



NISD SHAC

Celebration Nutrition Guidelines

Northwest ISD SHAC serves to advance student health and reduce childhood obesity through nutrition, physical activity, and other school based activities. NISD SHAC encourages parents, teachers and staff to serve as role models for our students when making nutritional decisions. Due to the increasing number of children with food allergies or other dietary restrictions, Northwest ISD suggests the following guidelines with regards to school celebrations. These guidelines are in no way meant to prohibit celebrations, but to encourage a healthier way to celebrate.

The goals of these guidelines are to:

- Provide nutrition education experiences that support the instructional component to improve students' eating behaviors and help develop healthy lifestyle practices
- Refrain from using food as an incentive or reward
- Encourage students, teachers and staff to celebrate in a healthy manner
- Celebrate with non consumable items

School Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays are important to every child, and children like to celebrate with their classmates. However, sending in a food treat to the classroom to celebrate can exclude those children who have food allergies, diabetes or other dietary restrictions.

We encourage parents to send in non-food treats so that all children can participate. The following is a list of alternatives to cupcakes, donuts and candy.

- Party favors such as erasers, pencils, bubbles, stickers, glow necklaces, crazy straws, stickers, bouncy balls
- Send your child in a T-shirt that all of his or her friends can autograph
- Provide a small craft for the class
- Sidewalk chalk, homemade crayons, play doh
- Donate a book in your child's name to the library
- Have the class sign your child's favorite book
- Donate recess equipment in your child's name
- Decorate a birthday box and send it into the classroom. Be sure send note cards or smaller pieces of paper with the box. The teacher asks each child to write a birthday message and put it in the box.

Please remember that celebrating your child's birthday with the class is completely optional.

Healthy food alternatives to cupcakes, donuts and candy

- Popcorn
- Plain or pretzel Goldfish Crackers
- Pre-Packaged fruit
- Quaker Granola Bars
- Pretzels
- Teddy Grahams
- Graham Crackers
- Chocolate dipped fruit

Teacher and Staff Luncheons

The Do's and Don'ts

Do's

USE MINIMAL SALT—Use herbs, spices, and flavored vinegars to flavor food instead.

OFFER MANY FRUITS & VEGETABLES—every plate should be filled with ½ fruits and vegetables!

INCLUDE FISH OR VEGETARIAN OPTIONS

FRESH FRUIT BASED DESERTS ARE BETTER—avoid adding high sugar dips and toppings (A good benchmark is no more than 200 calories per serving.)

PROVIDE SMALLER PLATES—this will help with portion control.

CONSIDER SIDES (ingredients in dishes) such as:

- Whole grains (quinoa, bakery, couscous)
- Beans and legumes
- Rice (black, brown, red, wild, mixed)
- Pasta (whole grain)

SERVE SALADS—with dressings on the side, include oil & vinegar made with healthier oil, low fat dressing such as Italian and vinaigrette

SERVE FRESH FRUIT FOR SNACKS —apples, bananas, berries, Cantaloupe, grapes, melon, oranges, pineapple

SERVE FRESH VEGETABLES FOR SNACKS—bell peppers, carrots, celery, cherry tomatoes, snap peas, zucchini

SERVE WHOLE GRAIN CRACKERS, PITA CHIPS OR BAKED CHIPS

SERVE HEALTHIER DIPS—hummus, salsa, guacamole, nut butter, fruit dips and yogurt

OFFER RAW OR ROASTED NUTS—unsalted or lightly salted (no more than 140 mg sodium per serving)

PROVIDE WATER—Garnish in pitchers with cucumber slices or provide citrus wedges.

Don'ts

AVOID THE FOLLOWING:

SOFT DRINKS—serve sparkling water instead

BAKERY ITEMS—biscuits, cookies, croissants, Danishes, donuts, pastries

HIGH SODIUM-HIGH FAT MEATS—such as bacon or sausage

SAUCES AND GRAVIES THAT ARE HIGH IN SODIUM

DISHES WITH BUTTER, CHEESE, WHOLE MILK, HEAVY CREAM OR SOUR CREAM IS KEY INGREDIENTS

FRIED FOODS—including regular, non-baked chips

HIGH SUGAR DESERTS, DIPS, AND TOPPINGS

Classroom Holiday Parties

Enjoy all the food groups at your celebration

Get kids excited about fruit and vegetables at celebrations. Use cookie cutters to make apple “flowers”, “caterpillars” (grapes on a skewer), or “ants on a log” (raisins on a nut butter-filled celery stalk). If microwaves are available, whole grain English muffins make great personal pizza base. Have a variety of vegetables for kids to pick and top their own, then warm them up when they’re ready! Fun presentations can easily be found on the internet and can get kids more interested in trying new foods!

Snack Scientists

Invite students to make their own parfait with colorful sliced fruit and low-fat yogurt. Or have a build-your-own-bar of whole grain, low sugar cereals, granola, dried fruit and pretzels and invite kids to make their very own “snack invention”! Use punch cups for portion control, keep an eye on what students are selecting and encourage them to try something new!

Serve smaller portions

It’s not necessary to get rid of all sweets and desserts! Put less emphasis on sweet or sugary foods by using smaller bowls and plates for foods. Try mini bite-sized cupcakes paired with healthier snacks. Incorporate small amounts of candy into a trail mix or yogurt bar, but limit the amount that kids can take, and make the majority of ingredients come from whole grains, fruits or low-fat yogurt.

Sip smarter

Soda and other sugar-sweetened drinks contain a lot of sugar and are high in calories. Offer water when kids are thirsty. Float frozen berries in the water or add 100% fruit juice for color and flavor! Make fun ice cubes from 100% juice. Create a “float” by adding a scoop of low-fat sorbet (instead of ice cream) to seltzer water (instead of sugary soda). Or, serve yummy frozen juice bars (100% juice) instead of high-calorie desserts.

Make food fun

Sugary foods that are marketed to kids are advertised as “fun foods.” Make nutritious foods fun by preparing them with your child’s help and being creative together. Create a smiley face with sliced bananas and raisins. Cut fruit into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters.

“Real snacks” before treats

Set out healthy snacks like vegetables and dip, fruit, whole grain crackers and cheese BEFORE bringing out the treats. This encourages kids to try new foods and enjoy healthier items before they go straight for sweets. Keep in mind that candy or cookies should not replace foods that are not eaten at meal time.