

## **Guidelines for a Healthy Classroom**

Birthday celebrations, holiday parties and special occasions at school provide a unique opportunity to help make healthful eating fun and exciting for children. Schools can take advantage of classroom celebrations to serve food that tastes good, is nutritious, and provide students with an opportunity for nutrition education experiences.

### **Candy**

Candy is often prevalent at school parties and celebrations and used for rewards in classrooms. It is important to point out that candy can contribute to weight imbalance and cavities in children and provides no nutritional value to their diets. Candy may also displace healthier food choices. Therefore we would like to discourage the use of candy in the classroom.

### **Holiday Parties**

The Granville School District can help promote a positive learning environment by providing healthy celebrations that shift the focus from the food to the child. Every attempt should be made to serve healthy foods and beverages during classroom celebrations.

Baked "Sweet Treats": cookies, cakes, cupcakes, donuts and brownies, etc... are often associated with celebrations. In the interest of promoting healthy eating it is suggested that only one of these type items be offered at holiday parties. In addition, baked treats can be made healthier by using whole grain ingredients (whole grain chocolate chip cookies) and/or incorporating fruits (banana muffins) and vegetables (carrot cupcakes).

### **Classroom Rewards**

Classroom rewards should not be food based. Food rewards provide unneeded calories and displace healthy food choices. Rewarding with food can interfere with children learning to eat in response to hunger and satiety cues. This teaches children to eat when they are not hungry as a reward to themselves, and may contribute to the development of disordered eating.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

We are encouraging only healthy snacks to celebrate student birthdays. In keeping with our goal to shift the focus of celebrations from food to the child We are encouraging parents to consider sending in non-food items to celebrate your child's special day. Some ideas include: stickers, school supplies, a book or game for the classroom.

In addition, we encourage teachers to provide a list of suggestions to parents of desired items specific to your classroom.

If you prefer however to send in a food item we encourage healthy items. The following are some suggestions:

- Fruit cup
- Cheese and crackers
- Mini or small muffins or cookies containing whole grains
- Vegetables and dip.