



## FAMILY GUIDE TO EVERYDAY RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

Responsible decision-making is one of the most challenging skillsets you'll promote and also, one of the most important. Consider how often as a parent, you have to make difficult and complex decisions that impact family members. Do you let your young child go to a birthday party when you haven't met the family? Do you allow your child to try out for a school musical when he's getting poor grades or already committed to playing basketball? Do you allow your teen to go to a friend's house when parents are not home to supervise?

In fact, responsible decision-making requires higher order thinking skills, connections that require practice over time connecting an action to a consequence. Those neuropathways will not be fully established until emerging adulthood (mid-twenties). Yet, we need our children to learn how to act responsibly today. Offering our child small, regular, authentic choices and discussing how choices result in a variety of consequences can nourish and build those critical skills. Here are some ways in which you can get started.

Parenting is filled with many personal decisions. Each family has its own unique culture and values. There's no such thing as perfect parenting and there are no right answers! But because it's such a complex and meaningful role, there's much we can learn from one another if we share our ideas and strategies with an open mind and open heart. Sharing our failures and successes can provide invaluable support and help us feel like we are in this together!

### TALK ABOUT IT

How do you make decisions as a family?

What strategies do you use to make complex decisions when it goes well?

What strategies do you use to make complex decisions when it doesn't go well?

What choices do you offer your children?

### TIPS

- **OFFER TWO AUTHENTIC CHOICES.**
  - Example: Would you like to go outside to play or stay indoors to play?
- **PROVIDE THREE OR MORE OPTIONS.**
  - Example: "Would you like to play outside, in the basement, or in your room?"
- **BRAINSTORM CHOICES TOGETHER.**
  - Example: "Where should we play today? We could play in the yard. Where else do you think we could go play?"
- **OFFER OPEN-ENDED CHOICES.**
  - Example: "Where would you like to play today?"



# PTA HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

- **OFFER CHANCES TO MAKE FAMILY DECISIONS COLLABORATIVELY.**
  - Example: You might discuss and come to a decision as a family on issues like how you will serve your community together over the holiday break, how you will spend time on a weekend, or how you might help your grandmother recovering from surgery.

*NOTE: As parents, we have to strike a balance between protecting our kids from harm and preparing them for the realities of life. It is okay to increase or decrease the responsibility for making choices based on how your child is doing.*

## RELATED RESOURCES

Check out these additional tools around responsible decision-making:

- Responsible Decision-Making Challenge: Coaching
- Parent FAQs on Promoting Responsible Decision-Making

