

# How-To

TEMPLATE SERIES

# CHOICE BOARD

STRUCTURED DECISION-MAKING



**HANDS in Autism®**  
Interdisciplinary Training  
& Resource Center

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Making choices can be a difficult task for some individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Making a choice requires the individual to consider all possible appropriate options, select one option, and indicate that selection to another person. Difficulties may arise in any one of these steps, or in all three. By providing the individual with a choice board will help with a choice-making process.

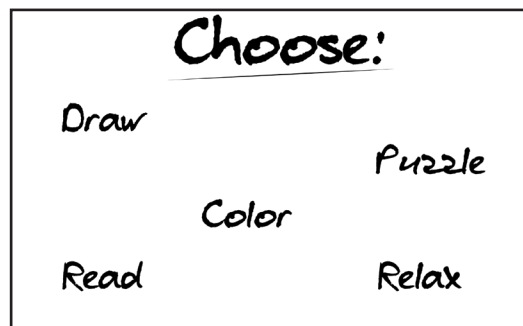
A choice board is a visual representation of all possible appropriate choices. By providing visual choices, the individual does not have to think of the options on their own.

Visual choices can help the individual focus on the appropriate options rather than get distracted by all the options that may or may not be appropriate or available.

**REMEMBER:** Choices on a choice board should be arranged in a random shape, and not a line. A list of words or pictures presented in a straight line may be mistaken for a schedule and thus to be completed in order. Random placement of choice options will encourage an individual to select any of the preferred choices.

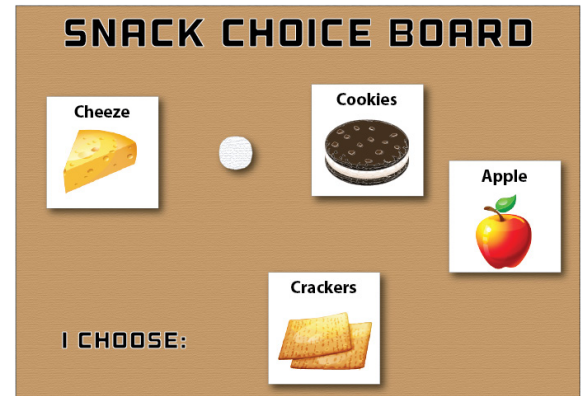
Depending upon the individual's functioning level, they may either verbally indicate the choice or physically remove the selected option from the board and give the card to an adult or place on a designated space to indicate the choice.

**HOW TO SELECT OPTIONS FOR THE CHOICE BOARD?** It depends on the activity type (e.g., leisure, snack, activities to do during a flight or family trip). However, choices available should be interesting, engaging, and motivational.



**WHAT IF I DO NOT HAVE TIME TO CREATE A LAMINATED CHOICE BOARD?** While pre-made laminated choice boards are more durable and reusable, if you are short for time or materials, you can make the choice board using a plain piece of paper and a marker or a pen.

**HOW MANY CHOICES SHOULD I OFFER?** Start with two or three choices, if an individual has hard time making a choice or if you have a restricted number of options. However, you can offer as many as five options. Try not to go beyond five though, as making a choice can become too hard.

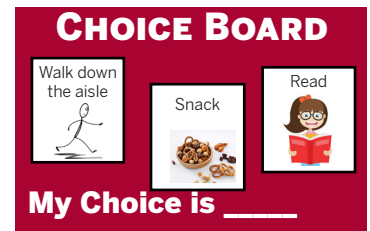


Reminder: This is only one example.

This template may need to be individualized to meet the particular needs of a person with ASD!

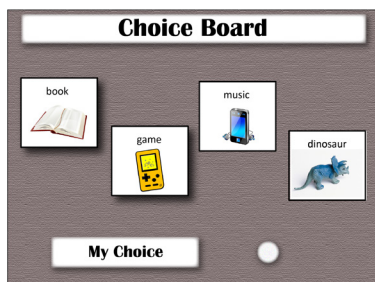
## SCENARIO FOR USING A CHOICE BOARD AT HOME:

While traveling may offer many exciting opportunities for individuals, social interactions, flying on an airplane, and sitting for prolonged periods of time may present some stressful or challenging situations for individuals with ASD or related developmental disabilities. Together with your child, brainstorm potentially reinforcing activities or items that may be scheduled proactively or provided as a reinforcer for deserving behavior (e.g., walking down the aisle, play a game). Create a choice board using these items or activities.



