

Gravesham Early Years Specialist
Teaching & Learning Service



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Makaton

Makaton is a system of
signing that helps children
who are pre-verbal com-
municate more easily.

Makaton should always be accompanied by the spoken word.

The following is taken from the Makaton.org website

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 and body language (posture and movement). All this is communication.

Makaton uses speech with signs (gestures) and symbols (pictures) to help people communicate. We also use facial expression, eye contact and body language to give as much information as possible.

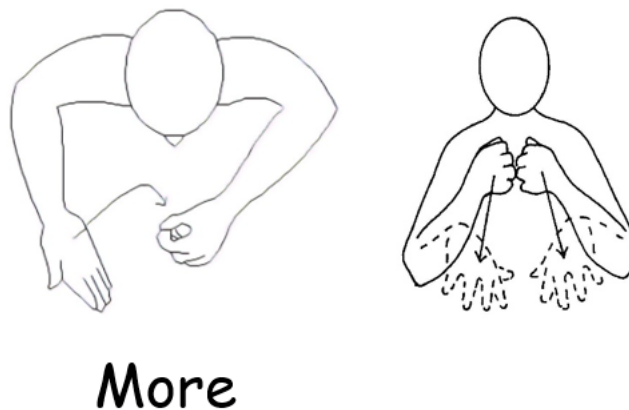
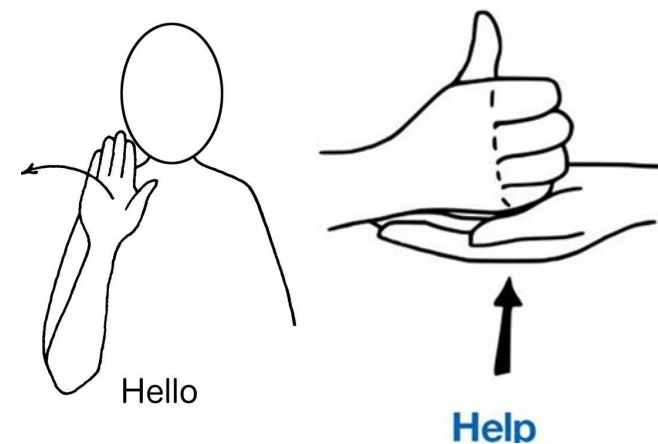
With Makaton, signs are used with speech in spoken word order. Using signs can help people who have no speech or whose speech is unclear. Research has shown that signs and gestures are easier to learn than spoken words. This makes sense. Babies use gestures before they can speak, to tell us what they want. For example, they might point at the biscuit tin or hold out their arms to be lifted up. Children and adults can use Makaton to let others know what they want, make choices, share information and understand more. This helps build and develop important communication and language skills.

Symbols can be used to support communication in many different ways. Using symbols can help people who have limited speech and those who cannot or prefer not to sign.

If a child has to rely on speech development alone, these vital skills may not develop properly: eye contact, turn taking, making choices, understanding, and sharing information.

Children and adults who have difficulty understanding and speaking often become frustrated or withdrawn. Young children may communicate this through behaviours such as screaming and kicking; older children and adults may shout or hurt themselves. By using Makaton, we are helping them to communicate in a more acceptable way.

Here are some useful signs to start you off:



to drink

to eat

