

## ***Ideas to Develop Choice Cards/Objects To Help Elicit or Support Communication Efforts***

*This mode of communication supports oral language - a spark for oral communication to start, but should not hinder early communications. Eventually most young children find oral communication more efficient and drop the supports.*

**Find familiar objects of interest to your child. Food is a natural motivating first choice to learn. You may:**

- Use a label directly from your child's favorite food or use an empty container. For example, use a jelly jar label or an empty bag of chips.
- Cut out desired pictures from catalogues. Example: toys or clothes
- Write the word below the picture – an early literacy step.
- Draw pictures of desired objects.
- Take photographs of desired items, people, activities, etc.
- Use actual objects. Some children do not understand the 2 – D mode. This is easy when choosing clothes to wear – Hold up a green shirt and a blue shirt and say, *"Do you want the green shirt or the blue shirt?"*

**How to use:**

1. Be certain your child is familiar with the choices.
2. Always use the same word to label the picture/item as you present the choices. Ex. "ice cream, cake."
3. At the child's eye level, hold up two choice items/pictures. (In the beginning as the child is learning, present what you know the child wants with a second choice that is obviously not what she wants. For example, present and ask, *"Do you want ice cream or a horse?"* Knowing the child is hungry, she'll choose the ice cream. Once the child appears to understand the process of choosing, present similar choices. Ex. *"Do you want ice cream or cake?"*)
4. Wait for a response. It may take a little time for the child to decide.
5. Child will likely reach for or point to what she wants.
6. As the child reaches or points, affirm and say for example, *"Yes, you want ice cream. Ice cream is yummy. Ice cream."* Hold out the chosen picture/item. Then present what the child wants – a bowl full of yummy ice cream!

Note: With some children it may be necessary to give help by using your hand to guide his hand to what you think he wants. Guide the child's hand onto the appropriate picture and label the choice.

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