

Manchester Local Care Organisation

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service

Advice for Parents and Carers:

Using Objects to Help your Child Understand Routines (Objects of Reference)

Why use Objects for Routines?

Objects for Routines help children to:

- *Understand their daily routine*
- Move from one routine to the next routine
- Know what comes next in their day

Here are some examples of objects you could use to represent a routine:

- A cup for drink time.
- A towel for bath time.
- A book for story time
- A toy car for playtime.
- A spoon for mealtime.
- A coat for going outside.
- A toothbrush for bedtime.

How to use Objects for Routines:

1. Gain your child's attention by getting down to their eye level. Then say their name, or gently touch their arm.
2. Show the object before the next event and say what will happen, e.g. "mealtime" or "bedtime."
3. Take your child to the event right away to help them connect the object with the activity.
4. Let your child hold the object as they move to the event.

- *Ensure that the event is ready before you use object of reference to transition, for example if it is time to go out make sure you have everything you need before leaving.*

Tips for using Objects:

- Your child may not want to hold the object whilst moving, and that's ok! Make sure you have their attention, and they can see the object before the event.
- Choose objects that match each event, e.g., a nappy for changing time.
- Make sure the event is ready before using the object, e.g., have everything ready before going outside.