



## CHOICE AND DECISION MAKING TEACHER TIP SHEET

Teachers can teach choice and decision making by infusing options that require students to make choices or decisions throughout the school day or the school year. Choice making is simply showing a preference between two or more options. Decision-making involves considering all the potential solutions in a situation, understanding the consequences associated with each solution, and choosing the solution that best serves your needs about long term issues or outcome. Allowing students to make choices allows them to gain control of their environment and can help reduce challenging behaviors. Below are some suggestions of ways to extend teaching beyond simply asking students to make choices about what they want to eat or do for free time.

### Tips:

- Start with direct instruction by explicitly teaching the definitions of choice and decisions.
- Teachers should infuse choice making in multiple areas throughout the day.
- Preference assessments are critical to begin teaching choice making for students. Teachers can utilize preferences to reward or encourage choice making skills.
- Utilize pictures, objects, symbols, or other resources to support students who may have limited verbal expression.
- Choice boards can also be used by students to select what they are working for that are preference based.

### Example areas and activities:

- During free time, provide a student with an array of choices or a choice board to make a selection of a preferred activity/item.
- During snack time or lunch, allow students to select what to eat.
- Students should be allowed to make selections about the materials they use or the way they complete projects. This can be as simple as selecting which color to use in younger grades or as complex as deciding which multimedia format (ex. writing, photography, performance, art, etc.) for larger projects.
- If students work with various paraprofessionals or teachers, allow them the opportunity to choose which teacher will assist them. Be careful to ensure that dependence on a particular adult does *not* occur.
- Students should have the opportunity to choose peer partners to work with.
- Students should be able to select general education classes and extracurricular or career technical education classes. These classes should connect with interests and/or IEP goals and transition goals. Students should be shown how the decision of taking certain classes can directly impact their future.
- Student should have some degree of choice in building their schedule and activities.