

# Prohibit the Use of Food as a Reward



## WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

### MESSAGING & BEHAVIOR

- Using food as a reward, even healthy food, encourages children to eat outside of meal and snack times when they may not be hungry and can lead to poor nutritional habits.<sup>1-6</sup>
- Talking to children about good nutrition while at the same time rewarding their behavior with unhealthy foods sends a mixed message that can interfere with healthy choices.<sup>6</sup>

### UNHEALTHY FOODS

- Children are commonly offered unhealthy food items like candy, cookies, sugary drinks, or pizza as a reward for good behavior or academic performance, a practice that increases their risk for overweight and obesity.<sup>1-5</sup>
- Foods used as rewards tend to be high in sugar, fat, and salt, and can help create unhealthy taste preferences that last into adulthood.<sup>1,3,6</sup> Rewarding children with food can also hurt the quality of their diet in the short term.<sup>1-5</sup>

#### References

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