

Nutritious Peanut and Tree-Nut Safe Lunch Suggestions [606 CMR 7.12(15)(d)]

A **nutritious lunch**, incorporating the ChooseMyPlate.gov/preschoolers suggestions should be balanced, keeping in mind these different food groups and quantities:

• **Example A:**

- 1 ounce grains
- 1 ounce protein food
- ½ cup vegetables
- ½ cup fruits
- ½ cup milk/dairy

Grains - click for more examples

1 oz equivalent = 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal

- 100% whole-wheat bread, bagels, or English muffins
- oatmeal
- 100% whole wheat crackers
- shredded wheat cereal
- toasted oat cereal
- whole grain corn or wheat tortillas
- brown rice
- whole grain pasta

Proteins - click for more examples

All foods made from meat, poultry, seafood, beans and peas, eggs, processed soy products, and seeds.

1 ounce of meat, poultry or fish, ¼ cup cooked beans, 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of soy nut butter, or ½ ounce pumpkin or sunflower seeds

Vegetables - click for more examples

Vegetables may be raw or cooked; fresh, frozen, canned, or dried/dehydrated; and may be whole, cut-up, or mashed.

- Cherry tomatoes (cut in halves)
- Cucumber, carrot, celery sticks
- Raw zucchini rounds
- Salad
- Raw broccoli
- Sliced red pepper

• **Example B:**

- 2 ounces grains
- ½ cup vegetables
- ½ cup fruits
- ½ cup milk/dairy

Fruit - click for more examples

Fruits may be fresh, canned, frozen, or dried, and may be whole, cut-up, or pureed.

- Orange
- Pear
- Apple
- Banana
- Applesauce, fruit cocktail
- Seasonal fruit:
 - Melon, Plum, Peach

Dairy - click for more examples

- Milk
- Yogurt
- cheese
- non-dairy alternatives:
 - Calcium-fortified juices, cereals, breads, rice milk
 - Canned fish (sardines, salmon with bones) soybeans and other soy products (tofu made with calcium sulfate, soy yogurt, tempeh), some other beans, and some leafy greens (collard and turnip greens, kale, bok choy).

Desserts

Whole-grain cookie
Granola bar
Puuding

Beverage

Water
Milk
Juice – 4 oz. 100% fruit juice

All lunches must contain an ice pack. Foods to be eaten hot should be put in a pre-heated wide-mouth thermos. See lunch routines information on other side.

Lunch Routines [606 CMR 7.12(15)(d)]

- Children's daily lunch should contain:
 - An ice pack and a drink (**NO glass containers**). Foods to be eaten hot should be heated and put in a pre-heated wide-mouth thermos. **FCNS does not have the facilities to heat up food.**
 - **NO foods containing peanuts or tree nuts** -- see lunch suggestions for alternatives.
- Please label **the outside** of your child's lunch box. **Label each container or package of food with your child's name and the date** – this is required by NAEYC to protect all children by eliminating any chance of confusing parts of your child's meal with those belonging to another child.
- Please provide your child with a lunch that is both "healthy" (see lunch suggestions) and easy to handle – our aim is to encourage as much independence as possible in the children. They are so proud when they can do everything themselves!
 - Please send utensils and a napkin from home.
 - Limit the number of choices of food – too many confuse and overwhelm the children. One item per food group is plenty.
 - Fruit should be peeled and cut up if that is the way your child prefers it.
 - Food should be in bags or containers that can be opened by your child.
 - **Candy is not permitted at FCNS.**
- The following items/foods are **too dangerous for us to manage in a school setting** – thank you for leaving them at home:
 - Sharp edges – metal cans with ring pull tops.
 - Choking hazard - see below
- **See nutritious peanut and tree nut-safe lunch suggestions on the other side.**

Choking Hazards adapted from www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers/food-safety/choking-hazards.html

Some foods are easy for your preschooler to choke on when swallowing them.

These include foods that are round and about the size of the throat –about the size of a nickel. Prevent choking by avoiding these foods or cutting them in small pieces--no larger than one-half inch (½").

Foods that may be choking hazards:

- Chewing gum
- Popcorn
- Chips
- Cheese cubes
- Round slices of hotdogs or sausages
- Carrot sticks or baby carrots
- Tough meat
- Hard candy
- Whole grapes
- Cherry tomatoes
- Large pieces of raw fruits and vegetables

To prevent choking:

- Have your preschooler eat at the table, or at least while sitting down. Do not let your child run, walk, play, or lie down with food in their mouth.
- Keep a watchful eye on your child while he/she eats.

- Cut food for your preschooler into pieces no larger than one-half inch (½"), and teach them to chew their food well.
 - Slice hotdogs and sausages lengthwise.
 - Cut meat and chicken across the grain into small pieces.
 - Slice grapes, cherry tomatoes, and other round foods in half.
 - Cook carrots or celery sticks until slightly soft, grate them, or cut them into small pieces or thin "matchsticks."
- Spread soy nut butter or sunflower butter thinly on bread or crackers. A thick "glob" of these butters can cause choking.

Resources for parents:

[Healthy Portions for Preschoolers](#)

[ChooseMyPlate/preschoolers](#)