HEALTHY WAYS TO REWARD CHILDREN

AMERICA'S HEALTHIEST SCHOOLS

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. Try not to use food, even healthy options, as a reward or punishment. Follow these steps to reward students in a healthy way at your school or site:

STEP #1
WRITE OR UPDATE YOUR DISTRICT OR SITE WELLNESS POLICY TO PROHIBIT THE USE OF FOOD AS A REWARD OR PUNISHMENT.

STEP #2
SURVEY STAFF, STUDENTS AND FAMILIES TO IDENTIFY SUCCESSFUL NON-FOOD REWARD OPTIONS AND SHARE THE RESULTS WITH YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY.

STEP #3
SEND A LETTER TO STAFF EXPLAINING THE SCHOOL'S NEW POLICY AND INCLUDE EXAMPLES OF ALTERNATIVE PRACTICES.

STEP #4
PROMOTE THE NEW POLICY THROUGH THE SCHOOL'S WEBSITE, SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS, NEWSLETTERS AND/OR BULLETIN BOARDS.

STEP #5
SHARE WHAT'S WORKING AT STAFF MEETINGS TO ENCOURAGE YOUR PEERS.

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NON-FOOD REWARD IDEAS

CHOOSE A PRIZE

- **Pencils or erasers**
- **Stickers**
- **Books**
- **Enter a drawing or raffle for a bigger prize**
- **Earn tokens or points toward a prize**

GET MOVING

- **Hold a special event such as a soccer game or kite flying party with friends**
- **Provide extra time outside**
- **Turn on the music and throw a spontaneous dance party**
- **Let children choose and lead an activity**

SHAKE UP YOUR ROUTINE

- **Provide a few minutes of extra free time**
- **Allow children to select a special book during story time**
- **For one day, let a child go first for every activity**
- **Host a special dress day where children can dress like a superhero, athlete or animal**

SHOW THANKS

- **Give out a certificate or ribbon to celebrate an accomplishment**
- **Post recognition signs around the school or on a bulletin board**
- **Give a shout-out in the morning announcements**
- **Call or send a letter home to a parent**

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