

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS: *Strategies for home and school*

Choice Making




Choice making is difficult for students. It requires problem solving and understanding the consequences of the choice. For instance if they make the wrong choice they are stuck with an activity they don't like. This is why children tend to choose the same activity over and over again and insist on sameness. Another reason they sometimes choose the same activity is they like perfectionism. By doing the same activity they know how the activity looks, works and finishes. This makes them happy whereas unknown activities are unpredictable and can be scary.

CHOICE MAKING

"I only ever gave Daniel two choices. He could wash the dishes now or in 10 minutes. There were no other choices to make. The end result was always going to be the same, but Daniel had some control over the choice." - Anna

Key Strategies in Choice Making

- Show the child what to do if they make the wrong choice: e.g. put the book back on the shelf, rather than throwing it and choose something else
- Show the child how to make choices
 - Start with easy choices such as one thing they really love and one thing they are not too keen on
 - Always start with only two choices
- Use a Choice making board with visuals.
- Make a chart of things that they like and don't like e.g. use food as an example as they are normally very clear of what they like and don't like in food.
- If they are perfectionists show the child what to do if they make a mistake and encourage having a try at new activities.
- Use the *"First, Then..."* or *"When, Then..."* or *"Now, Next, Later"* to encourage them to try new activities. Always put their favourite activity last as a built in reward for trying new activities.

My Name is:		
Now	Next	Later
		
.....

- Always explain how to use any visual that you put into place. Don't just expect the child to know how to use it.

New Activities

Sometimes it is important to encourage children to try a new activity without giving them a choice. In our experience sometimes when a child tries a new activity they love it.

Excerpts from The Ultimate Guide to School and Home by Sue Larkey and Anna Tulleman.

The Ultimate Guide to School and Home

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Key strategies for all ages and stages.
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