

## Non-Food Rewards at Home

### Food as a Reward

Rewarding your child is important. However, how you reward is important as well. Unhealthy foods that are consistently used as rewards can contribute to poor health, encourage over-consumption, contribute to poor eating habits, and increase a child's preference for sweets. Likewise, it isn't a good idea to reward children with more TV or computer time, as this can also encourage unhealthy behaviors. Read this page to discover some suggestions on providing fun rewards that don't revolve around food or screen time.

### Tips and Suggestions

- Make a list of fun, non-food rewards that don't cost much money, and post this list where the whole family can see it. Allow your child to choose from the list when appropriate
- Have a separate list of special and inexpensive rewards for really big achievements or milestones
- Give certificates or ribbons for healthy behaviors
- Allow your child to invite a few friends over after school to play sports
- Invite a few of your child's friends to a sleepover
- Have a family game night
- Keep a box of special toys or art supplies that can only be used on special occasions
- Go to a sports game together
- Camp out in the back yard
- Allow the use of electronics that support physical activity, like dancing games
- Choose toys and games that promote physical activity, like jump ropes, balls, or skip-its
- Lastly, remember that words of appreciation can go a long way. Children love to hear "you did a great job" or "I appreciate your help."

### Final Considerations

For more information about healthy eating and active living resources, please email [5210healthywashoe@nnph.org](mailto:5210healthywashoe@nnph.org).