



WHAT IS IT AND WHY IT IS IMPORTANT?

Adults often need to tell young children where to go and what to do. Giving choice balances this by offering times where your child has a say. When you give choice, you let your child select what they would like to do from two or three options you give to them.

When you offer choices, you give your child the chance to:

- ◆ Practice making decisions
- ◆ Learn to manage their own behavior

This strategy gives children choice within safe limits *you* set. Giving several choices makes it more likely your child will do what you ask. Giving choice helps you avoid arguments when your child does not want to do something.



HOW TO AND TIPS:

Plan ahead to give choice. Decide:

- ☒ When to give choices
- ☒ What options you will give your child to choose from

When giving a choice:

- ☒ Make sure you have your child's attention and then tell them clearly what their choices are.
- ☒ Make choices specific and phrased as things you *want* your child to do. For example, "You can use walking feet or tiptoe," instead of, "You cannot run inside."
- ☒ Give children time (at least five seconds) to make a choice, and offer support if needed.
- ☒ You can give a choice of the order if you want your child to do two things. For example, "It's time to get on your shoes and coat. Which would you like to put on first?"
- ☒ You can give the choice to do something right away or after a few minutes, such as, "Would you like to try the bathroom now or in five minutes?"
- ☒ Give your child specific praise for making a choice and acting on it. For example, "You chose to read books now, that will be so fun!"



WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Using Choice at Home

- ◆ Getting dressed in the morning: "Which shirt do you want to wear today, the red or green one?"
- ◆ Before bed: "You can choose to brush your teeth or wash your face first."
- ◆ During lunch: "Would you like orange or apple slices with your sandwich?"
- ◆ When it's time to clean up: "It's time to clean up! Should we put the blocks in the bin or the pretend food back in the kitchen first?"



LOOK at you: You are the expert on your child. We'd love to hear from you! When do you give choices at home? What choices work best for your child? Let us know what works well for your family!