

SUBJECT: HEALTHY PRIZES

Policy Statement

Healthy prizes consist of a variety of choices as a prize or way of positive reinforcement that excludes choices that are unhealthy and provide no nutritional supplement for children. Healthy prizes may consist of stickers, pencils, erasers, extra minutes of recess, etc. This policy excludes rewards such as hard candy, pizza parties, chocolate, and sweets.

Rationale

The purpose of this policy is to provide children with positive reinforcement that is beneficial to the child's health while rewarding him or her for doing something good.

Definitions

Prize: For the purposes of this policy, a prize is anything in addition to a grade that is given to a student or to the class for something positive that has been achieved.

Unhealthy: For the purposes of this policy, unhealthy is any item containing empty calories, or an excess in calories and fat content that provides no nutritional value to the child (e.g., pastries, cookies, candy, chewing gum). Accumulating points for a party (e.g., pizza, cake, ice cream, etc.) should be considered unhealthy.

Healthy: For purposes of this policy, healthy is an item that is either beneficial to the child's well being or has no negative effect on the child's well-being. An item beneficial to the child's well being consists of, but is not limited to, vegetables, fruits, low fat or fat free milk, minutes adding up for more time at recess, or a game day. An item having no negative effect on the child's well being consists of, but is not limited to, pencils, pens, erasers, paper, crayons, markers, etc.

Policy

The Healthy Prize policy aims to reduce the unhealthy items used as positive reinforcement for a behavior or a grade. Rewarding children in the classroom need not involve candy and other foods that can undermine children's diets and health and reinforce unhealthful eating habits. A wide variety of alternative rewards can be used to provide positive reinforcement for children's behavior and academic performance.

"It's Just a Little Treat": The Harm in Using Food to Reward Children

Schools should not only teach children how to make healthy choices and to eat to fulfill nutritional needs, but also should provide an environment that fosters healthy eating. Providing food based on performance or behavior connects food to mood. This practice can encourage children to eat treats even when they are not hungry and can instill lifetime habits of rewarding or comforting

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themselves with food behaviors associated with unhealthy eating or obesity. Awarding children food during class also reinforces eating outside of meal or snack times. Since few studies have been conducted on the effect of using food rewards on children's long-term eating habits, the best policy is not to use food to reward children for good behavior or academic performance. At minimum, children should not be rewarded using foods of poor nutritional quality. (Note: classroom parties are covered by this policy.)

The Value of Rewarding Children (with Non-Food Rewards)

As teachers know, classroom rewards can be an effective way to encourage positive behavior. Children, like everyone, alter their actions based on short term anticipated consequences. When trying to foster a new behavior, it is important to reward a child consistently each time he/she does the desired behavior. Once the behavior has become an established habit, rewards can be given every now and then to encourage the child to maintain the preferred behavior. The ultimate goal of rewarding children is to help them internalize positive behaviors so that they will not need a reward. Eventually, self-motivation will be sufficient to induce them to perform the desired behavior, and outside reinforcement will no longer be necessary.

Physical Activity and Food Should Not be Linked to Punishment

Punishing children by taking away recess or physical education classes reduces their already-scarce opportunities for physical activity. Another counter-productive punishment is forcing children to do physical activity such as running laps or pushups. Children often learn to dislike things that are used as punishments. Thus, penalizing children with physical activity might lead them to avoid activities that are important for maintaining wellness and a healthy body weight. In addition, food should not be withheld as a means of punishing children. The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits withholding meals as a punishment for any child enrolled in a school participating in the school meal programs.

Procedures

The Superintendent, Principal, teachers, and food service providers should collaborate to make sure all teachers are following policy. These simple changes can cause a big change in the end when it comes to dealing with the obesity and inactivity epidemic going on in America today.

Teachers, faculty, staff, parents, community and outside businesses can work together to make this change an easy but important one. Kids can compete for prizes among classmates, classrooms as a whole, or even the entire grade.

In addition to the change in prize choices, explanation and education of benefits should also be provided with all participating individuals including, but not limited to students, faculty, staff, parents and guardians.

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Agreement Statement

I have read the above statement and understand the responsibilities expected of me for this policy change. I agree to participate fully and have all classroom rewards that are beneficial to the students.

Director

Participating Teachers and/or Staff:

Any other key participants:

Date: _____

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SUBJECT: HEALTHY PRIZES (Cont'd.)**Social Rewards**

"Social rewards" which involve attention, praise, or thanks are often more highly valued by children than a toy or food. Simple gestures like pats on the shoulder, verbal praise (including in front of others), nods, or smiles can mean a lot. These types of social rewards affirm a child's worth as a person.

