

# Non-food Alternatives

## For School Rewards and Fundraising

### How NOT to use food in your school

#### 1) Incentives, rewards or celebrations

Presenting food (both sweet and non-sweet) as a reward significantly enhances the desire for that food. Holiday celebrations, for example, could focus on traditional activities or games.

#### 2) Punishment

Withholding food (usually candy or other low-nutritive value foods) as a punishment reinforces the desire for that food--just as if it were used as a reward.

#### 3) Fundraising to support school programs

Food fundraisers may help the financial health of school activities--but at the expense of children's physical health.

School food choices are not limited to lunches and vending machines.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) Nutrition Standards for Food in Schools are suggested as voluntary guidelines and primarily affect school a la carte and vending choices. But those are not the only school food practices that contribute to childhood obesity. The IOM also recommends applying the nutrition standards to classroom parties and celebrations plus fundraising, rewards, and incentives for students. In addition, non-food alternatives may provide double benefits by limiting high calorie snacks AND increasing physical activity.

#### Non-food Rewards for Elementary Students (Low/No Cost)

- Trips to a treasure box filled with nonfood items, such as stickers, play tattoos, bubbles, jump ropes, puzzles, key chains, yo-yos, spider rings, charms, trading cards, pencil toppers, extra credit opportunities
- Play favorite non-electronic game
- Extra recess
- Make deliveries to the office
- Sit by friends
- Help teach class
- Eat lunch with the teacher
- School supplies
- Show and tell
- Paperback book
- Free choice time at end of the day
- Read or have class outdoors
- "No homework" or Homework Bargain pass
- Listen to an audio book/watch a video
- Choose one student from each class to walk with the principal at lunch
- Extra art time
- Play a computer game
- Enjoy class outdoors
- Read to a younger class
- Listen to music while working
- Play a favorite game or puzzle
- Eat lunch outdoors with the class
- Be a helper in another classroom
- Dance to favorite music in the classroom
- Select a book from the teacher to read to class

#### Non-food Rewards for Middle School Students

- Sit by friends
- Listen to classroom music while working
- "No homework" or Homework Bargain pass
- Eat lunch outside or have class outside
- Computer time
- Chat break
- Field trips
- Assemblies
- Extra reading time
- Free time at end of class

#### Non-food Rewards for High School Students

- Extra credit opportunities
- "No homework" or Homework Bargain pass
- Extra lunch outside or have class outside
- Computer time
- Coupons to video stores, music stores, movies (donated)
- Drawing for donated prizes among students who meet certain grade standards
- Free time at end of class
- Free passes to school events and games

**Students learn from ALL their school experiences.**

**The goal is to create an environment that supports the healthy nutrition messages being taught in the classroom.**