

## What Is It?

Choice making is a strategy where the teacher offers choices to a student before beginning an activity where the student's challenging behavior typically occurs. The student is offered a choice of materials that are needed for the task, a choice of components of the activity, or a choice of different activities when given directions to the task.

## When to Use It

- Choice making is most effective for behaviors that are maintained by escape from a task or demand
- Choice making should only be used with activities that offer flexibility for the student to accomplish the learning goal while using different materials, completing only components of the task, or completing an alternative activity.

## Steps to Implementation / How to Do It

After identifying a task or activity the student is trying to escape:

	1. Select one of the activities or tasks.
	2. Identify a variety of choices that would still allow the student to complete the activity. These can be choices of materials ("Do you want to use markers or colored pencils?"), components of an activity ("Do you want to draw the picture first or write the paragraph?"), or activities ("Do you want to do computer math or a math worksheet?").
	3. Offer the choices when asking the student to engage in the desired task.
	4. When the student makes a choice, engage the student in the selected activity.
	5. Additional choices may be offered during the activity to support the student's continued engagement in the task.

### Example

*Selena frequently scribbles on her paper and refuses to complete assigned writing in Mr. Bennett's class. The intervention team completes a functional behavior assessment and determines the function of the behavior is to escape writing. They decide to implement choice making during all writing tasks. Mr. Bennett identifies an array of choices that can be made during writing tasks.*

*On the first day of implementation, Mr. Bennett presents the writing task to the entire class and then approaches Selena to offer her choices. Mr. Bennett asks Selena if she would like to use sentence stems or a graphic organizer for the pre-write activity. Selena chooses the sentence stems, and Mr. Bennett gives her a worksheet with sentence stems on the assigned topic. Selena finishes the writing.*

*The next day during a writing activity during reading group, Mr. Bennett asks Selena if she would like to work with him or with a partner to complete the written assignment. When Selena chooses to work with a partner, Mr. Bennett helps Selena and her classmate get started in the task and Selena finishes the work. The following day, Mr. Bennett gives Selena a list of writing tasks (e.g., proofread the first paragraph, brainstorm ideas for the body of the paper, outline the second paragraph, practice writing topic sentences) and asks her to choose one to work on during writing block. Selena chooses to practice topic sentences and engages in the writing task during writing block. This process continues during writing blocks, and Mr. Bennett offers Selena a variety of choices during each block.*

### How to Increase Effectiveness

- Brainstorm an array of choices that can be used during the activity. Vary the choices that are offered to the student across opportunities. For example, for a writing activity do not always offer the choice of a marker or colored pencils. Sometimes also offer an erasable pen, crayons, teacher's blue pen, etc.
- Maintain control of the choice of items until the student makes a selection.
- Present the student with two or more choices each time. If a student requires additional support to engage in the activity for longer periods of time, consider offering choices throughout the activity.

### Resources

Jolivette, K., Stichter, J. P., & McCormick, K. M. (2002). Making choices--improving behavior--engaging in learning. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 34, 24-29.