



Partner Skills: Offering Choices

A choice is only a choice when you can ask for something not offered.

The types of choices we make

Everyone makes lots of different choices throughout the day ranging from smaller (what to wear) to bigger choices (where to live?)

For most people it is easier to reject options, rather than saying what they want

“What do you want for dinner?”

“I don’t know.”

“How about a stir fry?”

“No, not that.”

“Then what do you want?!”

“I don’t know!”

For the person being asked it can create pressure to generate a choice and express it, and for the person asking, it can be frustrating to offer options only to have them rejected

Where the offering of choices comes in

It can take effort for everyone to think of suitable options

A list of choices, like a menu, can help

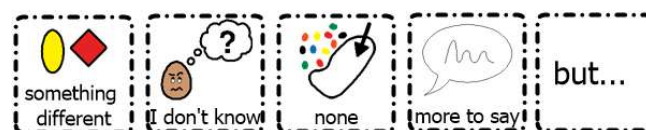
Choice boards and lists can help people know what kind of options are available and are good for small, quick, everyday choices

The essentials

A choice is only a choice when someone can ask for something that was not offered

At a minimum, a choice board should include a way to say: “Something Different”

It should also consider the following:



“But...” is important. It helps refine our choice.

It is important to have someone’s robust communication system available. Always.

If someone does not have a communication system yet, a core board should at least be available

A choice board or list is not...

A list of choices is not a robust system of language. It is often a list of things, people, or places but without the words to make comments or add nuance to choices

A choice board is not essential to make choices, but it sometimes gives someone ideas about what their choice could be

Communication Partner Skills: Offering Choices

Choices are like menus. Autonomy is choosing the restaurant.

Modelling and introducing choices:

Even if someone knows how to point at things to get what they want, there are always things that can be taught when using choice boards

People with complex communication needs are often bombarded with questions which demand a response

Sometimes using a “soft probe” for someone’s opinion with an offer of options can let someone know a choice can be made, but there is no pressure/requirement to do so

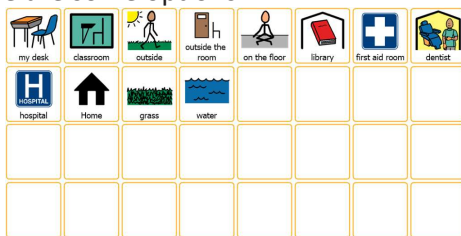
If a choice is regularly offered, consider making a choice board to visualise the options

Example:

“I wonder where you want to go”



“Here are some options”



WAIT!!

Give time to process and contribute if they want to

Reinforcing choices:

Visual resources available can be used to reinforce choices made by someone, even if they have used a different way to express it

Choice boards and communication systems can be used to model language

*Modelling note: Always ask before using someone else’s system and have a separate copy if possible

Examples:

