



FOOD FOR A HEALTHY CLASSROOM PARTY CHECKLIST

Support and Promote the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*

Teachers and school staff want students at school to learn to the best of their ability, get along well with others, engage in healthy behaviors, and have fun.

Classroom and school celebrations, such as birthday parties and holiday or achievement celebrations, are part of the school experience at many schools. *Can classroom or school celebrations and get-togethers be fun and healthy at the same time?* Sure they can; with a little pre-planning.

The *Michigan Nutrition Standards* recommend that classrooms minimize food as a method of celebration, and, if classrooms include food, that at least half of the items offered are healthy ones that meet the standards.

Follow the steps below to communicate with parents about your healthy classroom celebration and to make sure you have everything you need to make it the healthiest it can be.

Remember, food is not needed at every party, celebration, or recognition event. There are lots of other ways you can celebrate without food.

STEP 1: Check with school administrators to find out if you have any school policies about whether or not classroom celebrations at your school can include food and beverages, and if so what kinds of food and beverages are allowed. If there is not a policy, and you are going to include food, follow the *Michigan Nutrition Standards* recommendation that at least half of the food offered and served at the party be healthy and meet the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*.

STEP 2: Send home the [Healthy Party Letter for Parents](#). This letter explains the healthy party guidelines and asks parents or caregivers to provide something for the party, if they are able, such as a healthy snack, a drink, a game, or a craft. The Healthy Party Letter is a MS Word file. You may personalize or edit/change the letter to fit your classroom's needs and your school's policy. If you have children with allergies or special dietary needs in your classroom, or if you have a "no peanut" policy in your classroom you will want to add that to the letter. If you are not going to include food revise the letter and ask parents to get involved in other ways.

STEP 3: Collect the returned letters and plan your party. Remember—the focus of the party should be on the celebration—not the food. Brainstorm with other teachers for ways you can make the party special by providing special games, crafts, music, and more. Complete the Healthy Classroom Party Checklist to make sure you've covered everything to make your party the healthiest it can be.

STEP 4: Enjoy your Healthy Classroom Party—with or without food!



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INSTRUCTIONS: Complete the Healthy Classroom Party Checklist below. Before the party, all answers should be “Yes” or NA (not applicable).

TASK	YES	NO	NA
Checked with school administration to find out if we have policies related to classroom celebrations and parties.			
Reviewed the <i>Michigan Nutrition Standards</i> for ideas on <u>how to conduct a party without food</u> , or if food will be served, the kinds of healthy food and beverages that are recommended.			
Checked to see what I have on hand, or what the school will supply e.g. plates, cups, napkins, craft supplies, physical activity equipment, etc.			
Revised, personalized, copied and sent home to parents and caregivers the <u>Healthy Party Sign Up Sheet</u> . Explained whether or not we will have food at the party on the sign up sheet.			
Collected the Healthy Party Sign Up Sheets. Checked to see that I have or have planned for: <input type="checkbox"/> a game to get kids up and moving <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 activities (do I have the supplies I need?) <input type="checkbox"/> healthy food items for the party (if including food)—at least half healthy <input type="checkbox"/> a healthy drink; such as low-fat or fat-free milk or water <input type="checkbox"/> refrigeration for party food, if needed <input type="checkbox"/> paper goods, cups and utensils, if needed <input type="checkbox"/> music, if needed <input type="checkbox"/> hand washing or hand sanitizer <input type="checkbox"/> trash cans and clean up <input type="checkbox"/> taking pictures of the party <input type="checkbox"/> volunteer thank you notes			
Called or e-mailed parents or caregivers to thank them for volunteering and to work out the party details. Reminded them of how many students we have in the class and if food will be served, that portions should be small.			
Called or e-mailed again, same information as above, one day before the party.			
Planned where activities and food (if served) will go in the room. Prepared the room for the party.			