

## CHOICE BOARD GUIDANCE

### Purpose

The purpose of this choice board is to support communication and teach appropriate coping skills. This strategy is to be used when the child is showing signs of escalation.

### Using The Choice Board

*Use procedures 1 or 2 based on your child's language skills.*

#### → 1

#### Preparation

1. Choose a time when the child is very calm (or at baseline) and sit down with them and show them the board.
2. (IF APPROPRIATE) Ask them what they think about what is displayed. For example, '(\_ their name \_), how do you feel about taking a break?'. While we may have a fairly good idea that they find these things soothing, it is important to ensure we are taking their views into account.
3. Explain that the board will be used to help them when they are feeling 'frustrated, sad, when they need help, etc.'. Answer any questions they might have.
  - a. Be mindful that this is to introduce the board to them and get their views on its use. While we can provide them with an example of when we would use it, we want to avoid too many hypothetical scenarios. Ultimately, its purpose will likely become more evident to the child once it's in use.
4. Identify signs of escalation (what does the child look like when they is no longer calm, but hasn't yet gotten to 'crisis?'): *Example: The child's begins speaking louder*
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_

*Agreeing on what the child's behaviours look like at this time will help ensure we are consistently using the strategy at the same time.*

→ 2

*Preparation*

1. Choose a time when the child is very calm (or at baseline) and sit down with them and show them the board.
2. Begin 'pairing' the symbols with what they represent. For example, '\_their name\_', this one means you want a hug'. Point to the symbol, then give them a hug. Prompt them to touch the symbol themselves. When they do it, immediately give them a hug.
3. Do the same for the remaining symbols. *Do this as many times as needed.*
4. Identify signs of escalation (what does the child look like when they are no longer calm, but hasn't yet reached 'crisis?'): *Example: Child begins clenching her fists*
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. \_\_\_\_\_

*Agreeing on what the child's behaviours look like at this time will help ensure we are consistently using the strategy at the same time.*

## Implementation

### First week: Modelling

1. Once escalation signs are observed, locate the choice board
2. Validate their feelings. Example, ‘\_name\_, I can see you’re very \_\_\_\_\_ ...
3. Prompt communication. Example, ... do you know why?’
4. If the child does not verbalise what is bothering them and it is apparent what the concern is at that time, point to what they appear to need on the board and follow with, ‘it looks like you need \_\_\_\_\_’
5. Once you’ve modelled this, provide the selection to them.

#### Example:

*The child is trying to put their shoes on and is struggling. They begin to raise their voice. Approach them with the board and say, ‘\_name\_, I can see you’re frustrated, what is the matter?’ then wait a few seconds. If no response to behaviours continues, then say. ‘I can see you are having trouble with your shoes; it looks like you need help’ Then point to the help symbol and provide the help right away.*

### Second week onwards: independent

1. Once escalation signs are observed, locate the closest choice board
2. Validate their feelings. Example, ‘\_name\_, I can see you’re very \_\_\_\_\_ ...
3. Prompt communication. Example, ... do you know why?’
4. If the child does not verbalise this, show them the board and ask, ‘What do you need?’ allow them time to consider options and select.
5. Be mindful that some days they might display more independence with using the board and other days they may need more support with selecting.

#### Example:

*The child is trying to put their shoes on and is struggling. They begin to raise their voice. Approach them with the board and say, ‘\_name\_, I can see you’re frustrated, what is the matter?’ then wait a few seconds. If no response to behaviours continues, then show them the board and say, ‘What do you need?’ Provide them with what they have selected as soon as possible. Prompt selection if needed.*

*Remember: This is just a guide on how we should say things, speak to your child in the way you normally would while considering simple communication.*