

be healthy • be active • be well

Nutrition



Fitness



Health



Toolkit

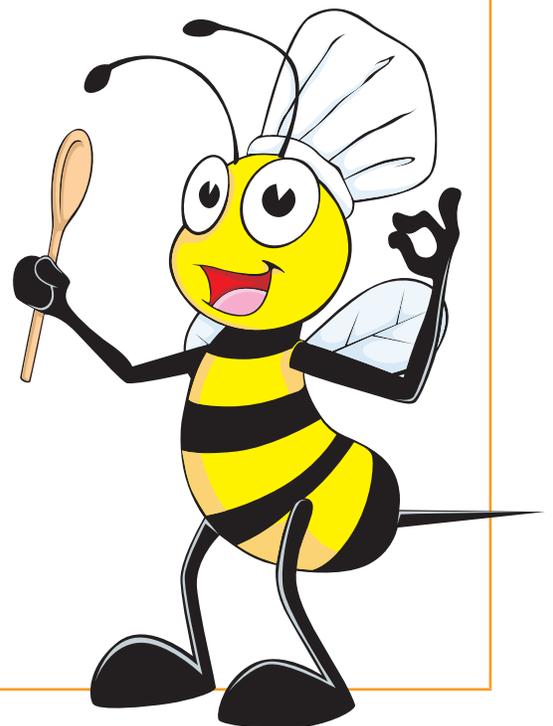
## Focusing on students rather than the food

Celebrating birthdays and other special occasions in the classroom is fun and provides a great way to teach students about healthy eating. While a child's birthday comes only once a year, multiply that by the 25 students in a class, then add parties for Halloween, Valentine's Day, and other holidays year round and you have a routine flow of celebrations which could involve potentially unhealthy food choices. The occasional treat is okay, but we want to work together as a school district and with parents to ensure students participate in healthy celebrations at school, reducing the exposure to high-fat, high-sugar, low nutrient treats.

### Benefits of Healthy Celebrations<sup>1</sup>

- ◆ **Healthy Students Learn Better** - Research clearly demonstrates that good nutrition is linked to better behavior and academic performance. As a District, we strive to provide a healthy learning environment for our students.
- ◆ **Consistent Messages** - Providing healthy classroom celebrations demonstrates a school commitment to promoting healthy eating habits. It supports the classroom lessons students are learning about health, instead of contradicting them. Healthy celebrations promote positive lifestyle choices to reduce student health risks and improve learning.
- ◆ **Healthy School Environment** - To enhance good eating habits, students need to receive consistent, reliable health information and ample opportunity to use it. Healthy celebrations are an important part of providing a healthy school environment.
- ◆ **Excitement About Nutrition** - Children are excited about new and different things, including fun party activities and healthy snacks. School staff and parents need not worry that children will be disappointed if typical party foods are not served in the classroom. Holiday treats and traditional birthday parties with cake can still be available at home.
- ◆ **Protect Children with Food Allergies** - When parents send in food, it is difficult to ensure the safety of children with food allergies. Schools can protect food-allergic children by providing nonfood celebrations or, if food is served, obtaining it from known sources such as the school food service program.

<sup>1</sup>Healthy Celebrations, Connecticut State Department of Education, May 2005 (Revised November 2011)



## Ideas for nonfood celebrations (elementary)

- Throw an annual school or classroom party.
- Limit celebrations with food to no more than one per month per classroom, with a limit of no more than one “junk” food item that does not meet nutrition standards.
- Plan special party games or consider game/learning stations with puzzles, games, or art/craft projects.
- Ask parents to provide games, pencils, erasers, stickers, or small school supplies to use as prizes, rather than food.
- Have a dance party to incorporate physical activity.
- Read books related to the party or holiday theme.
- Instead of food, parents could purchase a favorite book for the classroom in honor of their child. Invite the parent to read the book or attend when the book is being read to the class.
- Give students extra recess time instead of class party. For birthdays, let the birthday child choose and lead an active game for everyone.
- Create a birthday “package.” The birthday student wears a sash and crown, sits in a special chair, and visits the principal’s office for a special surprise (pencil, sticker, bookmark, etc.).
- The birthday student can be the teacher’s assistant for the day and gets to do special tasks, such as making deliveries to the office, leading the line, starting an activity, and/or choosing a game or story.



### Kid Favorite



Party mix with whole grain colorful goldfish crackers, pretzel sticks, popcorn, Teddy Grahams, and dried cranberries.

