

Non- Food Classroom Reward and Celebration Ideas

Rewards are a way to recognize achievement and celebrate success, progress, and events in students' lives. The rewards should fit with the goals and mission of the school, promote healthy living, and support nutrition and physical activity education messages throughout the school. Non-material, non-food rewards are powerful ways to recognize and celebrate students' success.

Benefits of Non-Food, Healthy Celebrations:

- Healthy kids learn better
- Promotes a healthy school environment
- Promotes consistent health messages
- Promotes focus on person and event rather than on food
- Keeps kids with food allergies/special diets safe

Elementary School Ideas:

- Pajama Day
- Crazy Hat Day (or hair, pants, shirt)
- Super Hero Day
- Costume Day
- Beach Party in January
- Have class outside
- Have lunch outside
- Game of quiet ball
- Word games on the board
- Sit in the teacher's chair/desk/podium for half a day
- Desk Buddy: move desk to sit by a friend x half a day, an hour, etc.
- Nature hike outside
- Indoor scavenger hunt
- Choose a book for the class (or game music, physical activity break, etc.)
- Read with a friend in a special area in the classroom
- Sit on desks to read
- Call, text or email parent about the student's success
- Announce student's success over the morning announcements
- Post a certificate on the wall noting the student's success
- Group game
- Make deliveries to the office

- Walk and Talk with the principal

Middle School Ideas:

- Talk Time: chat with friends x5 minutes
- Listen to music
- Free time choice: read, do homework, draw
- Free Pass: skip 3 questions on a certain homework assignment
- Late assignment pass
- Have class outside
- Take lunch outside
- Word game on the board
- Sit in the teacher's chair/desk/podium for half a day
- Desk Buddy: move desk to sit by a friend x half a day, an hour, etc.
- Nature hike outside
- Indoor scavenger hunt
- Choose a book for the class (or game, music, physical activity break, etc.)
- Read with a friend in a special area in the classroom
- Drop in PE
- Homework buddy: work with classmate on an assignment x 15 minutes
- Call, text or email the parent about the student's success
- Post a certificate on the wall noting student's success
- Computer time
- Group game
- Read the morning announcements

High School Ideas:

- Recognition in morning announcements
- Late assignment pass
- Reduced homework
- Extra credit
- Post certificate on the wall noting student's success
- Homework buddy: work with classmate on an assignment for allotted amount of time
- Call, text or email the parent about the student's success
- Send a written note in the mail
- Have class outside
- Have lunch outside

- Music choice
- Listen to music in class
- Chat break last 5 minutes of class
- Pep Rally
- Assemblies

Check out these resources:

Action for Healthy Kids: Health Non-Food Rewards

Non-Food Alternatives

Center for Science in the Public Interest: Health Classroom Celebrations

Clemson Cooperative Extension: Non-Food Rewards for Kids

Choose My Plate 10 Tips: Make Celebrations Fun, Healthy and Active

Alliance for Healthier Generation

Let's Move! Active Schools