How can you celebrate a job well done without using food treats?

Here are some ideas:
• Make a list of fun, non-food rewards that don’t cost much and post it where the whole family can see it. Allow your child to choose something from the list when appropriate.

• Have a separate list of special and inexpensive rewards for those really big achievements.

• Give certificates or ribbons for healthy behaviors.

• Allow your child to have 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.

• Camp out in the back yard.

• Allow the use of electronics that support physical activity, like Dance Dance Revolution.

• Choose toys and games that promote physical activity like jump ropes, balls, or Skip-Its.

Food as a reward:
• Contributes to poor health.
• Encourages over-consumption of unhealthy foods.
• Contributes to poor eating habits.
• Increases preferences for sweets.

Be sure to avoid giving extra time in front of the TV or computer as a reward!

Words of appreciation can go a long way. Children love to hear “You did a great job” or “I appreciate your help.”