

Objects of Reference

What are objects of reference?

'Objects of reference' is the use of 'objects' as a means of communication.

Objects can be used alongside words. For example; a book for story time, goggles for swimming, stethoscope for doctor.

Who uses objects of reference?

Any child with significant communication difficulties or visual impairment who is finding it difficult to understand and use words, signs, symbols or photographs.

Why are they used?

Objects of reference can be used for a number of reasons:

- ⇒ To help develop an awareness and an understanding of the environment, for example for signalling what is about to happen.
- ⇒ As a step to using more complex forms of communication, such as sign, symbol or word.
- ⇒ To help children make choices about the activities they want to do.

What 'objects' should you use?

Objects can be chosen on an individual basis to suit each individual and their family. For example:

- ⇒ '**cuddly toy**' for bed time
- ⇒ '**sponge**' for bath time
- ⇒ '**nappy**' for nappy changing routine
- ⇒ '**glitter tube**' for sensory room
- ⇒ '**shoes**' for going outside
- ⇒ '**cup**' for snack time



A useful 'rule of thumb' is that the object you choose is **meaningful , motivating and can be frequently used.**

It does not matter what you decide to use, as long as it is used consistently by all carers so that your child learns to associate the object with the event.

How do you use objects of reference?

Allow your child to see, touch or feel the object of reference just before an activity or event is about to begin. **Always say the word at the same time as showing the object.**

Objects of Reference List

Object of reference	Item
Art	Paintbrush
Assembly	LED tea light candle
Cheerleading	Pom poms
Circle time	Quoit circle
Computer	Computer mouse
Cookery	Wooden spoon
D.T	Wooden block
Dance	Voile scarf material
Dinner	Metal tea spoon
Drama	White Mask
English/story	Thick cardboard Childrens book
Forest school	Piece of log/tree
Garden/allotment	Childrens spade
Geography	Artificial grass
Get out of Chair	Square of Carpet
History	Crown
Horse-riding	Leather lead/reigns/dog lead
IPad	use the real item
Library	Plastic card (like a library or credit card)
Magic carpet	Piece of magic carpet mat
Maths	Plastic numbers on cards (1, 2, 3)
Music	Hand bells
Nurse	Silicone fob watch cover
Occupational therapy	glitter tube (OT to have one each)
Office	Plastic wallet
P.E	Beanbag
Physiotherapy	Foam mat
Play Time	Plastic holey ball
PSHE	Unbreakable mirror/ acrylic mirror
Sand tray	Sanding block
Science	Measuring cylinder
Sensory activity	Scourer
Sensory room	Plastic shoelaces (scoobies)
Snack	Cup
Soft play	Stress ball
Speech and language	bubble wand (SLT to have one each)
Swimming	swimming Trunks/swimming costume
Time out/needs space	Object individual to child
toilet	metal unisex sign
Trip out	Key
Water tray	Small funnel