Tips on facilitating choice-making and working on communication skills

Pam Sepulvado, MCD, CCC-SLP
Speech-Language Pathology Consultant

Region 10 ESC
Experience the Power of 10®
Providing choices throughout the day can...

- increase children’s receptive and expressive language
- offer children a sense of control of their environment
- help children develop self-control
- honor children’s individual differences
- help children complete non-preferred activities
- increase understanding of cause & effect and problem solving
- invite cooperation and respect
Incorporating Choices Throughout the Day

Provide a Choice of Two

- Do you want cereal or pancakes for breakfast?
- Do you want to get dressed now or in 10 minutes?
- Do you want to complete the math activity before or after snack?
- Do you want to put your toys in the red box or blue box?
- Do you want to set the table by putting out the plates or cups?
- Do you want to eat your apple whole or cut up in pieces?
- Do you want me to read with you or do you want to read alone?
- Do you need help when you begin brushing your teeth or at the end?
Provide choices → increase language

Receptively by linking object or activity with spoken words. Expressively by providing a model for child’s response.

- I want apple.
- I want apple please.
- I want to eat the apple.
- I want the big red apple please.
- I want the big red apple cut in small pieces please.
- I do not want the banana. I want the apple.
- Please give me 2 apple slices and you 4 slices on the blue plate.
- Give brother 3 apple slices and give her 2 apple slices.
- After we read the bear book, we will eat apples.
Provide choices

Increase independence and communication

• When provided choices of what to wear, to eat, or toys to play with, children feel more in control of their environment.
• When provided with choices, children are learning how to make decisions and developing their inner narratives (self-talk).
• Increasing inner narrative skills can lead to better problem solving as we “talk” our way through every day situations and problems.
• When provided with choices, children are learning cause & effect skills. “If I choose carrots now, maybe I will have a choice of cookies later.” “When I make my choice, we get to move on to the next fun activity.”
Challenging behaviors can be the result of a breakdown in communication. Either understanding the situation, directions, or the ability to relay a message.

Providing a choice in the midst of challenging behaviors can help diffuse a situation until you can assess the breakdown.

- Do you want to put away your blocks with mommy or daddy helping?
- Do you want to eat your green beans before potatoes or after?
- Would you like to wear your green or blue shirt today?
- Do you want to complete your classwork after you take a 5 or 10 minute break?
Communication Throughout the Day

- Books
- Toys
- Games
- Mealtimes
- Apps

  - Joint Attention
  - Taking-Turns
  - Pretend Play
  - Basic Concepts
  - Labeling
  - Vocabulary
  - Ask/Answer Questions
  - Phonemic Awareness/Rhyming

  - Story Telling
  - Sequencing
  - Following Directions
  - Giving Directions
  - Predicting
  - Inferencing
  - Cause & Effect
  - Problem Solving
  - Social Communication
Games

- **Headbanz**- asking & answering question, vocabulary, categories, strategy
- **Cranium**- vocabulary, questioning, reading, spelling, whole-brain activities
- **Guess Who**- asking & answering questions, describing, turn-taking
- **Don’t Say It**- vocabulary, reading, working in a team
- **Taboo**- vocabulary, word-finding, working in a team
- **Sorry**- turn taking, problem solving, one-to-one correspondence, following directions
- **Candyland**- turn-taking, learning colors, following directions
- **Chutes & Ladders**- turn-taking, following directions, counting
Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.

- Fred Rogers -
Making Choices


https://cehdvision2020.umn.edu/blog/improve-child-development/

Speech & Language

https://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/chart/


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQG8MB6lIs0 Modeling AAC at Home

https://teachingtalking.com/language-activities/
Learning Websites & Apps

https://learn.khanacademy.org/khan-academy-kids/

https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/

https://pbskids.org/

https://www.highlightskids.com/


Toys & Games


http://www.playingwithwords365.com/top-toys-how-they-can-support-speech-language-development-part-one/
Got questions about special education in Texas?

Email: inquire@spedtex.org  www.spedtex.org  Chat with us online

Collaborative Project