

# NUTRITION BITS AND BITES

## Rethinking Rewards



### Did you know?

The type of rewards we use impact a child's overall health and well-being.

## Should Food be Used as a Reward?

While food is an important part of celebrations and is meant to be enjoyed, breaking the link between food and good behaviour can help promote a healthy relationship with food.

- IF you use food as rewards, it can:
  - Increase a child's desire for the reward food which is often sweets.
  - Make it hard for children to listen to their natural hunger and fullness cues.
  - Teach kids to expect food when they've done something well.
  - Increase risk of dental cavities.
- Try to keep food as food, neither a prize nor a punishment.
- Non-food rewards are the best way to support a child's health, growth, and development!

Using non-food rewards also protects children with food allergies. Read more about non-food rewards here: <https://foodallergycanada.ca/non-food-treats-10-food-free-ideas-kids-ages/>

## Recipe for Change: Using Non-Food Rewards



### Reward Ideas:

#### At Home:

- Dance party
- Dress up day
- Pajama day
- Stickers
- Face painting or temporary tattoos
- Bookmarks
- Books
- Family game night
- Painting a mural for their bedroom or playroom
- Invite a few of your child's friends over for a sleepover
- Camp out in the backyard
- Go to a sports game
- Create a box of special toys or art supplies that are only used for rewards or special occasions



#### At Schools or Community Centers:

##### Early Years:

- Stickers
- Bookmarks
- Extra art time
- Fun coloured pens or pencils
- Get to sit by friends
- Eat lunch outdoors
- Dance to favourite music in class
- Extra recess time



##### Older Years:

- Get to listen to music while working
- Extra talk time at the end class
- Extra credit
- Have class/programs outside
- No homework pass
- Books

### Tips to Implement Ideas:

- Get input from your child. Ask how would they like to be rewarded and make a list together 😊
- Use words of encouragement! Kids love to hear "I'm so proud of you" or "I appreciate your help!".
- Choose prizes, toys, and games that promote physical activity!

Check Out **Appetite to Play** for More Ideas to Support Healthy Eating and Activity for Kids:  
<https://www.appetitetoplay.com/healthy-eating/tips-ideas/10-easy-non-food-rewards>

For more information on nutrition and healthy eating, visit:

<https://www.southernhealth.ca/finding-care/health-info-for-you/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/>

To access previous school nutrition newsletters, visit:

<https://www.southernhealth.ca/whats-happening/nutritional-newsletters/>

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