



Raising good decision makers

The decisions that your children make as they approach adulthood may dictate the people they become and the life paths they choose.

Good decision-making is a complex process that takes years to master and needs to start when children are young. Children are notorious for making snap judgements and acting on them without thinking. So the first step is to teach them to stop before they leap. With a few seconds of hesitation and some practice, your children can prevent a lot of bad decisions from being made.

Children can become good at making bad decisions if they are never held accountable for making poor decisions. Bailing them out of trouble caused by bad decisions doesn't help children. It tells them that they aren't responsible for their decisions and they can continue to do silly things without fear of consequence.

The long-term personal, social and professional implications of children growing up as poor decision makers are profound and negative.

Working out how to make good choices in life is a vital skill to teach children of all ages.

You can coach your children to make smart choices and be good decision makers by guiding them through the process using this series of questions.

- Why do you want to do this?
- What are all your options?
- What facts do you know that will help you consider your options?
- What are the consequences of these options?
- Is this behaviour safe?
- How will your decision affect your family, friends or others?
- Is this behaviour fair to others?
- Is this decision smart and in your long-term best interests?



Once your child has made their decision, let them try it out unless it is harmful to themselves or others. Experiencing the consequences of their choices will help your child in their future decision-making.

Regardless of how your child's decision turns out, help them to evaluate how good the decision was and what they have learnt from the situation.

If the outcome of their decision was positive, celebrate and let your child know that you are pleased that they took the time to work through the situation on their own.

Decision-making, like anything, requires practice.