

Be Involved as Your Child Learns to Make Choices

We all want our children to learn how to make responsible choices. We want them to say no to drugs. We want them to do their own work instead of copying someone else's. How can we teach them to make responsible choices?

- Limit the choices your child can make. There's no question that children have to practice making choices. But that doesn't mean they need to make every choice for themselves. Set limits on the things your child can decide.
- Match freedom with responsibility. A child who is old enough to choose between tuna and peanut butter is also old enough to pack her own school lunch.
- Help your child think about consequences. Children don't always connect outcomes with the choices they have made. Ask your child, "How did that work for you?"

The last time your child put off a big school project, she got a poor grade. Help her remember that when the next big task comes along.

Source: Valerie Frankel, "Teaching Your Child to Choose," Parenting, October 2002, The Parenting Group, 530 Fifth Avenue, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10036, 1-800-234-0847.

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