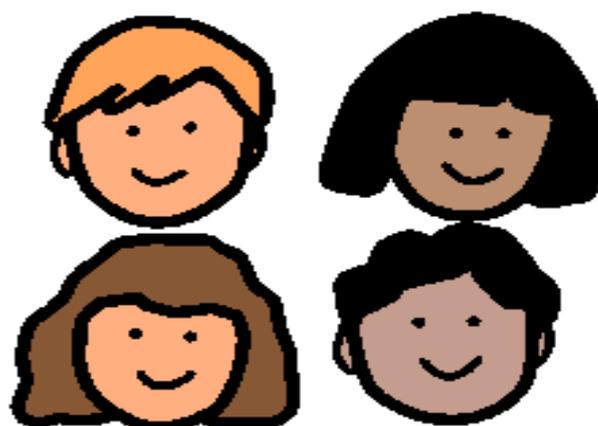


**Early Years
Speech and Language Therapy (SLT)
(for 0-5 year olds)**



Supporting your child's use of Makaton
Signs at home

April 2020

The Pack

This home programme pack has been designed by Speech and Language Therapists and is based on the most up-to-date research on communication development in the early years.

How-to-use this pack

1. Take a look at the **top tip**
2. Each top tip has an **activity** idea you could try
3. Think about how you can use the top tip in other **daily routines** (e.g. snack time, small group time, outside play) to increase the opportunities for the child to learn throughout their day
4. If the child isn't responding in the way you expect or the activity isn't working; move on to another activity, and come back to it.
5. ... and finally keep it **fun** and keep it **going!**

Why use signs?

They are easier than words: This reduces *frustration and tantrums*, and helps children to tell you about their *ideas and feelings*.

They are interesting to watch: This helps the child's *looking and listening*.

Signs make you slow down your speech: This makes it easier for the child to *understand what you're saying*

They are usually obvious: e.g. cupping your hand to your mouth for "drink", so they help your child **understand and remember** words.

They can make it easier for you to understand your child: This means both of you will be less frustrated

The signs are fun – they help **develop enjoyment and confidence in communicating**.

The signs help all children's speech and language skills.

SIGNS DO NOT STOP CHILDREN FROM SPEAKING – THEY PROVIDE A STEPPING STONE TO SPEECH

The speaker says and signs the word at the same time. Only the key words are signed



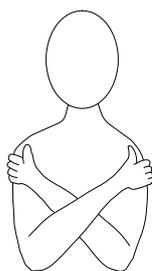
Tip 1: Start with 5 signs for items that are meaningful to your child



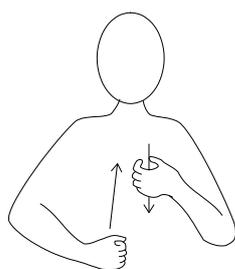
Activity: Choosing Your Starter Signs

- Choose 5 items which are particularly important to your child. You could include a favourite food, a pet, and a favourite toy.
- These are likely to be high frequency words in your child's life. Use the sign alongside the word every time you name the items during the day.
- Play hide and seek. Every time you find the item, say and the word.
- Take photos of the items. Look through the pictures and whilst saying and signing them.

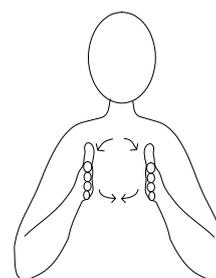
You could try building up your child's vocabulary 5 signs at a time.



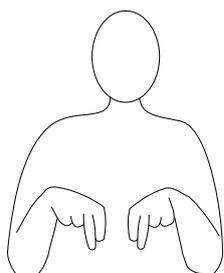
teddy



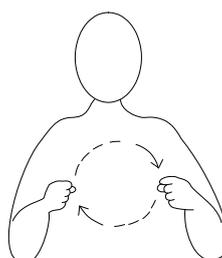
milk



ball



dog



car

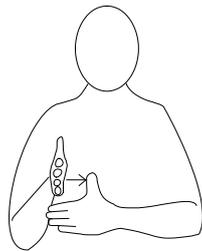
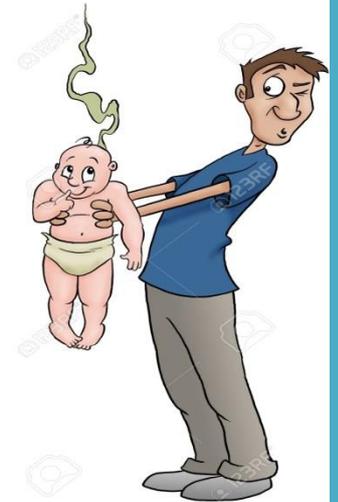
Tip 2: Use signs during every day routines



