

## Objects of Reference

### What is an object of reference?

Objects of reference are multi-sensory items which can be related to a person, activity, event or instruction. Over time the child will learn that the object stands for something.

### Who will need to use objects of reference?

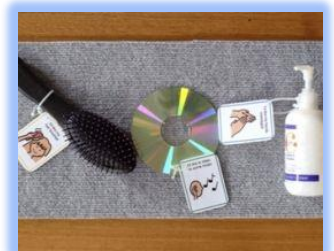
- A child who has speech and language delay.
- A child who is not yet understanding verbal instructions, visual prompts or signs and symbols.
- A child who has a visual or hearing impairment.
- A child who requires adult support to explore objects.

### Why use an objects of reference?

- It is easy to find objects of reference around the nursery environment which represent a person, activity, event or instruction.
- It/they are versatile and can be used throughout the day and in different environments.
- A child with speech and language delay can be included in activities.
- They are easy to transport so can be taken and used in different environments.
- Supports a child's understanding and shows what will happen next.
- They can be used to encourage choices during play and clarify request by the child.

### How to use an object of reference.

- Show the child the object right before the activity. Let the child hold it.
- Use key words or phrases e.g. "coat on", "it's snack time".
- The activity must follow straight afterwards. If there is a delay or interruption the process must be restarted.
- Use a sign or touch cue if the child needs these.
- Show them the person, object, place or activity.
- Put the object of reference away when the activity is happening or has finished.
- Objects of reference can be stored in a bag or box so they are easily accessible and portable.
- The objects can also be placed on card (vertical or horizontal) with Velcro to make a timeline. It will be important to remove the object when the activity is happening.
- All adults should use this strategy in a consistent manner.



Links to EYFS: C&L, PSED, MD.

SEND Code of Practice C&I, SEMH,

### Parental Section: Using strategies at home.

Start with using 3/5 objects of reference. Pick things that you do every day with your child. For example going outside, mealtimes, seeing a favourite family member, a favourite activity or favourite food.

Use the same way as above. Your child will most likely to understand and use the object which is most motivating for them. For example a rubber duck for bath time, their favourite spoon/fork/plate for mealtimes, their own coat or shoes when it is time to go outside. It will be important for the objects to be shown in the same way by everyone.