



# Creating Healthy Schools

## Foods Served at Parties and Celebrations

Our school district understands the importance of providing nutritious foods and beverages that meet the standards set by U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans. To reinforce healthy habits at our schools, we will limit the foods and beverages served during parties and celebrations during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Each party will include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually. Classroom celebrations will focus on activities (e.g., giving free time, extra recess, music and reading time) rather than on food. The district will give a list of healthy party ideas and celebration guidelines to parents, families and teachers.

### Why is this important?

Making healthy food choices helps to create a positive learning environment. Foods served during classroom celebrations are often foods that are high in fat, added sugars, and empty calories like cake, candy, chips or soda. Celebrating with these food items promotes unhealthy food choices and can increase the risk of gaining weight and other health problems. It is important to set a positive example promoting healthy food items during parties and celebrations.

It is just as important to keep healthy food items at home to serve during times of celebration.



### How can I get more involved?

There are many ways you and your family can become active in supporting healthy celebrations in your child's school and classroom. Below are a few examples:

#### School Policy

- Ask to see if your school's wellness policy addresses school celebrations.
- Join the school wellness committee and advocate for school wellness policies.
- Ask your child what foods are being served at school and classroom celebrations.

#### Birthday Celebrations

- Instead of sending cupcakes or candy for your child's birthday, send a healthier option; some ideas are listed below.
- Provide non-food goody bags for your child's classroom birthday celebration.
- Provide supplies for special birthday games and activities.

#### Other Celebrations

- Donate a book to your child's classroom related to the celebration theme and volunteer to read it to the class.
- Visit your child's classroom and lead an activity.
- 30-day challenges – pick a healthy habit and organize a competition around it, starting with a kick-off event and ending with a healthy celebration.

#### Healthy Celebration Food Ideas

- Fruit Smoothies
- Fruit kabobs
- Low-fat trail mix
- Low-fat or nonfat milk
- Celery topped with peanut butter and raisins
- Low-fat yogurt
- Graham crackers
- Whole grain crackers with cheese
- Dried fruit
- Low-fat popcorn



### Other Resources:

- The Center for Science in the Public Interest has created a Healthy School Celebrations document with recipes for healthy celebration foods and celebration ideas broken down by month. Information can be found at:  
[http://cspinet.org/new/pdf/healthy\\_school\\_celebrations.pdf](http://cspinet.org/new/pdf/healthy_school_celebrations.pdf)
- The Connecticut State Department of Education has produced information regarding healthy celebrations that includes activities to replace food at school celebrations as well as the benefits of healthy celebrations. Information can be found at the following links:  
<http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/HealthyCelebrations.pdf>  
Also: [http://www.mdpta.org/documents/Healthy\\_Celebrations.pdf](http://www.mdpta.org/documents/Healthy_Celebrations.pdf)
- Action for Healthy Kids has information on ideas to modify birthday celebrations as well general school celebrations. This document is available at: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/game-on/find-challenges/1786-ten-tips-for-making-the-switch-to-healthy-celebrations>



## I'm interested in learning more!

Who do I contact?

Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

PTO President: \_\_\_\_\_

School Wellness Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

District Wellness Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

