

# Planning Celebrations to Include Play



It is part of the American culture to celebrate birthdays and holidays by convening a group of friends and family into one location and eating. Unfortunately, many of the foods served are poor in nutrition, large in portion sizes and sitting around is acceptable. You can be a role model and set good examples when you are hosting a celebration or attending one by following some of these good tips:

- Present food in a festive manner by using colorful serving dishes, garnishes, fruit, and decorative non-edible items.
- Cut food in fun shapes and sizes, making it unique to the celebration.
- When serving fruits and vegetables, think about what is in season. This will help with the taste, texture and sight.
- Mix foods of contrasting colors to make dish look more appealing.
- Make sure water is easily accessible and looks refreshing.
- Provide pitchers throughout the location filled with fresh lemons, cucumbers or oranges.

It is possible to get 60 minutes of play into a day even during a holiday or celebration. Just include activities that create movement or play such as:

- Have a dance party.
- Set a rule that every time a certain word is said everyone has to do 10 jumping jacks. The last person to jump up has to do 20.
- Read a book about the special event.
- Give pencils, bookmarks or stickers as prizes or in goodie bags.
- Make a craft.
- Make a treasure hunt that requires movement into clues.
- Have a celebration in a location that offers space for play like a Metro Park, bowling alley, or swimming pool
- Play games like Tag, Hide and Seek or create an obstacle course.
- Play with or take a pet out for a walk.
- Play charades.
- While playing an indoor card or board game, set goals of the players, take a break to stretch and move around after each game. The winner of the game chooses the next activity.

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