

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.



Teaching Progression:



Step 1: Identify Decisions in My Life

SUB SKILL(S):

- Identify decisions
- Identify decisions about being healthy

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

Why are decisions important to my health?
When does a decision need to be made?

NHES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

(5.2.1) Identify situations when a health-related decision is needed.

VALUABLE VOCABULARY:

*decide,
decision,
pick,
choose,
healthy*

Step 1: Identify Decisions in My Life | Sub Skill: Identify Decisions

Language of Health Literacy:

The person in the picture is trying to decide _____.

The picture shows a decision about _____.

I decide to _____.



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Share a story about a decision regarding your health that you recently made. Provide details in your story that include the following: the context for the decision, things you consider when making the decision, some factors that made the choice difficult, whether this was a good or bad choice for your health, and how you felt after making your choice.

After sharing your story, ask students to repeat back what they heard. Gather as many details as possible. Chart

the details of your story that align with the Decision-Making steps that follow (healthy choice, helper, good/bad choice). Explain to students that in order to make the decision you just shared, you had to keep in mind how the choice would help or not help you be healthy.

See Next Page For Teaching Notes.



Teaching Progression: Step 1 | Identify Decisions in My Life (Cont.)

TEACHING NOTES:

- Some options for stories regarding healthy choices include: going to sleep early in order to rest fully; eating a healthy breakfast with specific foods or going for a long walk as exercise.
- The details you provide in your story should align with the parts of decision-making students will learn.
- Use images on the chart to aid in understanding for students who are not reading and writing.
- Use the chart throughout the health skill activities as a reminder to students as they share their stories, describe who/what helped them make their choice, and determine whether their choice was good or bad for their health.



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

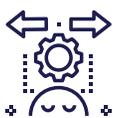
Define the word *decide* for students. To *decide* means *to pick or choose something*. Sometimes, it is choosing between objects or actions. Give students pictures of someone making decisions. Have students identify what decision is being made. Then, ask students to identify if the picture shows a decision related to health.

TEACHING NOTES:

- Pictures should include examples of specific health-related decisions and examples of decisions that are not health-related. For example, pictures could show someone picking between two different food options, one healthy and one unhealthy. In another picture, a person could be deciding between two different toys.
- Model and provide the *Language of Health Literacy* to support student responses and understanding.

Step 1: Identify Decisions in My Life

Sub Skill: Identify Decisions About Being Healthy



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Facilitate a whole-class discussion about the different situations that require students to make decisions. Separate these decisions into home and school. Chart student responses. After a list is generated, read each decision to the class. If a student thinks the decision is related to their health, have them jump up and down. If a student thinks the decision is not related to their health, have them squat low to the ground. Ask students to explain their answers.

Language of Health Literacy:

_____ (decision) is about health.

_____ (decision) is not about health.

See Next Page For Teaching Notes.



Teaching Progression: Step 1 | Identify Decisions in My Life (Cont.)

TEACHING NOTES:

- Examples of Decisions:
 - School example: students may decide with whom to play.
 - Home Example: students may need to decide when to go outside to play.
- Use images on chart to aid in understanding for students who are not reading and writing.
- Use other movements or make modifications to activity to meet the needs of your students and classroom.



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Place students in pairs or small groups. Ask students to share with their partner/group a story about a healthy choice they made. Give each student an opportunity to share at least one story with their partner/group. Ask students to share with the class some of the healthy choices they heard from their partner/group.

TEACHING NOTES:

- Literacy Enrichment: Students write their story about a time they made a healthy choice before sharing with a partner or group.



Teaching Progression:



Step 2: Think About Help

SUB SKILL(S):

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

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

Why do I need help making some decisions? What kinds of decisions do I need help? Who do I ask for help when making a decision?

NHES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

(5.2.2) Differentiate between situations when a health-related decision can be made individually or when assistance is needed.

VALUABLE VOCABULARY:

decision,
trusted adult,
help, safe

Step 2: Think About Help | Sub Skill: Identify When Help Is Needed



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Explain to students that sometimes making a decision requires getting help. State who helps you make healthy choices in your life. Explain how these people help you make decisions in your daily life. Provide students with questions they can ask themselves if they are trying to figure out if they need help. Model answering the following questions:

- Am I safe?
- Am I allowed to do this on my own?
- Would I feel angry, scared, or sad doing this on my own?

Language of Health Literacy:

I need help when I decide

TEACHING NOTES:

- Make sure your examples are relevant for your students
- Add questions as needed to meet the needs of your students.



Teaching Progression: Step 2 | Think About Help (Cont.)



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Read different scenarios to students about someone their age making a decision. If students think the person needs help with decisions, have them wave their arms. Ask students to explain their answers.

TEACHING NOTES:

- Make sure scenarios are relevant and responsive to the students in your class.
- Use other movements or make modifications to activity to meet the needs of your students and classroom.

