

HEALTHY WAYS TO REWARD CHILDREN



Using food as a reward or punishment not only encourages children to eat outside of meal and snack times or when they're not hungry, but also may create a lifelong habit of rewarding or comforting themselves with food. This practice can undermine healthy eating messages and reinforce unhealthy eating habits. Whether at home or at school, try not to use food, even healthy options, as a reward or punishment.

There are many examples of non-food rewards that kids will love. Here are a few of our favorites:



CHOOSE A PRIZE

- Pencils or erasers
- Stickers
- Books
- Enter a drawing or raffle for a bigger prize
- Earn tokens or points toward a prize



GET MOVING

- Hold a special event such as a soccer game or kite flying party with friends
- Provide extra time outside
- Turn on the music and throw a spontaneous dance party
- Let children choose and lead an activity



SHAKE UP YOUR ROUTINE

- Provide a few minutes of extra free time
- Allow children to select a special book during story time
- For one day, let a child go first for every activity
- Host a special dress day where children can dress like a superhero, athlete or animal



SHOW THANKS

- Give out a certificate or ribbon to celebrate an accomplishment
- Post recognition signs around your home or on the refrigerator
- Call a family member or friend, such as a grandparent, to share the news