

Health Skill:

Decision-Making



Background Information

The health skill, *Decision-Making*, focuses on the fact that people make decisions everyday. These decisions can be everyday decisions, impulsive decisions, quick decisions, or thoughtful decisions. Identifying the level of importance for each decision allows for an intentional process to be utilized when needed. Taking the time to make thoughtful decisions, especially regarding one's health, helps maintain positive health behaviors and change unhealthy behaviors. It is important for students to understand that the use of this skill allows them to sort through problems, brainstorm options, analyze the outcomes, follow-through, and reflect on the choices they make. When applied to health, the steps in this health skill model gives students the ability to make decisions individually, or collaboratively, to improve their quality of life. The health skill also allows students to make decisions outside of high-risk and high-stake contexts, increasing the likelihood of making healthy choices when facing potentially unhealthy situations. Mastery of *Decision-Making* empowers students to work through difficult situations by keeping the impact of the decision on their health in mind. Mastering *Decision-Making* prepares students for the other health skills, such as *Goal-Setting*, *Self-Management*, and *Advocacy for Self & Others*.

Notes on Grade Level Progression

Activities, vocabulary, and language throughout the grade levels are vertically aligned and build upon one another.

If students require scaffolding, refer to previous grade levels for additional ideas for activities and instruction that address gaps in student skills. For enrichment activities, look at higher grade levels in order to provide additional practice opportunities or for ideas on how to deepen understanding.

PreK-2

- Identifying decisions related to health
- Knowing when to get help
- Choosing between two options
- Learning from decisions

3-5

- Identifying options
- Predicting outcomes
- Reflecting on decisions

6-8

- Defining different types of decisions (everyday, impulsive, thoughtful)
- Analyzing collaborative and individual decisions
- Predicting and evaluating outcomes
- Using strategies to help follow-through on decisions
- Identifying potential obstacles to health decision-making

9-12

- Using more complex prioritization strategies (pro/con lists, values rating)
- Using collaborative decision-making strategies

NATIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION STANDARD (NHES) 5:

Students will demonstrate the ability to use *decision-making* skills to enhance health.

National Health Education Standard Rationale: Decision-making skills are needed to identify, implement, and sustain health-enhancing behaviors. This standard includes the essential steps that are needed to make healthy decisions as prescribed in the performance indicators. When applied to health issues, the decision-making process enables individuals to collaborate with others to improve their quality of life.



PreK-2 Framework

In grades PreK-2, students begin *Decision-Making* by exploring the moments in their life when decisions must be made. To support students in grades PreK-2, have students first think about decisions in general and then transition to identifying decisions related to their health. Students should also learn which decisions require help and which decisions can be made on their own. Preparing students for later grades, Steps 3 and 4 go beyond the Performance Indicators. In Step 3, students practice *Decision-Making* by choosing between two options, and in Step 4, students reflect on the importance of learning from their decisions. Many of the activities in the teaching progression are written for students who have not started reading and writing. If students are reading and writing, adapt or add to activities to reinforce literacy skills. For some activities, guidance is provided for how literacy can be included.

Mastery of *Decision-Making* for grades PreK-2 means students are able to identify health-related decisions, identify help when needed, and make a health-related decision.

The Steps:

Step 1: Identify Decisions in My Life



Step Overview: The main goal of this step is to develop awareness for when decisions need to be made. Understanding when decisions are necessary helps an individual recognize when they should use a decision-making process. Students learn to identify when a decision is needed and whether the decision relates to their health.

Sub Skill(s):

- Identify decisions
- Identify decisions about being healthy

Step 2: Think About Help



Step Overview: Sometimes decisions can be made individually, and others require the input and help from others. Once someone has developed the ability to recognize when a decision needs to be made, they need to determine if help is needed. Recognizing when help is needed allows for the healthiest decisions to be made. In this step, students think through a decision they feel they can make on their own and a decision that requires help and advice. This step does not go into how to identify trusted adults or how to ask for help, rather it focuses on determining if help needed is when making decisions. For guidance on how to identify trusted adults, see *Access Valid & Reliable Resources*. For guidance on how to ask for help, see *Interpersonal Communication, Stage 1: Communication Techniques and Advocacy for Self & Others, Stage 1: Advocacy for Self*.

Sub Skill(s):

- Identify when help is needed
- Ask trusted adults for help



Step 3: Make a Decision

Step Overview: After identifying when decisions need to be made and the help that is needed, a person makes their decision. This step provides students with guiding questions they should consider when deciding between two different choices.

Sub Skill(s):

- Ask questions about options
- Pick between two things

Step 4: Look Back & Learn



Step Overview: Learning to reflect on actions takes practice and intention. After making a decision, it is important to take time to reflect on the results of that decision and connect to future decisions. Building time for students to reflect is crucial in developing metacognition, which supports other health skills, such as *Goal-Setting*, *Self-Management*, and *Advocacy for Self & Others*. While decisions are rarely all good or bad, the questions included in this step refer to decisions as good or bad in order to be developmentally appropriate. As students mature throughout the grade band, teachers should experiment with more nuanced ways of describing types of decisions. See *Decision-Making* for grades 3-5 to get ideas on different ways to describe decisions.

Sub Skill(s):

- Did the decision make you feel good or bad?
- What might happen next after that decision?
- How did asking for help make your decision healthier?
- Would you make that decision again? Why or why not?
- What do you want to remember next time you have to make the same decision?



Teaching Tips

- Teach *Decision-Making* outside of health content. For example, provide opportunities throughout the day to make decisions, such as where to sit, what to have for a snack, or which toys to play with.
- Continue to support students in identifying trusted adults in their life that can support healthy decision-making. Refer to *Access Valid & Reliable Resources, Stage 1: Communication Techniques of Interpersonal Communication*, and *Stage 1: Advocacy for Self of Advocacy for Self & Others* for additional activities related to trusted adults.
- Use manipulatives to make *Decision-Making* tangible. For example, let students hold two different snacks in their hands and choose which one to eat.

See *Teaching Progression* for suggested learning activities.