

## Ideas for Celebrations at School

We know that birthdays and holidays are important to every child and that kids 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, celiac disease or other dietary restrictions. In addition, frequent sugary snacks do not contribute to achieving our goal of healthy bodies and healthy eating habits for all students. Many teachers will also admit that they would rather not have to deal with food in the classroom, especially cupcakes and messy treats.

Below are some suggestions for alternatives to food treats for your child's celebration at school. **Always check with your child's teacher first** to see what he/she finds acceptable for their classroom and be sure to provide advance notice to ensure this fits into their schedule.

1. **Party favors** (bouncy balls, matchbox cars, erasers, tops, magnifying glasses, notepads, balloons, whistles, bubbles, etc.). You can get these at a party supply store, dollar store, dollar shelves at stores like Target and Michaels and catalogs like Oriental Trading Company.
2. **Buy something for the classroom your child will love** (books, games, music, class decoration, etc.).
3. **Decorate a box** and send it into the classroom. Also send index cards or smaller pieces of paper. Have the teacher ask each child to use one sentence to write something nice about the birthday student and put it into the box. The birthday student gets to take the box home at the end of the day. You could also do the same thing using an autograph book.
4. Send in an item that all children **can sign** as a birthday treat for the birthday student (shirt/sweatshirt, tote bag, autograph book or page, stuffed animal, etc.).
5. Ask the teacher if you can have a **show and tell** time for your child on their birthday. They can make a poster, bring in some of their favorite things, bring pictures, tell the kids about their favorite things or life at their house, etc.
6. Ask the teacher if you can send in a **dance song**, and have the whole class do the hokey pokey, the chicken dance or whatever is your child's favorite. Invite the nurse or the principal!
7. **Donate a plant or seed** that the class could plant together and watch it grow.
8. Contact your school librarian to arrange to **donate a book** to the school library in honor of your child. The book will have a name plate that recognizes the donation in honor of the birthday and will be enjoyed by students for many years to come. Maybe the librarian could read this book to your child's class during library time.