When offering a choice, start with a phrase “*Make a choice*” then allow your child select the preferred activity and move the card next to *My Choice Is* to help remember the selection. If fine motor is a challenge, help the child move the card by placing your hand on top of their hand (hand-over-hand prompting technique). If a child gets distracted, point back to the choice board to remind about the activity.

## SCENARIO FOR USING A CHOICE BOARD ON A SCHOOL BUS:



Similarly, riding on a school bus can be difficult for students who may get distracted or are not sure what to do. As a result, they may engage in undesired behaviors, like tantrums. By offering bus-friendly choices, you can avoid such behaviors, making the ride more comfortable both for the student and for other people on the bus.

Parents or caregivers may be the best source for suggestions on what choices to offer to engage the student.

## SCENARIO FOR USING A CHOICE BOARD TO TEACH CHANGE:

Individuals with ASD are not comfortable with change, so any modification to a schedule can lead to undesired behaviors. However, you can use choice board to teach change in a friendly and nonthreatening way. Add a Surprise choice to your choice board. However, start with surprises that are more desirable, and then move towards less desirable.



## HOW TO MAKE A CHOICE BOARD:

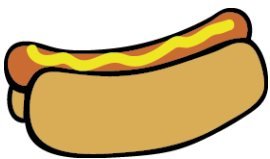
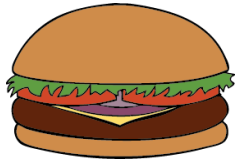

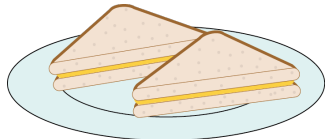

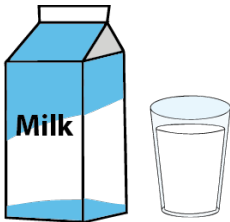
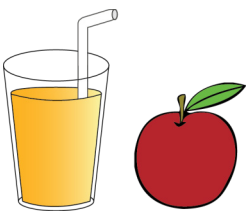
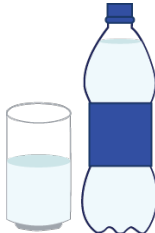
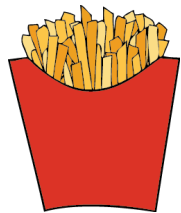

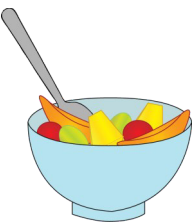
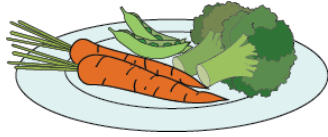
### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- ✕ Board template
- ✕ Cards
- ✕ Construction paper (preferred for boards)
- ✕ Scissors
- ✕ Hard and soft velcro dots or spools (cut down to 1” pieces)
- ✕ Laminate & laminator


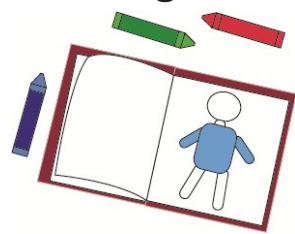

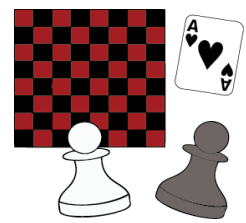
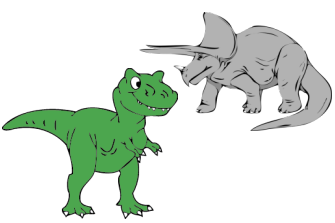



