
No-Bake Energy Balls Kids Can Actually Make

Cooking | All Year | Ages 4-7

Last Tuesday my four-year-old asked for a snack eleven times before lunch. Instead of losing my mind, we made these.

No-bake energy balls are the easiest thing you'll make with your kids this month. No oven means no burns, no timers, and no standing over anyone. Just mixing, rolling, and a lot of sneaky licking of fingers.

What You Need

- 1 cup old-fashioned oats
- ½ cup peanut butter (or almond butter if allergies are an issue)
- ½ cup honey
- ½ cup mini chocolate chips
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Large mixing bowl
- Wooden spoon or spatula
- Plate or baking sheet
- Parchment paper (optional but helps with cleanup)

How to Make Them

Dump everything into the bowl. Yes, all at once. This is not fancy baking.

Let your kid stir. It'll be stiff and sticky — that's exactly right. If their arms get tired, tag in. Takes about two minutes of solid mixing until it all clumps together.

Stick the bowl in the fridge for 15 minutes. This step matters. Warm mixture equals flat, sad blobs instead of balls.

Pull it out and start rolling. Scoop about a tablespoon of dough, roll it between your palms. My kids made some the size of marbles and some the size of golf balls. Both work fine.

Line them up on a plate and refrigerate for another 30 minutes. Then they're ready.

What Actually Happens

Your four-year-old will eat chocolate chips straight from the bag. Let it go.

The dough is sticky. We keep a damp towel nearby for wiping hands between rolls. Also, cold hands work better — run them under cool water first.

These keep in the fridge for a week in an airtight container. We've never had them last that long.

Ways to Mix It Up

Swap chocolate chips for dried cranberries or raisins. Add a tablespoon of flax seed if you're feeling virtuous. Toss in shredded coconut. Use sunflower seed butter if you're sending these to preschool at Brookside or Prairie Village where nut allergies are common.

My six-year-old likes rolling the balls in extra oats or coconut before refrigerating. Makes them less sticky and she feels like a professional.

KC TipBulk oats and honey are cheap at the Costco on Linwood or any Hen House. If you want local honey, the City Market vendors sell it every weekend — tastes better and the kids think it's magic.

Make a double batch. One for now, one for the park. They travel well to Loose Park or Shawnee Mission Park without turning into mush in your bag.

