

5 Steps to Implement Nonfood Rewards and Fundraisers

1. Know Your Wellness Policy

Your local wellness policy should clearly state expectations for the use of nonfood alternatives in your school. It should identify all situations (i.e., classroom parties, fundraising, incentives, lunchroom) where the policy is applied.

2. Use Clear Communication

Be sure to communicate your nonfood alternatives policy to everyone—including staff, students, parents, and community members/organizations. Spread the word using student/staff/parent handbooks, intercom or email announcements, parent newsletters, student newspaper, school website, and social media accounts.

3. Engage Staff and Students

Nonfood alternatives are good for both staff and students. Conduct a survey and find out how they want to be rewarded.

4. Provide Options

Students and staff won't miss traditional food rewards if there are plenty of fun alternatives. Use this publication to identify a number of nonfood alternatives that can be used as incentives.

5. Ask for Help

Be sure to use resources (next page) and support available to you.

Nonfood Alternatives for School Rewards and Fundraising

School food choices are not limited to lunches and vending machines.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture established the Smart Snacks in School Nutrition Standards as a part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Smart Snacks are a set of national nutritional standards for foods and beverages sold outside the federal reimbursable school meal programs during the school day. These items are called "competitive foods" because they can compete with participation in school meal programs. Smart Snacks must meet limits on fat, sugar, sodium, and calorie content. Smart Snacks are also required for classroom parties, fundraising, rewards, and student incentives. Nonfood alternatives are an easy choice when planning events, limiting calorie consumption, and promoting positive behavior such as physical activity.

[\[www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/npao/smartsnacks.htm\]](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/npao/smartsnacks.htm)

Nonfood Rewards for Elementary Students

- Trips to a treasure box filled with nonfood items, such as stickers, play tattoos, bubbles, jump ropes, puzzles, key chains, yo-yos, spider rings, charms, trading cards, pencil toppers, extra credit opportunities
- Play favorite nonelectronic game
- Extra recess
- Make deliveries to the office
- Sit by friends
- Help teach class
- Eat lunch with the teacher
- School supplies
- Show and tell
- Paperback book
- Free choice time at end of day
- Listen to classroom music while working
- Teacher reads a book to the class
- Read or have class outdoors
- "No homework" pass
- Listen to an audio book/watch a video
- Have a teacher perform (sing or play an instrument)
- Choose one student from each class to walk with the principal at lunch
- Theme dress day—everyone gets to come to school in their pajamas

Nonfood Rewards for Middle School Students

- Sit by friends
- Listen to classroom music while working
- "No homework" pass
- Eat lunch outside or have class outside
- Computer time
- Chat break
- Field trips
- Assemblies
- Extra reading time
- Free time at end of class
- Invite a special visitor—community heroes, local authors or artists

Nonfood Rewards for High School Students

- Extra credit opportunities
- "No homework" pass
- Extra reading time
- Eat lunch outside or have class outside
- Computer time
- Coupons to video stores, music stores, movies (donated)
- Drawing for donated prizes among students who meet certain grade standards
- Free time at end of class
- Free passes to school events and games

Fundraising Ideas

To Do

- Invite chefs from local restaurants to donate healthy hors d'oeuvres and desserts for a "Taste of (insert your town)" event
- Ask local businesses to donate a portion of sales on a given date or time to the school
- Organize events—such as a bike-a-thon, sled-a-thon, walk-a-thon, dance-a-thon, rock-a-thon, or read-a-thon—for which sponsors pledge money by the mile, hour, or number of books/pages
- Organize a car or pet wash



- Sell tickets to a parent-teacher talent show or basketball game
- Invite community members and businesses to donate items (e.g., weekends at vacation homes, pool or lawn care, babysitting, lunch with a local celebrity) for a silent auction/raffle
- Charge for gift-wrapping services during holidays
- Organize a fun run
- Rent-a-teen helper (rake leaves, water gardens, mow lawns, wash dogs)
- Singing telegrams (good for chorus or band)

- Hold a talent show/magic show
- Carnivals
- Dances (kids, father/daughter, family, Sadie Hawkins)
- Recycling cans/bottles/paper
- Organize a golf tournament
- Bowling/skate night
- Treasure hunt/scavenger hunt
- Penny wars (pennies—1 point, nickels—5 points, quarter—25 points; team with the most points wins)
- Spaghetti dinner (use food donated from local businesses)
- Book fair
- Sport clinic
- Cheerleading clinic
- 3-on-3 basketball tournament
- Lip-sync contest
- Silent auctions
- Recycle cell phones
- Flamingo fundraiser (donation for lawn ornaments to be removed from your lawn)
- Rent out special parking spaces
- Trash-to-treasure sale (community members bring items to donate for a school yard sale)
- Pay for a chance to soak your teacher in a dunk tank
- Nonbake sale (pay NOT to bake)
- School job fair



To Sell

- Magazines
- Discount cards/coupon books for local businesses
- Holiday ornaments/wreaths/flowers
- Plants/flowers/bulbs
- Gift wrap/greeting cards/note cards
- Brick/tile/stone memorials to be placed on school property
- Mother's Day hanging baskets
- Valentine's Day carnation sale
- Cookbooks with recipes from teachers/students/community members
- Temporary tattoos
- Emergency/first-aid kits
- Picture frames
- Gift baskets
- Music CDs, videos, DVDs
- Pedometers
- Balloon bouquets
- Healthy foods:
 - Gift baskets with fruit/cheese
 - Low-fat, low-salt pretzels
 - Specialty-shaped pastas
 - Seasonal fruit/nut baskets
 - Popcorn, cheese, apples
 - School spirit gear
 - Calendars featuring school-specific functions and photos
 - School art projects

Additional Resources

- Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Nutrition and Wellness Resources—www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/nutrition
- Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Store—store.extension.iastate.edu
- Association of Fund-Raising Distributors and Suppliers—www.afrds.org
- Tools for Schools: Focusing on Smart Snacks—www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/tools-schools-focusing-smart-snacks
- PTO Today—www.ptotoday.com
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation—<https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take-action/schools/wellness-topics/nutrition-services/non-food-rewards>

Prepared by Ruth Litchfield, PhD, RD, LD, nutrition and wellness state specialist, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

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