

Here's How to... Use a Choice Board.

<p>What is it?</p>	<p>A choice board displays the choices available to your child using the pictures, symbols or printed words depending on what is most meaningful for the child. A choice board can support children to develop their understanding of spoken words and promote independence. If a child doesn't have symbolic understanding, you can introduce the process of making a choice using objects of reference</p>
<p>Who is it for?</p>	<p>In Early Years settings they support all children both verbal and pre-verbal and particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children presenting or diagnosed with communication difficulties including Autistic children - Children new to the setting - Your youngest children - Vulnerable children - Children with EAL
<p>How do I use it?</p>	<p>Consider using Velcro or Blu Tack to attach the symbols to the choice board, this gives the child the option of giving you the visual or pointing to it to communicate their choice.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To start, offer two choices and gradually increase the number of choices you offer when this is manageable for the child. 2. Gain the child's attention and label the choices verbally alongside by pointing to them on the choice board. For example, if offering a choice of activities, point to each symbol whilst saying the word it represents e.g. point to the symbol for playdough and say 'playdough'. Remember to keep your language simple. If the child does not have symbolic understanding and you use object of reference, hold the items and name them. Ensure the items are at the child's eye level. 3. When the child indicates their choice, give them the item immediately. 4. If required, support the child to engage with their choice.
<p>Why would I use it?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is a useful resource if a child finds it hard to settle or to choose during child-initiated times. - A choice board offers a limited choice which is easier to cope with and encourages interaction. - If a child can't see an activity the choice board offers a visual representation of what is available.
<p>Top tips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - DO remember that children can indicate their preference when offered a choice in different ways so look for them using a range of 'non-verbal' communication skills as well as spoken language. E.g. a look or a gesture to let you know what they want. - DO always use choices that are available to the child. If something is not available, don't add it to the choice board. - DO consider the child's level of understanding when preparing your support-remember symbolic understanding takes time to learn and objects of reference may be best for our complex learners. - DO make sure you use a consistent picture/symbol to represent each different activity or toy.