

Using Makaton



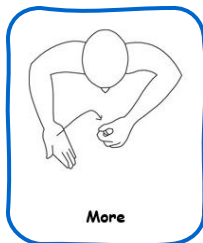
Communication
IS EVERYONE'S
BUSINESS

Using Makaton signs can support children understanding and use of language, by providing a visual and physical prompts to support spoken language.

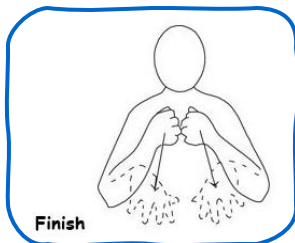
Step 1

Identify what level your child is at. What signs do you need to know to support them? For example, do they need...

- Core vocabulary such as “more”, “finished” & “help”
- Routine related vocabulary such as “food”, “play”, “work”
- A range of verbs and nouns



More



Finish



Help

Note!

*Makaton focuses on the **key words** in a sentence. If you're signing along as you speak, make sure you focus on these words, and leave out “filler” words such as “a” or “the”.*

*(For more information on **key words** please see our “what are key words” leaflet).*



Step 2

Identify *when* you are going to implement these signs. The end goal is to integrate them throughout the day, but you can start small. You can begin by using them during:

- Adult-led play activities
- Timetable / routine prompts / support
- Child-led activities (commenting on what they're doing)
- Structured group activities

Step 3

Learn the signs you need. Most Makaton signs can be found online, Cbeebies parenting & Mr tumble have Youtube videos to support with frequently used Makaton signs.

Beware! Some creators use signs that look like Makaton, but they are different! For example, some creators use signs based on American Sign Language.

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Step 4

Begin modelling! Model Makaton signs **while you speak** during activities with your child.

Try not to put pressure on your child to copy your words / signs but build in opportunities for them to use the vocabulary themselves.

For further support with this, please see our “means reasons and opportunities leaflet”.

Step 5

Repeat plus one. Where your child is beginning to use / copy Makaton signs, add one key word to what they're saying. For example, if they request “more”, you can say & sing back “more ball” or “more biscuit”.

Find out more
here:



Things to remember

- **Consistency** – *Make sure the same signs are being used by all people who meet the child and in all the places where the child goes*
- **Always talk** – *Makaton is not an independent communication method. It comes alongside spoken language and can be supported with symbols as well. Make sure you're always talking while signing.*
- **Encouragement** – *offer lots of encouragement as you go, praise your child for attempts they make at signing, and keep modelling!*
- **Don't give up!** – *recognise the small steps your child makes and keep going.*