

STRATEGY 3: Prohibit the Use of Food as a Reward

why does this matter?

Rewarding kids with food, even healthy foods, encourages kids to eat outside of meal and snack times, when they may not be hungry, and can lead to poor eating habits.^{1,2}

Using food, such as candy, cookies, doughnuts, sugary drinks, and pizza, as a reward for good behavior and academic performance is a common practice with kids and **puts them at risk for excess weight gain and obesity**.^{3,4}

Encouraging kids to eat healthy foods, but at the same time rewarding good behavior with unhealthy foods, **sends a mixed message and confuses kids**.¹

Foods that are used as rewards are typically high in sugar, fat, and salt with little nutritional value, and can play a role in establishing kids' preferences for unhealthy foods.^{1,2}

References

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3. Kubik MY, Lytle LA, Story M. Schoolwide food practices are associated with body mass index in middle school students. *Arch. Pediatr. Adolesc. Med.* 2005;159(12):1111-1114.
4. Dattilo AM, Birch L, Krebs NF, Lake A, Taveras EM, Saavedra JM. Need for early interventions in the prevention of pediatric overweight: a review and upcoming directions. *J. Obes.* 2012;2012.