

# Non-Food Rewards for Students

Compiled by the Jefferson County Public Schools' Wellness Committee

Students are often given food as a reward for “good” behavior. Typically, these food rewards are empty calorie foods with little or no nutritional value.

Try something besides food for a reward!

## Consequences of Using Food as a Reward:

- It teaches students to eat when they aren't hungry
- It contributes to the development of life-long habits of rewarding or comforting oneself with unhealthy foods
- Food is linked to emotions such as feelings of accomplishment
- It can influence students to associate “junk foods” with being good or feeling happy
- It reinforces a poor habit of eating outside of meal or snack times
- It can lead to obesity, Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, dental problems, and other health concerns
- It contradicts classroom nutrition education



REWARDS

## *What are the most effective rewards?*

- ✓ *Intrinsic* – the behavior itself results in good feelings
- ✓ *Extrinsic* – if:
  - Rewards are related to the behavior and fit naturally
  - Given promptly and consistently after the positive behavior



## Non-Food Rewards for Students

- Treasure box filled with non-food items such as stickers, small toys, puzzles, etc.
- Play favorite game
- Make deliveries to the office
- Help teach class
- School supplies
- Paperback book
- Listen to classroom music while working
- Listen or an audio book/watch a video
- Have teacher perform
- Verbal praise
- Care for class animal
- Read morning announcements
- Recognized during announcements
- Featured on a photo recognition board
- Earn play money to purchase prizes
- Extra reading time
- Extra credit opportunities
- T-shirt
- Movie, zoo, museum coupons
- Extra recess time
- Sit by friends
- Eat lunch with teacher/principal
- Note/email to parents
- Free time at end of day
- Teacher reads a book
- "No homework" pass
- Extra art time
- Walk with principal at lunch
- Read to a younger class
- Go to library
- Computer time
- Eat lunch outside
- Chat break
- Field trips
- Assemblies
- Drawings for donated prizes
- Coupons for video/music stores
- Free passes to school events



## What are your students' favorite rewards? Why not ask them?

*For older students, do a short written survey at the beginning of the year; For younger students, verbally ask them – "What do you think is a good reward?"*

**An effective reward is something  
the student desires.**

