

POWER UP

Media Safety conversations *for Families*[™]



1 *Power to Choose*

Plus: 5 Tips for
Raising Confident
Kids!

Dear Parent,

Raising children in a digital world is a challenge, but you can do it! More effective than any filter is a positive, open relationship between you and your child. This booklet will help you nurture that relationship through fun but important conversations.

Here is everything you need to **talk, practice, plan** and **play** together. Use whatever meets the needs and ages of your children. Share all these ideas in an organized family meeting or as separate smaller discussions. As you have supportive conversations frequently, your children will feel empowered, secure and know they can come to you about anything.

How to use this conversation guide:



Read through this entire guide in advance.



Make each message your own. Whenever possible include personal experiences, even funny ones. Kids love hearing your stories!

CONVERSATION INCLUDES:

- ***Let's Talk***
- ***Let's Practice***
- ***Let's Plan***
- ***Let's Play***

Turn off your phone. Giving your family undivided attention shows that connecting with them is important to you.

Ask the suggested questions, then simply listen. Resist the urge to jump in and give the “right answers.” Value each response even if you don’t agree. Trust is gained as you appreciate your child’s perspective. The goal is not to convince your child to agree with you, but to connect together in a supportive way.

Use the space provided to make your family plan together. Don’t forget the game! Children learn best through play.

Enjoy raising a confident child one conversation at a time!

Deanna Lambson

Founder, White Ribbon Week

Nichole Conrad, LCSW

I Have the Power to Choose

Why? Making positive media choices begins with this important realization, “I can choose.”

SUGGESTED FAMILY READ-ALONG

Learn with Noah as he discovers all the choices he can make with his new phone!



Noah's New Phone,
EDUCATEEMPOWERKIDS.ORG

Imagine the limitless choices available to children through technology! It is estimated that kids are offered over 1000 choices daily through the Internet. Because of the far-reaching scope of the Internet, the consequences of those choices are magnified. It's clear to see why children need skills to choose wisely and safely.

This family conversation helps kids develop the skill of decision-making regarding media and technology. Children will practice weighing options, considering consequences and evaluating their choices.



“No matter what the situation,
remind yourself, “I have a choice.””
Deepak Chopra

The Conversation

1 LET'S TALK

When we are born we can't make any choices on our own, everything is decided for us. As we grow, we learn and practice making our own decisions.

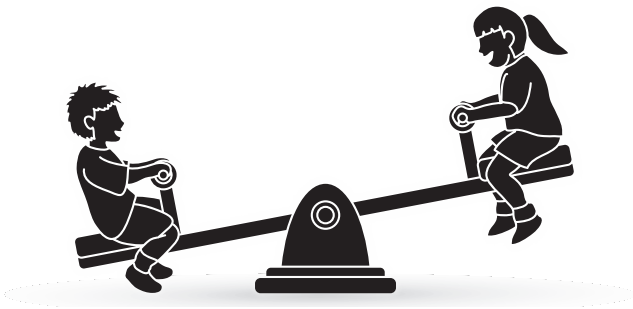
Can you guess how many choices you make each day? Is it 10, 100, or 1,000? We actually make around 30,000! Some choices are simple, like 'which shirt should I wear today?' Other choices are tricky, like 'should I download this app?'

The most important thing to know about the many decisions you make is you have the power to choose! The greatest power comes from making choices which help you feel happy, healthy and safe.

Q What choices did you make when you woke up today?

- What choices did you make at school?
- What choices did you make about how to spend your time?
- What choices did you make about using screens and devices?

(Share a few of the many decisions you as a parent make in your day.)



