

Healthy school **CELEBRATIONS**



Healthy Kids Club



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Celebrate the **HEALTHY WAY**

Good nutrition and the value of healthy food choices are often taught in the classroom. However, many times foods served in the classroom, in the case of a class party or rewards for behavior, are low in nutrients and high in calories. This sends them a mixed message – that good nutrition is just a part of their education and is not important to their health. To send the right message and to keep our children healthy, teachers, staff and parents can work together to offer healthy classroom party alternatives.

Aim to take the FOCUS off of FOOD

From birthday parties to holiday celebrations, there are many celebrations in schools. Along with the fun usually comes pizza, juice, cake, and chips and as many as 500 EXTRA calories in a typical classroom party. Offering so many treats so often can contribute to unhealthy eating habits. Try a few of these easy changes to shift the focus of school parties from unhealthy food to healthy fun.

- Use active games or activities as a main focus. Play games inside or out. Extra recess can be EXTRA special. Talk to your school's PE teacher about using the gym, or some PE equipment.
- If favors are given – try to include non-food items, and if food is included, make it healthy.
- Have a dance party.
- Read children's books related to the party theme.
- Celebrate creatively by setting up craft stations.
- **REMEMBER** always refer to your district's policy regarding store-bought food.

Poudre School District is committed to providing healthy learning environments for students and to helping reduce the number of overweight and obese children. The district encourages:

- Using physical activity instead of food or candy to reward students.
- Offering as many healthy options as treats at school sponsored parties.
- Eliminating all sugar sweetened (soda, punch, etc.) beverages during the school day.

Check out the wellness policy, district ends and strategic direction documents at pdschools.org.



Celebrate the **HEALTHY WAY**

Benefits of Healthy Celebrations

Healthy Kids Learn Better – Research clearly demonstrates that good nutrition is linked to better behavior and academic performance.

Provides Consistent Messages – Providing healthy classroom celebrations demonstrates a school commitment to promoting healthy behaviors.

Promotes a Healthy School Environment – In order to positively change eating behaviors, students need to receive consistent, reliable health information and ample opportunity to use it. Healthy parties are a great way of doing that.

Creates Excitement About Nutrition – Children are excited about new and different things, including fun party activities and healthy snacks.

Protects Children with Food Allergies – When parents send in food, it is difficult to ensure the safety of children with food allergies.

Healthy Food Ideas

- Fresh fruit kabobs.
- Dried fruit (with little or no added sugar).
- Vegetable trays with hummus or low-fat dip.
- Sunflower seeds.
- Fruit smoothies.
- Low-fat granola bars.
- Pretzels.
- Graham crackers.
- Low-fat cheeses.
- Whole grain crackers.
- Baked tortilla chips and salsa.
- String cheese.
- Low-sugar yogurt parfaits.
- Light or low-fat popcorn.
- Applesauce.

Instead of serving sweets, offer healthy, nutritious snacks in appropriate portion sizes.

DRINK TO YOUR HEALTH

Remember to offer non-sugar sweetened beverages

1st Choice: Water – flavor with an orange or lemon slice for fun.

2nd Choice: Milk (low-fat or non-fat)

3rd Choice: 100% fruit juice (limit to 1 cup)

Fizz it up. Mix 100% fruit juice with plain sparkling water.



Healthy Party Planning **CHECK LIST**

Three Weeks Before

- Contact the classroom teacher and make a plan for the party. Make sure you know the amount of time you have for the party and where you can throw the party. Don't forget the gym could be an option. Contact the office manager or PE teacher quickly, often the gym needs to be reserved for special events.
- Decide on a theme if you want one. Make, borrow, and buy any decorations or music you may need to fit the theme. Look for active games that get kids moving and grooving.
- Line up any help you may need. Email or make phone calls to parents and volunteers to help with party planning, providing supplies, passing out snacks, organizing games, and clean-up.
- Plan the menu. Remember the idea is to take the emphasis off of food and place it on fun. If you decide to serve snacks, refer to your district's wellness policy. Aim to serve fruits, vegetables, and non-sugar sweetened beverages.

Two Weeks Before

- Check on supplies. Share the list with other parents and volunteers and decide who is able to bring what. The classroom teacher may be able to send home a sign-up sheet to seek out help and supplies.
- Pick a playlist. Music always makes a party more fun.
- Grocery shop. Buy any non-perishables at this point.

One Week Before

- Set the stage. Take a mental walk through the games and activities planned. Do you have enough space? Can students move around easily? Is going outside an option?
- Touch base with the classroom teacher. Go over the party plans and make any adjustments necessary.

