

SE15

All Interest Areas

Making Choices



What You Do

Materials: paper and pencils

Background: Sometimes children have difficulty choosing between different options at choice time and throughout the day. You may notice children wandering around the room, moving from interest area to interest area and staying at each place for only a few minutes at a time, or making inappropriate choices. Offering specific choices gives children some control over their environment. When offering choices, make sure that they are acceptable to you and reasonable for the child. Do not offer unrealistic or unacceptable choices, such as “You can sit alone in the classroom or you can come with us to the playground.”

1. **Talk with the children at the beginning of choice time about where they would like to play. Encourage them to think about what they should do when they are ready to move to a new interest area.**

“Emma, can you tell me what you need to do before leaving the water table? Yes, you have to hang up your smock and put the water toys back in the bucket.”

2. **Talk about their choices within an interest area to make them aware of their decision-making skills.**

“Nicholas, you chose to paint a tree. Why did you choose to paint a tree today?”

3. **For children who have a difficult time choosing, limit the number of choices and talk through the benefits or consequences of each choice.**

“Ruthie, it looks like you would like to choose a book to read. What kind of story do you want? You are looking for animal stories, so let’s look on this shelf where I see a few animal books.”

Objective 1

Regulates own emotions and behaviors
b. Follows limits and expectations

Related Objectives: 7b, 9b, 11a, 11c, 17b

Additional Ideas

Offer opportunities throughout the day to make choices, e.g., which water fountain to drink from, book to read, or crayon to use.

English-Language Learners

- Allow a child to express his choice in various ways, such as looking, pointing, or touching.
- For children at the beginning stages of expressing themselves in English, ask questions with the answer options included: “Tiago, do you want to paint or play with the blocks?”
- Provide children with ample time to respond.

Including All Children

- When offering choices throughout the day, use pictures, drawings, and objects that show the choices.
- Record choices on a child’s communication device with appropriate labels, e.g., “I want to go to the Block area.”
- Offer a child two or three choices; pause to give a child enough time to make a choice.

Teaching Sequence

YELLOW	<p>Offer the child two different choices. Explain each option clearly and let the child know the next step after making a choice.</p> <p>“Molly, would you like to paint at the easel or draw with colored pencils at the table?” “After you are finished with your drawing, I can help you put the pencils away, and we can find a book for you to look at for rest time.”</p>
GREEN	<p>Invite the child to think about his other decisions by creating a written plan for choice time. Divide a piece of paper into four sections. Help the child write up to four choices, drawing pictures in each section as visual cues. Ask the child to order his choices and then number the sections 1, 2, 3, and 4. Have the child refer to the plan before moving to the next interest area.</p> <p>“Looks like you need help finding something to do. Let’s talk about your choices and make a plan.” “You’d like to build with the new cardboard blocks. I’ll draw a picture of a block here to help you remember.” “Which activity would you like to do first?”</p>
BLUE	
PURPLE	

Questions to Guide Your Observations

- Was the child able to follow limits and expectations when making choices? (1b)
- How did the child engage in his choices? (11a)
- How did the child make choices from two or more options? (11c)
- Did the child follow the illustrated chart or written plan during choice time? (17b)