



# Healthy School

## C E L E B R A T I O N S

From birthday parties to holiday celebrations, there are many celebrations in elementary schools. Along with the fun, usually comes food. Just one school party can include pizza, sugary juice drinks, chips, cake and ice cream, plus a goodie bag with candy.

Offering so many treats so often can contribute to unhealthy eating habits. However, with a few easy changes, parents, teachers, and school administrators can shift the focus of school parties from unhealthy food to healthy fun.

### IDEAS FOR HEALTHIER CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS

- Have a scavenger hunt for items or information in the classroom or around the school.
  - Have children search for items related to the party theme.
- Provide "free choice" activity time at the end of the day.
- Provide extra recess 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.
- Read a children's book related to the party theme.
- Allow children a trip to the treasure box
  - (parents can supply it with small toys, books, note pads, paints, etc.).
- Allow students to pick a book of their choice and ask the principal or a parent to come in and read it.



### SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICIES

- Federal law requires every school district to have a local wellness policy. These policies must address nutrition education, physical activity, school meals, and all other foods and beverages available at school.
- Provide parents with healthy ideas for birthdays and other celebrations.
  - List only healthy items on the class party sign-up sheet.
- Experts recommend limiting celebrations that involve food to no more than one party per class per month.

# Birthday Parties

Keep in mind that each student's birthday can mean multiple celebrations: one at home with family, a party with friends, and then another at school. Food need not be part of school parties. Instead, find ways to recognize the child, celebrate them, and make them feel special.

## WAYS TO CELEBRATE A BIRTHDAY & RECOGNIZE A CHILD ON THEIR SPECIAL DAY:

- Make a sign, sash, crown, button, or badge for the birthday child.
  - They can do special tasks like make deliveries to the office or be the line leader.
- Let the birthday child be the teacher's assistant for the day.
- Let the birthday child choose an activity or game.
- Allow the student to pick a book and ask the principal or a parent to come and read it.
- Play an indoor game of the student's choice.
- Serve snacks with fun plates, napkins, cups or straws.
- Have a tasting party where children can vote for their favorite healthy snack.
- Use cookie cutters to make sandwiches or fruit more interesting.

## HEALTHY PARTY SNACKS:

- Fruit smoothies
- Trail mix
- Fruit Kabobs made with a variety of fruits
- Yogurt parfaits with non-fat or low-fat yogurt, low-fat granola and fruit
- Angel food cake topped with fresh fruit
- Light or Low-fat popcorn
- Low-fat pudding
- Applesauce or other fruit cups
- Raw veggies served with low-fat dip
- Berries with low-fat whipped topping
- Bananas or strawberries & chocolate syrup as dip
- Graham crackers with jam or apple butter
- Fresh apple slices with caramel or yogurt dip
- Have each parent bring in one type of fruit & kids can make their own fruit salad
- Raisins or dried fruit such as bananas, apples, peaches, apricots, plums, etc.
- Whole grain tortilla chips and salsa
- Whole grain crackers such as Triscuits with reduced-fat cheese

