

### Why Provide Choices

Providing choices helps your child communicate more often. Choice making is important for all children, but it is especially important for children who may have difficulty interacting or initiating with others. By simplifying decisions into two choices, it becomes easier for your child to indicate what is most interesting to him/her. Providing choices can also help reduce tantrums, since it allows your child to have a sense of control in his/her day.

### The Steps

1. Hold out Choice #1 to your child and label it. "Do you want..."
2. Hold out Choice #2 to your child and label it. "or..."
3. Hold both choices out and watch and listen to identify which your child prefers.
4. Label your child's choice when you give it to him.

For example, "Do you want the ball (hold the ball in child's direct line of vision) or the book (hold the book in child's direct line of vision)? Oh, you want the book (hand book to child)."

### Helpful Hint: POP

Remember to POP (Position, observe, and pause) when providing choices

- **Position**—Be in front of your child, at eye level. Hold the two choices far enough apart from each other to easily tell which your child attends to more
- **Observe**—Watch your child carefully to see which object she looks at longer, or look for subtle gestures from her. If she does not reach, point, or vocalize, observing these less noticeable reactions are a great way to identify your child's preference. You can then assist her by providing the words, gestures, etc. she needs to make her choice clear.
- **Pause**—When offering the two choices, wait a bit after labeling each choice to give your child time to process. Try not to repeat the question until you've given your child time to think and respond.

As your child ages, he may not need as many visuals to help him make choices. You can adjust the way you present choices as your child develops.

