



Tips for Home or School Choices at the Swimming Pool (or in the Bath)



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Providing children with choices is a powerful tool for communication purposes as well as for managing potential problem behaviors. It is not unusual for children who have limited choices to display problem behaviors as a way of trying to tell others what they want. Providing simple, controlled choices can go a long way towards minimizing occurrences of problem behavior.

Given that we are upon the time of year when you might be spending time at the pool with your children, I thought I'd provide a few strategies for providing your children with choices while cooling off at the pool.



One option is to use one of these fun swimming pool boards (available at many dollar stores) as a "choice board."

On the back side of this board, you can add pictures of pool toys from which children can choose. In this

example, the photos of the pool toys were taken with a digital camera, printed on regular paper, and then covered with contact paper. (To make the pictures last longer at the pool, you might want to provide double layers of contact paper.) The covered photos were then attached to the board using adhesive caulking. A great advantage of this type of "choice board" is that it floats!



Another possibility for materials that you can use to make choice boards for outdoor use involves using kitchen cutting boards as shown in this photo.

You can find cutting boards of different weights and colors at many dollar stores and / or discount stores. The handle provides a great way of carrying the "choice board" and the board itself is durable and waterproof for use at the pool. In this photo, the pictures for the choices were



cut out of newspaper ads and covered with layers of contact paper. If your children use line drawing symbols at school, you might ask your children's teachers to print copies of symbols for pool play for your home use.)

A third option for a "floating choice board" involves using meat trays (washed, of course!).



This option works well for those children who need the actual objects from which to choose. The objects can be placed in the tray and the desired one can then be picked. Larger meat trays can also be used for providing a greater number of choices or for providing a greater distance between choices so that there is less visual clutter.

Adapting these Choice Boards for Bath Time

Any of the above ideas can also be adapted for bath time choices. One simple example is in the photo below that shows the use of actual objects for choosing a toy to play with during bath time. You could also provide choices for what to use for washing



(i.e., a bath mitt or a bath pouf)— as shown in the picture above— as well as choices about type of soap, shampoo, etc.

Giving children choices helps to provide them with a sense of control. Choices while swimming (or bathing) are just two examples of times when you can provide children with choices. The examples in this article provide you with ideas for "floating choice boards." Having choices in the pool (or bath) can make the activity more enjoyable for everyone!

