

Using Makaton

Makaton is a language programme which uses both signs and symbols to support the development of communication skills. Speech and language therapists recommend using Makaton to support both understanding and saying words.

Makaton is always used alongside speech and makes language visual. Signing key words of a sentence alongside speech helps the spoken words to be understood more clearly.

You can find out more information by visiting www.makaton.org

It is important to access a course with a trained tutor as soon as possible to learn how to get started. Ask your speech and language therapist about how to book onto a course.

Some frequently asked questions:

Is Makaton difficult to learn?

You can create a personalised vocabulary for your child, starting with just a small number of signs, and could add more in as soon as you and your child are ready.

The training manuals have pictures of each of the signs that are taught, so you can return to them as a reminder whenever you need to.

There are lots of resources available on the internet that can help you remember the signs that you have learnt on the courses. Download our information sheet about recommended websites [here](#) to learn more.

Will Makaton stop my child using their voice to talk?

Makaton will not stop a child from talking, as long as speech is always used alongside the signs. Research shows that using Makaton actually helps to stimulate vocalisation and words. Makaton is often used as a temporary alternative when talking is difficult, and children usually drop the use of signs when they can use spoken words to communicate.

Would we still use Makaton even though our child has started to speak?

Yes – research shows that using signing alongside speech supports the development of speech and interactive skills, and can also help with the intelligibility of unclear speech.

Makaton helps to support understanding language, and learning new vocabulary. It can be used alongside other speech and language therapy interventions to support the development of expressive language, grammar and literacy skills.