

Decision-Making goals

Decision-Making: A child's approach to problem solving that involves learning from others and from their own previous experiences, using their values to guide their action, and accepting responsibility for their decisions.

Thoughts for adults supporting this project

When we think about our wishes for every child in our care, near the top of the list is their ability to make effective decisions that help them to be happy, healthy people who are ready to learn and to contribute in life. Learning to make positive decisions comes from years of practice and support.

Young people learn best from watching, talking with, and listening to people they admire and respect, about their values. They learn from watching how adults make our decisions and lead our lives as a result of those decisions. Making time for conversations about how you make decisions, and modeling your process of planning and reflection, will pay big dividends over time.

Keep in mind

Understanding and practicing effective social and emotional skills many times in our daily lives prepares our young people to be ready to make healthy decisions, large and small, even when they are in stressful or super-exciting circumstances. Hearing what you think about when you have a decision to make gives them insights that they can draw from when they are at school and out in the world! For quick videos that show six links in a decision making process, consider watching: <https://www.decisioneducation.org/decision-focus-videos>

Reflection questions

- When I've had complicated or difficult decisions to make, what did I think about?
- How do I approach decision-making? Do I think through any particular steps? Make a pro and con list? Reflect back on other decisions I've made and compare them to this decision?
- Who and what has helped me make good decisions in the past? How might that help me in other situations? How does my child know about what I think is important when making decisions?

Extension

If you are interested in reading more about strength-based parenting as a way to support your child in becoming a healthy decision-maker, the Search Institute is a valuable resource. You could start your exploration with (www.ParentFurther.com/familyassets or <http://www.search-institute.org/research/family-strengths>).



Decision-Making Home Activity: Building Conversations

The Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets research (<http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18>) tells about the importance for every young person of having at least one trusted adult to turn to and count on. Regularly having conversations about ideas and choices we’re making helps get us in that routine—and makes it more likely we’ll feel ready and safe to talk when it’s time for big decisions.

Sometimes adults don’t know what you’re thinking or aren’t sure how to open a conversation with you. This activity is to help change that!

1. Take time to think about some trusted adults who you respect and can turn to, for guidance and support.
2. Think about how you might start a conversation with them about something you’re interested in getting advice about.
 - “I’m curious about...”
 - “I’m interested in...”
 - “How can I...”
 - “What do you think about...”
 - “What’s important to you when you have a big decision to make?”

This week, ask at least two adults to have a conversation with you. When you’re done, ask them to sign below, and thank them for sharing their thoughts with you. Set another time to talk, to keep building the conversation habit!

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

