



Objects of Reference

Objects of Reference can be used to support:-

Receptive language/understanding

Memory and sequencing of events

Signalling the beginning of a new activity

Choice-making

Objects are the first stage of symbolic development and therefore they are easier for your child to understand than photographs or picture symbols

How to make Objects of Reference

- Select the activity, event or person that you want your child to understand, e.g. dinner routine.
- Choose an object. It should be simple to understand, for example a spoon could be used to represent dinner time



= **Dinner**

- As your child's understanding develops further, the objects you use could represent more abstract concepts.

For example, a wooden circle could symbolise that something has finished, or a stone or pebble could symbolise going for a walk outside.



= **Outside**

How to use Objects of Reference

- Begin with 3 objects of reference for activities that happen often. You can add more items as your child becomes familiar with using objects to communicate.
- Decided on 3 activities you are going to focus on, e.g. bath time, dinner time and using the potty
- Choose 3 real object to represent the activity e.g. a spoon for dinner, a flannel for bath time and a nappy for toilet.

- Before you start the activity show your child the Object of Reference and say the word (e.g. bath time). Make sure you use the same object and word together each time you introduce the activity. After showing the object and saying the word to your child you should start the activity immediately, this will support your child to develop an understanding of the connection between the object and the activity.
- Once your child understands the link between the objects and activities you can use these objects to offer choices between activities.

Things to remember

- Always use the same objects in the same way every time the activity takes place.
- If your child attends Nursery or school, liaise with the staff so that you all use the same objects for activities.
- Store your child's objects in a bag, box or basket so they are easily accessible.
- Objects should be relevant to your child

Examples of Objects of Reference

