

HEALTHY CELEBRATIONS

HEALTHY KIDS ARE BETTER LEARNERS

HEALTHY PARTIES IN THE CLASSROOM

It's a special day! Why not celebrate with a treat?

We all look forward to special days, whether it is simply the end of a successful week, a holiday, or our birthday. As adults and educators, we want to celebrate each success and every milestone with our students. So why not celebrate with cake and cookies?

The environment for children has changed and at school, it is important to identify and respect what students *need*: a safe, healthy and nurturing environment, personal attention from caring adults, stimulating surroundings for mind and body. What children do not *need* is junk food at school, sugary treats and empty calories that provide nothing for their nutritional needs and may deter their concentration at school.

That is why our school encourages healthy celebrations that will add to the learning environment and the students' wellbeing. Celebrations should focus on fun, not food.



CELEBRATE THE PERSON

Elementary

- Allow the student to choose a free time activity
- Designate as helper, leader, or star for the day
- Decorate the student's desk. Create a traveling trophy to adorn the birthday person's desk
- Sit in the special chair for the day or wear the birthday sash
- Take a trip to the treasure box filled with pencils, stickers, note pads, or small trinkets

Secondary

- Recognition and attention: have classmates give a compliment to the birthday person
- Rewards: choose background music
- Extra privileges in the classroom
- Give a "No homework pass" for one subject
- Celebrity Status: visible signs of stickers, sash, crown, stuffed school mascot animal to carry

FINDING NEW WAYS TO CELEBRATE SPECIAL DAYS





Classroom celebrations can be a time to strengthen the message that healthy food choices lead to healthier bodies and minds. Students can learn different ways to celebrate and have fun without using unhealthy food as the reward.

Whether or not students believe the message may depend upon how the adults in their lives deliver the message and demonstrate its importance and serve as an example by modeling healthy choices.



Focus on Fun—not food

Make fun, not food, the centerpiece of the celebration.

- * Find ways to relate the celebration to academics.
- * Play an educational game.
- * Focus the party around art, music, or dance.
- * Read a new story or book chosen by the students.
- * For a special treat, invite parents or guest speakers to participate in the class.
- * Ask the birthday student to celebrate their individuality by telling about their favorite things.
- * Choose an imaginary travel destination (at random, or using a globe, or pick a slip of paper out of a jar) and take a virtual birthday trip. Learn about a new destination.
- * Celebrate cultures with stories of celebrations of other lands.



Healthy Students Learn More

- Healthy eating increases students' ability to learn and improves behavior.
- Schools can play an active role in teaching healthy lifestyles at an early age, thereby decreasing childhood obesity.
- Classrooms can serve as a powerful environment to model healthy lifestyle choices.

If Food is Served – Recommend Healthier Options

- Serve 100% juice, non-fat milk or water at parties, rather than sugar-sweetened drinks or soda.
- Offer fruits, vegetables and whole grains or low-fat dairy products.
- Suggest packaged foods such as granola bars, yogurt, 100% fruit bars, or whole grain crackers.
- Please refer to the Healthy Snacks handout or visit the websites provided.

For more information, visit these websites

www.cspinet.org/new/pdf/healthy_school_celebrations.pdf

www.actionforhealthykids.org

www.healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/hsmrs/Connecticut/CT%20Healthy_Celebrations.pdf

Keep local food safety regulations and food allergy concerns in mind.