



IES Grant #  
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# Teach Strategy Make choices

A good way to get children engaged in an activity or routine is to give them choices. Choices allow children to select their preference, which often increases their motivation and personal ownership. Follow these steps to help your child learn to make choices!



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1

Identify a few activities that are fun for you and your child to do together (ex: go for a walk, read a book, play a game).

Use pictures to represent each choice. The pictures should be simple, clean, and easy for your child to identify what they represent!

Show these pictures while saying and pointing to the choices so your child can pair the activity with the visual.

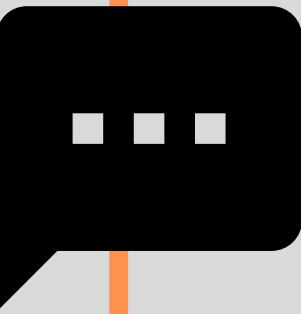


2

Introduce choices to begin a new activity or make some changes to an ongoing activity. Start with two choices and extend the number as your child becomes more confident making choices.

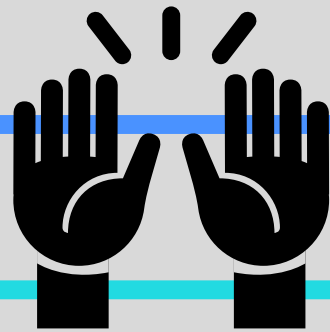
To begin a new activity, you might say, "Go for a walk or read a book?"

To add variety, you might say, "Feed the baby, or give baby a nap?"



3

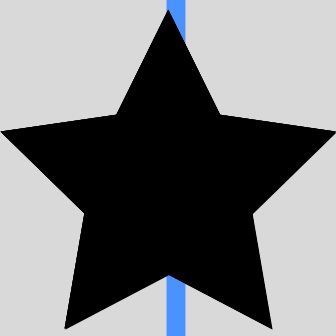
- If your child appropriately asks for one of the choices, immediately provide the choice and give lots of positive descriptive feedback.
- If your child does not make a choice, or asks for something other than the provided choices, model a choice and provide the selection (ex: "Let's read a book!")
- If your child begins to engage in challenging behavior, stay calm and avoid attending to the behavior.



4

Repeat this process several times throughout the day in other fun routines (ex: playing, snack time, story time) until you notice your child making a choice from available options without a model.

Note: It is important to agree to your child's choices while they are learning this skill! This helps them understand this new way to get their needs met, rather than using challenging behavior.



5

Once your child learns and responds to choices, you can incorporate choice during other activities or routines in your day that might be more difficult (ex: getting dressed, bath time, bed time).

In these routines be sure to include an option that your child is likely to choose! For example, if you want your child to put on their shoes, you might say "do you want to wear sneakers (not their favorite) or rain boots (their favorite)."



## Helpful Hints!

- Limit choices to no more than two or three at a time. Providing any more might make it difficult for your child to understand!
- Only provide choices that you are able to follow through with. For example, in the winter, providing the choice to wear shorts might not be reasonable since it is cold outside.



For more information on how to teach your child new skills, [click here](#).

