lock some snacks away, which does not support these discussions.

Top Tips...

1. **Involving children in menu planning, shopping and decision-making** ensures their views are listened to and acted upon in day-to-day living.
 2. **Make healthy options easy and accessible** and ensure there is regular access to nutritious food, drinks and snacks to support children's physical health and emotional well-being.
 3. **Practice should actively promote healthy lifestyles and avoid unnecessary restrictions** that could negatively affect a child's relationship with food.
 4. **Consider the experience of children around past access to food** which may have been limited or used for control when developing the healthy meal plan.
 5. **Have good routines around mealtimes** where there is a range of foods the child likes but introduce new and interesting options **where possible to promote discussion on healthy and unhealthy options.**
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Questions to consider...

- Does the background information of a child's experience around food and meals inform the care plan?
- Are all the staff team aware and model healthy eating in the home?
- Is there any restrictions to children accessing food in the home that are unnecessary but part of the home's routine?
- Is there information in the home about healthy food options for children to look at?
- When promoting healthy options is there sufficient understanding in the home about the impact of poor diet and food choices on children's development?

