

# Using Choice and Preference to Promote Improved Behavior



Project funded by the Child Care and Head Start Bureaus in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



## What Works Brief Training Kit #15



Center on the Social and Emotional  
Foundations for Early Learning  
[www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/)

May 2008

The **What Works Brief Training Kits** were developed to help in-service and pre-service providers conduct staff development activities. Each Kit is based on one What Work Brief and contains the following items: presenter's PowerPoint note pages, participant handouts, activity ideas, pre-training survey, demographic form, training evaluation, and training certificate.

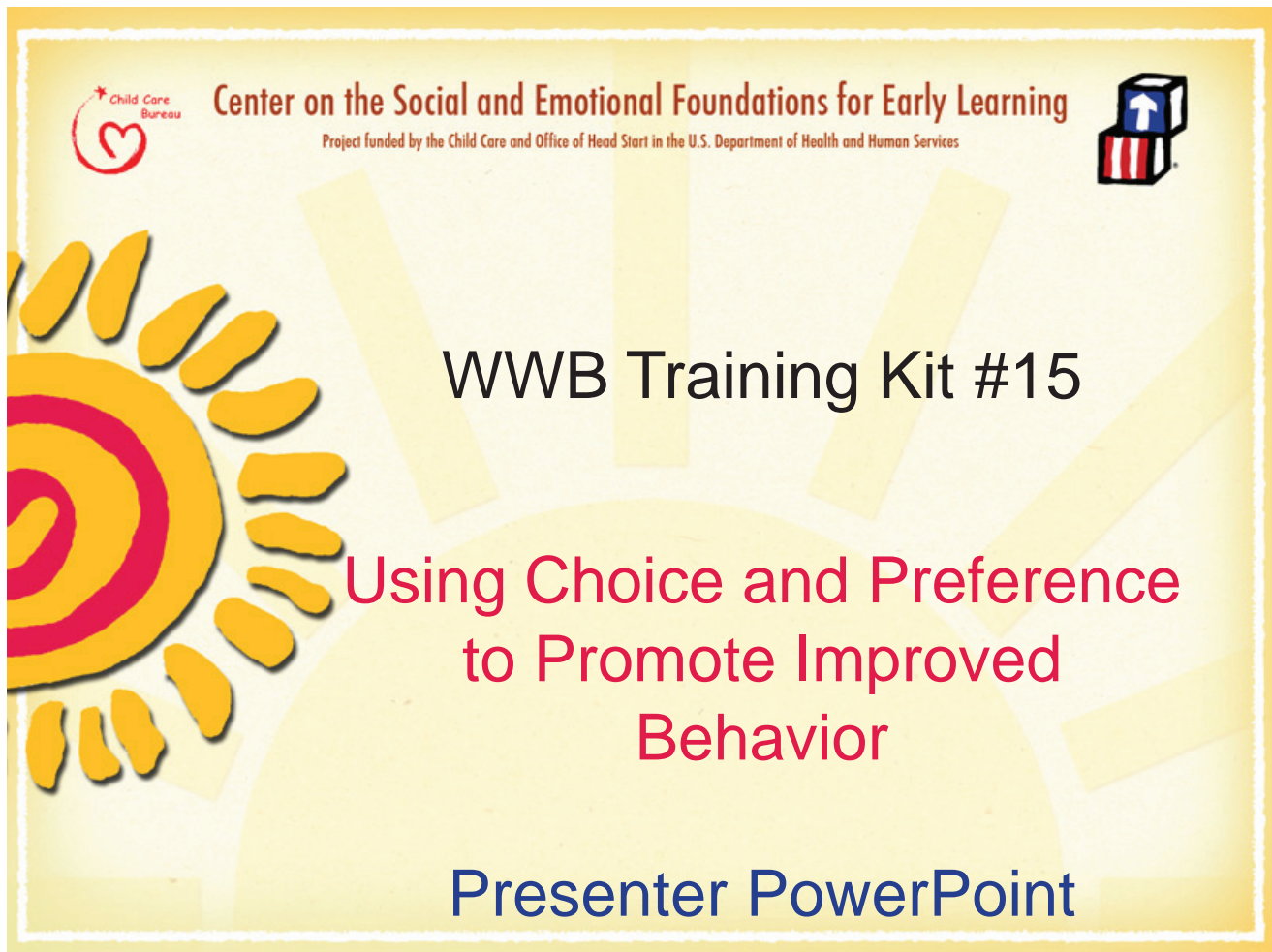
The What Works Brief Training Kits are grounded in the Pyramid model depicted below which provides a framework for describing the four interrelated levels of practice that address the social and emotional development of all children. The Pyramid is designed to guide practitioners in understanding the importance of children's social emotional competence in terms of school readiness and the prevention of challenging behavior. This What Works Brief Training Kit relates to the "Individualized Interventions" level of the Pyramid.



