



Objects of Reference



Objects of Reference are objects used to represent a person, activity or event. Over time the person learns that the object stands for that person, activity or event. Objects of Reference are used to help a person understand what is happening in their environment and also be used to help people make choices.



How to make Objects of Reference



1. Select the person, activity or event that you want them to understand.

2. Choose an object. It should be easy to understand. It could be something like:

- The item you will use during the activity (e.g. fork= dinner, paintbrush= painting)



- A part of the actual object (e.g. rope= swing, piece of pottery= gardening)



- Something like the actual object (e.g. fabric of the same material as the object)



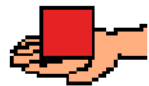
- Something that is not directly related but can symbolise the activity (e.g. a twig could symbolise going outside for a walk)



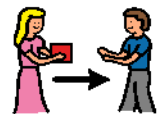
3. It is best to start with around 3 Objects of Reference for activities / events that occur very frequently. You can add more Objects of Reference later.



How to use Objects of Reference



1. Just before the individual starts the activity give them the Object of Reference. Use a sign and/ or speech e.g. "now we are going to the park".



2. After giving the Object of Reference it is important to immediately begin the activity to help them understand the connection between the object and activity.

3. It is very important that objects are used consistently every time you do that activity.



4. When an activity starts, take the Object of Reference from the person and put it away. It is a good idea to have a consistent place (e.g. a bag) to keep all the objects and put them away when the activity has started.

5. Once the individual has understood the connection between the objects and activities you can use these objects to offer choices relating to these activities.