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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**TOPIC: Classroom parties can be fun and healthy!**

Everybody loves a party, and classroom parties can be especially fun. However, this year schools are likely to have new guidelines about acceptable foods which may have parent volunteers a bit perplexed.

Schools were mandated to adopt wellness policies before the start of the current school year as a way to promote healthier eating and activity habits for youth. Schools set specific policies regarding standards for foods served not just in the cafeteria but also in classrooms for parties and celebrations. In some schools this may mean no change to previous policies. Parents in other schools, though, may now be asked to keep nutrition in mind as they plan parties.

With a little thought, celebrations at school can be both healthful and fun. Change the focus from food to the children and think about activities, games and crafts they might enjoy. Public libraries and craft stores have books with age-appropriate fun ideas. Parents can provide game supplies as well as small prizes like bracelets, stickers, pencils, wax fangs and spider rings.

For refreshments, some quick and easy ideas include air-popped popcorn, pretzels, whole grain crackers, string cheese, baked chips and salsa, fresh fruit and veggie sticks with lowfat dip. Theme-related names for healthy snacks add to their appeal. For example, Abracadabra Wands and Witch's Brew sound much more enticing for a Halloween party than fruit and cheese kabobs and cran-apple punch.

Both recipes are from a University of California Cooperative Extension publication, "Classroom Party Ideas." Copies of it and "Healthy Treats, Alternatives to Candy!" are available by sending a SASE to Linda Rellergert, University of Missouri Extension, 260 Brown Road, St. Peters, MO 63376. Another resource, "Healthy Celebrations: Promoting a Healthy

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School Environment,” can be downloaded by clicking on Healthy Snacks Guidance at

<http://www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Student/NutritionEd/index.htm>

### **Abacadabra Wands**

10 red apples, cut into 64 chunks  
5 cups red grapes  
8 ounces lowfat cheddar cheese, cut into 64 chunks  
64 long, thin pretzel sticks (about 3 inches long)

Use a wooden skewer to poke holes in center of each piece of food. Thread pieces onto pretzel stick.

Makes 32 servings of 2 sticks each. Nutrition information per serving: 56 calories, 2g protein, 11g carbohydrate, 1g fat, 116mg sodium.

### **Witch’s Brew**

1 gallon chilled cranberry juice  
1 gallon chilled apple cider  
12 ounce frozen orange juice concentrate, undiluted

Mix all ingredients together in large pitcher or punch bowl. Serve immediately.

Makes 32 1-cup servings. Nutrition information per serving: 125 calories, 33g carbohydrate, 0g fat, 6mg sodium.