

## **Objects of References**

## What are "Objects of Reference"?

Objects of reference uses objects that have a specific meaning linked with them.

When used **often and consistently**, these objects can help children to develop an understanding of their environment. For example, when they are given a spoon, they know that it is time for dinner.

Objects of reference can be used to help children to make choices between activities and to help them understand what is going to happen next.

## How to introduce Objects of Reference:

1. Find an **object that is clearly associated with each activity** and not used in other activities (make sure it is something the child can hold and explore).

## For example:

- Lunchtime plate
- Teeth brushing toothbrush
- Nappy change nappy
- Bath time flannel
- Toilet toilet roll



- 2. **Just before the activity**, give the object to the child, so he can explore it for a while. Name the activity (e.g. "bath time") and make the Makaton sign, if you know it. Make sure you go the activity straight away so the child learns to link the object with the activity.
- 3. Keep the object with you **during the activity**, so she can see and touch it. This will help build her link between the object and activity.
- 4. At the **end of the activity**, show the activity is over by putting the object in a "finished" box (e.g. shoe box or ice-cream tub), or encourage your child to put it in himself. Clearly say e.g. "bath time finished" and then move away from the activity.
- 5. Keep **repeating** this process each day to help your child learn what activity each object represents. It will take time and patience, so you will need to persevere!
- 6. Once your child seems to be **anticipating** the activity when you give them the object, you can begin to introduce further objects.