

Dear Parents/Guardians,

At Cedar Rapids Community Schools, we work hard to ensure that students' minds and bodies are ready for learning each day. In addition to the hard work our teachers and staff do every day to prepare students for success in the classroom, we can also work to encourage healthy eating and physical activity, leading them to lifelong success. By helping them start healthy habits early in life, we can help reduce our children's health risks and increase their chances for longer, more productive lives.

Parents/guardians should:

- Honor your child's birthday by sending non-food treats such as stickers or pencils
- Ensure all food sent to school for birthday celebrations promote healthy food choices by meeting Smart Snack guidelines (see the list of healthy snack ideas attached to this letter).
- Ask your child's teacher what non-food or healthy rewards/incentives they are utilizing in the classroom.
- Become involved in planning school holiday parties that include games, crafts and healthy foods and beverages.
- Participate in brainstorming ideas for healthy, non-food focused fundraisers for the school.

To encourage your participation in this plan, attached to this letter you will find suggested food and beverages. These items are consistent with the intent of the district's Wellness Policy and will promote healthful eating among our students.

As educators, caregivers and loved ones we all want the best for our students. Thank you for joining us in giving students healthy opportunities to celebrate important events and achievements.

If you have any questions, please contact the school or the district staff (contact information is below). We are looking forward to making our school the healthiest it can be so our students can do their best work.

Have a healthy day!

Sincerely,



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Our goal is not to cut out all treats, but to make sure they are eaten in moderation and do not become the focus of parties or celebrations. The focus should be on fun, not food. The list below provides healthy suggestions for celebrations.

Healthier Options

- 100% juice instead of punch
- 100% fruit juice freezer pops
- Trail mix
- Apples with caramel dip
- Fruit or vegetables
- Popcorn (minimal salt and butter)
- Dried fruits
- Low-fat yogurt products
- Fruit leather
- String cheese
- Sparkling water
- Pretzel products
- Real fruit popsicles

We encourage parents to use the list above as a guide in providing healthy snacks. You may also choose to bring in non-food items to give to each child on your child's birthday. Here is a list of ideas:

- Glow-in-the-dark items
- Slap bracelets
- Party hats
- Silly bands
- Bubbles
- Chalk
- Stickers
- Little toys
- Stamps
- Plastic rings
- Erasers
- Holiday theme items
- Pencils
- Crayons
- Pens
- Decorative pencils

Here are a few other ways that you can celebrate your child's birthday at school:

- Donate a book to the school in honor of your child's birthday with his/her name inside.
 - Have your child bring their favorite book to share and read it to the class.
 - Donate a ball or jump rope to the classroom for recess.
 - Choose a favorite song or musical piece to sing or play for the class.
- Whether your child eats his or her snack at home or at school, or if you provide a snack for a classroom party or celebration, keep these things in mind:
- Snacks should be kid-size. Both children and adults don't need large portions.
 - Snacks should be colorful. Kids eat with their eyes. Make snacks visually appealing.
 - Snacks should be healthy. Offer fruits and vegetables as often as you can.
 - Drinks should be served in small portions, a cup or less each. Water is the healthiest choice.