



OBJECTS OF REFERENCE

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Objects of reference can be used to help children understand what is about to happen by giving them a meaningful cue.

Choose three or four key events or activities which happen regularly such as meal times, bath times, going to school or pre-school.

Choose objects that are

- Always used with that activity eg child's own cup for drink, specific sweatshirt or bag that is used for school.
- Make sure your child will associate that object with the activity.
- Make sure the object is a suitable size to see but also possible to carry around.



The items you choose should be kept in a special bag that everyone recognises as your child's object of reference bag.

Just before your child is about to start the activity

- Draw their attention to the object of reference and say what is going to happen.
- Where possible, allow your child to touch and/or hold it.
- Then start the activity immediately eg show their plate and say dinner time, sign dinner and take your child to have their dinner.



It is essential that objects of reference are used consistently and that each person who interacts with your child uses the same cues.

The number of objects you use can be increased as your child begins to show some recognition of the link.