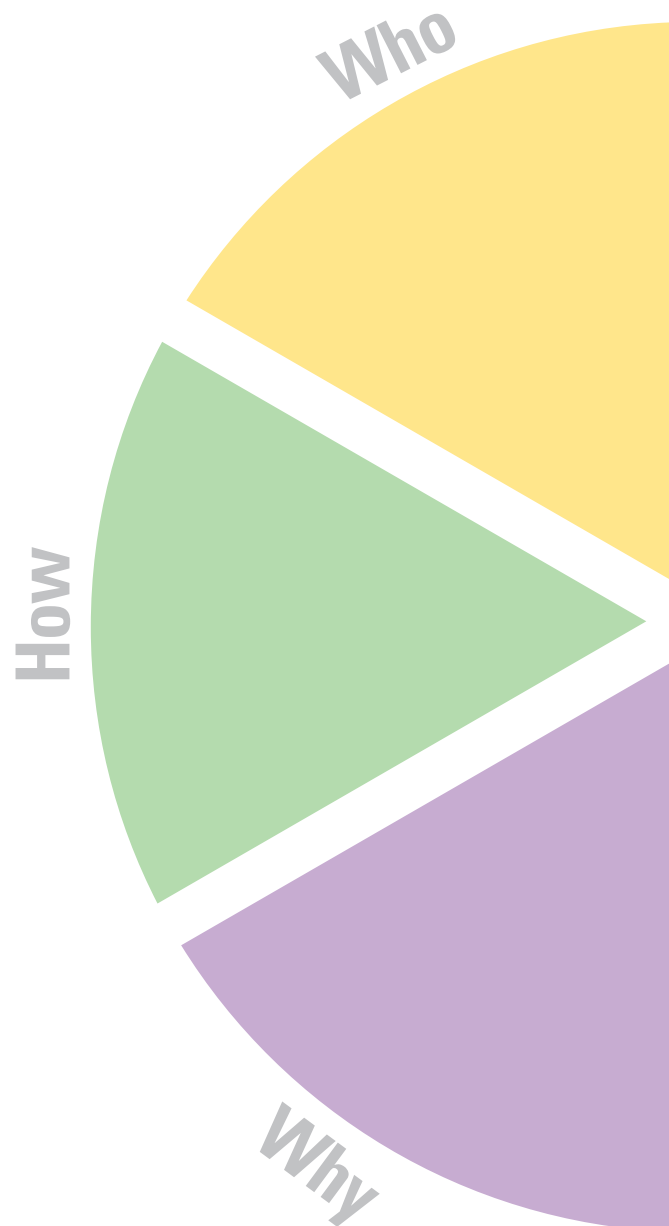
Object Lesson

Have you seen a teeter-totter (or seesaw) on the playground? As one person pushes up, the other goes down. (Invite children to mimic the motions of a teeter totter.) When you make a choice, like pushing up on a teeter-totter, something always happens on the other side.

Every choice you make has a consequence, meaning something happens as a result of your choice--like the teeter-totter. Some consequences are positive, like getting a good grade after studying for a test; however, others are negative like losing privileges for breaking a rule.

Q What are the consequences of these choices?

- I choose to stay up really late.
- I choose to say something unkind about a friend at school.
- I choose to turn off the TV when I am asked.
- I choose to call 911 on mom's phone.
- I choose to tell someone about a scary video I saw online.



2

LET'S PRACTICE

ROLE PLAY "What if's" (Use the following or make up your own age appropriate and relevant scenarios. Kids can create "what-if's" as well!)

Bring up decisions you have struggled with. Let them help you problem solve.

Early Elementary:

What if something scary comes on while you're watching TV?

- What are your options?
- What are the possible consequences of each?
- What choice will I make?
- Is it the right choice for me?

Later Elementary:

What if you've been asked to do your homework, but you're so close to leveling up on your game?

- What are your options?
- What are the possible consequences of each?
- What choice will I make?
- Is it the right choice for me?

Teenager:

What if friends at school are sharing an embarrassing photo of another student?

- What are your options?
- What are the possible consequences of each?
- What choice will I make?
- Is it the right choice for me?

3

LET'S PLAN

Family Media Choices

Because we all use technology in the home, it's important to get input from everyone on the rules we want to follow. Let's brainstorm how we can be smart and safe using technology. What are your ideas?

