

Choosing Tubes

What do I need?

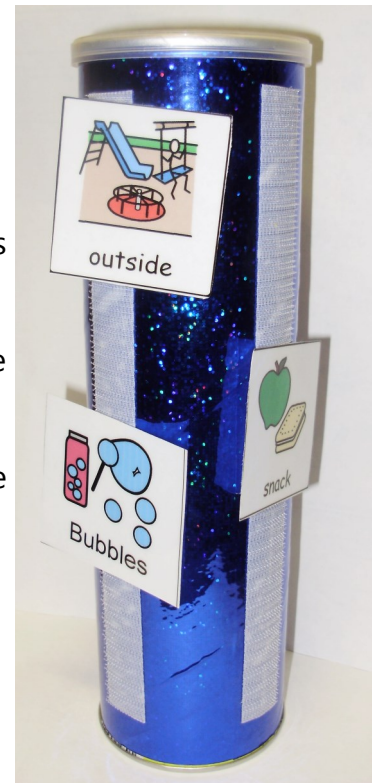
- an empty tube, e.g. 'Pringles' tube covered in plain paper
- Velcro strips stuck down the length of the tube
- a posting slot in the lid of the tube
- a set of laminated picture symbols that represent the activities that are on offer to the child
- The pictures should be stuck with Velcro on the outside of the choosing tube.
- Any symbols for activities that are not available that day can be stored inside the tube.

Who do they help?

- children who find it difficult to focus on a play activity
- children who tend to stick with one activity for the whole session
- children who always choose the same activity
- children who need help to be independent in moving between activities during free play sessions

How does a child use the choosing tube?

- The choosing tube should be kept in a chosen place where the child can access it.
- Before each session, make sure that the symbols of the activities available are stuck on the outside of the choosing tube.
- The child will choose a symbol representing the activity that they would like to do.
- They remove the chosen symbol from the tube and take it with them to the activity.
- Ideally there should be another Velcro strip at the activity (e.g. stuck on the sand tray) for the child to Velcro their symbol to whilst they play.
- You could use a [sand timer](#) to help the child to know when to move on to something different.



- The child then returns to the choosing tube with their symbol, posts it through the slot.
- The child chooses their next activity from the symbols that are left on the outside of the tube.
- This process continues throughout the session.
- If you have more than one child requiring a choosing tube in a group they will need different colour tubes.

How will the child know how to use the choosing tube?

- If the child is not already familiar with the symbols it may take some time for them to begin to understand that the symbols represent the activities so you may need to work on familiarising them with this first.
- It is important that you teach the child how to use the choosing tube. Take the child through each step and show them what to do. It may involve you choosing an activity for them at first.
- As you demonstrate the steps to the child use simple language to describe what they are doing. E.g. "painting finished, choosing tube again"
- Do not expect them to understand it straight away.
- It may take a while for the child to become independent in using the choosing tube.
- Over time you can gradually reduce the amount of prompting you give to the child so they can become more independent.