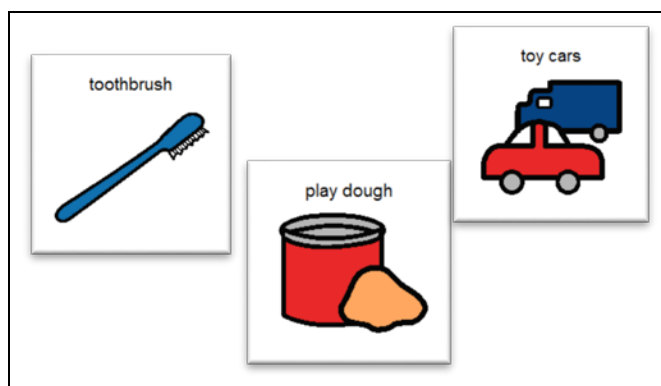


Choice Board

What is it? A Choice Board is a visual display of appropriately available items or activities your child may choose to access.

When is it helpful? A choice board is helpful when communicating to your child what items and activities are available. A choice board can clarify expectations when setting limits on certain items and activities as well as provide children with the necessary tool to communicate wants and needs to you. When used for less preferred activities, a choice board can also increase compliance and decrease challenging behaviors.



How do I teach it and use it?

- Decide what items or activities are available. Begin with two items at a time until your child begins to discriminate between the pictures.
- To help teach your child to discriminate, you may put one picture of an item you know your child will want and one picture of an item you know your child will not want. For example, place a picture of play doh and a toothbrush on the choice board knowing your child dislikes brushing his teeth and enjoys playing with play doh.
- It is helpful to have a snack choice board available in the kitchen and a toy/activity choice board in the area in which your child plays.
- You may present the board at different times:
 - During general playtime (i.e. child is wandering around the room)
 - Denying access (i.e. your child wants to go outside but it is raining, your child wants cookies but you would prefer he have fruit or pretzels as a snack)
 - Ending activity (i.e. your child loves washing hands, and you predict turning off the water may lead to challenging behavior or it is time to turn off the TV)
- Present the board to the child and ask “Do you want ____ or ____?” You may point to the picture as you label the choices
- Wait for a cue from your child – it may be a word, a reach, a point, eye gaze –immediately give the one word model for the activity and allow immediate access. If your child does not reach or point to the picture, you may hand over hand prompt him to touch while you model the word.
- If your child does not make a choice, you may hand over hand prompt him to touch the picture you believe may be most preferred.
- If your child makes a choice that you do not believe he wants, you should still provide the item or activity. This will teach your child that making choices is a powerful form of communication. For example, if your child touches the toothbrush picture instead of the play doh picture give him the toothbrush for a few seconds before presenting the choice again. This does not mean he needs to

brush his teeth. You may prompt him to touch the play doh picture if you know he actually prefers play doh.

- Think about activities that are difficult to put into words and find a picture to represent them. For example, take a picture of you holding your child to represent a request to be held or take a picture of you tickling your child to represent your child's favorite game.

What if challenging behaviors occur? If challenging behaviors occur, continue by physically prompting your child to make a choice. Keep your focus on the communication rather than on the challenging behavior. Even if it is necessary to prompt the child to make the choice, it is important to still provide access to the item or activity. Try to redirect your child to the new activity. If you need to provide attention to calm your child, try to have him communicate this attention (i.e. prompt him to choose a picture to represent being held or hugged).

If you think challenging behaviors may happen, introduce the choice board during general play and snack time. Once your child understands the choice board allows access to fun items and activities, introduce it during those times when you need to deny access or end preferred activities. If challenging behaviors become more difficult to control, it may be appropriate to consider behavioral consultation with a professional to address these behaviors directly.