

# University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources

Making a Difference for California

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## NUTRITION NEWS

CalFresh Healthy Living, University of California



### PROMOTING A HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT



The new school year has just begun; now is the time to establish classroom guidelines. If it is not your policy already, please consider NOT using food as a reward.

We all know that research shows healthy kids learn better. Many of you are including regular nutrition lessons as part of your lesson plan. Nutrition principles taught in the classroom are meaningless, if they are contradicted by rewarding students with candy and other sweets.

Often candy is used because it's easy, relatively inexpensive, and everyone likes it. But, children are at risk of associating food with emotions and feelings of accomplishment when food is used in the classroom as a reward. This reinforces the practice of eating outside of meal or snack times and encourages students to eat treats even when they are not hungry. This practice may create lifetime habits of rewarding or comforting oneself with unhealthy eating.

Please take a look at the following list for some alternative reward ideas.

- Make deliveries to the office
- Teach class
- Sit by friends
- Eat lunch with the teacher
- Certificate
- Sticker
- Extra recess
- Bank system—earn play money for privileges



Have a contest among the teachers—who can come up with the best alternative to using food as a reward.

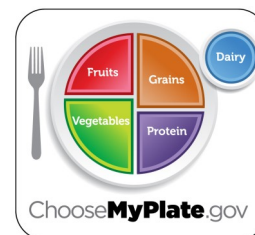
You are doing such a great job. Keep up the good work by providing the best possible learning environment that supports healthy behaviors!!

*Do not withhold food, beverages, or physical activity time to discipline for academic performance or poor classroom behavior.*

#### Fall 2019

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#### More Resources

Visit our website -  
**Let's Eat Healthy:**  
<http://ceplacer.ucanr.edu>



## CREATE A PHYSICALLY ACTIVE CLASSROOM

**P**hysical activity doesn't have to be in a recess or PE setting to be effective. Movement-based activities can be used to energize students after lunch, to relax and calm a class before a test, to help them refocus, or at the end of the day. There are many names for physical activity breaks, such as brain breaks, energizers, and brain boosters. Regardless of what you call it, the goal is simple - get kids out of their seat to be physically active throughout the school day.



Here are some ideas to get you started:

- ★ **Chart Class Progress** - Make a chart of physical activities that can be done at school and ask students to report the number of minutes they engage in the activity each day. Tally the number of hours. *Setting and achieving goals is very empowering for children.*
- ★ **Energize Your Students** - After a long lesson, bending, stretching, or jogging in place can make a difference. *Did you know that just standing significantly increases the blood flow to the brain and you'll have less behavioral issues when students are refreshed?*
- ★ **Set a Class Walking Goal** - Set a goal to walk to a fun place, such as the state capitol or an amusement park. Then have the students record the miles they walk every day at recess or PE until they reach the goal. *Walking is one of the best exercise habits to establish for a lifetime of good health.*
- ★ **Use an Exercise Ball** - For some quick classroom exercise, write the name of exercises (run in place, jumping jacks, etc.) on a ball. Toss the ball when you'd like to energize the class. *Just a few minutes of physical activity refreshes the body and the brain.*

Source: *Good for Me...and You!*, Lesson 4

## PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING

**S**chool is the ideal setting to teach and provide students with opportunities to practice healthy behaviors. Do your part to promote positive health behaviors.

- ☺ **Daily Review the School Lunch Menu** - Make part of your morning routine reviewing the menu choices and discussing healthy options from the five food groups. *Daily social reminders are effective in reinforcing decision making.*
- ☺ **Integrate Nutrition into Other Subjects** - Look for ways to discuss foods and healthy eating when studying other subjects (reading books, doing math problems or studying science). *This will help students understand that healthy eating is important.*
- ☺ **Set Up a Water Station in the Classroom** - Make it easy for students to drink water throughout the day. If this is not practical, allow students to visit the water fountain throughout the school day and to carry water bottles in class. *Staying hydrated can improve brain functioning.*
- ☺ **Use Non-food Items for Class Fundraisers** - Choose things like a walk-a-thon, car washes, or recycling projects. *Not only will students get the added plus of physical activity, they will be learning or practicing new skills.*
- ☺ **Offer Healthy Choices for Classroom Celebrations** - Consider alternatives to sugary sweets, such a 100% juice, veggie and fruit platters, whole grain crackers, or non-fat yogurt. *Healthy alternatives reinforce the nutrition messages being taught.*
- ☺ **Keep Yourself Healthy** - Your students look up to you, so show and tell them how you make healthy eating and exercise choices. *Teachers have a powerful influence on their students' habits.*



Source: *Good for Me...and You!* and *It's My Choice...Eat Right! Be Active!*

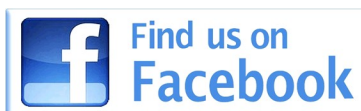
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## Happy Healthy Me...Moving, Munching & Reading Around MyPlate for 4 to 6 Years Olds

Combines stories and literacy with nutrition education.

## Eating Healthy from Farm to Fork...Promoting School Wellness

A nutrition education curriculum that makes the connection between local food systems, garden-based learning, school food service, and the establishment of healthy habits. (K-2nd Grade)

## My Amazing Body - 1st Grade

## Good for Me and You - 2nd Grade

## It's My Choice...Eat Right! Be Active! - 3rd Grade

These curricula promote healthy eating and physical activity. Children will gain skills to practice appropriate healthy behaviors.

## Nutrition to Grow On

A garden-enhanced nutrition education curriculum. Objectives: 1) Teach the importance of making healthful food choices; and 2) improve children's preference for fruits and vegetables by giving them an opportunity to work with the land and grow their own produce. (4th-6th Grade)

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