

**Communication Supports to Develop Choice-Making
With Stubborn Early Talkers
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Gather familiar things that interest the child. Initially, food can be a motivating choice to learn positive communications!

Here are some ideas to use:

- Use a label from a favorite food or an empty container. E.g., an empty cereal box.
- Cut out desired pictures from catalogues. E.g., toys or clothes, places.
- Draw pictures of desired objects.
- Take photographs of desired items, people, activities, etc.
- Use actual objects. This is easy when choosing clothes to wear. Hold up a green shirt and a blue shirt and ask, “Do you want green or the blue?”

NOTE: Writing the target word on the picture or item becomes an early literacy step. It also provides consistency of using the targeted word that was taught.

How to use the above items:

1. Be certain your child is familiar with the choices. Label while sharing them.
2. Always use the same label when presenting choices. E.g., *puppy* vs. *dog*.
3. Being at the child’s eye level, hold out two choices.
4. Wait quietly for a response.
5. Child will likely reach for or point to what they want.
6. As the child reaches or points, affirm, and say, *Yes. You want ice cream. Ice cream is yummy. Ice cream.* (The word is heard three times in this example, which is good.)
7. Present the chosen picture/item. Then the actual choice -- a big bowl of yummy ice cream!

NOTE: In the beginning while teaching this process, present what you know the child wants with a second choice that is obviously not wanted. E.g., When the child is hungry, and wants ice cream, present items and ask, “Do you want ice cream or a horse?” They will likely choose the ice cream. Once the child appears to understand the process of choosing, present two similar choices. E.g., “Do you want ice cream or cake?”

NOTE: With some children it may be necessary to give hand-over-hand guidance to wanted item. Always label the items when presented and chosen.

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