We welcome your feedback as you provide professional development activities with these materials.

Special thanks to the Meginnis Endowment at UIUC for funding to help support this effort and to the following individuals who developed the What Works Brief Training Kits materials: Micki Ostrosky, Hedda Meadan, Greg Cheatham, Monique Mills, Sallee Beneke, Nancy Gaumer, Amy Hayden, Elenor Rentschler, and Angel Fettig.

## Presenter Notes



### ***Speaker Notes:***

- Presenter should be familiar with the content in What Works Brief #15 and Module 1, Section VII on Schedules, Routines, and Transitions and Section IX on Giving Directions available at <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/>
- Consider using the *What Works Brief # 15* handout as a supplemental resource.
- Welcome participants.
- Take care of any logistics (e..g, length of time for session, break, handouts, etc.).
- Pass out pre-training survey for all participants to complete and turn in, if desired.
- As you present the workshop:
  - Remind participants to take the culture and background of children into consideration and to work hand-in-hand with parents when they select target behaviors, since some behaviors may be part of the child's culture.

## What is Choice-Making Strategy?

- Offering children choices.
- Happens at specific points in time.
- Happens throughout the day.
- Child has a choice between two or more activities or materials.
- Children must be given access to the choices they choose.



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### ***Speaker Notes:***

Ask participants to discuss children's current choice-making opportunities in their daily routine (e.g., meals, chores, centers, routines, play, etc.). Participants can brainstorm opportunities for choice while presenter lists these on a flipchart.

## Pair-Think-Share

**Pair** with a partner

**Read** the scenario on Activity 1 Handout

**Think** about

- What choices might you offer if you were Alex's teacher?
- How might having choices impact Alex?

**Share** your thoughts



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### ***Speaker Notes:***

- Assign partners
- Have the group read the scenario on the handout for Activity #1.
- Pairs should think about choices that they might offer Alex if they were his teacher.
- Share thoughts with the large group by having one pair share their ideas. Then ask other participants to share their ideas. Continue until all who volunteer have had an opportunity to participate.
- Following the group sharing, read "Alex's Story Revisited" from the What Works Brief #15

*Alex's Story Revisited A later look in Mr. Anderson's classroom shows that Alex has made good progress. Now that Mr. Anderson gives him choices within activities, such as what color clay to use or which scissors to cut with, Alex is more interested in working. Alex feels that he has a bit more control over his environment, so he is more motivated to stay on task. Making choices also helps Alex better understand what is expected of him during activities. As a result, he is wandering less and is rarely disruptive. Mr. Anderson plans to continue offering choices to all of his students in a variety of classroom situations.*

## When Choices Are Offered, Children Are...

- More cooperative.
- More engaged.
- Better behaved



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### ***Speaker Notes:***

#### Discussion (optional)

- Have session participants think of a time that they were forced to be somewhere and were given no choice in their activities (e.g., had to be at an evening meeting, attend a Saturday workshop, drive a child to an early morning soccer game).
- Share how they felt with a partner.
- Tell participants that adults can promote improved behavior by providing children with access to preferred toys, materials, activities, and social partners.

## What If I Can't Determine a Child's Preferences?

- Ask parents and family
- Observe the child's engagement and reactions when playing with various items or children.
- Note objects or people the child is drawn to during free play.



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### ***Speaker Notes:***

- Review the strategies listed on Powerpoint slide to determine a child's preferences.
- Thank the participants for participating and have them complete the evaluation form, if appropriate.
- Distribute the certificate of attendance if appropriate.

# Pre-training Survey

WWBTK #15: Using Choice and Preference to Promote Improved Behavior

☀️ Why is choice making an important strategy for early care providers?

