

OPUSD Recommended Snacks for Classroom Activities, Parties, and Celebrations

- Watch portion sizes when serving food or beverages to children (e.g. a 2 oz muffin rather than a 6 oz; a 4 oz scoop of ice cream rather than 8 oz)
- When menu planning for classroom celebrations, consider pairing rich foods with lighter, more nutrient dense options. For example, if pizza will be served, consider offering carrots w/ dip or lightly salted popcorn as a side rather than fried potato or corn chips. Similarly, offer a small scoop of ice cream topped with fresh berries and just a drizzle of chocolate sauce at a movie party rather than caramel corn or ice cream sundaes with candy fixings.
- When purchasing prepackaged, processed foods, look for a short list of ingredients that are familiar. Most prepackaged snacks contain processed corn and soy ingredients that are genetically modified. Choose organic or non-GMO verified instead.
- For grain-based foods, consider whole grains whenever possible.
- For sweets, choose options with <10 grams of sugar per serving.
- For salty foods, choose options with <280 grams of sodium per serving.

NON-PROCESSED FOOD OPTIONS¹

Fruit

Whole, unprocessed fruit is always the best choice. Small apples, bananas and tangerines are popular with children and easy to serve. Also consider introducing students to unfamiliar varieties such as kiwi, nectarines or an unusual variety of apple that may expand their knowledge and palates. Exotic canned fruits such as lychee, rambutan, and mangosteen can also be fun choices for “taste testing” and learning.

If choosing pre-packaged cut fruit such as apple slices, select those that do not contain sugar and use Vitamin C as a preservative (if any). Other good choices are fruit cups, applesauce, and fruit bowls packed in 100% juice or water with no added sugar. Dole Foods has several options: <https://dolesunshine.com/products/fruit-bowls>.

Also, keep in mind that fruit served with protein rich food (e.g., string cheese or seed butter) can make a very healthy, filling snack.

Vegetables

Fresh vegetables such as baby carrots, celery sticks, sliced cucumber, jicama sticks, or sugar snap peas served with hummus or salsa are healthy, filling choices. Choose hummus and salsa varieties that use whole food ingredients. Consider conducting a “taste test” activity using vegetables that students may not have tried such as maché lettuce, bamboo shoots, winter squash varieties, and the like.

¹ The brands suggested in this document are not exhaustive and are only meant to provide examples of the types of foods that are compliant with District nutrition goals.

SWEET FOOD OPTIONS

Granola and Cereal Bars

Many granola and cereal bars at the grocery store are really just candy bars in disguise. Look for whole grain options (usually, the first ingredient on the list is “oats” or “whole wheat”) that do not include soy protein isolate; and contain <10 grams of sugar and >2 grams fiber per bar. Of course, as with all foods, discuss with your classroom teacher any nut or other allergies in the classroom before bringing food to serve to students, especially with items like granola and cereal bars.

The best choices:

- Nature’s Path Chewy Granola Bars
- Nature’s Path Crunchy Granola Bars
- Annie’s Homegrown Chewy Granola Bars
- KIND Healthy Grains Bars
- KIND Breakfast Bars

“Okay” (higher sugar content) choices:

- Clif ZBar
- Larabar (typically contains nuts)

Granola, Cereal, and Graham Crackers

Similar to granola bars, the healthfulness of granola, cereal and crackers depends on the ingredients from which they are made. Always choose whole grain and low sugar choices. Limit corn and processed soy ingredients.

Best choices:

- Nature’s Path (available at Costco)
- Barbara’s Bakery
- Annie’s Homegrown
- Annie’s Homegrown Organic Bunny Grahams

Frozen Treats

- POPSICLES:
 - Choose 100% fruit varieties from brands such as Palapa Azul and Frutstix that use whole fruit as the first ingredient.
 - Avoid popsicles such as Otter Pops that are made from sugar, water, and artificial colors and flavors.



