

**Our goal at Tulita** is to offer healthy alternatives for school celebrations. There are several ways we can ensure students eating habits contribute to their overall, lifelong good health. Therefore, school wide it is recommended that non-food items or healthy food items be used for class celebrations and for class rewards. Below are some ideas to help think beyond treats when it comes to recognizing children's efforts, and for school wide celebrations.

## NON-FOOD BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION IDEAS

### CLASSROOM IDEAS

- Allow the birthday child to choose the game, activity, music, item, book, etc...
- Single out birthday child with a button/badge, crown, sash, sing the b-day song or head of line for lunch.
- Allow birthday child to be the first to do each classroom activity or be line leader for the day.
- Birthday prize box- ask parents to donate "prize" items/small trinkets to fill the box. Have a sign up sheet at the beginning of the year for parents to bring in a bulk item stock the prize box.
- Special book read to the b-day child (maybe they go to the library and pick one out to read to class).
- Special birthday item from class that they take home on their birthday and write about what they did to share with the class.
- Special show and tell for the birthday child.
- Maybe each month all the b-day kids get to eat lunch with the teacher or principal, or in a special place or table.
- Allow them to be teacher's helper for part of day, or help with special things, like deliveries around the school, bring books back to library, or be a helper in another classroom.
- Be helper around school (i.e. lunchtime, hanging up jackets in the lost and found bin, picking up trash or items on playground.
- Private lunch in the classroom with a friend.
- Sit by friends during class.
- Have birthdays included in announcements.
- They receive a free book from the school. Ask parents to donate books for this.
- When a birthday child shares a healthy treat, they get to visit or receive a prize from the principal.
- Can quietly listen to music while working.
- "No Homework" passes on their birthday.
- Class, homework time, or reading time in a special place like outside class on the tables.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- Bring in age-appropriate non-edible treat or a "goody bag" such as pencils, bookmarks, or stickers, tattoos, glow sticks, etc.
- Lead a simple craft activity. It is best if the parent can be there, but if unable send in supplies and directions for the class to do instead of eating a snack. Make sure to provide all the supplies and set up with the teacher in advance.
- Games- bring in a game or donate a new game to the class. Best if parent comes in to play games with the kids.
- Buy something for the classroom (books, games, music, plant, art supplies etc.).
- Come in and be a surprise guest reader and read a book to donate to the class.
- Have child donate a book and inside label it "This book was donated to Mrs. XXXX classroom in honor of XXXX 8th birthday." Have student read book to class if appropriate.
- Donate items to stock a birthday treasure box for b-day kids.
- Decorate a box with you child and send to class along with index cards and have the students use one sentence to write something nice about the birthday child to put in the box that they get to take home. Could also use an autograph book or a photo album made from class photos.
- Ask the teacher if you can send in a dance song, and have the whole class do the hokey pokey, the chicken dance, or the booty slide, whatever is your child's favorite.
- Bring in something that all the kids can sign as a birthday treat for the birthday kid (shirt/sweatshirt, tote bag, autograph stuffed animal, pillow case, etc.).
- Arrange a treasure hunt or scavenger hunt around the classroom for the kids. There can be a special treat at the end.
- Ask the teacher if you can have a show and tell time for your child on their birthday. Have them make a poster, bring in some of their favorite things, bring pictures, tell the kids about their favorite things or life etc.
- Have cards made from there classmates- bring in the supplies for this.

*There are many ways for making the birthday child feel special. Please feel free to brainstorm other ideas with your child and teacher. Always check with the teacher first to see what they find acceptable.*

## HEALTHY TREAT IDEAS FOR BIRTHDAY & CLASSROOM PARTIES

- 100% fruit juice or fruit slushes with no added sugar
- Fruit smoothies -serve w/colorful straws
- Fruit salad / kabobs – have kids help make. Use a variety of colored fruits and serve with low fat vanilla yogurt for dipping sauce.
- Fruit sundae bar- have the kids make their own with fresh fruit and low-fat yogurt
- Fresh fruit served in cupcake wrappers, waffle cones or waffle bowls
- Yogurt parfaits bar- serve fat free/low fat yogurt in cups. Set out toppings like fresh berries, bananas, granola/wholegrain cereal and shredded unsweetened coconut. Can also top with a cupcake topper.
- Berries with fresh whipped cream
- Graham crackers with different dips
- Pizza party- make your own using whole grain crust, bagels or English muffins. Top with lean protein, chopped vegetables, and low-fat cheeses
- Fat-free or low fat pudding
- Healthy snack cake squares topped with fruit and reduced-fat whipped topping
- Frozen fruit or fruit cups (in water, 100% fruit juice or light syrup)
- Watermelon pops- cut in chunks and push the pieces onto a popsicle stick and freeze overnight.
- Applesauce (Unsweetened)- Mott's Natural Style and Mott's Healthy Harvest line.
- Fruit bowls- Dole and Del Monte offer a variety of single-serve fruit bowls.
- Fruit Leathers- some brands are more like candy than fruit, due to high content of added sugars and lack of fruit. Try Natural Value Fruit Leathers and Stretch Island Fruit Leathers they don't have added sugars.
- Popsicles- look for popsicles made from 100% fruit juice like Breyers or Dole "no sugar added" fruit bars.
- Wacky Bananas- decorate unpeeled bananas with ribbons and birthday messages.
- Fruit cones- serve cut fruit like melon balls, whole berries, or grapes in ice cream cones
- Cinnamon tortillas with fruit salsa
- Popcorn cups- low-fat or air-popped popcorn with different flavors. Have child help decorate paper cups, small paper bags or movie theater-style bags with stickers, glitter glue, etc.,
- Strawberries filled with a dab of cream cheese
- Frozen yogurt tubes served with fresh fruit
- Dark-chocolate dipped strawberries
- Baked whole grain tortilla chips with salsa or bean dip
- Fresh apple wedges and dip
- Flavored water
- Healthy homemade muffins

