

This handout has been shared with you because your child is not using as much language as expected. Please consider the strategies below to support your child's language development at home.

## Creating opportunities

Create opportunities for your child to request by giving items a bit at a time, and by keeping items out of reach but in view so the child has to request these to carry on. Wait for your child to look, reach, point or say what they want. For example:

**Bubbles** – stop after you have blown the bubbles, look at your child and wait for them to indicate more.



**Snack** – give them a small amount of snack e.g. then hold the rest back and wait for them to request more from you.

**Give choices** wherever possible (e.g. of snack/book/colours), rather than giving the child the item they normally choose, create opportunities to make choices, even if you know they don't like one of the choices. Hold each item forward as you label it e.g. 'juice or milk?'

When playing encourage your child to make **symbolic noises**, e.g...

- moo
- meow
- woof woof
- choo choo (for a train)
- broom (for a car)



**Use simple gestures** alongside your words (e.g. pretend to drink when you say the word 'drink'). These will help your child to understand the words and begin to say them. Please see overleaf for some early Makaton signs.

## Model words from different categories

Playing sorting games with pictures and objects can help children to learn the links between words that they know. As they learn new words, this helps them to add 'new' words to groups of words they already know have similar words in.

E.g. sorting pictures of food vs. animals, clothes vs. food, jungle animals vs. farm animals.

## Comment

Focus on what your child is doing and talk about it.

Use short, simple sentences at your child's level, or just above. If your child produces one word...use one and two word phrases. You are modeling the language you want your child to be able to imitate.

- e.g.: watch your child's play and talk about what he/she is doing;
- "Driving. Oh-oh...Crash. Fall down. Beep beep. Drive up. Drive down. Man driving. Stop! Go car".

## Reduce questions

Rather than testing your child on something they don't know, where possible tell your child what something is so that they can learn it.

## Sing rhymes with your child. Use actions!

Help them to join in with the actions. Leave pauses and see if they will fill in the gaps.



## Repeat and add to your child's language

Listen to what your child has said and model the language you want him/her to imitate. Respond to your child's communication and build on ideas. For example;

- Your child points at a car and makes a noise. You model the word, "car."
- Your child says a single word, "car". You model a two word sentence, "go car, drive car."

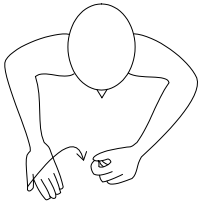
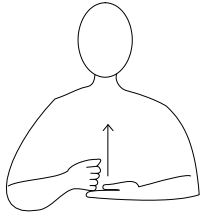
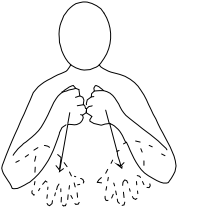
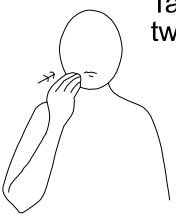
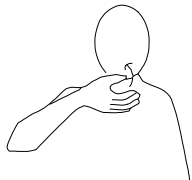
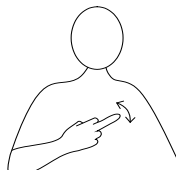
Encourage object and action associations such as;

- "brush hair", "eat cake", "wash baby."

Your child will need to have approximately 50 single words before they start putting 2 words together.

## Makaton Signing/Gesture

- A useful form of communication, which can alleviate frustration in a child who is not able to use verbal language as their primary means of expressing themselves.
- Signing will not stop a child talking, as when they start to say the words they naturally drop the sign. Always use the spoken word with the sign.
- Start with simple, easily recognisable signs, or sing songs with actions.

| Word   | Signs   |
|--|---|
| <p>More<br/>(Curl left hand into fist, move right palm onto the top)</p>   |                     |
| <p>Help<br/>(fist on flat palm and move both hands away from you.)</p>   |                    |
| <p>Finish<br/>(hands in fists up by chest, move down and out and spread fingers out)</p>                             |                   |
| <p>Eat</p>   | <p>Tap twice</p>  |
| <p>Drink</p>   |                   |
| <p>Toilet<br/>(Hand to opposite shoulder and rub middle finger against chest – whole hand can be used if easier)</p> |                   |