



“Choice Sheets” for Young Children Reduce Conflict about Screen Time and Increase Following Rules

Help your young child manage free time choices with a “Choice Sheet,” a page that allows them to choose acceptable activities. It will reduce screen time conflicts and they will also learn “self regulation” skills, including: Planning ahead, Doing something they enjoy right away, or saving it for later, Following rules

Create your child’s Choice Sheet with pictures of things to do during free time. Most are images of non-screen activities. Here are some ways to create the sheet:

- Copy and paste images of your child’s activities from the internet and print out the sheet
- Use specific stickers for each activity to create the sheet
- Draw the sheet using simple images for each activity

Guidelines you can use:

- When your child has free time during the day, invite them to circle the activity they want to do.
- When the activity is done, invite your child to put an X on the activity.
- Decide on total screen time for the day and divide it into parts. Experts recommend no more than 90 minutes per day; you might limit the choice to 3 sessions of 30 minutes or 4 sessions of 20 minutes. Use a timer to indicate when time is up; if desired, use timer for other activities.
- Once an activity is used up, your child must choose another activity. Remind your child that they can save screen time

until later in the day if they choose something else now.



Helpful ways to use your child’s Choice Sheet:

- If you keep a daily calendar, show it to your child. Tell them they are getting big enough to plan their day like you do.
- Create a list of possible activities with your child. Invite them to brainstorm things they like to do such as drawing, Legos, blocks, play kitchen, action figures, dolls, etc.
- Keep the choice sheet in one place where you can easily find it.
 - Use “praise that works” when your child
 - Circles an activity - “You made a good choice”
 - Plays on their own for the planned amount of time - “It’s nice to see you enjoy your choice.”
 - Marks completed activity with an X - “It’s fun to pick out favorite activities.”
 - And especially when they end screen time calmly.
- Tell other people in the family about how grown up your child has become using their Choice Sheet. Describe this activity to others with excitement about your child managing their time.
- From time to time check in with your child and decide if it’s time to change some activities on their Choice Sheet.

