

## What is Makaton?

Makaton is a method of communication that uses symbols, signs and spoken language. Makaton supports the development of communication skills like attention, listening, comprehension, memory, recall, expression, and formation of language by mimicking spoken language order using other methods.

Makaton benefits from multiple communicative channels being used together i.e. symbols, signs and spoken language which has been proven to effectively support and encourage speech and language skills. This can be beneficial to children who have limited or no speech or whose speech is unclear. Additionally, symbols help to improve the effectiveness of this method of communication by providing an alternative to those who physically cannot or prefer not to sign.



## Who is Makaton for?

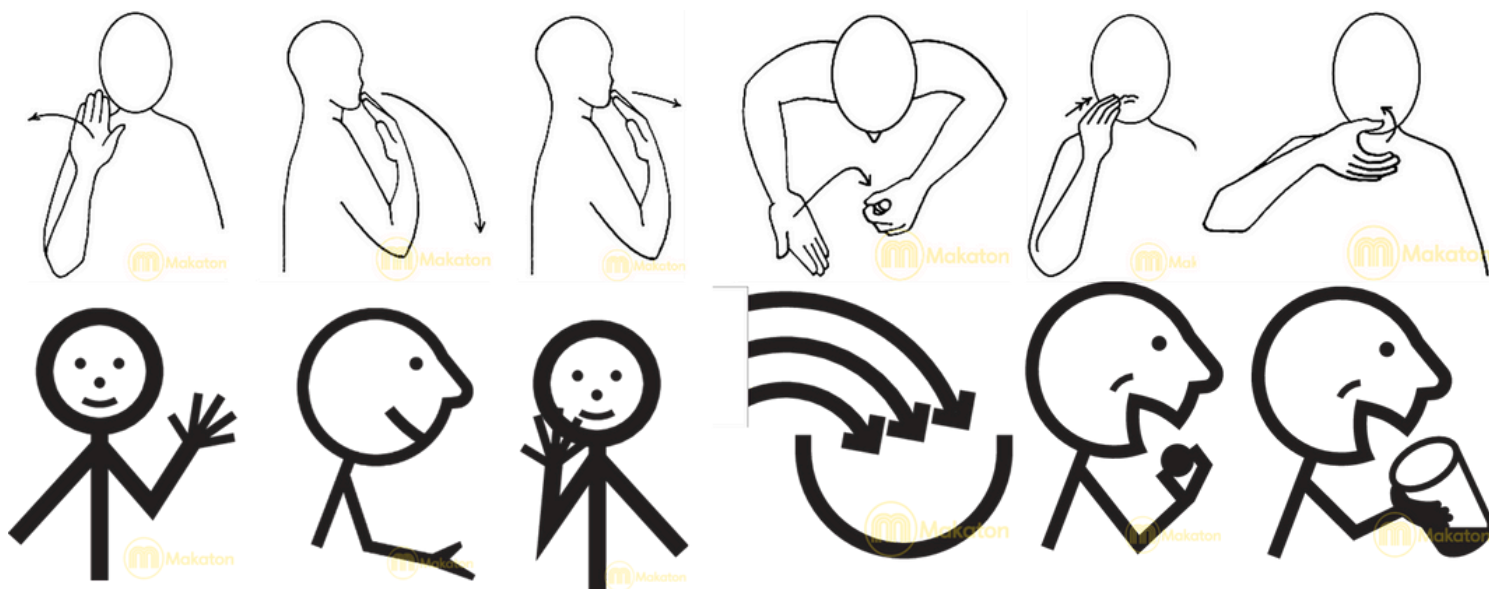
Makaton is designed to be used by individuals of any age or needs, this includes introducing to young babies, individuals who have English as an Additional Language, those with a speech and language delay or global development delay or those who have lost the ability to speak because of injury, illness or memory problems.

## How do I get started?

It is as simple as choosing a few signs and putting them into practice! Makaton signs and symbols are grouped into a 'Core Vocabulary'. This acts as a starting point for learning and contains a selection of signs and symbols needed for everyday communication and immediate needs such as eat, drink, nappy/toilet, home. As you and your child progress through stages more complex vocabulary relating to concepts such as time and emotions can be learnt.



At Dingley's Promise we often start with:



Hello

Please

Thank You

More

To Eat

To Drink

You can purchase books and view other resources containing the signs and symbols for both the 'Core Vocabulary' and subject specific vocabulary directly from the Makaton charity website: [www.makaton.org](http://www.makaton.org)

## Top Tips for Using Makaton

- Say the word clearly as you also sign or show the symbol.
- Be consistent, share familiar signs with key people in your child's life so that everyone can demonstrate communication this way and recognise when your child is communicating with them.
- It's about the communication. Your child may not sign perfectly every time, they may choose to move your hands to recreate the sign you have modelled, you do not need to wait until they get it 100% correct, celebrate their communication efforts and continue to model correctly.

As you and your child grow in familiarity with signs you can increase the number you are using and use them in different ways. Introducing signs during songs and simple traditional tales keeps communication fun, exciting and low pressure. Remember to sing or read at a slow and steady pace, this allows time for your child to follow and copy as they choose!



You can see how we include Makaton with nursery rhymes to support embedding Makaton and awareness of language. This repetition as well as familiar tunes and words further supports children's communication development and memory when creating and reproducing signs and language in different contexts. [Click here for our video demonstrating how we use Makaton in our centres.](#)

If you want to sing and sign along to Old MacDonald with your child, here are the key signs you can start introducing:

# Old MacDonald

## Sign Bank