## HEALTHY FOOD IDEAS FOR CELEBRATIONS

100% Juice (small)  
 Angel food cake  
 (plain or topped with fruit)  
 Animal crackers  
 Baked tortilla chips with salsa or low-fat dip  
 Bean burrito with salsa  
 Bottled water (small)  
 Bread sticks (whole wheat)  
 Bread sticks with marinara  
 Breakfast/cereal bars (low-fat)  
 Crackers (whole grain) or pita chips with  
 cheese sticks/cubes or hummus  
 Dried fruits  
 Fresh fruit and cheese kabobs  
 Fresh fruit wedges/slices  
 Frozen 100% fruit juice pops  
 Fruit bowls  
 Fruit smoothies (low fat milk)  
 Graham crackers  
 Milk (small and low-fat/fat-free)  
 Mini bagels with whipped light  
 or fat-free cream cheese  
 Mini muffins  
 Pizza (whole grain crust and low fat cheese)  
 Popcorn (low-fat)  
 Pretzels  
 Quesadillas with salsa  
 Rice cakes  
 Sparkling punch (seltzer and 100% juice)  
 Turkey, ham, cheese sandwich on whole  
 grain bread/wraps  
 Vegetable chips with salsa or low-fat dip  
 Vegetable sticks/slices with  
 low-fat dressing or yogurt dip  
 Waffles/pancakes (whole grain) with fruit  
 Yogurt (low-fat or light)  
 Yogurt (squeezable)  
 Yogurt and fruit parfaits  
 Yogurt banana splits with fruit (topped with  
 cereal or crushed graham crackers)

**Although nuts are nutritious, please avoid serving them due to food allergy concerns.**

\* This list is not all inclusive and is meant only to provide school staff and parents with guidance for healthier food and beverage choices. Not all items on this list will necessarily meet district nutrient standards, as items vary in sugar, fat, and calorie content from brand to brand. However, all of the items listed are believed to be consistent with the intent of the wellness policy to promote student health and reduce childhood obesity.



# Classroom Celebrations

## Healthy Holidays<sup>1</sup>

Ideas for celebrations during the academic year

### October

#### HALLOWEEN

- Focus on costumes and fun instead of candy.
- Instead of candy, try distributing small toys (i.e. stickers, small plastic spiders or ghosts, etc.)
- Decorate pillowcases or bags for trick-or-treating.

#### Healthy Party Snack Ideas

- Kiwi (cut in half and serve with a spoon)
- Apple cider
- Apples with caramel or yogurt dip
- Pumpkin dip and graham crackers
- Roasted pumpkin seeds
- Snack fruit cups (peaches or mandarin oranges)
- Orange-color fruit (i.e. oranges, cantaloupe, mangoes)
- Carrots with low-fat ranch dressing
- Use Halloween cookie cutters to make spooky sandwiches or fruit

### November

#### THANKSGIVING

- Have students write or draw a picture about what they are thankful for and share it with the class.
- Create a garland of gratitude. Cut leaf shapes out of construction paper, then crinkle them up to create the lines in a leaf. Flatten them out and have students write what they are grateful for. Use a piece of string and tape the stem of the leaf over the string. Display the garland in class.
- Do a service project as a class field trip.

#### Healthy Party Snack Ideas

- Turkey roll ups
- Whole grain English muffins or graham crackers with apple butter spread
- Warm apple cider
- Pumpkin dip

### December/January

#### WINTER HOLIDAYS

- Make holiday cards for nursing home residents.
- Decorate classroom with a winter theme.
- Make snow globes out of baby food jars and white glitter or snowflakes. Fill them with water until a half inch is left at the top and seal the lid with hot glue gun.

#### Healthy Party Snack Ideas

- Hollow out red and green peppers and fill them with a dip such as low-fat ranch, hummus, or guacamole and serve with vegetables
- Make fruit kabobs, alternating red and green grapes or red and green apples
- Serve green beans, broccoli, and tomatoes with a low-fat dip

### February

#### VALENTINE'S DAY

- Have students write down one positive comment about each classmate (i.e. "You're a good friend"), and pass them out.
- Create a Valentine's Day card holder. Cut a paper plate in half, have students paint/color it, and write their name on it. Use a hole punch to make holes around the bottom curve of the plate. Stitch the two halves together with colorful ribbon/string. Make a handle with the string to hang on desk.

#### Healthy Party Snack Ideas

- Cherry tomatoes and red peppers with hummus or ranch dressing
- Strawberries, dried cranberries, red grapes, apples
- Very-berry pink smoothies using strawberries for the fruit

<sup>1</sup>Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)

## March

### ST. PATRICK'S DAY

- Teach an Irish step dance.
- Decorate classroom with shamrocks made from construction paper.
- Plan a St. Patrick's Day scavenger hunt that leads to a pot of gold filled with treasures (i.e. markers, pens, pencils, and/or erasers).
- Read about Irish history or a story about St. Patrick.

### Healthy Party Snack Ideas

- Kiwi (cut in half and served with a spoon)
- Cucumbers, celery sticks, broccoli, sugar snap peas, green beans, or green peppers with hummus or a low-fat dressing.
- Whole grain tortilla chips with guacamole
- Try edamame - it's fun to eat and easy to serve!



