



Non-Food Classroom Party Ideas

Birthday parties and holiday celebrations can be a fun time for students, teachers and parents. But the pizza, cookies and cake that are most often served at these events can pack a walloping punch of sugar, fat and sodium—far exceeding the standard daily limits.

This year, instead of sending your child along with sweet treats to share with his or her class, work with your child's teacher to come up with alternative, non-food classroom celebrations. Use the following lists to choose parties that cut out the junk and boost fun!

1. Plan a scavenger hunt in the classroom, around the school or on the playground, and have students search for items related to the party theme.
2. Provide extra playtime at recess.
3. Set up one or two craft stations and play music in the background. Ask parents to provide supplies such as colored paper, markers or clay, and make crafts that go along with the week's lesson or an upcoming holiday.
4. Have a dance party! Let a child bring in a CD or playlist with a mix of his or her favorite parent-approved songs.
5. Plan special party games.
6. Organize a community service project such as making greeting cards for a local retirement home or for military overseas.
7. Schedule a fun physical activity break—think hula-hoop, jump rope or limbo contest!

If you want to recognize the birthday child on his or her “special day:”

- Make the child a sash, crown, button or badge that they can wear during the day.
- Have the child decorate a “birthday box” and send it into the classroom. Send along some index cards, and ask the teacher to have each child write something nice about the birthday child. The birthday child can then take the box home at the end of the day.
- Allow the child to be the “teacher’s assistant,” letting them take charge of a special task such as being the line leader, making deliveries to the office or announcing the morning messages.
- Let the birthday boy or girl pick a special indoor game or activity to play with the class.
- Have a parent or the principal come read a book of the birthday child's choosing to the class.
- Bring in a shirt/sweatshirt, tote bag, book or other item that classmates can “autograph” for the birthday child.

Additional resources can be found at:

http://cspinet.org/new/pdf/healthy_school_celebrations.pdf

<http://www.ohioactionforhealthykids.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Non-food-celebrations-and-reward-ideas-for-elementary-schools-2.pdf>