



Ideas for Rewards without Food

Rewarding children with food, even healthy food, encourages them to eat when they may not be hungry and can lead to poor eating habits. Use rewards without food instead.

HOW TO REWARD GOOD BEHAVIOR WITHOUT USING FOOD

Ask children what makes them feel special.

Use words of praise to reward children.

Use physical activity as a reward.

- Share a special item or talent with the class or group
- Sit in a special seat during snack or mealtime
- Have their name in a newsletter or on a bulletin board
- Get a note from the teacher or program staff, or send one home to families and caregivers
- Get coupons for special activities
- Share a favorite picture of a family member or friend
- Play a favorite game or puzzle
- Eat snack outdoors or have a picnic
- Take a walk with a favorite teacher or staff member
- Dance to favorite music
- Receive a trophy or ribbon
- Select an item from a treasure chest full of small, non-food items (For example: bubbles, Slinkys, yo-yos, glow sticks, temporary tattoos, fidget spinners, stickers, etc.)
- Enter into a drawing for donated prizes
- Win tickets to special events (sports games, dances, concerts, etc.)
- Earn points or play money special activities
- Earn certificates for music downloads
- Choose brain teasers or games for the group to play
- Earn sports equipment or athletic gear (For example: Frisbees, water bottles, head or wrist sweat bands, etc.)
- Get a positive note from a teacher or program staff, or send one home to families and caregivers
- Plan and lead an event or field trip

TIP

Be sure to avoid giving extra time using media as a reward.

Benefits of Using Non-Food Rewards

- Supports healthy eating
- Provides chances for rewards
- Increases time spent being active