I WANT IT ALL!

LIFE SKILL
making decisions

Why practice making choices?
Families may have unlimited needs and wants, but their financial resources are usually limited. That means they have to make choices about what they will buy and how they will spend their money.

What do we need?
two large pieces of paper, one labeled “adults,” the other labeled “children”; index cards or scrap paper; pens, pencils, and crayons; cut-out pictures of food, clothing, toys, etc. (optional)

How long will it take?
30 minutes

What do we do?
• Give three index cards to each family member. Each card represents a store: a grocery store, a discount store, and a clothing store.
• Each person writes or draws one to three items they would like to buy in each store. For younger children, go through newspaper ads or catalogs and cut out a variety of foods, clothing, toys, and other items that would appeal to them. Let them select the items they want and put them on the cards. Preschoolers probably will not be able to sort the items by category.
• Tape all the “adult” cards to the “adult” sheet of paper and the “children” cards to the sheet of paper marked “children.”
• Compare the sorts of things that everyone wanted.
  —What are the things all the adults want?
  —What are the things all the children want?
  —Do the children and adults want any of the same things?
  What are they?

Option. More questions to discuss.
—Is there enough money for everything your family wants to buy?
—if you can’t have everything you want, what do you do?
—How do you decide which item is most important? Who can help you decide how to use your money wisely?
• Go to the library and check out one of the following books. Read and discuss the ideas in the book.
  —Alexander, Who Used to be Rich Last Sunday by Judith Viorst
  —The Berenstain Bears, The Trouble With Money by Stan and Jan Berenstain
  —The Purse by Kathy Capil


What happened?
▼ Did family members agree on what they wanted most?
▼ How did family members decide which items to buy?

What did you learn?
▼ What did this activity help you learn about the difference between “wants” and “needs?”
▼ What did you learn about money management from this activity?

Why was this activity important?
▼ If you couldn’t distinguish between “wants” and “needs,” what would probably happen?
▼ What are some other situations in life that call for compromising and prioritizing?

What’s next?
▼ How could you use this method to handle other situations that call for compromising and prioritizing?