

What's wrong with using treats as school rewards?

Food treats are commonly used to reward students for good behaviour and academic performance. It's an easy, inexpensive and powerful tool to bring about immediate short-term behaviour change. Yet, using treats as rewards has many negative consequences that go far beyond the short-term benefits of good behaviour or performance.

Using treats as a reward

- Confuses children by contradicting the classroom lessons about healthy eating
- Discourages positive attitudes towards food and lifelong healthy eating habits
- Harms children's dental health. Frequent sugary treats can lead to cavities
- Connects food to mood by teaching children to eat even when they are not hungry
- Reinforces eating outside of meals or snack times
- Promotes a preference for sweets, teaching children to prefer them over healthy foods that don't taste sweet
- May be against family's wishes

Healthy classroom rewards are rewards that use non-food items and privileges. ***Ultimately a reward can be one that promotes health and physical activity.***

Please note all the following suggestions are at the discretion of the teacher to work within the school's policies and guidelines.



Ideas for Healthy Non-Treat Rewards

- An **Active Treasure Box** that encourages physical activity filled with hacky sacks, frisbees, bouncy balls, bubbles, balloons, yo-yos, slinkies, sidewalk chalk, paddleboards, nerf balls etc
- Seeds and a pot for children to grow their own plant
- Seedlings in recycled planter pots
- Gift certificates to a sporting goods store
- Pedometers
- Skipping ropes
- Free pass to a dance class, rollerskating lesson or the wavepool etc
- Sports equipment eg tennis racket, soccer ball
- Make deliveries to the office
- Fun physical activity break eg handball against a wall
- Water bottles
- Hula hoops
- Helping younger children play eg in the sandpit
- Access to a special item of PE property

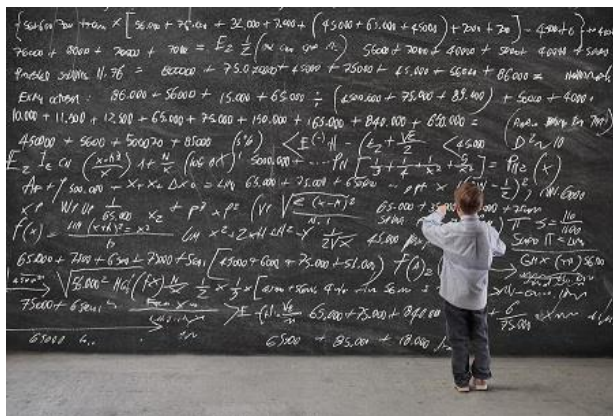


Other Rewards

- Treasure Box or Lucky Dip filled with stickers, erasers, finger puppets, note pads, playing cards, marbles, jacks, bookmarks, hair clips, stuffed animals, toy cars, smiggle pencils, markers, colouring in books, glitter, key chains, cups, magnets, back scratchers, crazy straws, temporary tattoos, books, bracelets, rings, necklaces, flashlights, scratch and sniff stickers



- Eyeglasses with nose disguise, funny masks
- Sunglasses, hat, t-shirt, shoe laces
- Movie ticket or free video rental at the discretion of the teacher
- Trophy, plaque, ribbon, or certificate in recognition of achievement or a sticker with an affirming message (eg "Great job")
- Letter, note or postcard sent home to parents
- Creative Activity Kits eg hobby kit or paint by numbers
- Laminated bookmarks saying 'I am a star' or other positive affirmation
- Cuddly toy to look after
- Vouchers - 10 mins free time, music on in class, teacher to wear a silly outfit, hat or to perform a special skill eg guitar playing



Privileges

- Early marks, within the Duty of Care School Guidelines
- Choice of a class activity – music, art, maths etc
- Play a board game, educational computer game or puzzle
- Extra recess or lunch time with a friend, within the Duty of Care School Guidelines

- Teach the class a simple activity like a math problem
- Writing or drawing on the blackboard/smartboard
- Be a helper in another classroom
- Sit with friends or a special seat near the teacher
- "Free time" at the end of the class
- Listen to music or a book on audio
- Read a book in the classroom
- Access to special art supplies, PE equipment, computer games or toys
- Be first in line for a day
- Help the teacher for the day
- Read to a younger class
- Be the "caller" for multiplication bingo
- A special pin, badge, medal or hat to wear for the next day eg 'I'm a star'
- Read the morning announcements
- Eat lunch with a teacher or the Principal
- Select a book to read from the library to the class
- Taking care of a school or class pet for a day



Group Class Rewards

- Plant some seeds together at school
- Enjoy class outdoors with a reading or physical activity
- Extra recess, art, PE or reading time
- Listening to music while working
- "Dancing to music" time
- Play a board game or do 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 field trip
- Movie time at the discretion of the teacher
- Free play in class for children who have followed the school rules all week – "Golden Time"
- Trophy on the table
- A Smiggle bag where table groups choose stationery – winning table chooses 3 items, 2nd table 2, 3rd 1 and 4th a pencil for example



Social rewards

Social rewards, which involve attention, praise, or thanks, are often more highly valued by children than a toy or food. 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.

Easy Reward Systems

Very well done! You're the best!
 Luv it! Super! Lovely! AWESOME!
 THAT'S FANTASTIC! Magnificent!
 Terrific! **WELL DONE!** Aren't you clever!
 Really amazing! Superb! Wonderful!
 That's Lovely! GREAT! Stupendous!
 Beautiful! Amazing! Fabulous!
 What Talent! Unbelievable!
 What a Star! That's gorgeous! Marvellous!
 BRILLIANT! Outstanding! A+ Wow
 COOL. Keep it Up! GREAT JOB! Super!

- A **point system** whereby children earn points that accumulate toward a prize
- **Reward cards** - 5 stamps on student's reward card and a postcard is sent home to parents, 10 stamps – a reward is chosen
- **Sticker charts** – 5 stickers and students can choose a prize out of the treasure box
- Use **play money** or **tickets** as rewards. Set amounts that students can save up and cash in for classroom privileges or can spend in a class auction at the end of the year
- Present a **Student of the Week Certificate** or trophy
- Recognising a child's achievement on the school-wide morning announcements and/or the school's website
- A **photo recognition board** in a prominent location in the school

- A point system also may be used for an entire class to earn a reward. 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, then they receive a group reward
- Table points awarded to quiet working tables or tidy tables and add up to an award or privilege
- **Happy tickets** for good behaviour. The student or students with the most amount of tickets at the end of the week get to choose from the Active Treasure Box in front of the school at assembly to promote good health
- **Marbles** - if the class gets 30 by end of term they get to play a game of softball for example as a class activity on the last day
- **Ladder of Reward** – help children climb the steps of a ladder with this simple reward system



For further information

Contact: Andrea Sloane, Healthy Together Mildura Manager
Ph: 03 5018 8260
Email: andrea.sloane@mildura.vic.gov.au
Web: www.healthytogethermildura.com.au
Like us on Facebook:
 www.facebook.com/HealthyTogetherMildura