

Giving your child choices

Why?

- Choices are a good way to encourage your child to say new words, without them feeling as if they are 'performing' for you.
- When you offer the choice, you have reminded your child how the words sound – you have modelled the words for them.
- Giving choices not only makes it easier for your child to imitate and repeat, but it allows them to point or gesture if they can't say anything yet.



How can I help?

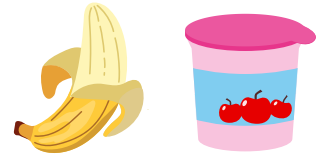
- If you want to encourage your child to say what they want it is best to offer them a choice. E.g. "Do you want milk, or water?"
- If you ask a question like this, they need to indicate milk or water – otherwise you won't know what they want.
- This is much better than asking a yes/no question e.g. if you say "Do you want milk?" – your child only needs to say yes, or no, and doesn't get the chance to practise more speech.
- Giving choices makes it easier for your child than it would if you asked an open-ended questions like, "What do you want to drink?". This can be harder because you are asking the child to recall and retrieve a word from memory.



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Ideas to try

- Give a choice between 2 items for snack "banana or yoghurt?"

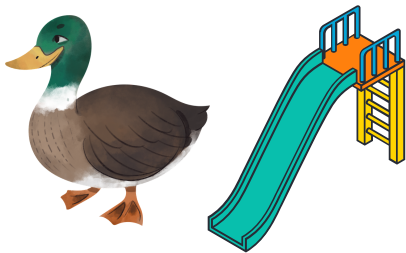


- Give a choice between 2 toys to play with "doll or teddy?"
- Give a choice between 2 books "Gruffalo or Monkey Puzzle?"

- Give a choice between 2 songs "baa baa or twinkle star?"

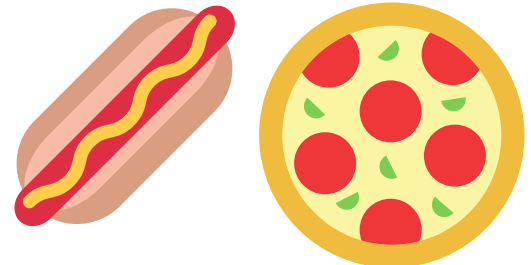


- Give a choice of everyday items "red or orange socks?" "Thomas or Buzz cup?"



- Give a choice of activity "Shall we go to the ducks or the slide?"
- Give a choice of what to do next "Coat on or wellies on?"

- Give a choice at the shops "Shall we buy hotdog or pizza?"



What if my child is finding it hard to make choices?

- If your child is struggling to make a choice make it easier by giving an item they like and an item they don't e.g. a choice between a biscuit and a potato!
- To start with children need to see the things they are making choices about, then you can use pictures of the things, then just the words.
- Don't give up if it's hard to start with, keep offering as many choices as you can, the more the better!
- Remember accept a point, a gesture, a vocalisation or a look as a valid choice to start with - you can add in the words.