## Recipe Ideas

### FRUIT DIP

- 1/2 cup vanilla low-fat yogurt
- 1 tsp. honey
- 1/4 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. nutmeg

Mix ingredients together until blended. Serve with fruit.

### BASIC SMOOTHIE

- 1/2 to 1 cup fresh or frozen fruit
- 1 cup plain non-fat yogurt
- 1/2 cup fruit juice
- 4 ice cubes or frozen fruit instead of ice

Combine all ingredients in blender and process on high until ice is crushed and mixture is smooth and creamy.

### PUMPKIN DIP (from the Dannon Institute)

- 1 tbsp. canned pumpkin
- 1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt
- 1 tsp. 100% orange juice concentrate
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon (optional)
- 1 tsp. maple honey (optional)

Mix ingredients together. Serve cold or warm.

## April/May

### SPRING PARTY

- Plan a nature walk to see plants re-awakening in the spring weather.
- Decorate plastic eggs with paint, glitter, and stickers and put physical activity messages inside (i.e. "hop on one leg 5 times" or "do 6 jumping jacks"). Have an egg hunt with students acting on the messages.
- Decorate flower pots for parents, planting a flower or seed inside.
- Work on a school garden project.

### Healthy Party Snack Ideas

- Carrot muffins
- Carrots with hummus or a low-fat ranch dressing
- Berries with or without whipped topping
- Fruit smoothies

## June

### END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR

- Talk about fruits from around the world and discuss where they originated.
- Have a tasting party with star fruit, papaya, mango, kiwi, guava, and/or pineapple.
- Visit a local farm, garden, or grove to learn about fruits and vegetables that grow in our area.
- Have students make a collage or write a story about what they plan to do over the summer.
- Have students write stories or put together items that remind them of the past school year. Have students take them home.
- Plan an outdoor game or activity to enjoy the warm weather.

## Keeping nutrition and health in mind

Fundraising helps schools supplement budgets and contribute to school activities. However, fundraising activities should be in keeping with the Collier County Public Schools Wellness Policy to promote healthy lifestyles, thus avoiding the sale of empty calorie foods.

### Ideas for Healthy Fundraising

- Have student make **artwork or greeting cards** and sell their masterpieces
- Host a **book fair** at the school
- **Brick/tile/paver/stone memorials** on school property
- Sell **candles** - consider using organic soy candles, which are good for the environment
- **Car/pet wash** - consider pre-selling tickets
- **Cookbook fundraiser** - Collect healthy recipes from students, staff, and community members, then put them together in a cookbook. Students then sell the cookbook for fundraising
- **Farmers market** - sell table/booth space
- **Family night** - organize fun events for the family to enjoy
- Sell **flowers, plants, or bulbs** for special occasions such as Mother's Day or Valentine's Day
- **Happy grams** or holiday/special occasion grams
- **Read-a-thon** (pledge by the page)
- Collect **recycled items** (cell phones, cans, bottles, etc). which can then be sold to recycling companies
- **Shopping donation programs** with local businesses - business gives a percentage of community members' purchases to the school.
- Rent out **special parking spaces**
- **Singing telegrams** - people purchase telegrams for special occasions (especially popular with music students)
- Faculty and/or student **talent show** - sell tickets
- **Trash to treasure community sale** - sell table/booth space
- **Treasure hunt/scavenger hunt**
  
- **Instead of candy, sell items such as:**
  - Emergency/first aid kits
  - Bike helmets and accessories
  - Herbs/local organic gardening supplies
  - T-shirt quilts
  - Stuffed animals
  - School branded items (i.e. t-shirts, mugs, caps, etc.)
  - Educational games
  - Holiday decorations/wreaths/trees
  - Bottle water with school logo on label
  - School calendars



## Fitness Fundraisers



- Bike-a-thon (pledge per mile)
- Bowling/skating night
- Dance-a-thon (pledge per hour)
- Golf tournament
- Hold a cheerleading clinic
- Hold a sports clinic
- Pedometer sale
- Teacher/student sports competition
- Walk-a-thon (pledge per mile)

## Alternatives to using food as a reward

Typically, food rewards are high in sugar, fat, and/or calories with little nutritional value (empty calorie foods = high calories and low nutrients). Although using food as reward is easy, inexpensive, and may promote short term behavior change, the long term effects have many negative consequences that go far beyond any short term benefit. The concept of using food as a reward does not model a healthy lifestyle. It may contribute to poor health such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and dental cavities. It may also encourage overconsumption of empty calorie foods, contribute to poor eating habits, and increase the preference for sweets.

Research clearly shows that healthy kids learn better, and Collier County Public Schools is committed to promoting a healthy learning environment.

