

# “Just Going to the Dentist”

A Lesson on Decision Making



Written by Economics Arkansas  
Powered by Delta Dental of Arkansas Foundation



## Lesson Description

Little Critter’s mother takes him to the dentist for a checkup. After he gets his teeth cleaned, x-rays taken, and a cavity filled, he discovers that going to the dentist is not that bad. In fact, keeping his teeth healthy is a wise decision to promote good health.

## Grade

Kindergarten

## Concepts

**Alternatives:** options to consider

**Benefits:** things favorable to a decision maker

**Choice:** a decision about what to do (and what to give up)

**Costs:** things unfavorable to a decision maker

**Decision-making:** a reasoned way of choosing the best one of the possible alternatives

**Opportunity Cost:** value of the next-best alternative that is given up when a choice is made

**Scarcity:** having less of something than is desired

## Standards

Arkansas Economics Standards

E.4.K.1. Recognize that all people have unlimited wants and limited resources (e.g., scarcity).

E.4.K.2 Explain reasons behind a personal decision.

Arkansas English Language Arts Standards

L.K.6 Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading, being read to, and responding to texts.

## Objectives

Students will be able to:

- \*identify costs and benefits when making a decision.
- \*identify a choice when presented with alternatives.
- \*identify the opportunity cost related to a choice.
- \*utilize a decision-making model to make a choice.

## Time required

45 minutes

## Materials required

- \**Just Going to the Dentist* by Mercer Mayer
- \*Visual 1 Decision Making Tool: Brushing Up on Decisions
- \*Toothbrush Decision Making Challenge
- \*Document Camera

## Procedure

1. Ask students if they have made any decisions today. (*Allow time for responses. If they can't identify decisions, prompt them to consider getting out of bed, brushing teeth, brushing hair, selecting clothes to wear, selecting food to eat, etc.*)
2. Tell students that every day people of all ages make decisions. Ask them if they have ever made a decision they later regretted. (*An example might be that someone asked them to clean their room, and they didn't. Later they lost some privileges as a result.*)
3. Ask students why they have to make a decision. (*Answers may vary but probably will include a statement that involves a parent saying they don't have enough money to buy everything they would like to have, enough time to go everywhere, or enough space to fit everything they want.*)
4. Challenge students to consider why they sleep (*to be rested and ready for the day*), why they exercise (*to keep their body healthy*), and why they eat fruit and vegetables and drink milk (*to build strong bodies*).
5. Tell students that today they will read a book about a family that made decisions about a healthy habit...taking care of their teeth. Hold up the book, *Just Going to the Dentist*. Read the book (approximately 4-5 minutes).
6. Ask the students the following questions upon completion of the book.
  - Why did Little Critter's mother decide to take him to the dentist even though he thought his teeth were just fine? (*She wanted his teeth to stay healthy.*)
  - What did the nurse and dentist do to check his teeth? (*The nurse cleaned his teeth. She took X-rays. The dentist looked inside his mouth with a little mirror on a stick. He looked at the X-rays. He discovered there was a cavity and filled it.*)
  - What is a cavity? (*A cavity is tooth decay or a breakdown in a tooth. The decay causes holes or weak spots in the hard surface of a tooth, which is called "enamel."*)
  - What might have caused the cavity? (*Answers might include eating sugary sweets, not brushing teeth, etc.*)
7. Explain that dentists encourage us to brush our teeth twice a day. Delta Dental of Arkansas created a fun video to help us learn how to brush our teeth. Let's pretend we are brushing our teeth. Hold up your hand to your teeth and hold an imaginary toothbrush. Show the video (1:56) and have students brush along (Link: <https://www.facebook.com/DeltaDentalAR/videos/429164251646219/> ).
8. Tell students that taking care of our teeth is a very important decision. It will help us have good oral health. We say that economics is all about decisions. We use helpful tools to help us make decisions. When we stop and think through things, it helps us be better satisfied with the choices we make now and in the future.
9. Display the decision making visual and tell students that today we will use a tool called a decision-making chart.
10. Share with the students that since we know that cavities form when we don't always take care of our teeth and don't always eat healthy foods, let's make a decision about an afternoon snack using the decision-making tool titled *Brushing Up on Decisions*.
11. Direct students to look at the top of the decision-making tool. You see the word **PROBLEM**. Problems aren't always negative or bad. Let's say you get to choose an afternoon snack to satisfy your hunger. Is that a bad problem? (*No.*) You do, however, have to decide what you want because you cannot have everything you see in the store or have at home. (**In the PROBLEM box, write: What will I choose for a healthy afternoon snack?**)
12. Explain that **ALTERNATIVES** are the options you consider. You might consider a bag of pretzels, a candy bar, a soda, an apple, an ice cream cone, yogurt, or a banana. Those would be your alternatives. (**In the ALTERNATIVES boxes for today write: candy bar and apple wedges.**)

13. Ask students to identify some benefits of eating the candy bar. (*Answers might include it's sweet and tastes good.* Ask them to identify some costs of eating the candy bar. (*Answers might include it could melt if it's hot outside, it might not completely satisfy my hunger, it's not healthy for my teeth.*)
14. Repeat the same process with apple wedges. (*Answers might include it's healthy for my teeth, it would fill me up, it's crunchy*) Ask them to identify some costs of eating the apple. (*Answers might include it's not sweet.*)
15. Discuss with students that after the benefits and costs have been listed, we have to make a decision that would best answer our question in the PROBLEM box. Look at the benefits and costs of each alternative and decide. (*Write in decision box: apple wedges.*)
16. Ask the students what is given up when apple wedges are the choice. (*The opportunity to have the candy bar.*) Economics says that our next best choice we give up when we make a choice is our opportunity cost. It is the opportunity lost when we choose.
17. Conclude by reminding students that making healthy choices for our teeth will have great benefits in the future. The consequences of not having healthy teeth might result in having cavities, poor oral health, losing teeth, etc.

