

Making Choices

Encouraging a child to make a choice between two items is the beginning of teaching children to:

1. Make requests by reaching, pointing or vocalising.
2. Learn the 'back and forth' element of communication with an adult ie the adult shows the child a choice, the child then responds by indicating what they want, followed by the activity happening or having the item.
3. Listen to the word of the object modelled by the adult, so building on receptive vocabulary.

Important tips when offering choices are:

- Be specific i.e. the name of the object, photo or picture NOT 'this or that'
- Show as you say i.e. move the object, photo or picture towards the child as you label it
- Create choice making opportunities in play and routines as much as possible
- WAIT for your child to respond

Here are some examples of choice making visuals that you may find helpful. These are ranked in order of difficulty beginning with the use of real objects which are easiest to understand. There is a short explanation of what is involved with each example to help you decide which may be most appropriate for your child.

Making a choice using objects

Show the child the objects that relate to the choice they are making, for example what activity they want to do. It is easier to start with choices that involve one item that is desirable for the child and one item that is not particularly interesting. In the picture below, the child has been given 2 choices using objects, the duck or the lorry. The child is not bothered by the duck and really likes lorries. In this way you will know that the child is able to make a clear choice or request for something they want to do.



Further information and practical examples about using this strategy to support a young child's communication can be found here [How to use choices to get your child talking - YouTube](#)

Making a choice using a photograph

A photograph of the object used in place of the object itself, should initially be the same size as the actual object making the connection for the child between the two much easier to make.



These photographs can be used on a choice board or on their own.

Using a phone to take photos can also help and will serve as a useful tool to share with your child.

You can then reduce the size of the photos and increase the amount to make the choice broader for the child.

Again, high motivators and less desirable items can be included to ensure that a clear choice is being made.

Having the words underneath will ensure that adults are consistent with their naming.

Making a choice using picture symbols

This time, instead of photographs, picture symbols are used on a choice board to show the children what is available to choose from increasing the level of difficulty.

