

## Choice-Making for Students with Severe Intellectual Disabilities (2)

**Objective:** To improve choice making skills in students with severe intellectual disabilities.

### Settings and materials:

Settings: Classroom

Materials: Food and leisure items recommended by classroom teacher and parents.

### Content Taught

Choosing preferred items independently, without prompting.

### Teaching Procedures

#### The training consists of five phases:

\*\* During all phases participants are presented with a pair of stimuli and the verbal cue, “(Student name), I have (first item) and (second item). Do you want (first item) or (second item)?” and given four seconds to respond before the stimuli are removed.

1. *Preliminary phase*
  - a) Preference assessment is conducted to determine which items on checklist child likes and dislikes. Items are selected based on the preference checklist which is completed by the child’s parents and teacher.
  - b) Upon completion of this checklist, child is observed to determine if they accept or reject the stimulus.
  - c) To qualify as “*accepted*” the child has to consume food or manipulate item within five seconds, and maintain interest in item for five seconds. “*Interest*” is defined by positive facial affect (smiling), looking at stimulus, or emitting positive vocalizations. “*Rejected*” is defined as throwing aside, spitting out, negative facial affect negative vocalizations, or showing no interest.
  - d) *Preferred stimuli* are those items that are accepted and consumed or manipulated appropriately for at least 80% of presentations (Green et al., 1991; Mason et al., 1989; Pace et al., 1985; Parsons & Reid, 1990; Smith et al., 1995), *neutral stimuli* items are accepted and consumed or manipulated 40-60% of presentations, and *disliked stimuli* are accepted and consumed or manipulated 0-20% of presentations.
2. *Prior to beginning this step, complete baseline phase of evaluation for pre-intervention data.* Choice between preferred stimulus and disliked stimulus with the introduction of the time-delay procedure (four second delay)
  - a. Provide verbal cue and present pair of preferred and disliked stimuli, and wait four seconds for a response from child.

- b. After four seconds, prompt student to choose an item then remove stimuli if child does not respond to it, present the next pair.
- c. If a response occurs, allow child to consume or manipulate the selection, with assistance from teacher if needed.
  - i. If the student makes a choice prior to the prompt it is “independent”.
  - ii. Mastery is determined by a minimum of 8 independent choices for 3 consecutive sessions.
  - iii. Instructional session consists of presenting 10 pairs of stimuli.

## **Evaluation**

### **Baseline evaluation phase**

1. Provide verbal cue and present pair of preferred and disliked stimuli, and wait four seconds for a response from child.
2. After four seconds, remove stimuli if child does not respond to it, present the next pair.
3. If a response occurs, allow child to consume or manipulate the selection, with assistance from teacher if needed.

### **Generalization evaluation phase. Choice between two preferred stimuli, continuing the time-delay procedure**

1. Follow same procedure as previous phase with the exception of the types of stimulus pairs.

### **Lesson Plan Based on:**

Stafford, A. M., Alberto, P. A., Fredrick, L. D., Heflin, F. J., & Heller, K. W. (2002). Preference variability and the instruction of choice making with students with severe intellectual disabilities. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, 37(1)*, 70-88.

