

# 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

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2

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

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3

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

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

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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](mailto:stephanie.joyce@healthiergeneration.org).