Three Days Before

- Check in with volunteers. Double check that everyone is still able to bring what they signed up for.
- Finish shopping.

One Day Before

- Finish any prepping for games and activities.

Day of the Party

- Finish any last minute food prep. Cut fresh fruits and vegetables in the classroom.

REMEMBER THE GOAL IS TO HAVE FUN AND BE ACTIVE.

Birthday **PARTIES**

Keep in mind that each student's birthday can mean multiple celebrations: one at home with the family, a party with friends, and then another at school. Food need not be part of school parties. Instead, find ways to recognize the child, celebrate them, and make them feel special.

- Make a sign, sash, crown, button or badge for the birthday child.
- Let the birthday child be the teacher's assistant for the day.
- Let the birthday child pick an active game to play outside or in the gym.
- Read aloud a book of the birthday child's choice.
- Provide special time with the principal or another adult, such as taking a walk around the school, or eating lunch together.
- Many teachers have "Activity Break" books. Let the birthday child pick their favorite for a mid-day moving break.

To reduce the number of parties (and the treats that come along with them) – set aside one day each month to celebrate all of the birthdays that fall in that month.

SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

Bethke Elementary

Students and staff at Bethke Elementary in Poudre School District celebrate birthdays with a "Happy Birthday. Let's Move" policy. Birthday celebrations center on the child instead of centering on eating. All Bethke birthday celebrations are free of any food and drink. Instead they celebrate through activities, creativity and movement. The students and teachers work together to choose an appropriate activity. The celebration of each child is limited to ten minutes to ensure academic time is upheld.



Birthday **PARTIES**

Active Games

Buddy Tag

To begin, one person is It and one is the Runner. Everyone else finds a buddy, links arms, and then scatters around the playing field. It then tries to tag the Runner. The Runner must link arms with a pair of buddies before he gets tagged. When the Runner finds a buddy, the buddy on the other side of the pair then becomes the Runner. If the Runner can't link to a buddy before he's tagged, he becomes It and It becomes the Runner.

Freeze Dance

Put on some kids music-have kids show off their silliest dance moves- but they must freeze in place when the tunes turn off.

Simon-Says

Let the birthday child be "Simon".

Balloon Stomp

Blow up enough balloons and tie a rubber band to each of them. Put a balloon around each player's ankle by stretching the rubber band over their foot. To make it more fun try putting a balloon on each ankle. Make sure players wear shoes to protect their feet. Play some music and have everyone stomp around, trying to step on and pop other players' balloons. Whoever has the last balloon left around their ankle is the winner.

Remember the idea is to take the emphasis off of food and place it on fun. If you decide to serve snacks, refer to your district's wellness policy. Aim to serve fruits, vegetables, and non-sugar sweetened beverages. Check out CanDo's School Wellness Resource Kit for healthy snack ideas: candoonline.org/schools

PARTY ACTIVITIES

- Go for a class walk or hike around the school campus.
- Give the class an extra recess to honor the birthday(s).
- Turn on some music and dance.
- If giving out favors – stick to non-food items like stickers, balls, notepads and pens, bubbles, chalk, balloons...etc.



Halloween Parties and **FALL FESTIVALS**

There is more to a fall party than big buckets of candy – though many of us often forget that. Kids will surely get their share (and more) of candy at home and trick-or-treating, so try to make your classroom party a healthy one. There can even be an interesting lesson to tie into your party – about the history of Halloween and legends of the fall.

Active Games

Musical Pumpkins

Cut pumpkin shapes from construction paper and arrange them on the floor; kids must move from pumpkin to pumpkin while music plays, just like in musical chairs. To keep kids from being excluded, allow them to share pumpkins as you remove a pumpkin for each round. By the end of the game, all the kids have to squeeze onto one spot. (Kindergarten and 1st grade)

Monster May I?

Pick one or two students to be the Monster they line up in the center of the play area. Students line up on the side of the gym (or field) and say together, “Monster May I?” The monsters in the center decide who can cross by calling out “Only if you are ____.” (Example: wearing a certain color, a boy, or a girl, etc.) Whoever the directions apply to run to the other side of the gym or field while the monster tries to tag them. If you are tagged, you must stop where you are and act like a ghost only moving your arms and legs. You must stay where you were tagged. Ghosts can now tag kids too. The last person to be tagged is now the monster. (1st and 2nd grades)

Blob Tag

Pick two students to be It. The students that are It tag someone, then the person they tagged links arms with the student who is It. They must stay connected with linked arms. Now the small blob (the two students) helps to tag the other students who have not been tagged yet. If they tag another student then that student must now join the blob. Continue until everyone is linked onto the blob. (2nd and 3rd grades)

