

Celebration / Party Guidelines

District regulations regarding parties as currently stated in the Student Handbook:

Parties may be held at the teacher's discretion throughout the school year to celebrate certain holidays or special occasions. If your child wishes to celebrate his/her birthday with the class, please contact his/her teacher in advance. The District strongly recommends students develop healthy lifetime nutrition habits. In keeping aligned with New Jersey State Nutrition Guidelines, when your child's class is having a celebration/party, please keep nutrition in mind. Please do not send in a treat where the first listed ingredient is sugar.

Birthday parties and holiday celebrations are an important part of school life, but sometimes students are eating much more sugar than recommended.

Healthy Celebration/Party Recommendations for Teachers and Families

Party Frequency

- Plan to celebrate all birthdays within each month, on one day, for party and food purposes.
- Acknowledge each child's birthday on their actual date with a non-food tradition (crown, "magic fingers", balloon, etc.)
- Student benefits will include less sugar and snacks, as well as less academic class time missed for parties.

Party Foods/Snacks

- Limit traditional sugary snacks (cupcakes, cookies, ice cream) to one item per party.
- Provide small or "mini" portions of such sugary snacks, with a limited plan for "seconds".
- Offer additional healthier alternatives such as fruit, veggies, whole grain crackers, lower salt pretzels, dairy items.
- Avoid nut snacks for all students.

*** See the attached list for some specific suggestions for many fun and healthy ideas!

Healthy Party Food Suggestions

Fruits

- Fruit kebabs
- Strawberry “flowers” on a lollipop stick
- Melon Munch
- Apples (small size)
- Clementines/Tangelos
- Bananas
- Watermelon slices
- Fruit juice (100%) as a beverage
- Sugar-free applesauce
- Fruit cups (peaches, pears, mixed fruit)
- Jello
- Dried fruit (craisins, apples, apricots, banana chips, freeze-dried berries)
- Raisins (plain or yogurt covered)

Vegetables

- Carrot “fingers”
- Cut veggies with low-fat Ranch “dip”
- Salad bar
- Veggie kebabs

Dairy

- Go-Gurts
- String cheese sticks
- Cheese “building blocks” to stack, then eat
- Yogurt parfait with fruit and low-fat granola (make their own, like a sundae)
- Milk boxes as a beverage

Grains

- Mini bagels with low-fat cream cheese
- Pretzels (lower salt and wheat versions are yummy, too!)
- Warm soft pretzels and mustard
- Whole wheat crackers (Triscuits, Wheat Thins)
- Popcorn
- Mini muffins (banana, corn, blueberry, etc.)
- Cheerios / Kix / Cracklin' Oat Bran "Snack Packages" (gift bags, party containers)

Other Favorite Ideas

- Taco making party
- Nachos with veggies and cheese
- Turkey and cheese pinwheels
- Water as a beverage in special "take home cups"
- Mini sandwiches (tuna, turkey, etc. with wheat breads or crackers)
- Hard-boiled eggs (sliced)

Drinks

- Water
- 100% fruit juice
- Veggie juice
- Fruit smoothies (blended fruit, ice, and water with yogurt)
- Milk (1% or fat-free) -- white or chocolate
- Apple cider