



Healthy Non-Food Rewards

Food Rewards

High School Students

- ❑ Extra credit
- Fun movie
- Reduced homework
- Late homework pass
- Donated coupons for music, movies or books
- Drawings for donated prizes
- Pep rally
- Recognition on morning announcements
- Tickets to school events, e.g., dances, sporting events

PTO/PTA Rewards

- Water bottles
- School-branded apparel
- Movie passes
- Special time with a teacher
- Dance Dance Revolution, Wii or video game party
- Pool party, hike, or group trip to a kids' fun place
- Raffle for bigger prizes, such as a bike, an iPod or a ride in a limo



"Rewarding children with unhealthy foods in school undermines our efforts to teach them about good nutrition. It's like teaching children a lesson on the importance of not smoking, and then handing out ashtrays and lighters to the kids who did the best job listening."

— Marlene Schwartz, PhD, Co-Director
Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, Yale University

Food Rewards contradict classroom lessons on nutrition, add empty calories to kids' diets and teach kids to eat when they're not hungry – setting the stage for unhealthy habits that can last a lifetime and contributing to the childhood obesity epidemic sweeping the country. One study found that every separate food-related practice (e.g., a food incentive or reward) that promotes low-nutrition foods in a school is associated with a 10% increase in students' body mass indexes (BMI).²

Check your school's wellness policy or school improvement plan to see if they contain any guidelines or goals about healthy, non-food rewards. If they don't, find out what it would take to address this topic.

Action for Healthy Kids® partners with teachers, students, parents, school wellness experts and more to fight childhood obesity, undernourishment and physical inactivity by helping schools become healthier places so kids can live healthier lives. Our programs, tools and resources make it possible for everyone to play their part in ending the nation's childhood obesity epidemic.

www.ActionforHealthyKids.org

The websites listed in this document are provided as a service only to identify potentially useful ideas and resources for creating healthier school cultures. Action for Healthy Kids is not responsible for maintaining these external websites, nor does the listing of these sites constitute or imply endorsement of their content.

¹Adapted from "Effective and Healthy Rewards for Kids," Coalition on Children and Weight San Diego and "Alternatives to Food Rewards," Connecticut State Department of Education, May 2005 (Revised November 2011).

²Kubik M., Lytle L., Story M. "Schoolwide Food Practices Are Associated with Body Mass Index in Middle School Students." Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, 2005, vol. 159, pp. 1111-1114.

³"Alternatives to Food Rewards," Connecticut State Department of Education, May 2005 (Revised November 2011).



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