*Serve snacks with fun plates, napkins, cups, or straws or have a tasting party where children can vote for their favorite healthy snacks.*

*\*Check ingredient statements and nutrition information to ensure items meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Ensure food allergies of any participants are known before serving any food item.*

**IS there a website for this we can include??**

**ALTERNATIVES TO FOOD AS A REWARDS or HEALTHY CLASS REWARDS**- Rewards can be an effective way to reinforce a child's good behavior and academic achievement. Recognizing their efforts can be achieved without food-based celebration which in return promotes good healthy habits. The following is a list of options, but is by no means a complete list.

- Dance party to favorite music
- Special art / craft time- or have an art party. Divide the classroom into 4 stations and at each station have a craft activity. Can also play music in the background.
- Talk time/free time at the end of class
- Reduced homework
- Music time or listen to music while working
- Extra recess
- Celebrate with physical activity- play a cooperative outdoor game as a class, have a hula hoop contest,
- Free choice time-let children vote between three options
- Extra computer time
- Listen to a book on tape
- Reward class achievement and behavior with coupons, tickets, tokens, stars etc.. in exchange for privileges
- Do an exercise video together
- Have a special guest or parent come into class and do a dance or teach a skill to them
- Have a themed scavenger hunt around the school
- Reading time in a special place- i.e. outside
- Teacher, principal, other school staff, or parent performs a

jump rope contest, relay race, have them design and run an obstacle course • Play indoor games of their choosing- board games they can bring in	special skill (singing, cartwheel...) or does something silly (gets slimed, dunked...) • Have a class lesson outdoors • Watch videos
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**RECOGNITION FOR REWARDS**

• Phone parents to tell them what a great day their child had or send a special note home. • Give a note to the student commending their achievement. • Design a caught being good in the act coupon.	• Maintain a recognition board in a specific location in the school. • Recognize a child or class's achievement during the morning announcements or in the e-blast.
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*Recognizing kids with respect and words of appreciation are better motivators than the use of food as rewards. Telling a child "Thank you for helping with..." is a healthy alternative to giving them treats for "good" behavior.*

**PRIZE EXAMPLES**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity/game sheets, puzzle books, cross words, word searches, Sudoku...</li> <li>• Balloons</li> <li>• Books, bookmarks</li> <li>• Balls- (beach, bouncy, juggling balls...)</li> <li>• Bracelets, rings, necklaces, charms</li> <li>• Bubbles</li> <li>• Capsules that become sponge figures</li> <li>• Colored chalk or sidewalk chalk</li> <li>• Coloring books</li> <li>• Crazy straws</li> <li>• Dice</li> <li>• Erasers, grips, pencil sharpeners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finger puppets or stuffed animals</li> <li>• Flashlights</li> <li>• Frisbees</li> <li>• Gliders</li> <li>• Glitter, glue</li> <li>• Hair accessories</li> <li>• Key chains</li> <li>• Magnets</li> <li>• Magnifying glasses</li> <li>• Match box cars, trucks, helicopters or airplanes</li> <li>• Notepads, journals, folders, drawing paper</li> <li>• Pedometer</li> <li>• Pencils, pens, highlighter, scented markers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pinwheels</li> <li>• A plant of seeds</li> <li>• Playing cards</li> <li>• Ribbon</li> <li>• Silly putty</li> <li>• Small dolls or action figures</li> <li>• Shoe laces</li> <li>• Spinning tops</li> <li>• Spirit wear</li> <li>• Sports equipment</li> <li>• Stencils</li> <li>• Stickers</li> <li>• Sunglasses</li> <li>• Whistles</li> <li>• Yo-yos</li> <li>• Jump ropes</li> </ul>
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There are many places to purchase inexpensive or bulk items: **If you want to keep this part in I can come up with more resources if needed.**

- Oriental Trading –[www.oriental.com](http://www.oriental.com)
- Party supply stores
- Dollar store
- Redondo beach library- has used books for sale
- Following websites offer free printable bookmarks, certificates, and/or posters: