

# IDEAS FOR NON- FOOD STUDENT REWARDS & FUNDRAISERS

## PROMOTING A HEALTHY SCHOOL

As teachers know, classroom rewards can be an effective way to encourage positive behavior. Food rewards, especially candy, are often used because they are inexpensive and entice students. This is also true for club fundraising. However, it is important to understand the potential harmful effects of using food, especially non-nutritious food, may have on student health. Acknowledging that obesity among children has become a national concern is essential. Health problems related to obesity include diabetes, heart disease, and high blood pressure. We can help instill habits that lead students to make their own beneficial decisions inside and outside of the classroom.

### Consequences of Using Food as Reward

**Compromises Classroom Learning:** Food rewards undermine all nutrition education being taught in the school environment, thus making nutrition education strictly theoretical instead of modeling positive behavior patterns.

**Contributes to Poor Health:** Food rewards, such as candy or cookies, provide unneeded calories and displace healthier food choices, therefore contributing to health problems for children such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and cavities.

**Encourages Over-consumption of Unhealthy Foods:** Many reward foods are high in added sugar, fat and sodium, with little nutritional value.

**Contributes to Poor Eating Habits:** It teaches kids to eat when they are not hungry, ignoring natural hunger and satiety cues. Instead students learn to eat as a reward to themselves, possibly contributing to disordered eating.

**Contributes to Poor Classroom Environment:** Children who suffer from poor nutrition score lower on exams.

## What Teachers and Fundraising Clubs Can Do

### Ideas for Alternatives to Using Food as a Reward or a Fundraising Item

Chalk (e.g. sidewalk chalk)

Markers

Coloring books

Rulers

Pencil sharpener, grips, or boxes

Gift certificate to the school store

Pencils: colored or with logos/decorations

Pens

Erasers

Notepads

Notebooks

Boxes of crayons

#### Toys

Stickers

Yo-yo

Rubber balls

Finger puppets

Stuffed animals

Plastic figurines

Toy cars, trucks, helicopters, or airplanes

Plastic sliding puzzles or other puzzle games

Key chains

Gliders

Magnifying glasses

Spinning tops

Marbles

Jacks

Playing cards

A plant or seeds, and a pot for growing

Fidget Spinners

#### Privileges

Extra recess

Choose music for the classroom

Design a class or hall bulletin board

Be first in line

Take class for a walk around the block

Take a walk with the principal or teacher

Help teach the class

Help the teacher

Read favorite book from home to the class

Read the school-wide morning announcements

Read to a younger class

Bring in favorite item for share day

Sit at the teacher's desk

Sit by friends

Go to the library to select a book to read

Pick out the book for the teacher to read

Use bean bag chair for the day

#### Recognition or Rewards

Phone parents about their great child

"Caught Being Good/In the Act" coupons or other non-food prizes

A photo recognition board in a prominent location in the school

Recognize a child's achievements on the school-wide morning announcements

Homework pass

Free time at the end of class

Choose your seat

Take care of the class animal for a day

Use the teacher's chair

Make deliveries to the office

Eat lunch with a teacher or principal

#### **\*\*Vendors of Inexpensive Incentive Items:**

Oriental Trading – (800) 875-8480 [www.oriental.com](http://www.oriental.com)

Really Good Stuff – (800) 3661920 [www.reallygoodstuff.com](http://www.reallygoodstuff.com)

Teachers Paradise.com – [www.teachersparadise.com](http://www.teachersparadise.com)

Carson Dellose – (800) 321-0943 [www.carsondelloso.com](http://www.carsondelloso.com)