

Healthy School Celebrations



WHAT'S THE HARM?

Typically, foods for school celebrations include cupcakes, candy, cookies and soda. So what's the harm? There is nothing wrong with an occasional treat, but unhealthy choices have become the norm rather than the exception.

Most children do not eat enough fruits, vegetables or whole grains. Obesity rates among children are on the rise, with serious health consequences. Constant exposure to low-nutrient foods makes it difficult for children to learn how to make healthy food choices. By providing students with nutritious choices wherever food is available (including the classroom), schools can positively influence children's eating habits.



SCHOOL OR CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS

- **Play indoor games of the students' choosing**
- **Engage the children in a special art project**
- **Take the children on a field trip**
- **Turn on some music and have a dance party**
- **Take a fun walk around the school with the principal or teacher**
- **Play games outside or host a field day- allow extra recess time.**

HEALTHFUL FOOD CELEBRATIONS

- **Make your own pizza party using chopped vegetables, fruits and low fat cheeses.**
- **Make your own fruit sundae bar with fresh fruit and low-fat yogurt or sorbet.**
- **Host a culture club—ask students to find and prepare healthy recipes from different cultures.**
- **Host an agriculture day—ask a local farmer to bring in produce and have a tasting party.**

Redondo Beach Unified School District

HEALTHY SNACK IDEAS

Serving healthy snacks to children is important to providing good nutrition, supporting lifelong healthy eating habits and helping to prevent costly and potentially disabling diseases such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity. Snacks play a major and growing role in children's diets.



Quick & Easy Snacks:

- Fruit salad with low fat cottage cheese
- Low fat chips and low fat salsas/dips
- Fruit wedges dipped in yogurt or peanut butter
- Fruit (apples, pears and grapes) with cheese
- Vegetables sticks with salsas/low fat dips
- Angel food cake with fruit and low fat topping
- Graham or animal crackers
- Low fat plain yogurt with fruit
- Crackers and peanut butter
- Granola and yogurt
- 100% fruit juice –add sparkling water!
- Fruit smoothies
- Air popped popcorn
- Bagels
- Cereal snack mix
- String cheese
- Edamame
- 100% fruit sorbets
- Pretzels
- Fruit and Nut Trail Mix
- Low fat frozen yogurt
- Water
- Low fat milk

"Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are."
Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin



PUMP UP THE NUTRITIONAL VALUE

Many brands offer whole wheat pretzels and whole grain crackers.

Try frozen fruit (choose the no sugar added variety) to make smoothies, toppings and parfaits. They are both nutritious and convenient.

Try cheeses made with part skim milk.

Many brands offer reduced fat or low fat chips. Trader Joe's sells a low fat tortilla chip, not marketed as low fat. It also has 4g of fiber per serving. Read the labels!

Try soy nut butter, sunflower seed butter and almond butter for peanut free alternatives.

Use dips made from legumes—such as hummus or black bean dip.



Funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Stamp Program, an equal opportunity provider and employer through the California Nutrition Network. For information about the California Food Stamp Program, please call 1-800-952-5253.





CELEBRATION IDEAS

Birthday Parties

Honor the child with a special button, badge, or crown.
 Allow the child to be "first" at something that day.
 Instead of food, ask parents to donate a book for the classroom or library in the child's name. Have the parents read it to the class.
 Sing "Happy Birthday!"
 Pizza with low-fat toppings (vegetables, Canadian bacon), pizza dippers with marinara sauce
 Ham, cheese or turkey sandwiches or wraps (with low-fat condiments)
 Low-fat pudding, low-fat yogurt, squeezable yogurt, yogurt smoothies, yogurt parfaits
 Quesadillas or bean burrito with salsa



Halloween -

There's more to Halloween than just candy.
 Explore Halloween's history and legends.
 Make homemade masks.
 Roasted pumpkin seeds
 Pumpkin bread muffins



Thanksgiving

Give thanks for what we have and for the people we have in our lives.
 Write a letter expressing our gratitude to someone special.
 Explore gratitude through poetry, art, or writing.
 Nut and dried fruit trail mix
 Corn bread



Winter Holidays

Community outreach is a natural activity at this time of year. Use money that would be spent on food for a worthy community cause.
 Decorate pillowcases for a homeless shelter.
 Make holiday cards for a nursing home.
 Collect animal treats for the animal shelter.
 Popcorn garlands



Valentine's Day

Ask students to write a positive attribute of each classmate and share them as valentines.
 Explore ways that love manifests through poetry, art, or writing.
 Angel food cake topped with fresh strawberry slices



St. Patrick's Day

Teach an Irish step dance.
 Explore the legends and history behind St. Patrick's Day.



Easter/Spring

Explore themes of renewal, nature's cycles, and new growth through reading, art, writing.
 Plant bulbs in the school yard in the Fall so they can be experienced in the
 Fill baskets with books and school supplies.



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NON FOOD REWARD IDEAS

Using food as a reward impacts health—both physical and emotional. Associating accomplishments with bad foods may foster the need to eat these foods in order to feel good. It is time to break the cycle.

Elementary School Students

- Make deliveries to office
- Teach class
- Sit by friends
- Eat lunch with teacher or principal
- Eat lunch outdoors with the class
- Private lunch in classroom with a friend
- Be a helper in another classroom
- Play a favorite game or do puzzles
- Stickers, pencils, bookmarks
- Certificates
- Fun video
- Extra recess
- Walk with the principal or teacher
- Fun physical activity break
- School supplies
- Trip to treasure box filled with nonfood items (stickers, tattoos, pencils, erasers, bookmarks, desktop tents)
- Dance to favorite music in the classroom
- Paperback book
- Show-and-tell
- Bank system - Earn play money for privileges
- Teacher or volunteer reads special book to class
- Teacher performs special skill (singing, cart wheel, guitar playing, etc.)
- Read outdoors or enjoy class outdoors
- Have extra art time
- Have "free choice" time at end of the day or end of class period
- Listen with headset to a book on audiotape
- Items that can only be used on special occasions (special art supplies, computer games, toys)

Middle School Students

- Sit with friends
- Listen to music while working at desk
- Five-minute chat break at end of class
- Reduced homework or "no homework" pass
- Extra credit
- Fun video
- Fun brainteaser activities
- Computer time
- Assemblies
- Field trips
- Eat lunch outside or have class outside



High School Students

- Extra credit
- Fun video
- Reduced homework
- Donated coupons to video stores, music stores or movies
- Drawings for donated prizes among students who meet certain grades standards