

HEALTHY CELEBRATIONS

It's important for children to develop healthy eating habits early on, because habits developed in childhood are likely to last the rest of their lives. Celebrations or rewards that include healthy foods and physical activity send a consistent message to children about the importance of healthy eating.

When we use treat foods as a reward, they become more desirable to children and increase the likelihood of overeating these foods now and in the future.

Take the focus off food.

There are lots of ways to celebrate or reward children that don't involve food. You can give small items like jump ropes and colored pencils or plan a fun family activity. Here are some ideas:

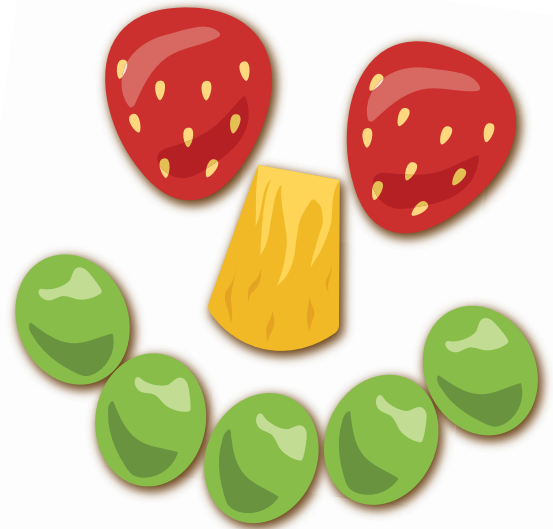
- Bowling or mini golfing
- Visit to a zoo
- Outing to the park
- Going out for walks or bike rides together
- Game nights or movie nights; let your child choose the movie or game

Family meals and celebrations are great opportunities to set a good example and help children learn to associate healthy food and physical activity with fun.



If food is offered:

- Include fruits, veggies, whole grains, low-fat dairy and water for beverages.
- Make it healthy, but make it fun too.
- Mini fruit kabobs with yogurt for dip
- Quesadillas with cheese and veggies
- Trail mix with whole-grain cereal, dried fruit, pretzels or popcorn
- Whole-grain English muffin pizzas
- Fruit smoothie
- Give your child an assortment of finger foods and let them make a funny face or design on their plate.



Mini Fruit Kebabs with Blueberry Yogurt Dip:

Ingredients:

Kabobs

- 4 grapes
- 4 fresh pineapple chunks
- 4 strawberries
- 4 toothpicks

Blueberry yogurt dip

- 1 cup vanilla yogurt
- 1 cup blueberries

Directions:

For the kabobs: thread the grapes, pineapple and strawberries onto toothpicks in any order you like.

For the dip: Mash blueberries with a fork and stir them into the yogurt. Or put yogurt and blueberries into a blender and blend until smooth

Serve the fruit kabobs with the yogurt for dip.

Refrigerate any leftovers immediately. You can easily change this recipe to include whatever fruit you have on hand or your family prefers.

