

Supporting Children in Developing Decision-making Skills

(summarized by TATS from *5 Ways Preschools Can Build Confident Toddlers*. Noodle.com.)

It is critical for young children's social and cognitive development that they learn they can make decisions, that these decisions have value, and that they can change the course of action of a decision. Children often learn decision-making skills in the regular routines of their day. Examples of opportunities for making choices during routines are below:

- choosing their clothing for the day at home and deciding on their outfit for dress-up at preschool.
- choosing a breakfast food at home and a snack at preschool or childcare
- being included in a family decision about where to go for fun and helping peers decide what to build, explore, and play with at school

Experiences that involve making choices teach young learners that they can make good decisions. Children's confidence in their own decision-making capabilities will help them during coming years. Environments and situations that encourage development of decision-making skills are described below:

Children should be supported in making choices about their art projects.



Students should be given and encouragement to do art that is of their own creation and results from materials that they choose. At times they should be supported in choosing the topic of art, give the artwork a title and describe its meaning to adults.

Students should be encouraged to select play activities.

Children should be encouraged to select from a variety of toys to play with and objects to explore. There should be many different types of items to choose from, including puzzles, building toys, transportation items, dramatic play objects, books, art supplies, and science tools. Preschoolers learn about making choices when they are allowed and supported in making decisions about their play.

Provide opportunities for choices about where to sit during some activities.

Labels on seats, as well as table and floor locations, are positive name-recognition activities and useful in managing the dynamics of a group; however, this exercise should be balanced with choice. Students learn valuable lessons both from selecting a seat near a specific peer or an adult who is helpful. Offering a choice of sitting in a specific color-coded chair or floor location is a good way of mixing up the activity but still allowing children to make choices.



Let students help select the snack.

It is important that children are given opportunities to decide what they will eat. Snacks are often provided as a variety of healthy foods. Students should, on occasion, have a say in which of these choices they consume so that they develop sound eating habits and try a variety of offerings.

Support children in selecting the book or song of the day.

Teachers tend to read to the class only what relates to the theme, letter, number, or color being emphasized that week, but occasionally, each preschooler should have a turn to choose the book being read to everyone. Even young children understand that there is a particular importance placed on the “book of the day,” and participating in this decision fosters a sense of self-confidence, responsibility, and pleasure.



Reference: Tarabush, C. 2023. *C. 5 Ways Preschools Can Build Confident Toddlers*. Noodle.com. retrieved from <https://resources.noodle.com/articles/5-ways-preschools-should-build-decision-making-skills/>

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