Recognition

- a) Trophy, plaque, ribbon, or certificate in recognition of achievement or a sticker with an affirming message (e.g., "Great job");
- b) Recognizing a child's achievement on the School-wide morning announcements and/or the School's website;
- c) A photo recognition board in a prominent location in the School;
- d) A phone call, e-mail or letter sent home to parents or guardians commending a child's accomplishment;
- e) A note from the teacher to the student commending his/her achievement.

Privileges

- a) Going first;
- b) Choosing a class activity;
- c) Helping the teacher;
- d) Having an extra few minutes of recess with a friend;
- e) Sitting by friends or in a special seat next to or at the teacher's desk;
- f) "No homework" pass;
- g) Teaching the class;
- h) Playing an educational computer or other game;
- i) Reading to a younger class;
- j) Making deliveries to the office;
- k) Reading the School-wide morning announcements;
- l) Helping in another classroom;
- m) Eating lunch with a teacher or Principal;
- n) Listening with a headset to a book on tape or CD;
- o) Going to the library to select a book to read;
- p) Working at the School store;
- q) Taking a walk with the Principal or teacher;
- r) Designing a class or hall bulletin board;

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- s) Writing or drawing on the blackboard/whiteboard;
- t) Taking care of the class animal for a day;
- u) Allowing a child to choose an extra recess activity for the class on his/her birthday.

Rewards for a class

- a) Extra recess;
- b) Eating lunch outdoors;
- c) Going to the lunchroom first;
- d) Reading outdoors;
- e) Holding class outdoors;
- f) Extra art, music, PE, or reading time;
- g) Listening to music while working;
- h) Dancing to music;
- i) Playing a game or doing a puzzle together;
- j) "Free choice" time at the end of the day;
- k) A song, dance, or performance by the teacher or students;
- l) A book read aloud to the class by the teacher;
- m) A field trip.

School supplies

- a) Pencils: colored, with logos or other decorations;
- b) Pens;
- c) Erasers;
- d) Notepads/notebooks;
- e) Boxes of crayons;
- f) Stencils;
- g) Stamps;
- h) Plastic scissors;
- i) Bookmarks;
- j) Highlighters;
- k) Chalk (e.g., sidewalk chalk);
- l) Markers;
- m) Coloring books;
- n) Rulers;
- o) Glitter;
- p) Pencil sharpeners, grips or boxes;
- q) Gift certificate to the school store.

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SUBJECT: HEALTHY PRIZES (Cont'd.)**Sports equipment and athletic gear**

- a) Paddleballs;
- b) Frisbees;
- c) Water bottles;
- d) NERF balls;
- e) Hula hoop;
- f) Head and wrist sweat bands;
- g) Jump rope.

Toys/trinkets

- a) Stickers;
- b) Yo-yos;
- c) Rubber balls;
- d) Finger puppets;
- e) Stuffed animals;
- f) Plastic or rubber figurines;
- g) Toy cars, trucks, helicopters, or airplanes;
- h) Plastic sliding puzzles or other puzzle games;
- i) Slinkies;
- j) Gliders;
- k) Magnifying glasses;
- l) Spinning tops;
- m) Marbles;
- n) Jacks;
- o) Playing cards;
- p) Stretchy animals;
- q) Silly putty;
- r) Bubble fluid with wand;
- s) Balloons;
- t) Capsules that become sponges/figures when placed in water;
- u) Inflatable toys (balls, animals);
- v) Small dolls or action figures.

Fashion wear

- a) Temporary tattoos;
- b) Hair accessories (barrettes, elastics or ribbons);
- c) Bracelets, rings, necklaces;
- d) Sunglasses;
- e) Eyeglasses with nose disguise;

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- f) Hat or cap;
- g) T-shirt;
- h) Sneaker bumper stickers;
- i) Shoe laces.

Miscellaneous

- a) Key chains;
- b) Flashlights;
- c) Cups;
- d) Magnets;
- e) Crazy straws;
- f) Backscratchers;
- g) A plant, or seeds and pot for growing a plant;
- h) Books.

A token or point system, whereby children earn points that accumulate toward a bigger prize. Possible prizes include those listed above and:

- a) Gift certificate to a bookstore or sporting goods store;
- b) Movie pass or rental gift certificate;
- c) Ticket to sporting event;
- d) Puzzle;
- e) Book;
- f) Stuffed animal;
- g) Magazine subscription;
- h) Board game;
- i) Step counter (pedometer);
- j) Sports equipment, such as tennis racket, baseball glove, soccer ball, or basketball;
- k) Children can be given fake money, tokens, stars, or a chart can be used to keep track of the points they have earned. Points can be exchanged for privileges or prizes when enough are accumulated;

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- l) A point system also may be used for an entire class to earn a reward;
- m) Whenever individual children have done well, points can be added to the entire class's "account." When the class has earned a target number of points, they then receive a group reward.

Adopted: 9/17/08