

Offering Choices to Children



Why do we offer choices to children?

Giving children choices in their everyday lives can help them in that moment and in decision making for themselves in the future. When children are given choices, they have a voice and so can communicate what they like and don't like. Choices can give children a sense of control of what they do and when they do it.



Offering children choices, can help them to:

- Have a sense of pride and self-worth
- Stay calm in anxiety producing situations
- Build confidence and independence
- Manage emotions
- Be tolerant and understanding of others
- Invite cooperation and friendships, compromise and negotiations

Children usually love to make choices and share these with you.

How can we offer choices?

- Keep it simple by offering only two choices
- Show real objects to children whilst offering and talking about the choices.
- Give time for children to respond – this could take 10 seconds or more.
- Children may point or look when making a choice.
- While it's great to give children a say in things, too many choices can overwhelm. It's important to continue to keep boundaries and options available.
- Offer choices that children can understand and that are appropriate to their development.
- It's ok for children to not want to make a choice. In modelling and explaining choices, be prepared to compromise and maybe try offering choices at another time, someone else could make the choice this time.
- Give children plenty of praise and smiles to show you value their decisions. Enjoy choosing together.



Opportunities for offering choices

Choices can be offered throughout the day in many situations, both at home and in the early years' setting.

Remember it's not always possible for you to offer choices to children.

Good times to offer choices may include:

- Snack and mealtimes together
- Everyday routines including getting dressed and washing hands
- Sharing books and singing songs together
- Playing and being with friends

Ten top tips

www.leicestershire.gov.uk/services-for-children-aged-two-years-to-starting-school

Listening and responding to children's voices

<https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/early-years/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs/learning-development-and-assessment/listening-and-responding-to-childrens-voices>