Dizzy Bat Relay

Go outside or to the gym. Split students into teams of four to five. Have the first student run down to the bat and spin with their forehead on a baseball bat (remember they must keep the bat on the ground). After 10 revolutions, they run back to their team and the next student goes until all team mates have completed the challenge. For a more competitive variation of the game, time how long it takes the students to complete the tasks and see who can do it the quickest. (2nd and 3rd grades)

Skeleton Scavenger Hunt

Have kids roam the school grounds on the hunt for skeleton parts (cut from paper, or plastic ones purchased from a toy store or craft shop). For an extra challenge, see if the students can reassemble their bony treasures into a complete skeleton set. (4th and 5th grades)

Cone Crazy

Take tall cones and throw them out in the play area. Half the cones should be standing up, and half on their sides. Divide the kids into two teams: The Zombies and the Humans. The Zombies job is to knock down the cones. The Humans job is to put each cone upright. When you say go, they all run around and do their job. At the end (when you blow the whistle) they must all freeze and you count which team had more cones. The Zombies win if more cones are down. The Humans win if more cones are up. You can have teams switch responsibilities too. Zombies can use one finger, elbow, forehead, foot, etc. to knock down cones and Humans can use the same to put cones up. (4th and 5th grades)



Winter **HOLIDAY PARTIES**

Like all of us, kids are tempted with tons of sweets and desserts during the holidays. It is also often cold and kids are confined to the indoors every day, keeping them more sedentary. This shouldn't be the case at school. Make your next school holiday party a chance for kids to get moving, give back to others, and eat healthy.

Active Games

Parachute Games

Knock the Snowballs Off- You will need four red and four green small foam balls. Break the class into two groups. Team one grabs one side of the parachute team two grabs the other side of the parachute. Team one tries to knock their balls off the parachute and team two tries to knock their ball off the parachute. The first group to knock off their balls wins. (K and 1st grade)

Gift Bag Relay

Split class into two teams, on slips of paper, write instructions: "Hop to the tree and back," "Run to the slide, go down, and run back," "Do 25 jumping jacks." Make two of each instruction (so that the teams will have identical sets). Put one in each gift bag. Each gift bag should have one slip per player. The first player on each team pulls a slip from the bag, performs the action, and tags the next player, who pulls the next strip. The first team to finish all the actions wins. (2nd and 3rd grades)

Snowman Wrap Race

Split students into groups of two. Each partnership gets a roll of toilet tissue, a length of crepe paper, and three circles cut out of black card stock and backed with a loop of tape. At "Go" the builders race to wrap their patient partners with the entire roll of toilet tissue, finishing off the look with a crepe paper scarf and the three card stock buttons. The first builder to complete her snowman wins (2nd and 3rd grades)

Snowball Fight

Use a bunch of softer balls of varying sizes and spread across a gym or classroom. Divide the area across the middle with tape or cones. Split the kids into two equal groups and send to each side of the room. Each team wants to keep their side clear of balls by continually throwing them to the opposite side. You can make tricky variations of this game by allowing only one hand, making them throw the balls backwards, or kicking only. After a certain period of time – yell "FREEZE" and the winning team is the one with the fewest balls on their side. (4th and 5th grades)

Gift Stacking Relay

Divide teams in two, Team A and B and then split each team so half are at one end of the room and half at the other end. (Distance 15 – 20 feet.) Stack three gifts on top of each other. Each team must take the stack of gifts from one stool to the other stool without dropping any gifts. Then the next person must pick up the gifts and take them back to the other stool. First team done wins. If the gifts fall then the person must go back to their starting point and begin again.

Harder version: Tell teams that they can only use one hand to carry the gifts (two when lifting off stool)

Even more difficult: Increase the number of boxes. (4th and 5th grades)

Valentine's Day **PARTIES**

Valentine's Day is yet another holiday filled with chocolates and candies. Kids who eat too much sugar are likely to have shorter attention spans, more chronic health problems and even be overweight. School should be a place full of good influences and healthy choices, so make your next Valentine's Day party a heart-healthy one that everyone will LOVE.

