

NAEYC Health Standard 5.B.14

Staff do not offer children younger than four years these foods: **hot dogs**, whole or sliced into rounds; **whole grapes**; **nuts**; **popcorn**; **raw peas** and **hard pretzels**; spoonfuls of **peanut butter**; or chunks of **raw carrots** or **meat larger than can be swallowed whole**.

Foods shall be cut into pieces no larger than **1/4-inch square for infants** and **1/2-inch square for toddlers/twos**, according to each child's chewing and swallowing capability.

Infants and toddlers often swallow pieces of food without chewing. Chicken tenders, fish sticks and other foods should be cut to the age group requirements. If this cannot be done, these foods should not be served regardless if the program provides the food or if it is brought from home. Staff should err on the side of safety regardless of whether a child has had problems chewing or swallowing.

Hard pretzel sticks and hard, small, traditionally shaped pretzels are high- risk foods for choking incidents.

This criterion is applicable to both food provided by the program, as well as food brought from home.

