



Information for
Parents and Carers

We all hope that our children will be able to talk to us but for some children this can be a problem.

We know that MAKATON can help. Some children will use MAKATON for a short time, others for longer.

MAKATON was developed in the 1970s to help people with learning disability to communicate.

It is now widely used with a variety of children with communication difficulties.

Things you should know about MAKATON

Talking does not just involve speaking.

Watch someone talking. They will not just be saying words but they will also be using:

- ?? hand movements or gestures
- ?? facial expression
- ?? eye contact
- ?? body language (posture and movement)

All this is communication.

MAKATON uses SPEECH and:

- ?? gesture
- ?? facial expression
- ?? eye contact
- ?? body language



It is a Language Programme which is based on a selected list of everyday words, for example

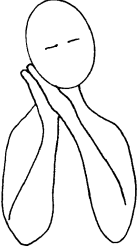

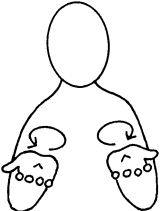

?? Mummy

?? Door

?? Fall

?? In

MAKATON uses SPEECH together with a:
SIGN (gesture) and/ or SYMBOL (picture)

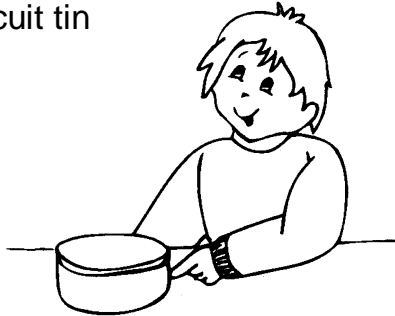
	SIGN	SYMBOL
eg sleep		
eg where?		

Let's consider some questions often asked by parents.

1 WHY USE MAKATON?

Signs and symbols give extra information which can be seen. Research has shown that signs or gestures are easier to learn than spoken words. This makes sense. Babies use gestures before they can speak, to tell us what they want, for example

pointing at the biscuit tin



or holding our arms to be lifted up.



Makaton can help a child who has difficulties with understanding and speaking. Through MAKATON the child is able to develop important communication skills.

If a child has to rely on speech development alone, these vital skills may not develop appropriately:

- ?? Eye contact
- ?? Turn-taking
- ?? Making choices
- ?? Understanding
- ?? Sharing information

Children who have difficulty understanding and speaking often become frustrated or withdrawn. They may communicate this through behaviours such as screaming and kicking which are unpleasant for the children and for us. By using MAKATON we are helping the children to communicate in a more acceptable way.

2 WILL MAKATON STOP MY CHILD FROM SPEAKING?

Experience and research indicate that using gestures and signs promotes and stimulates speech development. It is very important that you use speech together with signs and symbols.

3 WHAT IS A SYMBOL?

A symbol is a picture used to represent a word. The picture representation is simple and easy to remember. For example: a bus.



4 WHEN DO YOU USE SYMBOLS?

Symbols are used when a child has difficulty with hand movements making signing inaccurate or impossible. Symbols are used to develop reading and language skills.

5 WHO NEEDS TO USE MAKATON?

Children learn to speak by listening to other people speaking. If your child is going to use signs or symbols to help communicate your child will need to see you and other people using them as well. Everyone needs to be involved and will usually be happy to help.

6 WHAT WILL OTHER PEOPLE THINK?

You may feel strange using MAKATON at first and you may think that people are looking at you, but with practice it soon becomes more natural and you know it is helping your child.

7 HOW MANY SIGNS OR SYMBOLS DO YOU START WITH?

It is important that only a few signs or symbols are used at the beginning. These will be the most important ones for the child. They will be chosen by the people who know the child best. As the child learns, more words will need to be introduced.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN USING MAKATON

?? Using MAKATON is **FUN!**

?? MAKATON should be used in **EVERY** aspect of the child's day

?? Always remember to speak as you sign or use symbols and encourage any attempt at speech.

?? At first it may be necessary to help your child's arms and hands to make the signs or point to the symbols.

?? **DON'T GIVE UP TOO SOON:** It may take a while for you and your child to learn to use signs and symbols.

Acknowledgements

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