

## Making Choices

Often children will have favourite toys, foods or other items that adults around them know about. This means that they will be given the things they want without having to communicate. Give your child choices to encourage them to interact.

This is especially important if your child is struggling with verbal communication. Your child can make choices using non-verbal communication e.g. looking, pointing, reaching, vocalisation. This is great! – Your child is communicating with you. In time they may start to use some words.

Your child can make choices for:

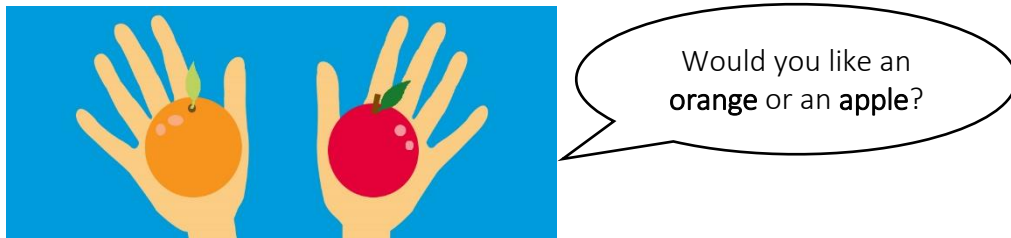
- Toys
- Food
- Drink
- Places to go or play
- What they would like to wear

Making choices can help your child to learn language and new words. It can also help reduce frustration and help your child to feel in control.

You can support your child to make a choice between two items. To make sure your child understands what they are doing by making a choice, offer something you know they really like and something they don't like e.g. chocolate buttons or broccoli.

Next, your child may be able to make a choice between two items. To make this choice easier, we suggest you choose an item / activity you know they really like and one they don't / aren't bothered about. This will make the decision easier for your child and also help you to check that they understand what making a choice involves.

It is important that you show the objects when you are offering a choice. If you are offering an activity, you may want to choose an object that represents the activity e.g. spade for playing in the sand pit. Label the items you are offering as you show them. This helps your child to understand words and how they link to objects.



When your child has made their choice and has been rewarded with the object/activity label it again so they are able to hear the word many times.

Even if your child chooses the 'wrong' thing, it is important that you give them the chosen item. Your child needs to learn the connection between the messages they are sending and what they mean.