

Non-food Alternatives

for School Rewards and Fundraising

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

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) Nutrition Standards for Food in Schools are suggested as voluntary guidelines and primarily affect school a la carte and vending choices. But those are not the only school food practices that contribute to childhood obesity. The IOM also recommends applying the nutrition standards to classroom parties and celebrations plus fundraising, rewards, and incentives for students. In addition, non-food alternatives may provide double benefits by limiting high calorie snacks AND increasing physical activity.

Non-food 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 non-electronic 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 the 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

Non-food 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

Non-food 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

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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, baby sitting, 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
• Non-bake 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

For more information, visit the following Web sites:

Association of Fund-Raising Distributors and Suppliers
www.afrds.org

Fundraising Bank
www.fundraising-ideas.com

Institute of Medicine Nutrition Standards
www.iom.edu/CMS/3788/30181/42502.aspx

Iowa State University Extension Nutrition Resources
www.extension.iastate.edu/healthnutrition/

Iowa State University Extension Publications
www.extension.iastate.edu/store

PTO Today
www.ptotoday.com

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