

Choice Boards: An Overview

Definition and Purpose	<p>Choice boards are a form of visual support, which is an evidence-based practice for autistic students. Visual supports are defined as a “visual display that supports the learner in engaging in a desired behavior or skills independent of additional prompts” (Steinbrenner et al, 29). Choice boards are a useful strategy for learners who may need clarification around the availability of activities, materials, or reinforcers, or needing support to increase independence and autonomy.</p>																
When to Use Choice Boards	<p>Ideal instances to use choice boards with autistic students, or other students with or without disabilities, could include (but are not limited to) choosing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » reinforcers for after work time, » what story is read during circle time, » which independent work to do first, » which center to go to next, or » which peers to have join a lunch bunch. 																
Why Use Choice Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Provides clarity on what choices are currently available » Promotes independence » Fosters student autonomy, allowing them a voice in portions of the school day 																
Critical Components of Choice Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Have an appropriate visual representation at the child’s current skill level to denote choices student can make. » Start by including choice board items that are highly preferred. » Remove “unavailable” choices when they can’t be chosen logically (e.g., if it is raining, don’t include the “slide” choice for the student to choose from). » Prompt the student to use the choice board when presented with an opportunity for choice. » Provide reinforcement to the student for making the choice by giving him or her the item/activity chosen immediately. 																
Choice Board in Action	<p style="text-align: center;">Choice Board</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Computer</th> <th style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Music</th> <th style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Bean bag</th> <th style="text-align: center; padding: 5px;">Treasure box</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 10px;">  Computer </td><td style="text-align: center; padding: 10px;">  Music </td><td style="text-align: center; padding: 10px;">  Bean bag </td><td style="text-align: center; padding: 10px;">  Treasure box </td></tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 10px;">  Putty </td><td style="text-align: center; padding: 10px;">  Gum </td><td style="text-align: center; padding: 10px;">  Walk </td><td style="text-align: center; padding: 10px;">  Puzzle </td></tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center; padding: 10px;">  iPad </td><td style="text-align: center; padding: 10px;">  Color </td><td style="text-align: center; padding: 10px;">  Bubbles </td><td style="text-align: center; padding: 10px;">  Ball </td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Computer	Music	Bean bag	Treasure box	 Computer	 Music	 Bean bag	 Treasure box	 Putty	 Gum	 Walk	 Puzzle	 iPad	 Color	 Bubbles	 Ball
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Assembly Tips	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Print and laminate the choice board and choice option page. 2. Cut out the laminated choice pictures. 3. Place hard-sided Velcro on the individual choice squares on choice board. 4. Place soft-sided Velcro on the back of the choice pictures. 5. Consider adding a Velcro strip or taping an envelope or Ziploc bag to the back of the choice board to hold unavailable choices. 6. Place pictures on the choice board of available choices for the student before presenting the choice board to the student.
Using Choice Boards to Support Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)	<p>A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) is a process for gathering, analyzing, and summarizing information about the relationship (i.e., function) between a person's challenging behavior and their environment (Cooper, et al., 2019). An FBA provides specific information around how behavior interventions should be individualized in consideration of a person's skills, preferences, sensitivities, and environment. For students in schools, an FBA is conducted to address one or more of the following situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » a change of placement to a more restrictive setting is considered due to a student's behavior, » a student with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is removed from current placement for more than 10 school days for behavior determined to be a manifestation of their disability, » the IEP provides for the use of restraint or isolation, » a student's behavior impedes learning for self or peers, » a student's behavior threatens safety of self or others, » when determined appropriate by the student's IEP team, » a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is considered ineffective by virtue of incomplete or flawed understanding of the student's behavior, and/or » a student's behavior limits student engagement, inclusion, and/or independence. <p>An FBA may be conducted, as appropriate, in the following situations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » a student with an IEP is removed from current placement for more than 10 school days for behavior not determined to be a manifestation of their disability, or » a student with an IEP is removed to an interim alternative education setting for up to 45 school days for a zero-tolerance offense. <p>Ultimately a complete FBA will present one or more functional hypotheses supported by available evidence as to why behaviors of concern are occurring, along with an appraisal of student's skill deficits that are impacting the behavior targeted within the FBA. The results of this FBA are used to</p>

Using Choice Boards to Support Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP) <i>Continued</i>	<p>individualize the Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). The BIP focuses on decreasing challenging behavior and increasing appropriate behavior (Cooper, et al., 2019).</p> <p>Choice boards are an evidence-based practice that can be used as part of a consequence (reinforcement) strategy in a BIP when paired with a token board or other reinforcement system. Choice boards can also be used as a visual support, which is an antecedent strategy, to set the student up for success and help to prevent occurrences of challenging behavior.</p>
Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) and Consequence (Reinforcement) Strategies	<p>A Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) should include specific preferred activities or experiences that can be used as reinforcers. These strategies should increase the likelihood the student will engage in the replacement behavior.</p> <p>Below is an example of a choice board description within a Behavior Intervention Plan.</p>

EXAMPLE DESCRIPTION WITHIN A BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLAN	
Intervention Description	<p>Staff creates a choice board with <preferred reinforcers determined in the FBA>. When Student <engages in replacement behavior> to <match function identified in FBA>, they use the choice board to select the reinforcer they want.</p> <p>Immediately after a safe hallway transition, the educator will show Student the choice board and say, "That was so safe! What would you like?" The Student may pick an item or activity from the board for the educator to deliver.</p>
Who will implement?	The educator
When will it occur? (e.g., time of day, days of week)	Following hallway transitions
When will the intervention begin?	8/1/24
Materials Needed	Choice board, laminated choice pictures

Learn More	<p>View TRIAD resources and trainings at triad.vumc.org/schools. Visit our online learning portal to access the free Introduction to Visual Supports course. To access, first register for an account. If you already have an account log in here.</p>
Reference	<p>Steinbrenner, J. R., Hume, K., Odom, S. L., Morin, K. L., Nowell, S. W., Tomaszewski, B., Szendrey, S., McIntyre, N. S., Yücesoy-Özkan, S., & Savage, M. N. (2020). Evidence-based practices for children, youth, and young adults with Autism. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, National Clearinghouse on Autism Evidence and Practice Review Team. https://ncaep.fpg.unc.edu/sites/ncaep.fpg.unc.edu/files/imce/documents/EBP%20Report%202020.pdf</p>

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