

LEAPS

learning eating active play sleep

Non Food Rewards



What are some non-food rewards that can be used in Early Years Settings?

Rewarding children can be an effective way to encourage positive behaviour. However, it is better not to use food, especially unhealthy food containing high amounts of fats, sugars and salt as rewards. Connecting unhealthy food rewards to positive behaviour change can encourage children to think unhealthy foods are desirable and may lead to children wanting them more often.

To meet element 2.2.1 of the National Quality Standards – *Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate for each child* – it is best practice for early childhood educators not to use food to reward or punish children.

There are a wide variety of alternative non-food rewards listed below, that can be used in early childhood settings:

Recognition Rewards

- Trophy, ribbon, plaque or certificate with affirming message (e.g. Great job!) presented in front of an audience
- Name announcement at function
- “Friend of the Week” with photo in a prominent position at the setting
- Congratulatory phone call, e-mail, letter or note sent home to parents

Sporting/Physical Activity Ideas

- Choice of game to play at activity time
- Water bottles
- Hula hoop, jump rope, frisbees
- Yo-yo’s, bubble blowers or hacky sacks

No Cost Rewards

- Attention, praise or thanks
- Allowed to sit next to friends
- “Free Choice” time
- Selection from “Treasure Chest” or “Mystery Box”

Stationery Ideas

- Rulers, pencil sharpeners, pens, pencils, glue sticks, eraser, or highlighters
- Stickers or stamps – possibly to add to a collection
- Bookmarks, exercise books or notepads