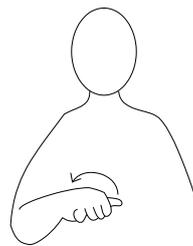
Activity: start using signs to support routines

- Signs can help to support your child's understanding of routines.
- Pick 3 significant routines that could be supported through the use of signs (e.g. nappy changes, bath time, getting ready to go out).
- You can mark the sequence using the signs for "first", "then" and "finished"

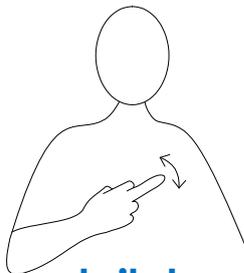
You could try using other visuals alongside signs to support your child's understanding of everyday routines (e.g. first/then boards, visual timetables).



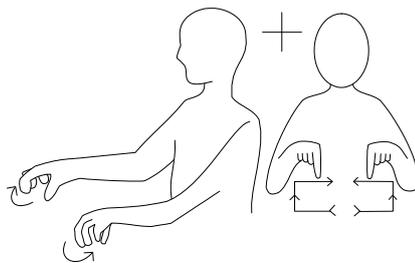
first



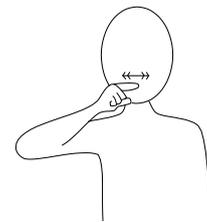
then



toilet



bath



brush teeth

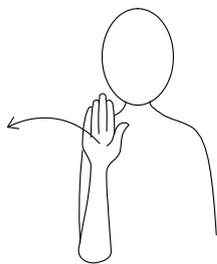
Tip 3: Use signs with social words and phrases



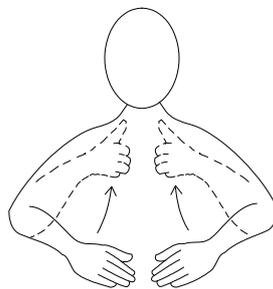
Activity: Greetings and thankyous!

- Model these signs across the day. Remember to say and sign the words.

You could play a turn taking game (e.g. build a tower). Model asking for a turn and saying thank you with the signs.



hello/goodbye



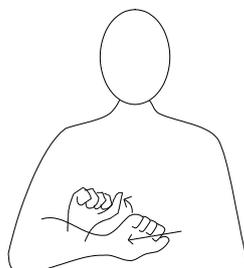
how are you?



thank you



mine/my turn



yours/your turn



sorry

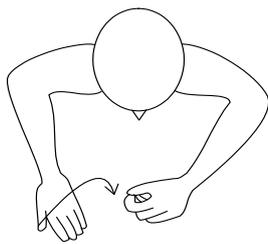
Tip 4: Use the signs for “more” and “finished” to encourage requests



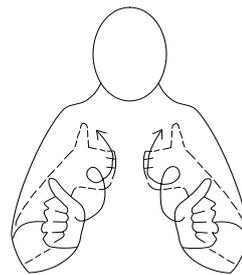
Activity: Snack Time, asking for “more”

- Cut your chosen snack into small pieces and give it to your child “bit by bit”
- Model the sign alongside the verbal request “more” as you give them another piece of snack.
- Give your child the opportunity to say and sign “more” for themselves.
- When your child has had enough to eat, say and sign “finished”

You could also try using these signs to encourage requesting at other times (e.g. whilst blowing bubbles)



more



finished



Tip 5: Use Makaton signs in action songs



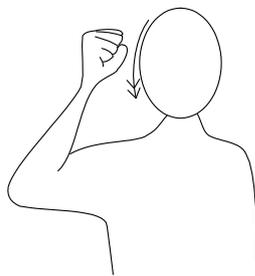
Activity: "This is the way we...."

- Say and sign the words as you go through the song.
- You could use props (e.g. a brush, a cup, a hat, a brick, a blanket).

You could try another favourite action song (e.g. "If you're happy and you know it...").



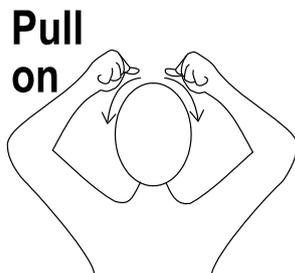
drink



brush

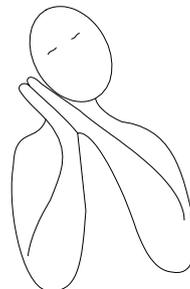


build



Pull
on

put on



sleep

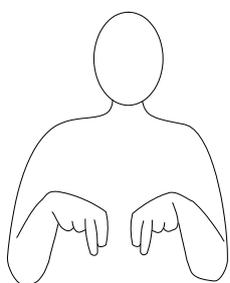
Tip 5: Use Makaton signs in topic songs



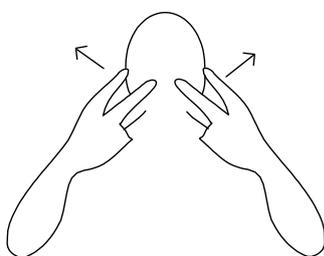
Activity: "Old McDonald"