(This conversation is meant to be a welcoming balance of childrens' ideas and parental direction. Write agreed upon choices in each piece of the "pie".)

- ▶ **Who?** Who do we text on our phones or play games with online?
- ▶ **What?** What kind of media does our family use? What kind of apps are good for us?
- ▶ **When?** When do we use phones, games or other devices? Are there times we put them away?
- ▶ **Where?** Where do we use our devices? Where are we not allowed to have devices?
- ▶ **Why?** What are the things we want to use media for?
- ▶ **How?** How long do we spend with screens such as TV's, video games, phones or computers?

ACCIDENTS HAPPEN

What can we do if we make a mistake?

(Consider sharing a time you made a poor choice using technology and what you learned.)

How does our family handle mistakes?

What

When

Where

4 LET'S PLAY

This activity will help your kids have fun making decisions and recognize there are always opportunities to choose. You will find there is a range of questions, from lighthearted and silly to real life insights.

Read the statement and allow each person to choose which scenario they “would rather.” Add questions or ask follow-up questions to give children an opportunity to explain their response.



Want to make it more interactive for younger children?

Pick two spots in the room, such as the touching the front door or sitting on the sofa. Direct your family to run sit on the sofa if they pick choice number one and to touch the front door for choice number two.



Would you rather **be covered in fur** or **covered in scales**?

Would you rather **always have to skip everywhere** or **run everywhere**?

Would you rather **text someone** or **talk to them in person**?

Would you rather **do homework online** or **on paper**?

Would you rather **eat tacos** or **pizza for a whole week**?

Would you rather **be a police officer** or **firefighter**?

Would you rather **play inside all day** or **outside all day**?

Would you rather **seek a new adventure** or **go somewhere you've visited many times**?

Would you rather **do an activity with the whole family** or **just one person**?

Would you rather **give up the TV** or **the computer for a year**?

Would you rather **you never had a cell phone** or **your parents never had a cell phone**?

Would you rather **have one great friend** or **a group of good friends**?

Would you rather **be the funniest person in the room** or **the smartest**?

Would you rather **be able to speak any language** or **speak to animals**?

Would you rather **read a book** or **watch a movie made from the book**?

Would you rather **step on a thorn** or **be teased at school**?

Would you rather **play a video game** or **a game of volleyball with friends**?

5 Tips for Parents

Raising confident kids

1 LET NATURAL CONSEQUENCES BE THE TEACHER

When there are no imminent dangers, look for ways you can allow choice and natural consequences to teach your child without any words being said. For example, rather than demanding your child wear a coat outside to play, let them experience the consequence of their choice.

2 ANSWER A PROBLEM WITH A QUESTION

When your child comes to you with a problem, respond with a question rather than a statement. For example, “What are some of your options?” or “What feels like the right thing to do?” You can help them practice problem solving and find confidence in contributing to the solution.

3 CREATE INDEPENDENCE

A wise parent once instructed, “Work your way out of a job.” Creating independence starts at an early age. With toddlers, allow choice within small limits, i.e. “blue cup or red cup?” As they grow, so should their opportunity to participate in the decision making process.

4 RECEIVE FAILURE WITH LOVE

If a child has made a mistake here are some helpful responses, “Thank you for sharing this with me, I know it can be hard to make mistakes.” “I know you feel good when you are able to succeed. How can I support you in turning things around?”

5 SHARE YOUR LIFE EXPERIENCES

While it may be hard for kids to picture you as a child or teenager, share your life experiences at their ages. Discuss choices you made and what you learned, including times when you made mistakes. These real-life examples help them learn about the power of choices and know they aren’t alone in making mistakes along the way.



POWER UP for families is available independently for home use or, in connection with White Ribbon Week school programs at www.whiteribbonweek.org

Thank you for sharing
“Power to Choose”
with your family.

Studies show that children who have open conversations with their parents about media are more resilient to online influences.

Please share your feedback at:
info@whiteribbonweek.org

For more Power UP for families conversations, visit www.whiteribbonweek.org.

