



Creating Healthy Schools

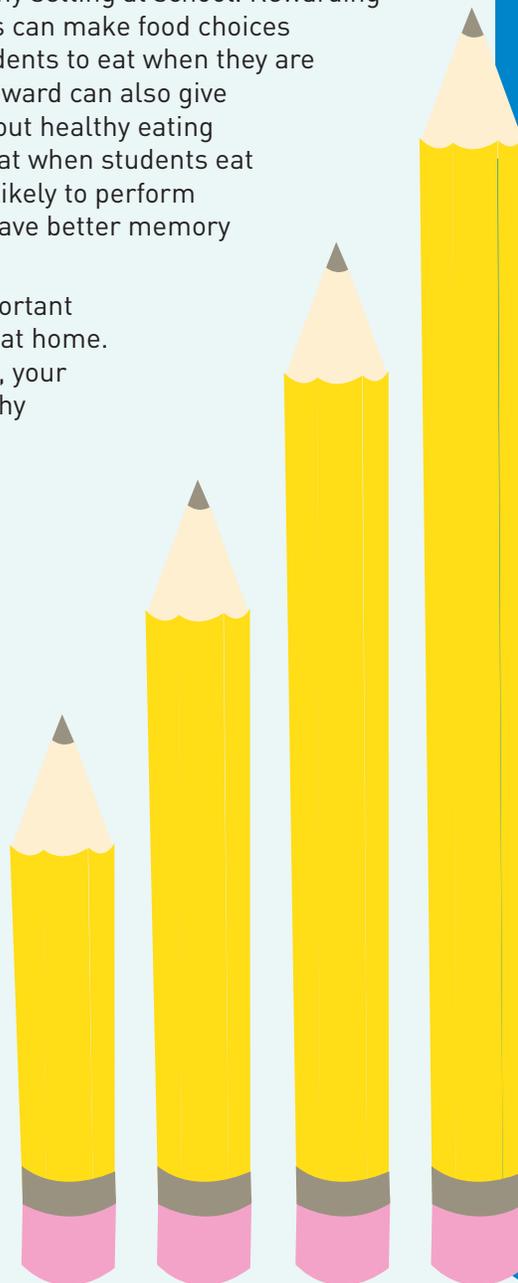
Avoiding food as a reward

Each school in our district is required to create and carry out School Wellness Policies, including a section on stopping the use of food as a reward. Schools will not use food as rewards for academic performance or good behavior. This policy will help your child learn healthy lifestyle behaviors.

Why is it important to avoid using food as a reward?

It is important to have a healthy setting at school. Rewarding students with unhealthy foods can make food choices confusing and encourage students to eat when they are not hungry. Using food as a reward can also give students mixed messages about healthy eating practices. Research shows that when students eat healthy foods, they are more likely to perform better in the classroom and have better memory and concentration.

Eating healthy is not only important at school, it is also important at home. By not using food as a reward, your family can help create a healthy setting at home.



How can you and your family get involved?

There are many ways you and your family can become active with school wellness. It is important to stop using food as a reward in schools and at home. Here are some ideas for you and your family:

School Policy

- Go to Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings and talk about how food may or may not be used as a reward in the school.
- Go online to the school website to see nutrition and physical activity information and a copy of the School Wellness PowerPoint presentation and orientation packet.
- Talk to other families about how the school may be using food as a reward and what you can do to start change.
- Ask your child's teacher about the use of food as a reward in the classroom.
- Talk with the principal, food service director, associated student body director, and teacher to find out how they keep track of using food as a reward.
- Work with other parents, the school wellness committee, and food service staff to discuss ways to use other non-food based reward systems.

School/Classroom Food Environment

- Ask your child what types of rewards for good behavior or grades are used in the classroom.
- Bring non-food rewards for your child's teacher to use.
- Brainstorm ideas for non-food rewards for your child's teacher to use in the classroom.

Other Resources:

- The Center for Science in the Public Interest has produced a resource that explains the reasoning for using non-food rewards, as well as more ideas for other non-food rewards. "Constructive Classroom Rewards: Promoting Good Habits While Protecting Children's Health"
http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/constructive_rewards.pdf
- Michigan State University has outlined non-food reward ideas based on cost: <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/Michigan/foodrewards.pdf>
- The Utah Department of Health has an extensive resource on more specific ideas to implement non-food rewards and the benefits: http://www.cr.k12.ia.us/assets/1/6/Reward___Motivate_without_Food.pdf
- The University of Clemson has a handout explaining the importance of not using food as a reward; it also contains ideas and strategies for parents and teachers to use. This can be found here: <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/food/pdf/hgic4110.pdf>



Ideas for non-food rewards

- Allow extra time for playing outside or inside.
- Play games as a family and let your child choose the game.
- Keep a box of special toys, video games, or art supplies that can be used only on special occasions.
- Allow your child to have a few friends over after school.
- Allow your child to have a sleep over.
- Have your child plan a special family trip, to the movies, park, zoo, etc.
- Set up a system so that your child can earn movie tickets, coupons, gift certificates to skating rinks, bowling alleys, and other entertainment places.

I'm interested in learning more!

Who do I contact?

Principal: _____

PTO President: _____

School Wellness Coordinator: _____

District Wellness Coordinator: _____