- ICE CREAM AND FROZEN YOGURT

- Frozen yogurt tends to be a lower fat option than ice cream, although they are typically similar in sugar content, depending on the brand or variety. Sherbet is also not necessarily a healthier choice as many varieties are high in sugar.
- Whether ice cream, frozen yogurt, or sherbet, it is best to select a variety that has a short ingredients list and does not contain high fructose corn syrup, and artificial flavors, colors, and preservatives.
- Rather than getting extravagant flavors that may not appeal to everyone, it is often better to select a high quality ice cream in one or more basic flavors as vanilla, chocolate, or strawberry and then offer high quality toppings such as berries, sliced bananas, dark or semi-sweet chocolate chips for students who want to opt for them.
 - SUGGESTED for Chocolate Chips: Kirkland Signature Chocolate Chips (Costco); Trader Joe's Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips; Equal Exchange Semi-Sweet Chocolate Chips (Whole Foods or Sprouts)
- Avoid offering candy and candy bars as a topping.
- Pay attention to portion sizes. Students will enjoy a 4 oz scoop of ice cream that is offered to them as much as they think they would enjoy a 16 oz ice cream sundae.
 - SUGGESTED: Stonyfield Farm Frozen Yogurt, Julie's Organic Mini Ice Cream Sandwiches; Julie's Organic Fudge Bar; Dreyer's Slow Churned Simple Recipes; Breyers Non-GMO Ice Cream; Trader Joe's Organic Vanilla Ice Cream



Ingredients

No GMO Ingredients

non-fat milk, cane sugar, cream, strawberries, buttermilk, cocoa, tapioca starch, lemon juice concentrate, pectin, guar gum, natural flavor. contains: milk ingredients.



INGREDIENTS: MILK, CREAM, SUGAR, STRAWBERRIES, WHEY, DUTCHED COCOA (PROCESSED WITH ALKALI), VEGETABLE GUMS (TARA, CAROB BEAN), NATURAL FLAVOR.

SALTY FOOD OPTIONS

Popcorn

Popcorn is a *great* whole grain snack. However, avoid microwaveable popcorn varieties, particularly those that contain artificial butter flavoring. Choose organic to avoid corn treated with pesticides. Air popped and lower sodium options are typically healthiest. Some pre-popped choices to consider: Whole Foods 365 Organic Reduced Fat & Sodium or Classic Salted; Trader Joe's Organic Popcorn w/ Olive Oil; Angie's Boomchickapop



Chips

Baked options are best. Fried versions can be a “once in awhile” treat. When opting for fried potato chips, choose varieties that use real potatoes and sport smaller ingredients list. Some non-GMO brands to consider: Kettle Brand, Boulder Canyon, Popcorners, Popchips



When selecting corn tortilla chips, always choose organic or non-GMO varieties. Serve them with mild salsa, guacamole, or hummus. SUGGESTED: Food Should Taste Good, Late July, Garden of Eatin', Way Better Snacks, Que Pasa, Mission Organics, Trader Joe's Organic White Corn Tortilla Chips



Some really great tortilla chips are made from ingredients such as beans, brown rice, and other varieties of whole grains. These options may also offer higher protein content. Some brands to consider: Beanfield's Bean & Rice Chips, Lundberg's Rice Chips



BEVERAGES

Water

Water is always the best choice! Students often have their own reusable water bottles at school. Allowing students to use their own water bottle is the cheapest, easiest, and most environmentally friendly beverage option for classroom celebrations. Of course you can always have a few disposable cups on hand if a student does not have their own bottle at school on a given day.

Juice

Always choose 100% juice, either carbonated or not, and serve with a protein- or fiber-rich food, such as a string cheese or a whole grain granola bar. Please note: juice is **not** the best option as a stand-alone snack. The fiber in whole fruit is found in the flesh of the fruit; fiber helps to slow digestion and therefore the flow of sugar into the blood. When juiced, the fiber is discarded and what is left is liquid sugar with some vitamins.

Smoothies

Smoothies can be as healthy as or unhealthy as their ingredients make them. Those made from primarily whole fruit rather than fruit juice OR using milk or milk alternative base can be nourishing options. Look on the ingredients' label for no or low added sugar. Some offerings at stores like Jamba Juice can contain sugar-laden sorbet and frozen yogurt.