



Healthy Celebrations

Tips for parents

Improving children's eating habits is the responsibility of schools, families and communities. Small changes can make a big difference in children's food choices. Celebrations or rewards that include healthy foods send a consistent message to children of the importance of eating healthy.

Adults may not realize it, but children pay attention to what they do. Children follow adults' choices about what to eat and how to be active. It's never too early for adults to set an example of healthy habits. Family meals and celebrations are good times to show children how to eat healthy foods and be more active.



Using food as a reward can have a negative effect. Food rewards can promote eating more calories by teaching children to eat when they are not hungry. Using candy as a reward can lead to a preference for sweets. Unhealthy food rewards also send mixed messages to the children and may lead to excess weight gain.

Benefits of healthy celebrations and rewards:

- Promotes children's health and learning
- Helps carry a consistent message between home, school and community
- Prevents risks of food allergies
- Helps fight childhood obesity

Things to do at home for rewards or celebrations:

- Offer rewards like movie, miniature golf or bowling passes
- Set aside time to play with your children and give them the option to choose an activity
- Plan simple party activities like hide and go seek, dancing, hopscotch, kick ball, Simon says, card or board games
- Place more emphasis on activities and less on food
- Serve small party snacks or bite-size finger foods
- Choose snacks from each of the MyPyramid food groups

