

CHOICE GIVING

Children do not naturally understand why they behave the way they do and they need to be taught that they can choose their behavior rather than being told after the event that they have made a “good” or “bad” choice. We use choice-giving as a means of increasing children’s empowerment and responsibility.

EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment can be described as the act of providing decision-making power to a child, often associated with redistributing responsibility from parent or teacher to their children. Empowerment helps children to accept authority and responsibility and take initiative.



DR. KAY SUDEKUM TROTTER

Dr Trotter and her staff specialize in children and adolescents and use many different counseling modalities to help individuals connect with true self, including traditional talk therapy, play therapy, expressive art therapy, experimental therapy and animal assisted therapy.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to facilitate the prevention or resolution of emotional and behavioral difficulties with individuals and groups in a safe, secure environment that nurtures inner healing and encourages optimal growth and development.

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CHOICES TEACHING CONTROL & RESPONSIBILITY



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EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE WITH CHOICE GIVING

Parents can teach their children self-control and self-discipline by guiding them in ways that support their growth and development. Discipline is ongoing and changes as children grow older. The limits and choices one has for young children are not, and should not be, the same as the limits and choices set for teenagers.

The following discipline technique can help children develop self-responsibility and control. Giving them the tools they will need to make healthy choices through out life. Using choice giving you acknowledge that it is important to help your child to learn to make their own connections between a choice and the outcome.

INTRODUCING THE IDEA OF NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

“When you have completed your homework, we can go swimming.”

If you choose to do this by 5 PM we can go today,

If you have not finished your homework by 5 PM we will have to wait until Saturday to go swimming.”



BRAIN RESEARCH AND CHOICE-GIVING

According to brain research, choice changes the chemistry of the brain. Choice and control (or even the perception that you are in control) lead to lower stress levels and encourage the release of endorphins which consist of, among other things, the “pleasure” neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin.

However, take the control away and instead the brain will generate a different neurotransmitter – noradrenalin – which slows down our thinking, leading to low morale, poor learning and reduced motivation.

HOW TO GIVE CHOICES

Always clearly state choice. The consequence of the choice should be natural or logical — not punishment

- Give young children small choices
- Give older/mature children bigger choices
- Choices must be acceptable to you, relevant and enforceable
- Choices need to be phrased positively

If you are unsure whether your choice-giving is positive, try thinking about whether your approach helps the child to feel competent, respected, free and energized, or whether they feel trapped, blamed, criticised and nagged by your choice-giving. Clearly state chosen consequence. Follow through with consequence without fail and without anger.

Toy removal consequences is for today only. For young children each day should be a chance for a fresh start.

Reflect the child’s choice, such as child showing self-control or any movement towards self-control. plus reflecting the child’s feeling (angry, disappointed, ect).



“If you choose to keep putting your shoes on the couch, then you choose to take them off.

“If you choose to stop putting your shoes on the couch, then you choose to keep them on.”

“If you choose to play with markers, then you choose to play on the drop cloth.

“If you choose to put the markers down, then you choose to play anywhere in here.”

“I see you are very angry, but the toy is not for kicking, [point] the shoe box is.”

Child kicks the toy a fourth time

“If you choose to kick the toy, then you choose not to play with it any more today.”

“If you choose to stop kicking the toy, then you choose to keep playing with it.”

Child kicks the shoe box instead

“You chose to kick the shoe box. That shows self control, especially when you feel so angry!”

- OR -

“I see you are very angry, but the toy is not for kicking, [point] the shoe box is.”

Child kicks the toy again

“You chose to stop playing with the toy today. You may play with it tomorrow.”

- OR -

“I see you are very angry, but the toy is not for kicking, [point] the shoe box is.”

Child nudges toy toward you with toe reluctantly.

“You stopped yourself from kicking it. Pushing it instead of kicking it shows self-control.”