

Making Choices

How will you invest your resources?

This activity is a great way to explain the tough choices low-income families make every day.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Make copies of the “game sheet.” Participants can work in teams of 2 or 3.
- Provide each group with 15 candies (Smarties work well because there are 15 in each roll).
- Tell each participant or team their candies will become symbolic of their “budget” and not to eat their candies until the end of the game!
- Explain that for the purposes of the game each person or team is to pretend they’re married with 2 children.
- One adult in the household is working full-time and the other is working two part-time jobs. Both make minimum wage.
- The family has a limited budget and only 15 candies to spend.
- They have some tough decisions to make.
- Each participant must study their choices in each row and invest their candies with 1, 2 or 3 candies depending on what’s most important to them.
- They cannot skip a row.
- After they’re done making their choices, ask the group how it felt to invest their candies. (Usually the response is, “There weren’t enough candies!”)

Now tell them there’s been a change. One of their children has an infected tooth and has to see the dentist. The family doesn’t have dental insurance. In order to address this, they must remove 2 candies from their board.

There has been another change. Your spouse just got laid off with severance pay – now take off 4 candies.

Now ask: How can CFC agencies be resources for this family?

People throughout this community are making these decisions every day.