



Grade 3-5 Decision Making

Background Information:

Students make decisions everyday, however, many of the decisions they see and experience may not have been carefully considered. It is important for students to understand that the use of this skill will allow them to sort through problems, brainstorm options, analyze the positive and negative outcomes, and then implement and reflect on the choices they make. When applied to health issues, this process gives students the ability to make decisions individually, or collaboratively, to improve their quality of life.

The decision making model for grades 3-5 involves five basic steps. Students identify a decision to be made, brainstorm options, identify if they need help making the decision, make the decision, and describe the outcome of the decision. It is a good idea to have these steps posted in the room or available as a handout. The model and an example should be shared with students during the teaching of the skill. Decision-making is a behavior, and like any other behavior, it can become a habit. If children get into the habit of making quick and impulsive decisions, they are more likely to make those types of decisions for the rest of their lives. If, on the other hand, children are taught to think out their decisions carefully and deliberately, they might develop positive habits that stay with them forever.

The Model



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The Steps

Skill Steps	Teaching progression	Grades 3-5 Decision Making Example:
Step 1: Identify the Situation That Needs a Decision	Students identify a list of situations where a decision needs to be made. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that decisions are made based on a variety of factors, experience, knowledge, and emotions. • Some decisions need to be made prior to the situation. For example, the decision to not use tobacco needs to be made before you are offered to use it. • Important decisions should be made in a thoughtful way. 	A couple of my friends don't want to include Jenny in our recess game. I am friends with Jenny, but also want to play the game with my other friends. What should I do? I think this is a situation that I need to make a decision about before recess.
Step 2: Brainstorm Options and Predict and List Positive and Negative Outcome	Students make a list of all of the possible options they would consider for a situation. The use of a chart is beneficial in listing all of the positive and negative outcomes of each option. The following questions may help guide students thinking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the option healthy or unhealthy? • How does this option affect me? • How does this option affect others? 	My options are to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I could ask my friends if Jenny could play. Outcomes, positive, I get to play with all of my friends, Jenny doesn't feel left out, negative, my friends might get mad at me, my friends might day no. 2. I could play with Jenny by myself. Outcomes: positive, I get to play with Jenny, Jenny isn't left alone, negative, I don't get to play the game, my friends might get mad at me.
Step 3: Analyze the Possibility of Needing Assistance	After identifying options and outcomes, students distinguish between the decisions they can make by themselves, and the decisions with which they need help. <p>Consider the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you having trouble coming up with healthy options? • Is your safety or someone else's safety at risk? • Are you feeling uncomfortable with your options? <p>Based on the answer to these questions, do I need to ask a trusted adult or refer to another resource for help?</p>	I feel safe in this situation, and comfortable with the healthy options that I have. I can make this decision on my own.
Step 4: Make a Decision and Follow Through	Students are now ready to make a decision based on their analysis of the positive and negative outcomes.	I will choose the option that is the healthiest for me, and follow through with the decision to find other friends that we can both play with.
Step 5: Describe the Outcome of the Decision	Students will describe the outcome of their decision and determine if the outcome was positive or negative for others and myself.	I told my teacher what I did and what happened. The outcome was positive because Jenny and I both had fun at recess.

Sample Student Handout



Decision-Making Worksheet

Directions: Read the decision-making situation and complete the decision-making steps below.



Step 1 - Identify the Situation:



Step 2 - Brainstorm Options and Predict and List Positive and Negative Outcomes:

Option	Positive Outcome	Negative Outcome



Step 3 - Analyze the Possibility of Needing Assistance:

Answer the following questions:

1. Are you having trouble coming up with healthy options?	Yes	No
2. Is your safety or someone else's safety at risk?	Yes	No
3. Are you feeling uncomfortable with your options?	Yes	No

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, seek the help of a trusted adult or resource. Who is a trusted adult for this decision?

Teaching Tips:

- Vocabulary, decision, option, outcome, results, positive, negative, analyze, consequences
- Content/knowledge needs to be combined with the decision making model.
- Posting the steps in the room will help students remember the steps
- Realize as a teacher where the students are developmentally. Impulsive decisions are normal at this age.
- Students need many opportunities to practice thoughtful decision making, with the understanding that there are consequences for their actions. Although students may not be able to identify consequences on their own at this point, it is still important to make them aware that there are consequences for themselves and others.
- Provide opportunities to practice real-life problem solving through role-play situations.
- The more practice children have with decision-making, the more likely it is that when faced with a real decision, they will fall back on the behavior they have learned.
- Reading - Put yourselves in the "shoes" of a character in the book you're reading. Use the decision-making steps and make a decision for the character. Would you make the same decisions for yourself as the character did?
- Writing - Use the decision-making steps to identify a cause and effect relationship that occurred in a reading selection.
- Social Studies - As a pioneer in the 1820's use the decision-making steps to decide where your family will settle.
- A partnership between schools and parents can provide the type of environment that will nurture children and help them learn appropriate decision-making

What Does Mastery of Accessing Information Look Like:

3-5 grade students will have mastered the skill of decision making if they can identify, implement, and sustain health-enhancing behaviors. They will first, identify the situation that needs a decision. Then they will brainstorm healthy options, list the positive and negative outcomes of each option, and analyze the possibility of needing assistance. Finally, students will make a healthy decision and describe it.

Teaching/Student Resources

The Colorado Education Initiative

<http://www.coloradoedinitiative.org/resources/chpe/>

RMC Health

<http://www.rmc.org/>

Colorado Department of Education

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cohealthpe/statestandards>



Decision-Making Worksheet

Directions: Read the decision-making situation and complete the decision-making steps below.



Step 1 - Identify the Situation:



Step 2 - Brainstorm Options and Predict and List Positive and Negative Outcomes:

Option	Positive Outcome	Negative Outcome



Step 3 - Analyze the Possibility of Needing Assistance:

Answer the following questions:

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Are you having trouble coming up with healthy options? | Yes | No |
| 2. Is your safety or someone else's safety at risk? | Yes | No |
| 3. Are you feeling uncomfortable with your options? | Yes | No |

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, seek the help of a trusted adult or resource. Who is a trusted adult for this decision?



Step 4 - Make a Decision and Follow Through

Make the decision that is best for you and record it below.



Step 5 - Describe the Outcome of the Decision

After you have followed through with the option you chose, describe the outcomes below.