Active Games

Heart Stomp

Every child begins by standing on a paper heart that has been taped to the floor. Start the music and have the children walk, dance, or jump around the room. When the music stops they need to stand on a heart. To keep kids from being excluded, allow them to share hearts as you remove a heart for each round. By the end of the game, all the kids have to squeeze onto one spot. (K and 1st grade)

Catch My Heart

You'll need a red ball or a heart shaped bean bag. Have student's stand in a circle. The first student starts by saying another student's name and gently tossing the ball to them. The player whose name was called catches the ball and then announces another player's name and throws it to them. Continue this until all the players get a chance throwing and catching the ball. Once everyone's feeling confident, throw a second ball into the mix. Now they must keep two balls going without dropping either one. Again, once they get the hang of that, throw a third ball into the game. And a fourth, if they can handle it. Have the players see how long they can keep the balls in the air. Start a new round once a ball drops. (K and 1st grade)

Steal my Heart

Divide your class into two teams, each with their own heart or red ball. Students then hide their heart somewhere on the playground. The goal is to find the opposing heart and bring to your team's side. If one student carrying the heart is tagged by an opposing student, he is sent to a designated area where a friendly tag from his own teammates rescues him. The first team to get the opposing team's heart onto their side wins. (2nd and 3rd grades)

Broken Heart Tag

Choose three students to be It. If one of the students tags you, then you drop to the ground and yell "Broken Heart." To get back in the game someone has to come and do 10 sit-ups with you. And then you are up and running again. Switch who is It every one to two minutes. Don't forget to switch up the exercises: 10 push-ups, 10 mountain climbers, 10 stretches, or 10 skier jumps. (2nd and 3rd grades)

Unfreeze a friend

You will need a beanbag for each player (often the PE teacher will have these). Pick a leader, then have each player balance a beanbag on his or her head. When the leader calls out an action — walk, hop, skip and the like — every player must move as directed while keeping the beanbag on her head (no hands please). If a beanbag falls, that player must freeze until another person picks it up for her (players can hold their beanbag in place while they're helping others). If all players are frozen at once, pick a new leader and start again. Periodically change leaders until everyone gets a turn. (4th and 5th grades)

Valentine's Day **PARTIES**

SCHOOL SPOTLIGHT

Ponderosa Elementary

Students and staff at Ponderosa Elementary in Thompson School District celebrate Valentine's Day with a Heart Healthy Hall Hop. Classroom teachers and parents work together to plan parties with fruit treats and valentine cards. The fruit treats consist of fruit parfaits, smoothies, fruit kabobs or any creative, delicious fruit treat. Students are encouraged to wear red and pink as well. They wrap up their Valentine's Day with a school-wide "heart" healthy hall hop. For 15 minutes, music is played over the PA system while students and teachers dance their little hearts out in the hallway. Not only do the kids love the event but it also promotes their culture of health and wellness. And it is a cost saving for their parents.



End-of-the-Year **CELEBRATIONS**

You made it! And of course you want to celebrate. The end-of-the year classroom party is the perfect time to reinforce the healthy eating habits you practiced all year.

Pirate Party

It's a Pirate's Life for Me

Use the playground as an obstacle course. They can walk the plank (long rope), swim through the water (a blue tarp), weave around plastic sharks (cones), jump through the hot sand, climb and slide to escape the evil pirates, explode a (balloon) cannonball and more.

Cannonball Blast

Tie an inflated black balloon (cannonball) to each kid's ankle. The kids have to try to "explode" the other pirates' cannonballs without having their own popped. Water balloons can also be used.

Bail Out the Boat

Split kids into groups of five or six. Pretend that their ship is sinking. Bail it out by having the pirates scoop cupfuls of water from the boat (bucket, cooler, etc.) and run to an empty container to dump the water. The first team to fill up their own container with water wins the game.

Capture the Pirate Flag

Divide your pirates into two teams, each with their own flag and own island. Pirates then hide their pirate flag somewhere on their island. Goal is to find the opposing flag and bring it back to your team's island. If one pirate carrying the flag is tagged by an opposing pirate, he is sent to a designated deserted island where a friendly tag from his own teammates rescues him. First team to get the opposing team's flag onto their own island wins.

Luau

Limbo, Limbo, Limbo: Don't forget the music.

Hula Hoopla: Host a hula hoop contest.

Aloha Volley

Challenge small groups of students to keep the beach ball in the air. Have them count each time they bump it up, if it hits the ground the count starts over.

Musical Beach Towels

A tropical twist on the traditional musical chairs, this party game uses either folded beach towels or luau-themed placemats in place of chairs. "Hawaii Five-O" or "Wipeout" is a perfect musical accompaniment.

Lay on the Leis relay

Split kids into teams of five or six. Line up kids a distance away from hula hoops. The children dash to their hula hoop, put on the lei, and dart back to the starting line. Then the next student races down to the hula hoop to retrieve their lei. The first team with leis wins.



