

Choice Boards

Early Years Team

Choice boards are a useful tool for many children, especially those who experience challenges with processing information and communicating about their choices e.g. verbal communication difficulties. They can be used to encourage a child to choose between two or more options, this might be what item they want to play with, which snack they would like, what area they want to be in etc. and can be adapted to include more than 2 choices if the child is able to process this and begin to make a decision with multiple options.

Aims of a choice board:

- To encourage two-way communication between the adult and child
- To offer children with communication challenges an alternative means to request something specific whilst supporting their language development.
- To make decision making less over-whelming for children by reducing the number of options and providing a consistent visual aid – words can be forgotten very quickly so when a choice of two options is offered verbally, the child may struggle to remember both of the choices for long enough to make a choice, whereas pictures/visual aids can remain in front of the child as they consider their choice.
- To allow the child to have more control and independence over their daily activities, thereby reducing frustration that can lead to challenging behaviour.

How to use 'Choice' Boards?

1. Prepare a selection of choices that the child can make throughout the day, these may be photos or visual representations, it is a good idea to have these laminated to make them more durable and to apply velcro strips to the back.
2. Select the pictures for the choices of activities or items and stick them on the choice board e.g. offering the choice between an apple or a banana for snack. Ensure that all items are readily available to access.
3. Place the board in the child's view at their level and show them the pictures of the two options one at a time, clearly saying what they are.
4. If necessary, prompt the child to select a card by pointing, reaching, looking at or saying the name of their choice. As soon as a card is chosen, say the word/s and give the child their choice straight away so that they learn cause and effect,

- e.g. “banana!” and give them the banana, followed by praising them and celebrating their achievement.
5. As the child begins to understand the process, gradually reduce the amount of support that you give and encourage them to choose with increasing independence.

Example:

