

What Is It?

Choice-making is a universal and individualized strategy that teaches children to be independent, active contributors to their own learning. Adults present a child or group of children with an opportunity to indicate preferences by choosing between two or more presented items or activities at various times across the day.

When to Use It

- To support a child who engages in challenging behavior to avoid activities or adult directions.
- To support a child's participation and engagement and prevent challenging behavior.

Steps to Implementation / How to Do It

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. Ensure that there are ongoing opportunities for all children to engage in choice-making across the day.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. Identify a variety of choices for a child who avoids participating in specific routines or activities, that still allow the child to complete the activity. Consider the child's interests when presenting choices. Choices can be of materials ("Do you want to use markers or crayons?"), components of an activity ("Do you want to draw a picture first or glue buttons?"), or activities themselves ("Do you want to draw a picture or look at books?"). Choices may also include the option of only completing specific steps of an activity.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. Present the choices when asking the child to participate in the activity or routine verbally and by using choice boards (visual supports that include objects, photos, pictures, and/or text).
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. Immediately engage the child in their selection when the child makes a choice.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. Offer additional choices during the activity to support the child's continued participation and engagement.

Example

Mx. Traci is a preschool teacher who offers choices to their students across a variety of classroom activities including circle time, snack, free choice, and centers. Despite Mx. Traci's success with providing universal choice-making to all children in their preschool class, they have one student that still needs additional support.

Emiko has a particularly difficult time participating in circle. Despite the choices Mx. Traci presents to the group during circle time, Emiko attempts to leave the group about 4-5 times per 15-minute circle time. After conducting a brief functional assessment, Mx. Traci determines that Emiko is attempting to avoid the calendar and daily schedule activities within the circle time routine. Mx. Traci decides to provide additional choices to Emiko during these activities. Each day, Mx. Traci incorporates choices for Emiko, such as which aspect of the calendar to start with and which picture card to represent each daily schedule activity. These choices help increase Emiko's interest and engagement during the calendar and daily schedule activities.

How to Increase Effectiveness

- Consider the child's preferences when determining what choices to offer, either with a formal preference assessment or by informally observing the child's activity engagement in a familiar setting.
- Ensure choices are age and developmentally appropriate.
- Collect data on the effectiveness of choice-making and make data-based decisions about how and when to offer individualized choice-making to a child.
- For information about how to use this strategy with a group of children, see the "Universal Choice-Making" intervention guide.

Resources

Dunlap, G., & Liso, D. (2004). [Using choice and preference to promote improved behavior.](#)

Green, K. B., Mays, N. M., & Jolivet, K. (2011). [Making choices: A proactive way to improve behaviors for young children with challenging behaviors.](#) *Beyond Behavior*, 20(1), 25-31.

McCormick, K. M., Jolivet, K., & Ridgley, R. (2003). [Choice making as an intervention strategy for young children.](#) *Young Exceptional Children*, 6(2), 3-10.

Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence. (n.d.). [Resource gallery of interventions: Choice boards.](#)