

Fun Alternatives to Food Rewards

Food rewards can be an easy way to bring about an immediate behavior change in students. So why change a reward system that seems to work? Rewarding children with food can contribute to health problems such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. It also interferes with teaching children to eat in response to hunger and fullness cues. Giving donuts, candy and soft drinks may seem like a harmless treat for a job well done, but rewarding children with unhealthy food can develop habits that stay with children throughout their school careers...and their lives

Listed below are some fun alternatives to using food as a reward:

Elementary school students

- Trips to a treasure box filled with a nonfood items such as stickers, play tattoos, bubbles, jump ropes, puzzles, key chains, yo-yo's, spider rings. Trading cards, pencil toppers, coupons for extra credit, etc...
- Bank system (earn money to be used for privileges)
- Play favorite game
- Extra recess
- Make deliveries to office
- Sit by friends
- Help teach class
- Eat lunch with teacher
- School supplies
- Show- and- tell
- Paperback book

Middle School students

- Sit by friends
- Listen to music while working at desk
- Reduced homework or homework pass
- Eat lunch outside or have class outside
- Computer time
- Chat break
- Field trips
- Assemblies
- Extra reading time
- Free time at end of class

High School Students

- Extra credit
- No homework pass
- Extra reading time
- Coupons to video stores, music stores, movies (donated)
- Drawings for donated prizes among students who meet certain grade standards
- A few minutes of “free choice” time at the end of class
- Free passes to school events or games

Rewards support student health when they involve using non-food items or activities to recognize students for their achievements or good behavior.

These types of rewards include:

- ⇒ **Stickers**
- ⇒ **Books**
- ⇒ **Extra time for recess**
- ⇒ **Caught-cha bucks**
- ⇒ **Grab bags(full of non-food items)**
- ⇒ **Award certificates**
- ⇒ **Gift certificates**
- ⇒ **Student the month “dog tags”**
- ⇒ **Outstanding student ribbons**
- ⇒ **“ I’m cool...I come to school” Key tag**
- ⇒ **Bookmarks**
- ⇒ **Pencils**
- ⇒ **Silicone bracelets**
- ⇒ **Water bottles**
- ⇒ **Backpack key tags**
- ⇒ **“ All star” mini trophies**
- ⇒ **Perfect attendance T-shirt**
- ⇒ **“ Believe, Achieve, and Succeed” lapel pins**
- ⇒ **Balloon bouquets for honor roll students**