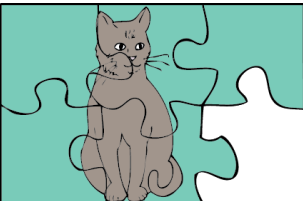
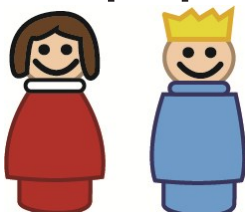
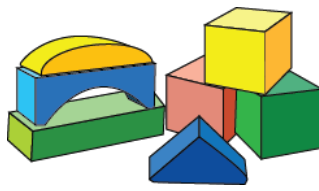
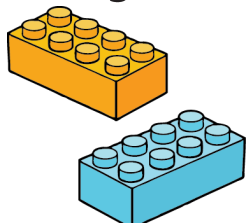
### STEPS TO MAKE A CHOICE BOARD:

1. Brainstorm potential choice options based on the interests of the individual and availability. Involve the individual in the brainstorming whenever possible
2. Print the board template and cards
3. Laminate the board and cards
4. Cut them out
5. Place soft velcro on the board to place choices, as well as next to *My Choice*. Place hard velcro on the back of the choice cards.

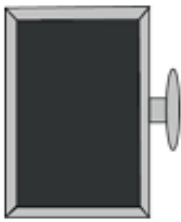






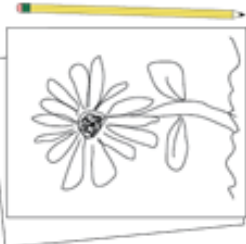






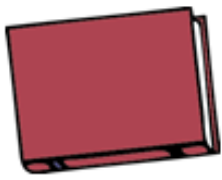
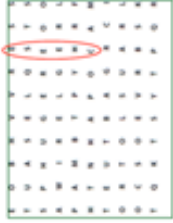



# CARD OPTIONS: MEAL CHOICES

<p><b>hot dog</b></p> 	<p><b>hamburger</b></p> 	<p><b>chicken nuggets</b></p> 	<p><b>grilled cheese</b></p> 
<p><b>Chocolate milk</b></p> 	<p><b>milk</b></p> 	<p><b>Apple juice</b></p> 	<p><b>Water</b></p> 
<p><b>French fries</b></p> 	<p><b>applesauce</b></p> 	<p><b>Fruit salad</b></p> 	<p><b>vegetables</b></p> 

# CARD OPTIONS: LEISURE CHOICES

<p><b>Toy cars</b></p> 	<p><b>Coloring book</b></p> 	<p><b>read</b></p> 	<p><b>game</b></p> 
<p><b>dinosaurs</b></p> 	<p><b>ball</b></p> 	<p><b>Stuffed animal</b></p> 	<p><b>Dress up</b></p> 
<p><b>puzzle</b></p> 	<p><b>Little people</b></p> 	<p><b>blocks</b></p> 	<p><b>Legos</b></p> 

CARD OPTIONS: MEDICAL OFFICE, THERAPIST OFFICE, OTHER SETTING

<p><b>Video</b></p> 	<p><b>Toothbrush</b></p> 	<p><b>Crossword</b></p> 	<p><b>Surprise</b></p> 																																																																								
<p><b>Headphones</b></p> 	<p><b>Music</b></p> 	<p><b>Coloring Page</b></p> 	<p><b>Drawing</b></p> 																																																																								
<p><b>Sunglasses</b></p> 	<p><b>Game</b></p> 	<p><b>Magazine</b></p> 	<p><b>Eye Spy</b></p> 																																																																								
<p><b>Rubber band</b></p> 	<p><b>Sticker</b></p> 	<p><b>Book</b></p> 	<p><b>Word Search</b></p> 																																																																								
<p><b>Heavy Apron</b></p> 	<p><b>Balloon</b></p> 	<p><b>Pen</b></p> 	<p><b>Sudoku</b></p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>9</td><td>6</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td></td><td>2</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td>1</td><td></td><td>6</td><td></td><td>3</td><td>8</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>8</td><td></td><td>6</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>8</td><td>3</td><td></td><td>6</td><td>1</td><td>9</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td>7</td><td></td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>5</td><td>3</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>9</td><td>3</td><td></td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>8</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>3</td><td>9</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>4</td><td>6</td></tr> </table>	9	6	1	2	3		2	4	3	1		6		3	8	2	7	4	2	3	8		6	1						3	4	7		8	3		6	1	9	2	2	7		1	1	5	3	8		2	4	6	9	3		4	6	7	4	5	2	1	1	8		3	9				4	6
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**My choice is** \_\_\_\_\_



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