Everyone Plays a Role

Providing Non-Food Rewards
for Children and Youth with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Children and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) receive services from multiple professionals within early care and education, school, health care, community, and home settings. These professionals are part of a child’s support team. Each member of the team plays a role transitioning to non-food rewards.

Everyone

• Provide non-food rewards.
• Provide physical activity as a reward.
• Help families and caregivers to reinforce healthy messages and strategies at home.

Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA)

• Conduct preference assessments to identify the non-food rewards that work best.
• Create or update the Behavior Intervention Plan to reduce and gradually replace food rewards.
• Share the plan with the team, including family members and all caregivers.

Case Managers

• Ensure that non-food rewards are used consistently in education and service plans.
• Support children, families, and caregivers to reduce the use of food rewards.

Classroom Teachers

• Use healthy non-food rewards for all students.
• Teach students about the importance of healthy behaviors, including non-food rewards.

Healthcare Providers

• Talk to families about how to avoid using food rewards at home.
• Recommend that food rewards be limited and/or eliminated from education and service plans.

Special Education Teachers

• Conduct preference assessments to identify the non-food rewards that work best.
• Create or update a student’s Individual Education program (IEP) and/or Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) to reduce and gradually replace food rewards.
  – If a Board Certified Behavior Analyst or psychologist is available, request assistance in creating the program.