



POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
Food and Nutrition Department
HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES TO FOOD REWARDS



Rewarding Good Behavior

Food, beverages, and candy are commonly used in schools to reward good behavior and academic performance. Often these foods have little or no nutritional value and are inconsistent with nutrition policies for foods sold and served on campus. Rewarding students with candy and sweets contradicts the teaching and modeling of behaviors and skills that promote student health.

Disadvantages to using food as a reward include:

- It undermines nutrition education being taught in the classroom.
- It encourages over consumption of foods high in added sugar and fat.
- It may displace more nutritious foods offered in the school meals program.
- It teaches kids to reward themselves with food, even when they are not hungry.

EXAMPLES OF NON-FOOD REWARDS

Recognition

- Recognize the student's achievement on the school-wide morning announcement and/or the school's website
- Create a photo recognition board in a prominent location in the school
- Write a note to the student commending the achievement
- Phone, email or write a letter to parents or guardians commending a student's accomplishments
- Give a certificate of recognition/achievement

Privileges

- Going first
- Read outdoors
- Sit with a friend
- Help the teacher
- Teaching the class
- Have an extra recess
- Choosing a class activity
- Read to a younger class
- Get a no homework pass
- Make deliveries to the office
- Play a favorite game or puzzle
- Earn play money for privileges
- Be a helper in another classroom
- Play an educational computer game
- Eat lunch with a teacher or principal
- Get "free choice" time at the end of the day

Rewards for a class

- Special visitor
- Watching a video
- Going to lunch first
- Allow extra recess
- Schedule a field trip
- Holding class outdoors
- Listen to music while working
- Assemblies or music concert
- Eat lunch outdoors with the class
- Extra art, music, PE, or reading time
- Dance to favorite music in the classroom
- Playing a game or doing a puzzle together
- Listen with a headset to a book on audiotape
- Have a teacher perform special skills (i.e. sing)
- Have a teacher read a special book to the class
- A song, dance or performance by the teacher, students or guest

Reward items

- School supplies
- A plant, or seeds in a pot
- Bracelet or necklace
- Paperback book
- Shoe laces
- Key chains
- Magnet
- Sticker
- Extra credit

School supplies

- Pencils: colored with logos or other decorations
- Notepads/notebooks, folders
- Highlighters or markers
- Pencil sharpeners
- Boxes of crayons
- Coloring books
- Bookmarks
- Stencils
- Erasers

Healthy Non-Food Rewards: Rewards happen at many levels across a school. Teachers, administrators and parent groups offer rewards to recognize and celebrate student accomplishments. The goal of rewarding students is to help them internalize desirable behaviors and create motivation for learning that comes from inside. The most effective rewards fit naturally into the context and mission of the school community and should promote healthy living as a desired value of the community. Non-material rewards involving recognition, privileges and opportunities for physical activity or other types of enrichment are powerful ways to help meet these goals. Material rewards such as school supplies, trinkets, toys, and gift certificates can be donated by parents or provided by parent-teacher organizations for use on a more limited basis.