Step 2: Think About Help | Sub Skill: Ask Trusted Adults For Help



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1 :

Share images (e.g. photographs, cartoons, illustrations) that show a scene where someone is helping another person make a healthy choice. As students are learning to identify the helper, name the helper for them and describe how they are helping. Remind students of previous conversations and discussions that may relate and help them to understand the role of a helper better.

Language of Health Literacy:

_____ helps me to decide to
_____.



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2 :

Ask students to share with a partner the people and things that help them make healthy decisions. Have students then share aloud with the class some of the helpers for healthy choices they heard from their partner. Prompt students to draw images of those who are helpers in their life helping them make a decision.

TEACHING NOTES:

- The images, paired with a brief description of the helper, can be used as cards that students can access regularly throughout and beyond the health skill activities.



See *Access Valid & Reliable Resources* to support students in identifying trusted adults in their life.



See *Interpersonal Communication* for speaking and listening strategies to support students asking for help.



See *Stage 1: Advocacy for Self of Advocacy for Self & Others* to support students in asking for help clearly.



Teaching Progression: Step 2 | Think About Help (Cont.)



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 3:

Post images of different helpers around the room. Read a story or show a video that shows many decisions being made. When students think the person in the story needs help, have them stand next to one of the images. Ask students why they thought the person needed help, and why they chose the person they did. If students have different answers, explain that people have different comfort levels for finding help and that help can come from many different people.

TEACHING NOTES:

- Images can be chosen by you or student-created. Make sure images are responsive to and reflective of the students in your class.



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 4:

Prompt students to recall the decisions that they have to make at home and school. Instruct students to draw the different decisions they make. Then, ask students to identify which decisions they need to ask for help in order to make the most health-enhancing decision possible by circling the image in red. Finally, ask students to identify the decisions they do not need help with by circling the image in green.

TEACHING NOTES:

- Create and label your own images to serve as an example for students.
- Model and provide the *Language of Health Literacy* to help with student responses.



Teaching Progression:



Step 3: Make a Decision

SUB SKILL(S):

- Ask questions about options
- Pick between two things

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

How do I make healthy decisions?

NHES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- (5.2.1) Identify situations when a health-related decision is needed.
(5.2.2) Differentiate between situations when a health-related decision can be made individually or when assistance is needed.

VALUABLE VOCABULARY:

decision,
healthy,
unhealthy,
safe, allowed

Step 3: Make a Decision | Sub Skill: Ask Questions About Options



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Explain to students that once they have identified when they need to make a decision and have identified people who can help them, they then make the decision. Remind students that in order to make a healthy decision they must be thoughtful.

Model asking and answering the following questions to help decide between two choices:

- Which choice follows the rules?
- Which choice is healthier?
- Which choice is safer?

Language of Health Literacy:

_____ follows the rules.

_____ is healthier.

_____ is safer.

TEACHING NOTES:

- Add questions as needed to meet the needs of your students.



Teaching Progression: Step 2 | Make a Decision (Cont.)



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 2:

Share a decision you need to make in your life. For example, tell students you are trying to decide whether or not you should go for a walk after school. Model for students thinking through who you went to for help and the help they provided. Then, using the questions above, share with students the thought process you went through to make the decision. Ask students to share what they think about your decision by asking the following questions:

- Was the decision healthy?
- Was help used?
- What could happen next because of the decision?

Step 3: Make a Decision | Sub Skill: Pick Between Two Things



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Place students in pairs or small groups. Provide students with two different objects. Have students go through the questions provided above to help make decisions, identifying the choice and identifying who they would go to for help. Then, have students decide between the two objects, explaining why they chose the object they did.

Language of Health Literacy:

I pick _____ . I picked this because _____ .

I decided to _____ .

I chose _____ .

TEACHING NOTES:

- The objects can be less specific to health at first and then gradually become more connected to health. For example, provide students with two different colored markers and then provide students with two different beverage options.
- As students progress, transition to using pictures or scenarios, as ability allows.
- Depending on student ability, provide more options or additional questions to deepen student



Teaching Progression:



Step 4: Look Back & Learn

REFLECTION QUESTION(S):

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

VALUABLE VOCABULARY:

*outcome,
reflect*

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

How do I learn from my decisions? How do I know when I have made a healthy decision?

NHES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

(5.2.1) Identify situations when a health-related decision is needed.

(5.2.2) Differentiate between situations when a health-related decision can be made individually or when assistance is needed.



SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITY 1:

Ask students questions that will help them understand the importance of looking back on their progress in working toward a goal. For example ask the following questions:

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

Ask students to share their reflections aloud about different decisions related to health. Celebrate students for naming the specific reasons they chose certain options. Remind students that reflecting, or looking back, at their decision and how they made it, will help them make healthy decisions in the future.

