



Creating Healthy Schools
and Communities
in Suffolk County

Making Celebrations Healthier

*Celebrations are a wonderful time to bring youth, staff and families together. We encourage celebrations of birthdays, holidays and seasons! CIUFSD supports the concept of once a month celebrations in each classroom. Below are some of those **reasons why monthly group celebrations can be important.***

- Monthly celebrations will reduce the consumption of unhealthy foods that occurs on a weekly basis, helping our children combat childhood obesity.
- Teachers will be able to provide more instructional time as daily/weekly celebrations can interrupt the school day.
- Children with specific food allergies will have a safer school environment, by reducing potential reducing potential exposure. Parents of children with allergies will know in advance that a celebration will occur and “safe” food items can be available for that day. Every child will be included in celebration.
- For those children whose parents cannot provide a “treat” for the class, this monthly celebration provides a way to include them.

Just a few ideas on how to make celebrations easier:

- Replace the “cupcake tradition” altogether with something new – for instance, draw a birthday mural!
- Celebrate birthdays by including healthier options.
- Host a culture club - ask students to find and prepare healthy recipes from different cultures.
- Incorporate the national monthly celebrations such as National Nutrition Month (March), American Heart Month (Feb), or Hispanic Heritage Month (Oct), to find creative ways to celebrate other than having sweets.
- Focus the winter holiday celebrations on giving back by making cards to give to a nursing home, collecting animal supplies for the humane society, or holding a food drive for the local food pantry.
- The birthday child is the teacher’s assistant for the day, and gets to do special tasks, like lead the line or start an activity.
- Host an agriculture day - ask a local farmer to bring in produce and have a tasting party.
- Instead of Halloween candy, bring in healthy treats such as fresh veggies and pumpkin dip.
- For Valentine’s Day, bring red fruits like strawberries, grapes, and apples.
- Do pumpkin math as a fun activity to celebrate Halloween. Each child brings in a pumpkin to weigh and measure the circumference, then create a colorful classroom graph all of the data.



Creating Healthy Schools
and Communities
in Suffolk County

The CIUFSD wellness policy encourages limiting celebrations that involve food during the school day. Nonfood celebrations are encouraged as an alternative to food based celebrations.

For more ideas, click on the hyperlink below or copy and paste the web address into your browser.

- Healthy Celebrations (4 pages): Recommendations for school celebrations and holidays:
https://cspinet.org/sites/default/files/attachment/healthy_school_celebrations.pdf
- Halloween Celebrations Guidelines (2pages):
<https://cspinet.org/sites/default/files/attachment/halloween.pdf>
- Alternative celebrations and activities:
<http://www.greeleyschools.org/Page/11391>
- Healthy Alternatives for School Celebrations, Rewards, Fundraisers and Snacks Project, September 2008 this guidebook (52 pages) features alternative celebrations and food suggestions:
<https://www.tpchd.org/files/library/3379ffef0bb808ad.pdf>
- Healthy Celebrations Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice – But It’s Just a Cupcake:
<https://www.tpchd.org/files/library/9a7e33138a46bf0.pdf>
- Action for Healthy Kids- Healthy and Active Parties:
<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/tools-for-schools/1249-healthy-and-active-classroom-parties>
- Action for Healthy Kids:
<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/storage/documents/parent-toolkit/celebrationsf3b.pdf>
- Promoting a Healthy School Environment-Oregon State University Extension:
http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/sites/default/files/documents/hse_healthycelebrations.pdf