

## Makaton (signing)

Makaton is a language programme using signs and symbols to help people communicate.

It is designed to support spoken language as the signs and symbols are used with speech, in spoken word order. They provide a visual representation of language, which increases understanding and makes expressive communication easier.

- **Stage 1:** Immediate needs, establishing interaction
- **Stage 2:** Home, familiar people, objects, food, events, activities etc.
- **Stage 3:** Outside world, animals, fruit, vehicles, actions, attributes, locatives, pronouns etc.
- **Stage 4:** School, objects, people, events, activities, pronouns, spatial location.
- **Stage 5:** The community, people, places, activities, events, objects, attributes, feelings etc.
- **Stage 6:** The wider world, places, thinking and knowing, attributes, pronouns, prepositions etc.
- **Stage 7:** Numbers, time, quantity, weather, money.
- **Stage 8:** Leisure interests, food, feelings, casual relationships.
- **Stage 9:** Resource vocabulary.

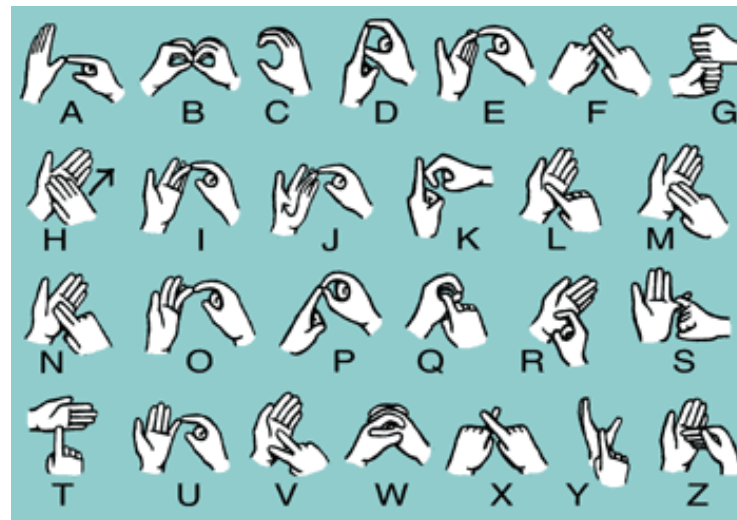
### STRATEGY:

To start with choose about five of the signs that will be frequently used with your child (from stages 1-3). Choose signs that can be reinforced on a daily basis. Then as your child becomes proficient at using these, add other signs on a regular basis, so his /her vocabulary increases at a manageable pace.

When giving your child information or instructions, disengage him/her from what he/she is doing and establish eye contact. Then speak simply, slowly and clearly emphasising each key word with a Makaton sign (where a sign is not yet being used, suitable gestures, pointing or other visual means can be used to reinforce the spoken language). Be consistent and use the chosen signs as often as possible and where appropriate.

After a period when your child has become used to seeing the chosen signs being used, encourage him/her to start signing. This can be achieved by using a hand over hand demonstration of the physical movements of the sign whenever appropriate. When your child starts to sign independently, accept a rough approximation of the sign and only alter/improve the signing when your child is confident in its correct use.

Makaton does not detract from your child's ability to use verbal communication. It takes away the frustration and enables individuals to connect with other people and the world around them.



**Notes:**