TEACHING NOTES:

- Provide many opportunities for students to answer these questions.
- Allow students to reflect in a variety of modes, including: through drawing, writing, partner discussion, whole-class discussion, and one-on-one conferencing.
- Model this reflection process for a decision you have made.



Assessing Mastery of Decision-Making Grades PreK-2

Students in grades PreK-2 will have mastered *Decision-Making* by demonstrating their ability to showcase the performance indicators identified in Standard 5. Use the student friendly language below to support rubric creation and feedback to students.

Standard 5: Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health.

5.2.1 Identify situations when a health-related decision is needed.

- I can identify decisions I make.
- I can identify decisions that are about being healthy.

5.2.2 Differentiate between situations when a health-related decision can be made individually or when assistance is needed.

- I can identify helpers for when I make decisions.
- I can identify when I need help making a decision.

ASSESSMENT TOOL #1 (5.2.1)

Have students create a comic strip of their day, starting when they wake up. Encourage students to be as detailed as possible, including details such as eating breakfast, getting dressed, brushing their teeth, going to school, etc. Once the comic strip of their day is complete, ask students to identify the parts in their day when they are making decisions. Then, ask students which decisions related to their health. Model and provide the *Language of Health Literacy* below to support student answers.

Language of Health Literacy:

_____ is about my health.
_____ helps me be healthy.
I decide to _____.

ASSESSMENT TOOL #2 (5.2.1)

Show a short video in which a choice regarding health has been made. The video can showcase a healthy or unhealthy decision. At the conclusion of the video, ask students to give a thumbs up for a healthy decision and thumbs down for an unhealthy decision. Students can then be grouped by their analysis or stay as one larger group. Prompt students to verbalize their reason for giving a thumbs up or down and ask them to share their noticings from the video that influenced their decision. Students are being informally assessed on their ability to verbalize why the choice is healthy or healthy. A formal assessment can be done through the thumbs up/down analysis if students first close their eyes or circle their decision on paper prior to the discussion.

Literacy Extension: After viewing the short video, ask students to write their analysis of the unhealthy or unhealthy decision. Prompt students to describe their reasoning using details from the video.



ASSESSMENT TOOL #3 (5.2.1, 5.2.2)

Provide students a series of photos, images, illustrations, videos, or readings and ask them to identify the healthy decision being made. Prompt students to identify who in the scene/story is helping and how they are helping the situation. Students are assessed on their ability to identify the health-related decision and their ability to identify helpers within a situation.

Literacy Extension: Students write sentences that state their understanding of who the helper is and how they have helped. Students may also draw images to describe these sentences and demonstrate understanding.

ASSESSMENT TOOL #4 (5.2.1, 5.2.2)

Ask students to share a time they made a healthy choice. Remind students to give details about who helped them make this choice and how they knew it was a healthy choice. Students are assessed on their ability to name and describe a healthy choice they made, who helped them with this choice, and share their understanding of what makes their choice healthy.

Literacy Extension: Ask students to write a detailed account of their own healthy choice, including all information from the health skill. Students may also be asked to write a fictional story of an individual making a good or bad choice regarding their health. Their story must include all health skill details.



Content Area Connections

Build content understanding through connections with other courses. Share suggestions with teachers to develop plans for content overlap and student language connections.

In order to support students developing *Decision-Making* skills, teachers across content areas can provide choice throughout their instruction. As students work through these options, teachers can prompt students to think about the questions in the *Teaching Progression* and below. Make sure the providing of choice is authentic. For example, students can decide how they want to complete a task, which game to play during free-time, or which snack to have.

Utilize content structures and topics in classrooms to reinforce student understanding and to support ongoing student development. The *Decision-Making* steps can be used across content areas when students are struggling with individual decisions. Remind students to consider who may influence them when they are making choices and how understanding these influences can support them in their development.

Reinforce the understanding that thoughtful decision-making is applicable across content areas. Add specific content information in place of the italicized words as necessary. These questions are meant to be used when students are making decisions regarding content, choosing partners or group members, or when reflecting on choices that have already been made. These questions can be a guide for independent reflection when students are challenged to understand the choices that led to a particular incident, and how others may have been able to help them on their path towards that choice.

- What was happening when *this* decision needed to be made?
- Who did you go to for help with *this* decision?
- How was *this* decision healthy or unhealthy?
- How was *this* decision safe or unsafe?

VOCABULARY REINFORCEMENT:

Utilize the vocabulary words below to reinforce student understanding and to showcase the ability to use words across content areas. For example, an entire grade-level team can decide to teach these words within the specific contexts of their classes to deepen understanding of vocabulary and language use.

decision, pick, choose, reflect, outcome

Resource Bank

RMC Health

- [Health Education Skills Model](#)

National Health Education Standards

- [Standards & Performance Indicators](#)