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. Food, even healthy options, should never be used as a reward or punishment.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO REWARD STUDENTS IN A HEALTHY WAY AT YOUR SCHOOL OR SITE:

1. Write or update your district or site wellness policy to prohibit the use of food as a reward or punishment

2. Survey staff, students and families to identify successful non-food reward options and share the results with your school community

3. Send a letter to staff explaining the school’s new policy and include examples of alternative practices

4. Promote the new policy through the school’s website, social media accounts, newsletters and/or bulletin boards

5. Share what’s working at staff meetings to encourage your peers

To learn more and join the movement, visit HealthierGeneration.org
NON-FOOD REWARD IDEAS
There are many examples of non-food rewards that meet both kids’ and the Alliance’s approval. Here a few of our favorites:

**CHOOSE A PRIZE**
- Pencils or erasers
- Stickers
- Books
- Entering a drawing or raffle for a bigger prize
- Earning tokens or points toward a prize

**GET MOVING**
- Lead a special physical activity break
- Host a special event such as a dance or kite-flying party
- Provide extra recess or PE time
- Turn on the music and let students dance for a few minutes
- Give students the opportunity to lead an activity

**SHAKE UP YOUR ROUTINE**
- Let the student choose a special activity
- Provide a few minutes of extra free time
- Allow student to select a special book
- Let student go first for an activity
- Give a “no homework” pass
- Host a special dress day where students can wear hats or pajamas

**SHOW RECOGNITION**
- Give out certificates or ribbons
- Post recognition signs around the school or on a prominent bulletin board
- Give a shout-out in the morning announcements
- Call or send a letter home to a parent

For more information, contact Stephanie Joyce, MS, RD/LD, SNS, National Nutrition Advisor at the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, at stephanie.joyce@healthiergeneration.org.