End-of-the-Year **CELEBRATIONS**

Wet and Wild Party

Water-Balloon Baseball

You'll need lots of water balloons for this one. Divide players into two teams and take turns batting and fielding as usual. Rather than calling strikes, you may want to change batters after a certain number of swings, and switch places whenever all the players on the at-bat team have had a turn at the plate. Give each team a point for every balloon they break. The outfielders won't have much to field, but they can try to tag the runners before they get to base.

Puddle Jumping

Give each student a plastic cup filled with water. Have two students turn a jump rope. One at a time while holding their cups, players must jump into the turning rope and complete six jumps. The player with the most water left wins.

Rainy Relay

Split the class into two teams. Provide each team with two buckets: one empty and one full of water. Set the empty buckets at one end of the yard and the full ones at the other near the kids. At the word "Go," the first player on each team dips his cup into his water bucket and holds the cup over his head as he dashes to the other end of the yard. (No covering holes with fingers, please.) When a player reaches the second bucket, he dumps what's left in his cup into the bucket, runs back to the start and passes the cup to the next player. The game continues until the formerly full bucket is empty. The team with the most water in the second bucket wins.

Over Under Sponge Relay

Split kids into groups of four. Give each team a sponge and line them up behind a bucket of water. When the race begins, the first player dunks the sponge into the bucket, making it sopping wet. Then they pass it to the player behind them over their head. The next player passes it under their legs to the third player. The sponge goes in this pattern, over then under until it gets to the last player. The last player then runs to the front of the line and re-dunks the sponge, repeating the process until the bucket is empty.



Non-food **GOODY BAG IDEAS**

- Pencils.
- Pens.
- Crayons.
- Markers.
- Erasers.
- Coupons.
- Key chains.
- Mini-flashlights.
- Shoelaces.
- Bracelets.
- Rings.
- Necklaces.
- Note pads.
- Coloring books.
- Play tattoos.
- Pencil toppers.
- Bubbles.
- Silly putty.
- Stickers.
- Stencils.
- Bookmarks.
- Glow sticks.
- Kazoos.
- Sidewalk chalk.
- Beach balls.
- Silly sunglasses.
- Crazy straws.
- Pinwheels.
- Bouncy balls.
- Magic wands.
- CD with party music.



Book **LiST**

Birthday

Instead of food, ask parents to purchase a book for the classroom or school library in the birthday child's name.

- *Happy Birthday Hamster* by Cynthia Lord
- *Finally* by Wendy Mass
- *The Birthday Pet* by Ellen Javernick
- *I Am Invited To A Party* by Mo Willems
- *How Do Dinosaurs Say Happy Birthday?* by Jane Yolen and Mark Teague

Holiday Celebrations

Read a book aloud to the class or invite a parent, the principal or a special guest to come in a read a book.

Halloween and Fall Festivals

- *Pumpkin Cat* by Anne Mortimer
- *The Sleepless Little Vampire* by Richard Egielski
- *Even Monsters Need Haircuts* by Matthew McElligott
- *If You're a Monster and You Know It* by Rebecca and Ed Emberley
- *Zen Ghosts* by Jon J. Muth
- *Boo to You* by Lois Ehlert
- *The Book That Eats People* by John Perry
- *The Hallo-Weiner* by Dav Pilkey

Winter

- *The Gingerbread Pirates* by Kristin Kladstrup
- *Over and Under the Snow* by Kate Messner
- *The Mitten* by Jan Brett
- *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* by Dr. Seuss
- *The Polar Express* by Chris Van Allsburg
- *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats

One-Hundredth Day

- *100 Hungry Ants* by Elinor Pinczes
- *The 100th Day of School* by Angela Shelf Medearis
- *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for the 100th Day of School* by Joseph Slate
- *Emily's First 100 Days of School* by Rosemary Wells
- *100th Day Worries* by Margery Cuyler

Valentine's Day

- *Be My Valentine Amelia Bedelia* by Herman Parish
- *If You'll Be My Valentine* by Cynthia Rylant
- *Love, Ruby Valentine* by Laurie Friedman
- *Love You Forever* by Robert N. Munsch
- *Zombie in Love* by Kelly DiPucchio

Please use this table to help you plan your healthy celebration. The ideas listed in this guide will help you fill in the blanks to ensure a fun-filled active party. You can also use this to help you divide up responsibilities among the other party volunteers!

Event	Physical Activity	Fruit and Vegetable Option	Non-Sugar Sweetened Beverage Choice	Book	Craft
Birthday Party					
Halloween/ Fall Festivals					
Winter Holidays					
Valentine's Day					
End of the Year					



Healthy Kids Club

