



RISEVT'S GUIDE TO HEALTHY REWARDS AND CELEBRATIONS

“Rewards happen at many levels across a school. Teachers, administrators and parent groups offer rewards to recognize and celebrate student accomplishments. The goal of rewarding students is to help them internalize desirable behaviors and create motivation for learning that comes from inside. The most effective rewards fit naturally into the context and mission of the school community and should promote healthy living as a desired value of the community.”

“Food rewards contradict classroom lessons on nutrition, add empty calories to kids’ diets and teach kids to eat when they are not hungry – setting the stage for unhealthy habits that can last a lifetime and contributing to the childhood obesity

epidemic. One study found that every separate food-related practice (e.g. a food incentive or reward) that promotes low-nutrition foods in a school is associated with a 10% increase in a students’ body mass index (BMI).”

“Rewarding children with unhealthy foods in school undermines our efforts to teach them about good nutrition. It’s like teaching children a lesson on the importance of not smoking and then handing out ashtrays and lighters to the kids who did the best job listening. “ – Marlene Schwartz, PhD, Co-Director, Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, Yale University

REWARDS:

Elementary School Students:

- Make deliveries to office
- Teach a class
- Be a helper in another classroom
- Read morning announcements
- Sit with friends
- Lunch with a teacher
- Play a favorite game/puzzle
- Extra recess time
- Show and Tell
- Free time at the end of class

- Dance to music in the classroom
- Gift certificate to school store
- Walk with Principal or teacher
- Fun physical activity break
- Teacher/volunteer reads special book to class
- Read or have class outdoors
- Extra art, music or reading time
- Teacher performs special skill (ie. Singing, music, juggling, other talents)
- Organize a special community service project (ie. Invite senior citizens to lunch, donate goods)
- Guest speakers



Middle School/High School:

- Sit with friends
- Choose your own partner for activities
- Listen to music while working at desk
- Go for a walk
- “No homework” pass, reduced homework, late homework pass
- Extra credit
- Group activities/games
- Tickets to school events (dances, sporting events, etc.)
- Free choice at end of class
- Field trips
- Eat lunch outside or have class outside
- Earn points for privileges
- Pool party
- Raffles for donated prizes
- Physical Activity

Recognition in all grades

- Certificate, trophy, ribbons, plaque
- Recognition on morning announcements or at a school assembly
- Photo recognition board (at school or on social media)
- Phone call, email or letter sent home to parents commending student’s accomplishments
- Thank you notes

Birthday Celebrations

- Be the teacher’s helper
- Donate or read favorite book to class
- Choose game/activity for the class
- Go for a walk, play a game/activity
- Extra recess
- Wear a special birthday crown, sash or badge
- Receive a birthday card from teacher/class
- “Celebrate me” book from classmates with stories/poems/drawings for the child
- Birthday student chooses the color that the class wears that day (or sports team or superhero)
- Have the students sharing the birthday month be the “Birthday Committee” and come up with the healthy celebration

How to be a healthy role model:

- Be active – play with the kids at recess, take them for walks
- Choose healthy foods and beverages
- Get involved in your employee wellness program
- Read your school’s local wellness policy
- Get involved in your school wellness team
- Don’t use food rewards