

Making Choices

- Try to increase the number of opportunities for your child to communicate **with** you.
- Creating lots of opportunities for choice making most easily does this.
- For example allow your child to choose:
 - What they want to eat,
 - What video they want to watch
 - Which toy they wants to play with
 - To play inside or outside (weather dependent)
 - What clothes they would like to wear
 - Whether they want to brush their teeth or their hair first
 - What toys they would like in the bath
 - Which story they would like read to them
 - Which piece they want to put in the puzzle first



Choice can be incorporated into just about every activity you do with your child. Allowing them to choose shows them the value of communicating with you – when they tell you what they want, they get it, that they do in fact have some control over you and their environment.

Most of the time this choosing will be just between 2 choices. In this case, it is easiest just to hold up the 2 objects (or objects representing the activities) and say, 'What do you want? X or Y?' This way you are providing a model for your child to copy and therefore encouraging them to use the true word.

When there is more than one choice – such as what to have for lunch, try making a picture board of the choices. Take photos (or cut pictures out of catalogues or draw pictures) of all the foods your child can choose from and stick them on to a board and laminate it. Show your child the board and ask them 'What do you want?' When they points to what they want, label it so they can copy you, 'Yoghurt, you want yoghurt'. Make sure that the choices you are offering are available – if you have run out of yoghurt (for example) cover the picture of yoghurt up. You might find it easier to attach the pictures to the board with Velcro. Then when you don't have the particular food you can just pull the picture off the board.

- **Waiting** - try not to anticipate the child's needs. Let your child get a little frustrated before you step in to solve the problem or to help. Try to wait for a look towards you or a change in sound before you step in. Let your child know that you have stepped in because he looked at you or because you heard them ask for 'help' (just a slight change in vocalisation will do). Tell them ' ____ help'. Gradually increase the time your child has to wait before you step in to help.