**STRATEGY 3: Prohibit the Use of Food as a Reward**

**why does this matter?**

Rewarding kids with food, even healthy foods, encourages kids to eat outside of meal and snack times, when they may not be hungry, and can lead to poor eating habits.\(^1\,^2\)

Using food, such as candy, cookies, doughnuts, sugary drinks, and pizza, as a reward for good behavior and academic performance is a common practice with kids and puts them at risk for excess weight gain and obesity.\(^3\,^4\)

Encouraging kids to eat healthy foods, but at the same time rewarding good behavior with unhealthy foods, sends a mixed message and confuses kids.\(^1\)

Foods that are used as rewards are typically high in sugar, fat, and salt with little nutritional value, and can play a role in establishing kids’ preferences for unhealthy foods.\(^1\,^2\)

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References

1. Puhl RM, Schwartz MB. If you are good you can have a cookie: How memories of childhood food rules link to adult eating behaviors. Eating Behaviors. 2003;4(3):283-293.