

## **Alternatives to Using Food As A Reward**

## **ADDENDUM D**

At school, home, and throughout the community kids are offered food as a reward for "good" behavior. Often these foods have little or no nutritional value but are easy, inexpensive, and can bring about short-term behavior change.

### **There are many disadvantages to using food as a reward:**

It undermines nutrition education being taught in the school environment.

It encourages over-consumption of foods high in added sugar and fat.

It teaches kids to eat when they're not hungry as a reward to themselves.

Kids learn preferences for foods made available to them, including those that are unhealthy. Poor food choices and inadequate physical activity contribute to being overweight and obese. Currently, obesity among kids is at epidemic levels and can often lead to serious health problems.

### **Students Learn What They Live**

Kids naturally enjoy eating healthy and being physically active. Schools and communities need to provide them with an environment that supports healthy behaviors. Below are some alternatives for students to enjoy instead of being offered food as a reward at school.

#### **ZERO-COST ALTERNATIVES**

- Sit by friends
- Read outdoors
- Have extra art time
- Have an extra recess
- Read to a younger class
- Make deliveries to the office
- Listen to music while working
- Play a favorite game or puzzle
- Earn play money for privileges
- Walk with a teacher during lunch
- Eat lunch outdoors with the class
- Be a helper in another classroom
- Eat lunch with a teacher or principal
- Dance to favorite music in the classroom
- Get "freechoice" time at the end of the day
- Listen with a headset to a book on audiotape
- Have a teacher perform special skills (i.e. sing)
- Have a teacher read a special book to the class
- Give a 5-minute chat break at the end of the day
- Play a computer game
- Get a no homework pass

#### **LOW-COST ALTERNATIVES**

- Select a paperback book
- Enter a drawing for donated prize
- Take a trip to the treasure box (non-food items)
- Get stickers, pencils, and other school supplies
- Receive a video store or movie theatre coupon
- Get a set of flash cards printed from a computer
- Receive a "mystery pack" (notepad, folder, sports cards, etc.)