

HEALTHY CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS

Birthday parties and holiday celebrations provide a great opportunity for schools to make healthful eating fun and exciting for students. Schools can promote a positive learning environment by shifting the celebration from the food to the child. Celebrations can include a variety of activities, games, and crafts and foods that taste good and are nutritious. An overall strategy to consider would be to have fewer parties and celebrate birthdays on a monthly basis.

Healthy Food Ideas

- Low-fat or nonfat plain or flavored milk, 100% juice, water, flavored/sparking water (without added sugars or sweeteners, sparkling punch.)
- Fruit Smoothies (low fat yogurt, fresh or frozen fruit, ice)
- Fresh fruit assortment, fruit and cheese kabobs, fruit salad, fruit with low fat whipped topping or topped with yogurt
- Dried fruit, 100%fruit snacks
- Vegetable tray with low-fat dip, celery and carrots with peanut butter and raisins
- Whole grain crackers with cheese cubes, string cheese or hummus
- Waffles or pancakes topped with fruit
- Pretzels, low fat popcorn, rice cakes, bread sticks, graham crackers and animal crackers
- Angel food cake, plain or topped with fruit and low-fat whipped topping
- Bagel slices with peanut butter or jam, fruit or grain muffin, whole wheat English muffin, hot pretzels
- Pizza with low-fat toppings (vegetables, lean ham, canadian bacon), pizza dippers with marinara sauce
- Ham, cheese or turkey sandwiches or wraps
- Low-fat pudding, low-fat yogurt, squeezable yogurt, yogurt smoothies, yogurt parfaits or banana splits (yogurt and fruit topped with cereal, granola or crushed graham crackers)
- Quesadilla or bean burrito with salsa
- Low-fat breakfast or granola bars
- Low fat tortilla chips with salsa or bean dip
- Trail/cereal mix
- Nuts or seeds

There is nothing wrong with an occasional treat but unhealthy food and beverages choices have become the norm rather than the exception. Healthy foods chosen as part of the festivities can provide an opportunity to reinforce nutrition lessons.