### Ideas for Non-Food Rewards (elementary)

- Give a smile and provide verbal praise
- Allow student to go first in line or during an activity
- Allow student to sit by his/her friends
- Give student the title of "Teacher's Helper" for the day
- Let the student choose a class activity
- Have the student eat lunch with the teacher or principal
- Give extra credit or class participation points.
- Allow student to take care of the class animal for the day
- Place a photo recognition board in a prominent location in the school
- Give student a note from the teacher commending his/her achievement
- Make a phone call or send an email/letter to the student's parent/guardian
- Recognize student on the school's morning announcements or school website
- Give student a ribbon or certificate of achievement
- Give student a sticker with an affirming message (i.e. "Great Job")
- Allow student to visit the non-food treasure box to pick out an item (i.e. stickers, pencils, pens, sidewalk chalk, bookmarks, notepads, etc.)
- Allow student the next turn for show-and-tell
- Set up a bank system for the class with students earning play money for privileges

### Rewarding the entire class

- Enjoy class outdoors
- Take the class on a field trip
- Eat lunch outdoors
- Give the class extra recess
- Take a fun physical activity break
- Give the class extra art time
- Dance to favorite music
- Read special book to class
- Watch a fun video





## Integrating Nutrition into Curriculum

Evidence shows that nutrition and learning go hand in hand. Therefore, nutrition education is coordinated from the classroom to the cafeteria where learning opportunities and experiences promote the practice of skills and reinforce attitudes which are needed for behavioral changes that will positively impact students' health.

Classes are conducted according to the Competency Based Curriculum guidelines, which are specific for age/grade level. Critical thinking links to subjects such as mathematics, physical activity, art, and sometimes music, in the lesson enhance integration of subject matter and nutrition education.

Opportunities are provided for students to taste new foods or foods that are low in fat, sugar, and sodium, or high in fiber, vitamins, and minerals. These experiences are created by hands-on making of healthy snacks, breakfast items, or other meals within the lesson.

Nutrition education empowers the student to select and enjoy healthy foods while learning about lowering their risks of chronic diseases and developing healthy lifestyles. Nutrition education is crucial to the well-being of every child.

### Kindergarten

Identify nutritionally desirable foods. Distinguish healthy and unhealthy foods.  
(HE.A.1.1.9)

### Grade 1

Classify foods and the group to which they belong. Discuss food choices and snacks.  
(HE.A.1.1.9a)

### Grade 2

Discuss food groups, My Plate, and daily serving numbers.  
(HE.A.1.1.9a)

### Grade 3

Explore food patterns, customs, and cultures. Discuss food values for a variety of foods and family influences on food choices. Analyze menus, exercise, and diet influences.  
(HE.A.1.2.2, HE.A.1.2.7, and HE.A.1.2.10)

### Grade 4

Discuss the functions of nutrients and their effects. Learn about menu designs and how to interpret food labels. Discuss nutritional needs, hunger vs. appetite, and eating disorders.  
(HE.A.1.2.2, HE.A.1.2.7, and HE.A.1.2.10)

### Grade 5

Discuss essential nutrients and balanced diets. Explore foods, cultures, influences. Analyze nutrient values, while discussing junk vs. healthy foods, food choices and the effect on health. (HE.A.1.2.2, HE.A.1.2.7, HE.A.1.2.10)

### Grades 6-8

Explore the relationship between positive health behaviors and the prevention of injury, illness, disease, and other health problems. (HE.A.1.3.2)

Discuss ways in which to reduce the risks related to health problems among adolescents. (HE.A.1.3.6)

Discuss about the various methods of health promotion and disease prevention. (HE.A.1.3.9)

Discuss eating disorders that adversely affect health. (HE.A.1.3.10)

### Grades 9-12

Discuss the potential impact of common risk behaviors on the quality of life. (HE.A.1.4.2)

Discuss how to delay the onset of and reduce the risk for potential health problems during adulthood. (HE.A.1.4.6)

Explore how nutrient and energy needs vary in relation to gender, activity level, and stage of life. (HE.A.1.4.9)



## Ideas by Subject Area

### **SOCIAL STUDIES**

Discuss foods around the world and food customs.

### **SCIENCE**

Explore gardening, plants as food, and the senses of taste and smell.

### **ART**

Create menu collages or edible art. Talk about food colors.

### **MATH**

Explore measuring and discuss ideal body weight. Calculate calories, fat, fat calories, saturated fat, protein, and carbohydrates from nutritional food labels.

### **MUSIC**

Integrate nutrition into songs, plays, or puppetry.

### **LANGUAGE ARTS**

Read nutrition books. Write letters or essays on nutrition topics. Challenge students to eat an item for every letter in the alphabet.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Discuss the importance of nutrition and exercise for overall fitness. Play games with a food theme.