

Healthy Celebrations

There are many opportunities for celebration throughout the year, from birthdays to holidays to other special occasions that may occur. Food and beverages are often a part of celebrations, but they don't have to be the center of attention. With a few easy changes, the focus at parties can shift from unhealthy food to healthy fun!

What's wrong with cupcakes?

There's nothing wrong with having treats on occasion. Everything can fit into a healthy diet when consumed in moderation. Keep in mind, though, that each child's birthday can mean multiple celebrations: one at home with family, a party with friends, and then another at school or child care. Food doesn't always have to be part of parties. Instead, find ways to celebrate a birthday & recognize a child on their special day.



- Make a sign, sash, crown, button, or badge for the birthday child.
- Let the birthday child be the teacher's assistant for the day. They can do special tasks like make deliveries to the office or be the line leader.
- Let the birthday child choose an activity or game.
- Play an indoor game of the student's choice.
- Let activities such as dancing, games, crafts, or singing be the focus rather than food.
- Talk to children about the reasons for the healthy makeover, and involve them in the party planning.
- Ask children to help their parents remember to bring fruits and vegetables or other healthy snacks instead of sweets if they choose to bring treats.
- Highlight healthy practices in the newsletter or website.
- Celebrate a child's cultural heritage with traditional crafts, games, and stories.
- Replace the "cupcake tradition" with something new—for instance, drawing a birthday mural, creating a birthday hat, or other special activity.
- Celebrate birthdays once a month or combine the month's birthdays with a national cultural celebration.

Ideas for Healthier Celebrations:

- Have a scavenger hunt for items or information related to the party theme.
- Provide "free choice" activity time at the end of the day.
- Provide extra recess or play time.
- Celebrate creatively by setting up craft stations and playing music in the background. Ask parents to provide the supplies such as clay, craft paper, pencils, markers, paints, and stickers.
- Plan special party games.
- Have a dance party.
- Pick a children's book related to the party theme. Ask a special guest or a parent to come in and read it.
- Allow children a trip to the treasure box (parents can help supply it with small toys, books, note pads, paints, pencils, bookmarks, stickers, etc.)
- Check with child nutrition staff to see if they are able to provide fresh items or other healthy snacks for a reasonable fee.