- Say and sign the words as you go through the song.
- You could use props (e.g. toy animals or pictures)

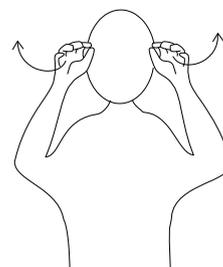
You could try another topic song (e.g. "Down in the jungle where nobody goes...")



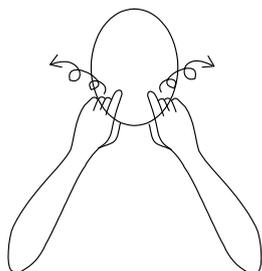
dog



cat



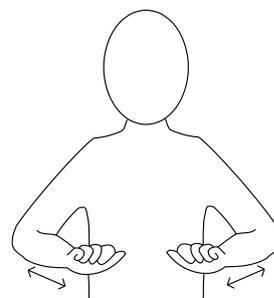
cow



sheep



pig



chicken

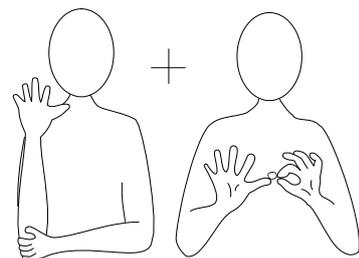
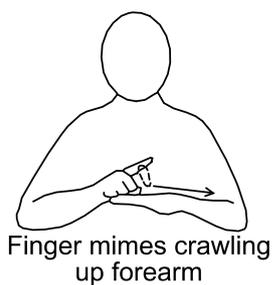
Tip 7: Use Makaton Signs during Story Time.



Activity: Emphasise key vocabulary in one of your child's favourite books

- Choose a favourite book and identify the key words you would like to sign.
- Say and sign the words as you read the story.

You could try using the sings “first”, “next” and “finished” (above) to mark the sequence in the story



The **caterpillar** ate a nice big **leaf**!



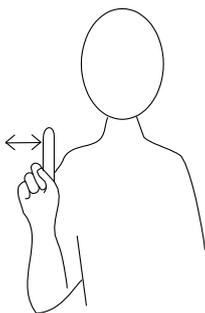
Tip 8: Introduce vocabulary using a “What’s in the Bag?” game



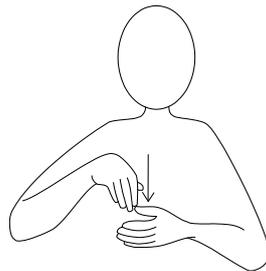
Activity: What’s in the Bag?

- Start with some everyday objects and put them in a bag or pillow case
- Make up a “what’s in the bag” song by using the tune from a familiar nursery rhyme (*The Farmers in the Den* works!)
- Take turns to take the items out of the bag. Say and sign the name for each item.

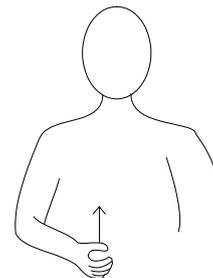
You could try working your way through different topics like animals, transport and food.



What



in



bag



Websites

You may also find the following websites helpful:

- Our speech and language therapy website: <https://www.clch.nhs.uk/services/speech-and-language-therapy-children>
- **NSPCC's** 'Look, Say, Sing, Play' campaign' with the following link <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/look-say-sing-play/sign-up>
- **Vroom:** Boost your child's learning with **Vroom's** fast and fun tips to your phone or via email. <https://www.vroom.org>
- The **Hungry Little Minds** campaign provides lots of ideas that can help boost your child's learning. www.hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk
- The **Makaton** Charity <https://www.makaton.org/>
- **Local Offer website:** (search "SEND local offer with the name of your borough). This website has lots of useful information for parents about local help for children with additional education and/or health needs
- **Parent forums:** Contact for support if your child has additional education/health need
 - Parents Active (Hammersmith & Fulham) www.parentsactive.org.uk
 - Full of Life (RBKC) www.fulloflifekc.com
 - Make it Happen (Westminster) www.wppg.org.uk
- **The Communication Trust:** for what to expect at different ages www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk
- **ICAN:** a children's communication charity www.ican.org.uk

CLCH NHS Trust

The speech and language therapy service is provided by Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust.

For more information visit www.clch.nhs.uk or call us on 020 7266 8777