



WHAT IS IT?

Choice is providing students the opportunity to indicate what they would prefer to do at a given moment during the day. Teachers decide on a set of activities (usually two) that are appropriate for the student to engage in and then encourage the student to choose between these options.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

It's time to clean up in the Dramatic Play center. The teacher asks Suzie, "Would you like to pick up the food or the dishes first?"

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Autonomy is an important developmental milestone for kindergartners. Every time that teachers allow choice, their students are given the chance to have a say and exert this autonomy! And, the more that teachers provide choices to students when possible, the greater the chance that students will comply with their commands when choice is *not* an option.

Incorporating Choice

It is important to allow choice whenever possible throughout the day, but it can be particularly helpful during certain times. For example...

Use when caught in a power struggle

When a student is unwilling to clean up after Free Time, offer them the choice of putting their toys away independently or with your help. Or let them choose *which* toy to put away first ("Do you want to put away the train or the tracks away first?"). Either option gets the job done, but this way the student feels like they have a say!

Use to re-engage students

When you notice that one (or a few) of your students are starting to become distracted or disinterested in a task, encourage their participation by giving them a choice in something to do. For example, if a student is having trouble waiting for a snack, give them the choice of passing out paper plates or leading the class in singing while they wait.

Use for students who use escape behaviors

Choice is especially useful for those students who use escape-avoidance behaviors. For a student who does not like to walk in the hallway, give them the opportunity to choose a friend to walk next to, or give them the option to be line leader.



TIPS FOR ALLOWING CHOICE

1. Embed opportunity for choice throughout the day

- Design classroom activities that purposefully incorporate choice.
Have part of your morning song be dedicated to a class vote (rather than choosing *for* them every day).
- Offer choice spontaneously when appropriate.
Offer students the choice of sitting on a beanbag or the floor while reading a book.
- Intentionally use choice to prevent or shorten negative behaviors.
If a student typically refuses to get ready for the bus, offer the choice between getting their backpack or folder first.

2. Be intentional in *how* you offer choice

- Make eye contact.
- Use a firm, yet warm tone.
- Keep it simple (give only 2-3 options at a time).
- Consider using visuals to make sure that students understand their options.
- Do not make one of the options a punishment.
All options should be acceptable activities where students should feel good about either choice they make.

3. After offering choice, make sure to...

- Provide enough time for students to make a decision (at least 5 seconds).
- Reinforce students' participation and positive behavior following their choice-making.

RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT ALLOWING CHOICE

Using Choice Brief

[Available as PDF](#)

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Using Choice Handout

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