

## **Celebrations at United Elementary**

We all love to recognize and celebrate birthdays and holidays in class, however, we have to remember that our goal is to provide the children with foods of maximum nutritional value on a regular basis. Although birthdays come only once a year, there may be 20 or more birthdays in each classroom!

We also celebrate several holidays and many accomplishments. There is nothing wrong with an occasional treat, but unhealthy choices can easily become the norm rather than the exception. Parties and treats for celebrations, classroom rewards, food fundraisers, and snacks can expose children to high fat, high-sugar, low-nutrient choices.

United Elementary School recognizes the benefits of healthy celebrations!

Please join us in our goal to promote a healthy learning environment by helping to put food in its proper place. Refreshments should complement the fun, not become the “main event”! Please consider non-food options for events and celebrations and provide the children with snacks that are part of a well-balanced diet and give them an extra boost of energy and nutrients.

### **Guidelines for Food/Snacks**

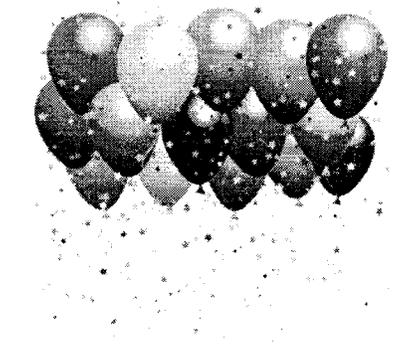
For the health, wellness, and safety of all students, the following lists provide guidelines for snacks brought to United Elementary School. This list is exclusive to snacks intended to be shared with other students.

Individual student snacks and lunches that are not shared are exempt from this list.

PTO holiday celebrations in the classroom may include one item from the normally not approved list if the classroom teacher agrees to allow it. The teacher must ultimately approve all incoming food since he/she is uniquely aware of the medical needs of the students in their care.

Our school practices strive to ensure food allergies of all the students are known before serving any foods. Unfortunately, students with food allergies are sometimes excluded from activities or experiences in an effort to be safe. With an aware and understanding community, children with food allergies can participate in and benefit from all the great experiences and opportunities that their peers do.

Water or 100% fruit juice is always the preferred drink in the classroom!



### Approved Snack Options:

1. Fresh/Dried fruit – trays, salads, or kabobs
2. Fresh vegetables – trays, salads, or kabobs
3. Pretzels/Baked Lays chips
4. Soft Pretzels
5. Goldfish™ crackers
6. Graham crackers
7. String cheese
8. Popcorn (individual serving bag)
9. Granola bars/Trail mix (peanut free only)
10. Fat free or low fat Yogurt/Gogurt™ (alone or as dips)
11. 100% fruit juice bars, strips, etc.
12. Pita chips and hummus
13. Baked chips (individual serving bag)
14. Cheez-its (individual serving bag)
15. Fig/Fruit Newtons™
16. Tortilla chips and salsa
17. Sugar-free Jell-O™/Pudding
18. Vanilla wafers
19. Dried cereal
20. Pre-packaged cheese & crackers
21. Animal Crackers
22. Whole grain crackers/Wheat Thins
23. Whole grain cereals/cereal bars
24. Light popcorn/Rice cakes
25. Single-serving sugar free fruit cups
26. Graham crackers/Teddy grahams
27. Dried Pumpkin/Sunflower seeds
28. Others approved in advance by School Principal

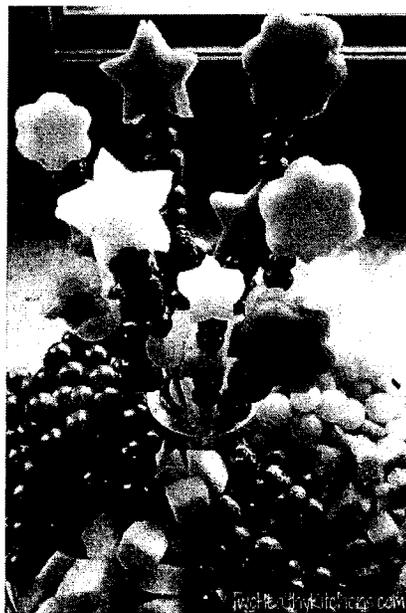
### Not Approved Snack Options:

1. Chocolate(s)
2. Candy
3. Cake products
4. Soda
5. Cookies
6. Gum
7. Donuts
8. Ice Cream
9. Granola Bars w/chocolate or nuts
10. Any homemade items

To reduce the possibility of allergen exposure, foods brought into school for sharing and special events must be purchased in stores and have ingredient list available for inspection

11. Any product(s) with nuts

To reduce the possibility of cross contamination contact, foods brought into school for sharing and special events must be purchased in stores and NOT be homemade products.



## Classroom Celebrations and Rewards

“But it’s only a cupcake...” Schools should not only teach children how to make healthy choices and to eat to fulfill nutritional needs, but should also provide an environment that fosters healthy eating. Providing food based on performance or for celebration connects food to mood. This practice can encourage children to eat treats even when they are not hungry and can instill lifelong habits of rewarding or comforting themselves with food behaviors associated with unhealthy eating or obesity.

Please consider non-food fun!

### Inexpensive examples of non-food treats that would be welcomed in every classroom:

Pencils: colored, with logos or decorations

Pens

Erasers

Notepads/Notebooks

Stencils

Post it Notes

Bookmarks



Gift certificates to the school store

Pencil grips or decorations

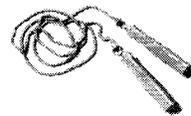
Water bottles

NERF Balls

Jump ropes

Stickers

Yo-yos



Finger puppets

Plastic sliding puzzles

Gliders

Tops

Stretchy animals

Temporary Tattoos

Magnets

Crazy Straws

Sunglasses

\*Talk with your child’s teacher about other possible classroom likes/needs. Again, he/she should be notified in advance that you will be sending a treat.

It’s important to provide consistent messaging around food and beverages and healthy eating throughout the school building. Promoting healthy options during meal and snack times while allowing food high in calories, fat, sugar and sodium at celebrations sends youth conflicting messages. Celebrations can include healthy options, but holidays and birthdays can also take on a non-food focus and instead provide opportunities for more play and time to enjoy music, dance, games, sports and other fun activities. Evolving policies and standards around foods and beverages allowed in classrooms creates the opportunity for starting new traditions to celebrate special days throughout the school year. **Thank you in advance for your support and cooperation!**

For more information see <http://www.allergyhome.org/schools> , <https://www.healthiergeneration.org/>, [http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Student/NutritionEd/Healthy\\_Celebrations.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Student/NutritionEd/Healthy_Celebrations.pdf), <https://sites.google.com/site/unitedelementary/healthy-snack-list>