

## Making Choices Game Instructions

### How will you invest your resources?

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

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- Make copies of the “game sheet” that can be found on our website under Fun Campaign Ideas at [www.unitedwaytriangle.org/cc](http://www.unitedwaytriangle.org/cc). Participants can work in teams of 2 or 3, if needed.
- 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!”)

**Unexpected expense occurs: (be creative and come up with your own unexpected expenses. Or make a “chance” card pile and have the participants draw their own unexpected events)**

- Now tell them there’s been a change. One of their children has a strep throat and has to see the doctor. The family doesn’t have health insurance. In order to get the child the health care the family must give up 2 candies.
- Tell the group to take off 2 candies and adjust the rest as needed.
- Tell them there’s been another change. Their spouse just got laid off with no severance pay. They have to take off 4 candies to adjust.
- Let them go through the exercise of taking off the 4 candies and adjusting the rest.



**How UW programs can help this family: (be creative and create your own based on what you learn yourself during the campaign)**

- Ask participants for ideas of how this family can use UW resources to help?
- If anyone says providing their children with after school programs, give them 2 candies back
- If anyone says job training programs give them 2 candies back.
- If anyone says call 2-1-1, give them 1 candy back. Then ask for other participants to name referral services from 2-1-1. For each referral service, like child health care, energy assistance, crisis intervention, counseling, legal assistance or suicide prevention, give that participant or team 2 candies back.
- If anyone mentions Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) give them 6 candies back.

**THE MORAL OF THE STORY:**

Today, many of our family, friends and neighbors are forced to make these tough decisions every day, right here in the Triangle.

United Way not only helps meet the immediate needs like hunger and homelessness, they also address the underlying causes of the problems. It's not enough to feed someone who's hungry. It's important to find out why the person is hungry in the first place and address the problem that problem.

Want to make a difference? Help create opportunities for everyone in your community. United Way is creating real, lasting change where you live, by focusing on 4 areas – education, income, health, and safety. That's what it means to LIVE UNITED! For more, visit [www.unitedwaytriangle.org](http://www.unitedwaytriangle.org).

Thank you for creating opportunities and inspiring hope for a better tomorrow.

**Now let everyone eat their candies!**