

Healthy school celebration ideas

Schools

Reinforce the healthy eating messages being taught in the classroom when celebrating birthdays and special events.

Schools and families commonly provide traditional 'party' options such as cakes, lollies, pastry foods and soft drinks to celebrate student birthdays and special events. However, these options don't support healthy eating messages, as they are most often low in nutritional value and high in energy, saturated fat, sugar and/or salt.

Try these ideas to help make classroom birthday parties and other school celebrations enjoyable for children, while reinforcing the healthy eating messages being taught in the classroom.



Party tips for schools

- Focus on activities, rather than food.
- Discuss reasons for healthier parties with students.
- Ask students to remind parents to provide healthier party options.
- Involve students in electing healthier party options they will enjoy.
- Provide smaller portion sizes of party food.



Food ideas

Savoury

These can be offered as a healthier alternative to sausage rolls, frankfurts, pies and commercial pizzas. Try these ideas:

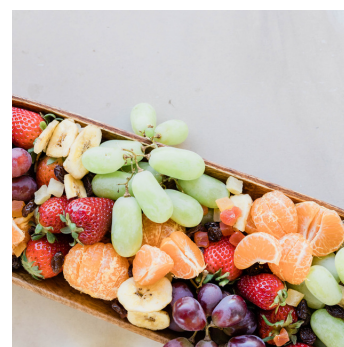
- a 'nibble platter' with:
 - reduced fat cheese
 - hummus, tzatziki, or salsa
 - wholegrain or wholemeal crackers
 - cherry tomatoes, snow peas, carrot, cucumber, capsicum sticks and green beans
- popcorn (minimal fat, salt and/or sugar added)
- platter of salad-based sandwich triangles or wraps
- mini pizzas made on English muffin bases (no bacon or salami added)
- toasted sandwich triangles
- bean quesadillas or burritos made with wholemeal tortilla bread
- oven baked wholemeal pita pieces with salsa and reduced fat Greek yoghurt
- baked potatoes with toppings (e.g. coleslaw, plain yoghurt, baked beans and reduced fat cheese)
- corn on the cob, and
- vegetable or meat BBQ kebabs.



Sweet

These options can be offered as a healthier alternative to birthday cakes and lolly bags:

- sliced fruit platter (serve alone or with reduced fat yoghurt)
- fruit kebabs (fresh or frozen), fruit salad, fruit platters, canned fruit (in natural juice)
- watermelon slices
- dried fruit without added sugars or coatings
- yoghurt parfaits (recyclable disposable plastic cups with layers of reduced fat yoghurt and fruit and/or whole grain cereal as a topping)
- snack mixes (muesli, dried fruits, nuts or popcorn). Check your school's allergy/anaphylaxis policy regarding the provision of nuts and products containing nuts, and
- English muffins, pancakes or raisin bread (with a thin spread of margarine, honey or 100% fruit jam).



Drinks

- Water
- 100% fruit juice without added sugar (serve size 250ml or less). Get the students involved in making fresh juices.
- Reduced fat plain or flavoured milk (serve size 300ml or less).
- Fruit smoothies (made with frozen fruit, reduced fat yoghurt and milk). Serving size of 300ml or less.
- 100% fruit juice slushes with no added sugar. Serving size of 200ml or less.



Non-food ideas

Here are some fun ideas to celebrate at school, without focusing solely on foods and drinks. This may also help to reduce the amount of less healthy options that are consumed by students.

Combine

- Celebrate combined birthdays once per month.
- Parents provide small trinkets for a treasure chest that is shared with the class each month.

Focus birthday celebrations towards marking a special national event such as:

- A multicultural themed day
- Easter
- Chinese New Year
- Christmas



Create

- Create a healthy party ideas book (e.g. healthy recipes, activities, games and crafts).
- Ask parents to provide a large card for the class to write birthday wishes.
- Create a 'Celebrate Me' book with stories, poems and pictures to celebrate the birthday child.
- Get students involved in preparing for celebrations (e.g. making decorations).



Play

- Plan special party games.
- Give children extra recess time instead of a class party.
- Let the birthday child choose and lead an active game for everyone.
- Arrange a treasure hunt around the classroom or playground.
- Birthday student takes home a class toy, or special item for the night.

Shine

- Birthday child leads a special 'show and tell' activity.
- Celebrate a child's cultural heritage with traditional crafts, games, fancy dress and stories.
- Allow the birthday child to help with special tasks for the day
- Have a birthday celebration photo board on the wall.



Share

- Parents bring small items to share with class members (e.g. pencils, stickers or erasers).
- Parents donate a book to the classroom or library in the child's name.
- Parents contribute items to a 'class Christmas hamper' which is given to a charity of choice.

Healthy school celebration ideas

Dress up

- Birthday student wears a special sash, crown, cape, or carries a special item for the day.
- Invite all students to celebrate the special day by wearing a selected colour or special item (e.g. badge, funny hat, a red coloured piece of clothing, etc.).



Dance

- Have a classroom dance party or 'dance-off' competition. Let the birthday student choose their favourite song to play from a list of classroom favourites (approved by teacher first).



Watch

- Birthday student chooses favourite online video clip for class to watch (teacher to approve first).