

Foods that may cause choking and should be avoided before 4 years include:

The Center references the USDA's guidelines for choking hazards for children under 4 years old. Because we have a mixed age group in preschool, we restrict all of the items below for the entire room. Please pay special attention to the outline below when packing lunches.

Young children especially ages 2 to 3 years are at risk of choking on food. They remain at risk until they can chew and swallow better by age 4.

- Hot dogs
- Seeds
- Raw carrots
- Raisins and yogurt covered raisins (dried fruit)
- Fruit roll up
- Chunks of meat
- Whole grapes
- Marshmallows
- Round or hard candy
- Chips
- Popcorn
- Pretzels
- Raw celery
- Cherries with pits
- Large pieces of fruit with skin

Some foods can be offered if you change the form. For example:

- Cut hot dogs lengthwise into thin strips
- Steam carrots or celery until slightly soft, and then cut into sticks
- Cut grapes or cherries (remove pits) into small pieces
- Cut large pieces of meat or fruit into smaller pieces