



What is it?

- Any object which is used systematically to represent an item, activity, place or person.
- A visual strategy to support understanding.
- Understanding real objects is the first stage of symbolic development.



Why use it?

- It is visual and clear, increasing the understanding of the spoken word.
- Helps support children who find it difficult to understand spoken words, signs, symbols and photographs.
- Supports understanding of daily routines.
- To signal the beginning of a new activity.
- To support transition times throughout the day, giving the child an idea of what is about to happen.
- To enable the child to make a choice or request items to communicate their needs.



Steps to success

- A consistent approach is necessary within your setting.
- Introduce a bag, place relevant objects in the bag e.g. nappy for toileting, cup for snack, spade for sand and carpet square for sitting.
- Hang the bag where all staff can get easy access, therefore keeping a consistent approach on the objects you use.
- Always speak the word when showing the object.
- Remember use for transition times and changes, starting and finishing activities, introducing new activities, choices and sharing information e.g. who is picking up today.
- Can be used as part of a visual timetable.
- Always give the child time to process what you are requesting.



Further Information

<https://library.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/visual-support-objects-of-reference/>

