



HEALTHY WAYS TO REWARD KIDS

Using food as a reward or punishment not only encourages children to eat outside of meal and snack times or when they're not hungry, but also may create a lifelong habit of rewarding or comforting themselves with food. This practice can undermine healthy eating messages and reinforce unhealthy eating habits. Food, even healthy options, should never be used as a reward or punishment.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO REWARD STUDENTS IN A HEALTHY WAY AT YOUR SCHOOL OR SITE:

1

Write or update your district or site wellness policy to prohibit the use of food as a reward or punishment

2

Survey staff, students and families to identify successful non-food reward options and share the results with your school community

3

Send a letter to staff explaining the school's new policy and include examples of alternative practices

4

Promote the new policy through the school's website, social media accounts, newsletters and/or bulletin boards

5

Share what's working at staff meetings to encourage your peers

NON-FOOD REWARD IDEAS

There are many examples of non-food rewards that meet both kids' and the Alliance's approval. Here a few of our favorites:



CHOOSE A PRIZE

Pencils or erasers

Stickers

Books

Entering a drawing or raffle for a bigger prize

Earning tokens or points toward a prize



GET MOVING

Lead a special physical activity break

Host a special event such as a dance or kite-flying party

Provide extra recess or PE time

Turn on the music and let students dance for a few minutes

Give students the opportunity to lead an activity



SHAKE UP YOUR ROUTINE

Let the student choose a special activity

Provide a few minutes of extra free time

Allow student to select a special book

Let student go first for an activity

Give a "no homework" pass

Host a special dress day where students can wear hats or pajamas



SHOW RECOGNITION

Give out certificates or ribbons

Post recognition signs around the school or on a prominent bulletin board

Give a shout-out in the morning announcements

Call or send a letter home to a parent

For more information, contact Stephanie Joyce, MS, RD/LD, SNS, National Nutrition Advisor at the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, at stephanie.joyce@healthiergeneration.org.