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☀️ How can you implement a choice-making strategy in your classroom?

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☀️ What can you do if you have difficulty determining children's preferences?

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☀️ What are the three most pressing issues you face as an early childhood professional?

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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# Pre-training Survey

WWBTK #15: Using Choice and Preference to Promote Improved Behavior

## Demographic Information

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Describe yourself (check the boxes that best describe you):

Your gender: ☐ Female ☐ Male

Your age: ☐ under 30 ☐ 31 to 40 ☐ 41 to 50  
☐ 51-60 ☐ 61 and above

Your ethnicity: ☐ European American ☐ Asian-Pacific ☐ Hispanic  
☐ African-American ☐ American Indian ☐ Other (specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Check your current teaching certificates:

- ☐ Early Childhood Education
- ☐ Elementary Education
- ☐ Special Education
- ☐ Other (Specify)\_\_\_\_\_

Check the one that best describes your education:

- ☐ High school or GED
- ☐ Some college
- ☐ Associate's degree
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Other (Specify)\_\_\_\_\_


Your teaching experience:

How many year(s) have you taught preschoolers?\_\_\_\_\_



How many year(s) have you taught preschoolers with IEPs?\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for completing this survey.

# Participant Notes



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## WWB Training Kit #15

### Using Choice and Preference to Promote Improved Behavior

#### Participant PowerPoint

## Notes

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### When Choices Are Offered, Children Are...

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## What If I Can't Determine a Child's Preferences?

- Ask parents and family
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## Notes

# Activity 1

## Developing a Hypothesis Statement

WWBTK #15: Using Choice and Preference to Promote Improved Behavior

Directions: Pair with a partner. Read the following scenario.

Think about the following questions:

- What choices might you offer if you were Alex's teacher?
- How might having choices impact Alex?

Share your thoughts

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*Alex is a 4-year-old boy in Mr. Anderson's preschool class who is happiest when he is out on the playground in the sandbox. Although Mr. Anderson has tried to get Alex to follow directions and use toys and materials appropriately during small group activities such as art, Alex does not comply with the classroom rules. He never seems to want to sit down with the rest of the class and participate. He seems uninterested in every art project, and Mr. Anderson has a difficult time keeping Alex's attention. Instead, Alex prefers to wander around the room. If Mr. Anderson does get him to sit still long enough to give him the art materials, Alex usually throws or pushes them off the table. Mr. Anderson has tried allowing Alex to play while the other children complete art projects, but he really wants Alex to participate. Mr. Anderson has also tried sitting behind Alex and helping him use the materials by giving him hand-over-hand guidance. Alex usually fights the whole time and sometimes hits and kicks Mr. Anderson. Time-out has not worked either; because Alex doesn't want to be at the art table, he is happy to go sit by himself. Mr. Anderson is ready to give up. Conversations with Alex's parents reveal that similar behaviors occur at home.*

1. What choices might you offer if you were Alex's teacher?

2. How might having choices impact Alex?

# CSEFEL Training Workshop Evaluation

WWBTK #15: Using Choice and Preference to Promote Improved Behavior

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Speaker(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Your position: \_\_\_\_\_

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☀ Circle the number that best expresses your reaction to each of the following items:

- |  |                       |   |   |   |   |                        |
|--|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|------------------------|
| 1. This topic is important to me.            | (Extremely Important) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Not Important at All) |
| 2. The amount of information covered was     | (Just Right)          | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Inadequate)           |
| 3. The information covered was clear.        | (Very Clear)          | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Vague)                |
| 4. The activities conducted were beneficial. | (Very)                | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Not at All)           |
| 5. The handouts provided were useful.        | (Very)                | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Not at All)           |
| 6. Overall, this presentation was            | (Very Useful)         | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | (Not Useful)           |

☀ Things I liked about this presentation:

☀ Things I would change about this presentation:

☀ Additional information I would like on this topic:

☀ New things I am going to try as a result of this workshop:

☀ Additional comments:

# Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning

## *Certificate of Training*

### **Using Choice and Preference to Promote Improved Behavior**

This is to certify that

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successfully completed the above training

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*Trainer*

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*Trainer*



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*Participant*

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*Date and Location*