



Healthy School Snacks and Parties

School is a place where students learn academic skills like reading and math, and life skills like healthy eating, friendship and physical fitness. When families provide snacks for children at school, it is an opportunity to partner with the school to encourage healthy eating. Below are examples of fun, festive and nutritious snacks for families to prepare for school celebrations.

Please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Prepackaged, store-bought foods with ingredient and nutrition labeling are required.
- Ask the teacher ahead of time about any food allergies of students.
- Ask the teacher if regular-sized package of crackers, cereal, yogurt, etc., can be divided at school or if individually packaged items are preferred.
- It would also be helpful to send any paper products such as bowls, cups and spoons that will be needed to serve the snack.
- Cold foods, including cut fruits and vegetables and dairy products need to be kept refrigerated until serving.

Fruit Group

- Fresh fruit such as apples or bananas - be sure to wash!
- Store-bought fruit tray
- Pre-packaged apple slices
- Individual fruit cups
- Applesauce cups or pouches
- Dried fruits like cranberries, mango, pineapple, raisins, berries, etc.
- 100% fruit leathers or roll-ups
- Frozen 100% fruit popsicles
- 100% fruit juice

Vegetable Group

- Pre-packaged carrot sticks
- Store-bought vegetable tray
- 100% vegetable juice or 100% juice fruit and vegetable blends

Milk Group

- Yogurt cups or yogurt tubes - can also be frozen first for a cool treat
- String cheese
- Cheese cubes or slices
- Low-fat (1%) or non-fat plain and flavored milk

Grain Group

- Whole wheat crackers
- Whole grain cereal
- 100 calorie granola bars or snack packs
- Graham crackers
- Trail mix
- Whole grain tortilla chips, baked chips or sweet potato chips
- Pretzels or popcorn
- Whole grain muffins



Protein Group

- Bean dips such as hummus
- Nuts such as almonds or walnuts
- Pre-packed deli meat tray

Combinations from the Food Groups

- Bagels and low-fat cream cheese
- Snack mix – cereal, popcorn, dried fruit, pretzels, whole grain crackers, etc.
- Yogurt parfait with yogurt, cereal, fruit, etc.
- Cheese and whole grain crackers

Celebrations do not always have to involve food. You might consider some alternative ways to celebrate those special events. See the “Non-food Ideas for Celebrations at School” for more info.



Non-Food Ideas for Celebrations at School

Celebrations such as birthdays and holiday parties are important to every child and they like to celebrate with their classmates. However, not all celebrations need to include food. Fun facts about non-food celebrations:

- Have been found to be just as fun and special for kids
- Make it easier to involve all students, even those growing numbers of students with food allergies, diabetes or other health-related issues
- Ease the financial burden for some parents who struggle with the cost of purchasing food/drinks for an entire classroom
- Reduce waste, making them environmentally friendly
- Create less clean-up for janitors
- Make at-home food celebrations with family and friends even more special

10 Ways to Enjoy a Non-Food Celebration at School

Always check with your child's teacher first to see what they find acceptable for their classroom and be sure to provide advanced notice to make sure that they can fit the plans into their schedule.

1. Small age-appropriate toys or school supplies such as bouncy balls, stickers, erasers, pencils, tops, magnifying glasses, notepads, bubbles, etc.
2. Purchase a book for the classroom or school library.
3. Buy an educational game for use in the classroom.
4. Send in supplies and directions for a craft for the kids to do. Or create sidewalk chalk art or a mural.
5. Arrange for the kids to play a game indoors or outdoors. If you don't have any ideas, talk to your child's teacher. They are likely to know what the kids will enjoy and what will work well in the classroom setting.
6. Ask the teacher for extra recess. Go on a class walk, nature hike or historical walking tour of the local area.
7. Arrange a treasure hunt or scavenger hunt around the classroom or playground. You can even use a theme that ties into what they are learning in class.
8. Turn on some music and have a dance party. 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 Harlem shake! Invite the nurse or principal!
9. Have the children design, build and run an obstacle course. Do relay races such as a 3-legged race or balance a plastic egg on a spoon.
10. Plant herbs, flowers or vegetables. Each child could do the planting in small pots or make just a few to keep in the classroom.

