

# FitFUTURE

Strategies for  
Better Living.

## Kid's Party Foods Get a Healthy Make-Over

by Jennifer Kerr, MS, RD, CDN

**Health experts agree** that improving the health of Americans will require cultivating good eating habits in our children. One strategy parents can use to help children develop life-long healthy eating habits is to provide opportunities for positive experiences with healthy foods. Engaging children in activities surrounding healthy food gets them familiar with, and therefore comfortable with healthy choices.

When you think of positive and fun childhood experiences, parties are sure to come to mind. Whether for a birthday, holiday or other event, parties are the perfect time to engage children in activities with healthy foods. Serving healthy options at parties is one way to create a positive experience with healthy foods. A child's experience is enhanced further if he or she is able to help prepare or assemble the food.

Ideas like those listed in the chart are delicious, child-friendly and healthy party foods. They are wonderful options for allowing children to participate in food preparation and assembly.

Instead of the usual high-fat, high-sugar party foods, try a few of these substitutes at your child's next event:

	Instead of...	Try this...
<b>Beverages</b>	Soda Fruit Punch	Water Lowfat milk or chocolate milk 100% fruit or vegetable juice Fruit smoothies – blend fruit, milk and yogurt Fruit coolers – blend watermelon, fruit juice and ice
<b>Crispy, crunchy snacks</b>	Chips and Dip Pretzels	Carrot, celery and bell pepper strips with quacamole, bean dip or yogurt dip
<b>Sweet treats</b>	Candy	Berry parfaits Fruited gelatin Smoothie pops Fruit kabobs
<b>Main course</b>	Pizza Delivery	Whole grain English Muffin Pizzas Pinwheels (rolled and cut sandwich wraps) Finger Sandwiches
<b>Party cake</b>	Traditional sugary-frosted cake	Carrot, banana or blueberry muffins or cupcakes. Topped with whipped topping or yogurt and berries or other sliced fruit
<b>Goodie Bags</b>	Candy	Non-food items like crayons, markers or something that follows the party theme, like toy cars for boys or hair bows/clips for girls.