



Spending Simulation:

For younger kids, you can simulate the experience of spending to teach them about trade-offs. Give your child some money (maybe \$5) and set up a small, at-home store. The store could include one item that will cost the whole \$5, a few between \$2 and \$3, and multiple small things for \$1 or less. These items can be small toys, treats, or even “coupons” for extra time playing games or a movie night. The point isn’t what they are buying, but that the child recognizes that they can’t get everything – they’ll have to prioritize what they want most. Repeat the store every so often, perhaps with money they earn, instead, to see how their understanding grows.

Expense Tracking:

For older kids, help them track all of their spending for a week or month. They can do it on a piece of paper, a spreadsheet, or even an app. At the end of the tracking period, have them evaluate all of their choices. Did they spend more than they expected? Less? What would they like to change? Help them create a target for the next period and suggest ways they can improve. Repeat the process to see what changes. You may even offer a reward if your child is able to meet a goal you agree on!