


Healthy Food Ideas: School Snacks, Celebrations & Family Events¹



Snack time, celebrations, and family events are great opportunities to promote a healthy lifestyle, provide consistent messages and create excitement around nutritious choices. When food is a part of the school day or a special school event, offer a variety of healthy options including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low fat/fat-free dairy products and water.

<h2>Fruits</h2>	<h2>Low Fat/Fat-Free Dairy</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Fresh whole or sliced fruit assortment ■ Fruit salad or kabobs ■ Dried fruit or 100% fruit leathers ■ Frozen fruit (try frozen grapes!) ■ Sliced apples with cinnamon ■ Unsweetened applesauce ■ 100% fruit popsicles ■ Banana pops (bananas, sliced in half, popsicle sticks inserted, rolled in yogurt and whole grain cereal toppings, and frozen) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ String cheese ■ Yogurt (try squeezable!) ■ Yogurt smoothies or parfaits 
<h2>Whole Grains</h2>	<h2>Vegetables</h2>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Low fat popcorn ■ Whole grain bagel slices, muffins or pita with hummus or peanut butter ■ Low fat breakfast or granola bars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Raw vegetables (baby carrots, sugar snap peas, sliced bell peppers and more) with low fat dip ■ Celery topped with peanut butter & raisins or low fat cream cheese & 100% fruit preserves ■ Edamame – boiled soybeans served in the pods <p>DIPS: hummus, salsa, bean dip, honey mustard, low fat ranch, low fat yogurt</p>

WARNING: A small but growing number of kids have severe peanut and/or tree nut allergies. Before bringing in peanuts, peanut butter, or other nuts as a snack, make sure none of the children have an allergy.

Edible Art

Creative parents can make items like “Watermelon Turtles” (hollowed-out watermelons carved to look like turtles, filled with fruit) or “Veggie-Head Bagels” (mini whole grain bagels with low fat cream cheese; use small pieces of veggies like broccoli, carrots, and peppers to create fun faces). In fact, edible “food art” can be created using a variety of healthy foods. Kids will have a blast making and eating the good-for-you treats.

Drinks

- Water
- Low fat or fat-free milk
- 100% fruit juice
- Sparkling punch (seltzer & 100% juice)





Make health the expectation and the easy choice for students and families

- Promote fruits and vegetables by arranging them in a visually-appealing way to draw the attention of kids and families.
- If sweets or other treats are present, offer them in small portion sizes with other, healthier foods that balance out the meal. Try cutting treats in half.
- Create sign-up sheets that list items like fruits, vegetables, whole grain crackers, low fat/fat-free yogurt, cheese and milk – and don't forget the water. Include one line for a parent to bring in a less nutritious, more traditional party treat (which is an opportunity to teach moderation), or eliminate that option entirely.

Alternately, instead of sign-up sheets, send home a list of suggestions for healthy party snacks (check for food allergies before serving).

Healthy Food Ideas

Mixed Foods

- Air-popped popcorn with nuts and dried fruit
- Low fat cheese on whole grain crackers
- Graham crackers with peanut butter
- Sliced apples with low fat cheese slices
- Whole grain pizza with low fat toppings
- Whole grain pancakes topped with fruit
- Wraps with low fat ingredients
- Quesadillas or bean burritos with salsa
- Low fat cottage cheese with fruit
- Baked tortilla chips with salsa or bean dip
- Trail/cereal mix (low fat/low sugar)
- Fruit-n-cheese pretzel kabobs
- Whole grain rice cakes topped with bananas or other fruit
- Low sodium sliced turkey wrapped around slices of cucumber, bell peppers, or carrots
- Mini sandwiches cut into fun shapes with cookie cutters

Get Kids in on the Act! Parents can bring in the ingredients and kids can make their own:
Trail Mix – pretzels, dried fruit, whole grain-low sugar cereals, sunflower or sesame seeds, etc.
Fruit Salad – apples, oranges, strawberries, blueberries, bananas, kiwi, pineapple, etc.

Look for more healthy food ideas:

Coalition for Activity and Nutrition to Defeat Obesity (CanDo)

School Wellness Resource Kit:

www.ActionforHealthyKids.org/SchoolWellnessResourceKit-CanDo



Action for Healthy Kids® partners with teachers, students, parents, school wellness experts and more to fight childhood obesity, undernourishment and physical inactivity by helping schools become healthier places so kids can live healthier lives. Our programs, tools and resources make it possible for everyone to play their part in ending the nation's childhood obesity epidemic.

www.ActionforHealthyKids.org

The websites listed in this document are provided as a service only to identify potentially useful ideas and resources for creating healthier school cultures. Action for Healthy Kids is not responsible for maintaining these external websites, nor does the listing of these sites constitute or imply endorsement of their content.

¹ Adapted from "Healthy Celebrations," Connecticut State Department of Education, May 2005 & "Healthy Food Ideas," Ohio Action for Healthy Kids, 2012