



HEALTHY SCHOOL CELEBRATIONS

Resource Guide

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Oregon State University
Extension Service

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This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. SNAP can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact Oregon Safe Net at 1-800-723-3638. USDA is equal opportunity provider and employer.

Resource Guide Introduction

Food Hero’s mission is to help low-income Oregonians improve their health through the increased consumption of fruits and vegetables. Food Hero is a multi-channel social marketing campaign which aims to meet our goals through work at the direct education level as well as work at the policy, systems and environment levels.

Food Hero is an initiative of Oregon Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed), which was developed by Oregon State University Extension Service and funded jointly by OSU Extension Service, Oregon Department of Human Services, and the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service.

Celebrate the Healthy Way

Fun and health can go together, especially in school parties and celebrations where healthy activities, food, and lessons can positively contribute to the health and happiness of students, teachers, and staff. Active, healthy classroom celebrations keep kids moving and help establish healthy behaviors as the norm. Healthier students are more likely to succeed in school and establish healthy habits that last a lifetime.

Providing healthy classroom celebrations:

Helps Kids Learn Better

“Healthier kids perform better on tests, are more focused in class, behave better, are absent less and have higher self-esteem” – Action for Healthy Kids, The Learning Connection Report:

<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/media-center/reports>

Provides Consistent Messages

Demonstrates a school commitment to promoting healthy behaviors.

Promotes a Healthy School Environment

In order to positively change eating behaviors, students need to receive consistent, reliable health information and ample opportunity to use it. Healthy parties are a great way of doing that.

Creates Excitement about Nutrition

Children are excited about new and different things, including fun physical activities and healthy snacks.

Provide a healthy snack or prepare a Food Hero recipe in class:

- The Health Department recommendation of “*purchasing commercially prepared and prepacked items*” for use in classroom events and celebrations, refers to food items purchased at the store. This includes store-purchased ingredients that teachers could use to prepare a simple recipe or students could use to assemble a healthy snack within the classroom.
- Refer to the *Healthy Celebrations Snacks List* (<https://foodhero.org/celebrations>) for ideas, or explore the Food Hero website snacks recipe category for more great ideas
<https://www.foodhero.org/recipes/categories/50>
- Three favorite methods to prepare a healthy snack / recipe in-class:
 - 1) Teacher-led demonstration: Teacher assembles recipes in front of class.
 - 2) Student-led self-serve / assembly-line style where students add the components to their own plates.
 - 3) Student-chef team assembly: Group of students make recipe, other students prepare tables, flatware, etc.

- Always keep it safe by reinforcing proper hand washing and food safety practices among all students and staff. Refer to the USDA 10 Tips to *Be Food Safe* sheet: <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips-be-food-safe>.

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A Bounty of Options and Strategies

Best Practices Framework

- Develop activity-focused celebrations.
- Encourage non-food celebrations.
- Aim to provide only nutritious snacks during celebrations.
- Reduce the number of celebrations that include sweets to a maximum of two per year.
- Ensure healthy snack options outnumber sweets.
- Create a *Healthy Classroom Celebrations Policy* <https://www.foodhero.org/celebrations>
- Adopt a *Healthy Celebrations Snacks List* https://foodhero.org/sites/default/files/health-tools/school_snacks_monthly.pdf

Fun-focused Celebrations

Food and beverages are oftentimes part of an event, but they don't have to be the center of the occasion. Celebrations can also take on a non-food focus with activities to get people moving and enjoy being together. Remember - students need at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity. Physical activity during the school day not only improves student health, but can also lead to increased learning. Create the opportunity to start new traditions to celebrate special days in healthy ways. Shift the focus off of food and promote healthy fun with some of these activities:

Art / Crafts projects	Storytime	BEPAT activities
Team trivia competition	Music / Dance party	Student-choice / led games
Extra recess	Themed scavenger hunt	Charades

Adding Interactive & Educational Components to Celebrations

Discover the learning opportunities healthy classroom celebrations provide by taking your class on an interdisciplinary adventure. Food Hero recipes are widely integrative and easily adaptable. Here are a few of our favorite ways to prepare a recipe, share a nutrition lesson, and connect it to math, science, and language arts:

- ✓ Discuss / revisit the importance of proper handwashing (see <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips-be-food-safe>). Instruct and practice the high-speed handwashing technique as a class.
- ✓ Read recipe directions and ingredients out loud.
- ✓ Name the food groups of each ingredient in the snack / recipe.
- ✓ Double recipes, working through doubling fractions of ingredient quantities.
- ✓ Use measuring spoons and cups, practicing leveling and reading techniques (solids vs. liquids).
- ✓ Discuss and work through conversions and equivalents (ounces to cups, cups to quarts, etc.).
- ✓ Compare ingredient quantities identified in a given recipe with quantities contained in cans, boxes, and other packaging at the grocery store. Calculate the amount of packaged food to include in the recipe.
- ✓ Read nutrition facts labels and ingredients lists as a class, introducing and practicing the life-long importance of "Read it Before You Eat It".
- ✓ Hold a "Recipe Discussion Panel" as either an oral or written exercise where students:

1. Express opinions of the recipe / snack using descriptive language (with younger students a thumb poll can be taken - thumbs up, sideways, or down, to collect and tally votes).
2. Propose ingredient substitutions to either improve the recipe / accommodate a food sensitivity / or re-create the recipe at home with the ingredients typically on hand.