Preschool snack ideas from the Kitchen, with allergy swaps

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Preschool snack ideas for every theme week, each a Peabody Kitchen recipe that names its allergens, shows a swap where there is one, and has lines for under-4s.

Each of Peabody's 52 preschool themes links one snack from the Peabody Kitchen, Peabody's own recipe shelf: 30 different recipes across the year, most of them no-cook. Every recipe page names the allergens it contains, shows a swap where there is one (sunflower seed butter for peanut butter, for example), and has lines for little ones under 4. Check each one against your room's allergy list and your program's rules before you make it. Peabody is free through the end of 2026.

A theme snack is a small thing that children remember. Apple week ends with a fruit cup; frog week has turtles made of kiwi. It ties the week together, and the children get to do the washing, pouring and stirring.

This post says only what the recipe pages say. We don't give food or allergy advice beyond that. Your program's rules and each family's instructions come first.

What every Kitchen recipe page shows

- Picture steps, read aloud, so a child can follow along.
- An allergen strip that names what the recipe contains as written. The Kitchen marks nine: peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, wheat, soy, sesame, fish and shellfish.
- A swap for an ingredient where there is one, such as oat yogurt for yogurt or gluten-free bread for bread.
- Lines for brothers and sisters under 4, such as "Cut grapes in half the long way for little ones under 4."
- The grown-up steps, marked on the page: cutting with a sharp knife, and anything hot.

The snacks, by theme

A selection from the year. The allergens are what each recipe contains as written, before any swap; the swap is the one the recipe page offers.

- Theme: Apples, Colors, Mixing colors · Snack: Rainbow Fruit Cup · Contains, as written: none of the nine · Swap on the page: none needed
- Theme: Shapes, Ocean, Frogs and ponds, Boats · Snack: Kiwi Turtles · Contains, as written: none of the nine · Swap on the page: none needed
- Theme: Rain and rainbows, Music, Water · Snack: Fruit Kabobs · Contains, as written: none of the nine · Swap on the page: none needed

- Theme: Butterflies · Snack: Fruit Caterpillar · Contains, as written: none of the nine · Swap on the page: none needed
- Theme: Scarecrows, Dinosaurs, Bugs · Snack: Ants on a Log · Contains, as written: peanuts · Swap on the page: sunflower seed butter
- Theme: All about me, Transportation, Opposites, Trains · Snack: Banana Sushi · Contains, as written: peanuts, wheat · Swap on the page: sunflower seed butter; corn tortillas
- Theme: Leaves, Weather, Flowers · Snack: Yogurt Parfait · Contains, as written: milk, wheat · Swap on the page: oat yogurt; the granola is optional
- Theme: Space, Winter and snow, My body · Snack: Frozen Yogurt Bark · Contains, as written: milk, wheat · Swap on the page: oat yogurt
- Theme: Seeds and growing · Snack: Chia Pudding · Contains, as written: milk · Swap on the page: oat milk
- Theme: Fairy tales · Snack: Overnight Oats · Contains, as written: milk · Swap on the page: oat milk; oat yogurt
- Theme: Five senses, Birds and nests, Counting · Snack: Trail Mix Your Way · Contains, as written: peanuts, milk, wheat, soy · Swap on the page: sunflower seeds; pretzels and chocolate chips optional
- Theme: Nursery rhymes · Snack: Mini Cracker Pizzas · Contains, as written: milk, wheat · Swap on the page: gluten-free crackers
- Theme: Pumpkins · Snack: No-Bake Pumpkin Pie Cups · Contains, as written: milk, eggs, wheat · Swap on the page: gluten-free graham-style crackers
- Theme: Farm, Community helpers · Snack: English Muffin Pizzas · Contains, as written: milk, wheat · Swap on the page: none listed

Four of the 30 cook: English Muffin Pizzas, Banana Oat Cookies (thankful and gingerbread weeks), Teddy Bear Toast (bears) and Owl Toast (night and day). On those, the hot step is a grown-up's step. The rest are no-cook, and the no-bake recipes page has more.

The lines for little ones

The under-4 lines come from the ingredients, so the same line appears on every recipe that uses that food. A few you'll see on the theme snacks:

- Grapes: "Cut grapes in half the long way for little ones under 4." (Rainbow Fruit Cup, Kiwi Turtles, Fruit Kabobs and others.)
- Peanut butter: "Spread peanut butter thin for little ones: a big lump can choke." (Ants on a Log, Banana Sushi.)
- Celery: "Raw celery is hard to chew for little ones under 4: cut it thin." (Ants on a Log.)
- Nuts and seeds: "Nuts and seeds are a choking risk for little ones under 4." (Trail Mix Your Way, with peanuts or with the sunflower seed swap.)

- Chia: the seeds "must soak first: never dry spoonfuls for little ones." (Chia Pudding.)
- Honey: "No honey for babies under 1." (Yogurt Parfait, where the honey is optional.)

Read the whole strip on the recipe page before you shop. These are the Kitchen's own lines, and your program's rules for your room come first.

Check before you make it

- Your room's allergy list, every time, even for a snack you've made before.
- Your program's own rules about food made in the room.
- Which steps a grown-up does: cutting, anything hot.
- The packet labels. Some ingredients, like crackers, tortillas and bread, are marked on the recipe page as ones whose label to read.

Try this on Thursday

On the wall plan from the theme planner, the snack goes on Thursday. One way to run it:

1. On Monday, open the week's snack and check it against your allergy list and your rules. Pick a swap, or another recipe, if you need to.
2. Shop with the ingredient list on the recipe page.
3. On Thursday, everyone washes hands first. Every Kitchen recipe starts there.
4. Give out the children's jobs: wash the fruit, pour from a small jug, stir, spread with a butter knife, arrange it on a plate.
5. Count the pieces before anyone eats them. It's the math corner, at the snack table.

Books to go with snack time

Some theme books are about food too. A Bun for Fran is about sharing a bun with a friend, and Jen and the Jam turns fruit into food with a silly mess. Both are on Peabody's free stories, at levels a four-year-old can follow along with.

If you want a theme built around food, the food and cooking week uses Butter in a Jar (milk and wheat as written, with gluten-free crackers as the swap), and its books include Sip, Sip, Sip. The snack time guide has the same checklist in one place.

Three things providers ask

Are the Kitchen recipes nut-free?

Some are, and the allergen strip on each recipe page says what it contains as written. Rainbow Fruit Cup, Kiwi Turtles, Fruit Kabobs and Fruit Caterpillar contain none of the nine allergens the Kitchen marks. Ants on a Log and Banana Sushi offer sunflower seed butter in place of peanut butter. Check your room's allergy list and your program's rules first.

Can I pick a different snack from the one the theme suggests?

Yes. The theme's snack is a suggestion. Any recipe in the Peabody Kitchen works, and its page shows the same allergen strip, swaps and lines for little ones.

Is the Kitchen free?

Yes. The recipes and the planner need no sign-in and show no ads, and Peabody is free through the end of 2026.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/preschool-snack-ideas