### **Closure**

Remind students that today's lesson was all about choices. We have learned that eating healthy and brushing our teeth twice a day are good decisions to have healthy teeth and few cavities.

Optional: Send the calendar home with each student. Challenge them to decide each day if they will make the decision to brush their teeth twice a day. Remind students that sometimes there will be other things that will tempt them not to take time to brush their teeth. Dentists tell us that brushing now might prevent cavities later. Students should record their decisions in the appropriate boxes and may bring back the chart for a prize or sticker. They could also be displayed.

### **Assessment**

Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down:

Ask students to hold up one hand and point their thumb up. As a statement is read, students should lift their thumb up if the statement is true and move their thumb down if the statement is false.

- \*Little Critter's mother decided to take him to the dentist to keep his teeth healthy. (thumbs up)
- \*We make choices each day. (thumbs up)
- \*Sometimes the choices we make today don't have consequences until later. (thumbs up)
- \*Everyone makes the same choice. (thumbs down)
- \*Alternatives are the options we consider. (thumbs up)
- \*The costs are things that make us happy. (thumbs down)
- \*Our next best choice is our opportunity cost. (thumbs up)

Decision Making Assessment:



Distribute a decision-making tool to each student and ask them to make a decision for a healthy snack. They may need a scribe to record their responses.





# Brushing Up on Decisions

**Problem:**



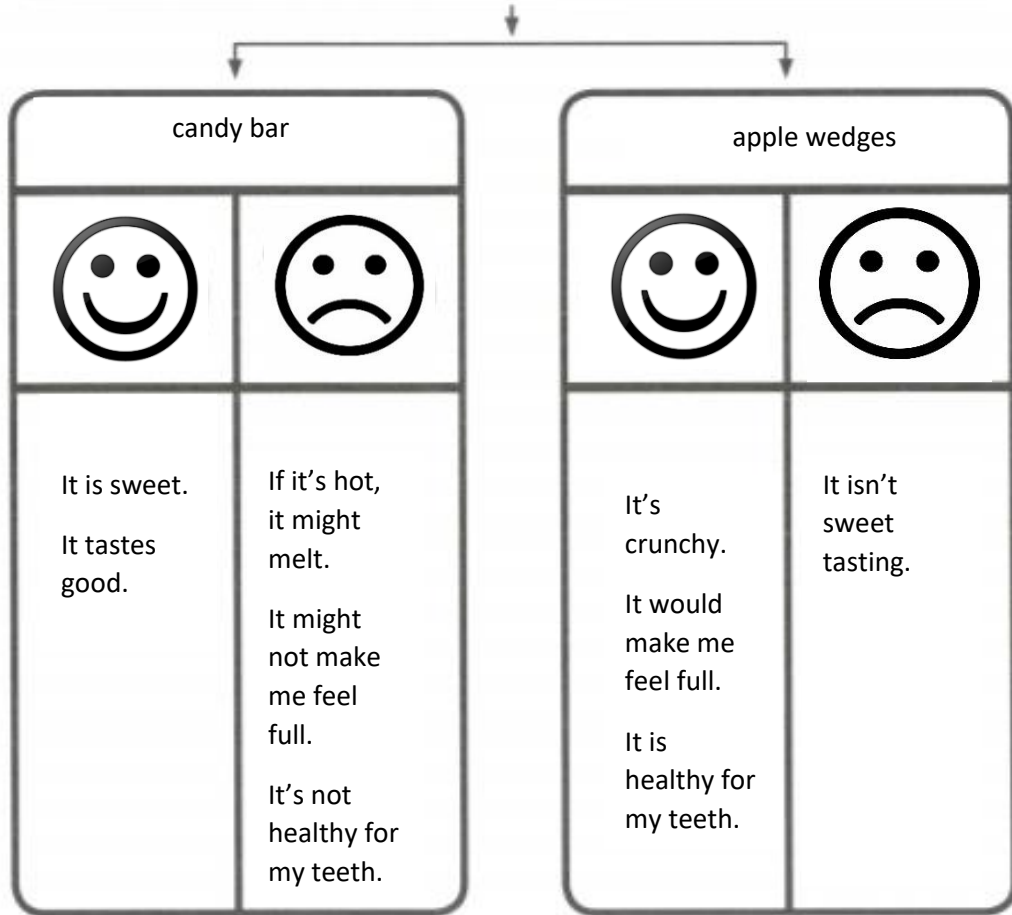
	

**Choice:**



Problem:  
What afternoon snack will I choose?



Choice:  
apple wedges

# MY TEETH BRUSHING CHART



NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

## DID YOU KNOW?

IT TAKES ABOUT 66 DAYS FOR A NEW BEHAVIOR TO BECOME AUTOMATIC.

SEE IF YOU CAN BRUSH YOUR TEETH TWICE A DAY FOR 66 DAYS!

MARK WHEN YOU BRUSH YOUR TEETH IN THE MORNING AND AT NIGHT.

START DATE: END DATE:	SUN		MON		TUE		WED		THU		FRI		SAT	
	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM	AM	PM
WEEK 1														
WEEK 2														
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WEEK 5														
WEEK 6														
WEEK 7														
WEEK 8														
WEEK 9														
WEEK 10														



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