



## School Parties and Celebrations

Schools have an extraordinary influence on the development of lifelong eating habits and other healthy lifestyle patterns. The occasions when students can practice making healthy food choices at school serve as opportunities to reinforce the nutrition knowledge learned in the classroom. Additionally, school parties are an opportunity to put food in its proper place as a complement to the fun and not as the main event.

### Non-Food Ways to Celebrate

- Donate a book to the school library or classroom in honor of the child's birthday with a personalized gift acknowledgement plate inside
- Donate playground/physical activity equipment- jump ropes, balls etc
- Celebrate with active games chosen by the students
- Have a dance party
- Engage students in a special art project
- Go for a fun run with the principal or local hero (fireman, mayor, athlete)

### Healthy Snack Ideas

- Small bottles or cartons of flavored milk, 100% juice, smoothies and water
- Fresh fruit tray-whole, wedges, slices (dip in orange juice to retain color)
- Fresh vegetable tray (baby carrots, grape tomatoes, celery sticks, cucumber spears, red and green bell pepper strips, cauliflower and broccoli florets) with reduced fat ranch, yogurt-based, or bean dip
- String cheese, cheese cubes or slices with whole grain crackers
- Low fat pudding cups, low fat yogurt squeeze packs or cups
- Finger sandwiches or sliced wrap sandwich pinwheels
- Pretzels, low fat popcorn, trail mix
- Animal crackers, graham crackers, oatmeal raisin cookies
- Mini muffins, banana bread slices, granola bar slices
- Mini cupcakes or angel cake, very lightly frosted, sprinkles or plain

Find more snack recipes at [www.newenglanddairyCouncil.org](http://www.newenglanddairyCouncil.org)

# SAMPLE LETTER

## Birthday Parties

Dear Parents,

We have a monthly celebration for children's birthdays on the first Friday of the month. If you would like to contribute to the classroom celebration during your child's birthday month, please let me know a week in advance. Check with me as to how many students are currently in our class. Celebrations are scheduled for the last hour of the school day to minimize disruption to the academic schedule.

When providing food, I encourage you to offer the healthy snack choices suggested on the School Parties and Celebrations flyer sent with this letter. Please provide me with the necessary paper goods to go along with the snack.

In place of providing a food focused celebration, consider honoring your child's birthday by donating playground equipment such as balls and jump ropes or donate a book to the library or classroom. It would be a wonderful opportunity for you to read the book to the class as part of the birthday celebration. Please let me know if you would like to do this so we can set up a time.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

