



School Celebrations

The number of overweight children has reached epidemic proportions both nationally and in North Carolina. Between 1995 and 2000, the number of overweight North Carolina children aged 5 to 11 years old increased 40 percent. More than one in five of 5 to 11 year-olds are overweight and one

in four of 12 to 18 year-olds are overweight (NC-NPASS 2003). Schools are places of extraordinary influence on the development of life-long eating patterns. Schools have an opportunity to provide classroom health and nutrition education supplemented by learning laboratories in the many venues where food is offered or served.

In support of Eat Smart: North Carolina's Recommended Standards for All Foods Available in School

School celebrations are fun and provide a chance to reinforce the message that nutritious food choices lead to healthier bodies and sharper minds. Individual schools and local education agencies should decide if and how often food will be part of group celebrations, and should encourage celebrations featuring activities other than eating. If school celebrations do involve food, work with the Child Nutrition Program to provide healthy options, support school meals, and ensure that food will be safe, wholesome and served in appropriate portion sizes.

Non-Food Ways to Celebrate

Ways for families to celebrate special events

- Donate a book to the school library or classroom in honor of a child's birthday with his/her name inside
- Donate funds for playground or physical education/activity equipment such as jump ropes or balls

School or classroom celebrations

- Play indoor games of the students' choosing
- Engage children in a special art project
- Take the children on a field trip
- Turn on some music and have a dance party
- Take a fun walk around the school with the principal or teacher
- Play games outside or host a field day - allow extra recess time

Healthful Food Celebrations

Ideas for classroom celebrations

- Make your own pizza party using chopped vegetables, fruits and low-fat cheeses
- Make your own fruit sundae bar with fresh fruit and low-fat yogurt or sorbet
- Host a culture club - ask students to find and prepare healthy recipes from different cultures
- Host an agriculture day - ask a local farmer to bring in produce and have a tasting party

Snack ideas

- Snack cake
- Baked chips and reduced-fat dip
- Squares without icing or topped with fruit and reduced-fat whipped topping
- Fresh apple wedges and caramel dip
- Lowfat yogurt with fruit and granola topping
- Reduced-fat popcorn
- Oatmeal raisin cookies and lowfat milk
- Whole grain crackers and cheese cubes
- Fig bars
- Fresh-cut vegetables and reduced-fat ranch dip or salsa
- Trail mix
- Small 100% juice
- Lowfat milk
- Water
- Sugar-free pudding

