



Healthy Celebrations

in schools

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.

School and classroom party celebrations often consist of low-nutrient, high-fat, high-sugar foods and beverages. These foods are fine occasionally, but if celebrations constantly include unhealthy foods, they can contribute to children consuming additional calories. School lunches, fundraisers, vending machines and snacks can also be common sources of less healthy food choices.

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 in the school for rewards and celebrations:

- Focus on non-food rewards like stickers, pencils, erasers
- Reward hard work with a homework pass or reading break time
- Make a wall of fame that highlights accomplishments to celebrate birthdays



- Instead of treats to celebrate birthdays, have kids bring a favorite book to donate to the class and put his or her name in it
- Make a wall of fame that highlights accomplishments to celebrate birthdays
- Have classmates write something positive about the birthday boy or girl to be put in a special birthday book
- Let the child be the teacher's assistant for the day

