

Dear Parents and teachers,

Per our Wellness policy/procedures we are recommending choosing non-food or healthier food alternatives for birthdays and classroom parties. The list below is a guide to healthy food suggestions.

Keep it simple! Remember, the goal is to celebrate the child.

Simple quick healthy food ideas:

Popcorn cones or cups: kids can decorate cups with stickers, glitter glue, or marker drawings and then fill with homemade popcorn. Alternatively, provide small paper bags for decorating. Each child will get a souvenir and some yummy popcorn.

Fresh Fruit: any kind- try kabobs, a fruit plate, with or without dippers, fruit salad in cupcake wrappers or ice cream cones.

Veggies: carrot sticks, cucumbers, celery, tomatoes. Kids love dipping- add a ranch dressing or hummus.

Smoothies: blend yogurt and fruit, and even mix in a green (spinach, kale) if you like. To make it festive bring in birthday cups for serving.

Popsicles: 100% fruit juice, if store bought

Berries: Top with real whipped cream in a birthday cup.

Ideas for those who love to bake and cook:

Mini muffins: Homemade muffins can be very healthy! Carrot, blueberry, strawberry, banana... Use whole-wheat or another whole grain flour, or add ground flaxseeds and/or wheat germ for extra nutrition.

Banana or zucchini bread: Most versions are very high in sugar and very high calorie. Cut the sugar in half or find a recipe with lower sugar (about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of sugar per recipe). Swap some or all of the white flour with whole grain flours.

Yogurt parfaits: In clear plastic cups, alternate layers of yogurt (preferably plain and organic) and fresh fruit such as blueberries, strawberries or mangos, and a lower-sugar (<6 grams) granola. Top with toothpick umbrellas.

Classroom Guacamole: Mash avocado, squeeze on fresh lime juice, then mix in chopped tomatoes and a sprinkle of sea salt. Serve with multigrain or bean-based tortilla chips and veggie sticks (celery, carrots and red peppers).

Homemade Popsicles: These will need to stay frozen until the celebration time. At home, you can blend plain yogurt (Mermaid Farm-in West Tisbury but also sold at Cronigs- yogurt works really well) and frozen fruit- strawberries or mangos work really well. Freeze into popsicles for the class. You can also freeze these in small paper cups and the kids can peel down the sides to eat them.

***Remember that birthday snacks are often served in addition to regular snacks. Birthday treats only need to be a small serving for each kid.**

Some additional websites:

http://www.cdc.gov/parents/children/healthy_children.html

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/children-over-five.html>

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/consumer/wellness/healthy-living/eat-better/tips/chopchop.html>

Note: if you have a child with a food allergy in your class room please make sure to talk to your child's teacher before bringing in any foods. You can also consult with your school nurse regarding these issues.