

Activities to Celebrate the Child



Using food as a reward for behavior and achievement can encourage unhealthy habits later in life. There are many disadvantages to using food as a reward:

- It establishes an emotional connection between food and performance.
- It encourages the use of food for soothing rather than for nourishment.
- It can undermine nutrition education taught in school.
- It encourages overconsumption of foods usually high in sugar and fat.
- It can contradict healthy habits valued by parents.

Portland Public Schools' Local Wellness Policy prohibits using food or beverages as a reward or incentive for students' behavior or performance.

Here are some ways to motivate a student using non-food rewards:

- **Social rewards** – Involve attention, praise, or a thank-you. Simple gestures like verbal praise, especially in front of others, can mean a lot.
- **Recognition** – A trophy, plaque, ribbon, certificate or a sticker.
- **Privileges** – Going first, choosing a class activity, sitting by friends, getting a “no homework” pass, doing special jobs, or taking a walk with a special staff person.
- **School Supplies** – Pens, pencils, erasers, notebooks, bookmarks, highlighters, markers, art supplies, rulers, or a pencil box.

Here are some ideas for class and school-wide rewards:

- Extra recess
- Going to the lunch room first
- Holding class outdoors
- Extra art, music, PE, or reading time
- Dancing to music
- Playing a game or doing a puzzle together
- “Free choice” time at the end of the day
- A song, dance, or performance by the teacher or students
- A book read aloud to the class by the teacher
- A walk to a nearby park



For more information and ideas, visit:
www2.portlandschools.org/district-wellness



Portland Public Schools
Learning to Succeed

HEALTHY
Portland