Using Makaton as an effective communication system

Jackie Webb
HLTA Communication/Regional Makaton Tutor
What is Makaton?

- Makaton is a unique language programme which uses symbols, signs and speech to provide a visual representation of language which increases and makes expressive communication easier.
- The Foundation Workshop comprises of 4 modules covering core vocabulary stages 1-4 plus additional vocab. The Enhancement Workshop comprises of 6 modules covering core vocabulary stages 5-8 plus additional vocab.
What is Makaton?

Makaton is a unique language programme which may be used as:

😊 a systematic multi-modal approach for the teaching of:
  ● communication skills
  ● language and literacy skills

😊 a source of highly functional vocabulary for:
  ● the person with communication needs
  ● as well as their interactive partners
Our goal is ....

To understand the basic principles of effective communication.
To understand the difficulties that our children have with communication.
To raise everyone’s awareness of the impact that effective communication has.
To continually refresh our knowledge and understanding of new signs and symbols.
To discuss how we can continue to encourage all our children to communicate with confidence.
Activity 1
How did you do?
How did you this activity make you feel?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Both Experienced</th>
<th>Both Used</th>
<th>Both Needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>frustration</td>
<td>eye contact</td>
<td>encouragement, co-operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anger</td>
<td>pointing eye pointing</td>
<td>confirmation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loss of confidence</td>
<td>finger pointing</td>
<td>small chunks' of information to build upon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feelings of inadequacy</td>
<td>facial expressions</td>
<td>organisation of information, starting with the dominant item first</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feeling stupid</td>
<td>body movement</td>
<td>shared knowledge of a gestural or sign system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may give up, leading to; withdrawal, isolation</td>
<td>gestures</td>
<td>shared life experiences and a common vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>may give up because of lack of a rewarding experience</td>
<td>mime</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fun</td>
<td>made reference to and the use of concrete objects in the room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Essential features of Makaton

- It has a core vocabulary of over 450 concepts, this is growing all of the time as technology evolves
- It has a resource vocabulary of 11000+ concepts
- It is used with speech, signs and/or symbols
- As well as having flexible teaching methods
Who uses Makaton?

- Children and adults with a broad range of communication difficulties, such as:
  - poor attention and listening
  - understanding speech
  - understanding what will happen next
  - developing speech
  - making themselves understood
  - telling people
    - 😊 what they want
    - 😌 how they feel
    - ☺️ what they are thinking
    - 😊 their choices and preferences
  - Learning to read and write
The aims of using Makaton

- For basic communication
- To help understanding
- To develop language skills
- To facilitate social communication
- To help to build relationships
- To increase equal opportunities
- To teach pre-reading and pre-writing skills towards literacy
It is important to remember to sign only the key words but speak the whole sentence grammatically correct.
Activity 2
The Makaton Core Vocabulary

Broadening Experience Through a Staged Approach
The Makaton Resource Vocabulary

Expanding on the Topics introduced in the Makaton “Core” Vocabulary

- Quantity and Measurement
- Cookery and Meals
- Colours
- Shared activities (verbs)
- Personal hygiene
- Attributes (adjectives)
- Personal possessions
- Money
- Personal actions (verbs)
- Household
- Computer items
- General objects (things)
- Public notices
- Disability and illness
- Self and family
- Sport
- Transport and vehicles
- Animals
- Leisure activities and interests
- Other countries
- Locatives (prepositions)
- Food and drink
- Feelings, emotions and behaviour
- Places
- Sexuality
- Religion and custom
- Calendar items
- People (general)
- Clothing and personal
- Grammatical elements
Makaton around the world

Makaton is used extensively all over the UK, it has also been adapted for use in many other countries, such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>Poland</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bahrain</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Portugal</td>
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<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>Qatar</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>Germany</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Sri Lanka</td>
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<td>Gibraltar</td>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
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<td>Greece</td>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guyana</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>UAE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

USA
Zimbabwe
What are we saying?
What are we saying?

where is the toilet

i would like a biscuit

and some juice
What are we saying?

where is the toilet
i would like a biscuit and some
juice

REMEMBER to sign key words and SPEAK as you sign.
Activity 3
ALWAYS USE SHORT SIMPLE SENTENCES, ALLOW CHILDREN TIME TO PROCESS WHAT YOU HAVE SAID TO THEM.
Keelman’s Way School is a TOTAL COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT and we use Makaton every day.

Daily lessons

Singing and signing

Parent Sessions

Our Community Cafe

Our Performances
PLEASE......

Help our children to become effective communicators. Encourage them to sign whenever possible. Use short simple sentences, and allow them the time to process what you have asked them to do. Try not to interrupt their thought process to early. Call their name to get their attention, always give them eye contact and get down to their level.

Mr Tumble has a lot to answer for, he can drive parents/carers mad but he makes it fun and interesting for all of our children.
Parent signing sessions

Parent’s are invited into school every term to brush up on their signing skills and to learn any new signs. These will be topic related, for example, Easter, Halloween and Christmas vocabulary. These sessions are well attended and are free to parents, carers, grandparents, siblings etc. It also gives parents and carers a chance to meet and talk to other parents.
Makaton Symbols

Symbols can be used at a variety of levels:
• Functional meaning (where one symbol represents a whole sentence)
• Key words in a sentence (where two or three symbols are used)
• For every word in a sentence including the grammatical words and word endings.

As far as possible, all Makaton symbols reflect three essential design criteria:
• They should be as pictographic as possible in order to convey the meaning of the concept represented.
• They should be uncomplicated so that they can be drawn by hand and used in a functional manner similar to writing.
• They should attempt to reflect language themes to support and encourage the development of language structure.

Makaton Symbols offer:
• Permanence. Unlike a sign and words which fade, the symbol is permanent.
• They offer concrete reference. Often the symbol is more like the object it represents, eg toilet, television.
Activity 4
To see

Where

What

Here

Look

Pain

This

Operation
Main Aim of Makaton Training

🖐 To be able to deliver more formal training to larger groups of parents, staff and other professionals.
🖐 To be able to further develop the use of the Makaton programme and to make more people aware of how important it is.
🖐 To promote the use of Makaton throughout school, including staff, children and visiting professionals.
Jacqueline Webb
About me: I am a qualified Makaton Regional Tutor, and I have been working with children with learning difficulties for over sixteen years.
I use Makaton on a daily basis with children, young adults and staff within my school environment. I also encourage parents and carers to use Makaton and have regular sessions within school so that parents can brush up on their signing skills.
I also offer training for the Foundation Workshop. The Makaton Foundation Workshop offers a comprehensive introduction to the Makaton vocabulary. The workshop consists of four modules each lasting three hours. As part of the workshop you will receive four participant manuals, a book of signs (core vocabulary stages 1-4), a book of symbols (core vocabulary stages 1-4) and upon completion of all four modules each participant will receive a certificate of attendance.

Foundation Workshop
Keelman's Way School
Campbell Park Road
Hebburn
NE31 1 QY
Tel: 0191 4897480
e-mail: jwebb@keelmanswayschool.co.uk
If you are interested in attending one of the workshops please contact school, details are above. The cost of each workshop is £90 per person, £40 fee if cancelled less than one week beforehand. Incomplete courses will still be charged for in full.
Activity 5
Now for some fun !!!
PLEASE - HELP YOURSELF

Please feel free to take some of the Sign/Symbol sheets with some topic vocabulary on.
Visit the Makaton website and find lots of fantastic resources that are free to print out or download. There are also some lovely stories about how Makaton has improve the lives of many children and their families.
THANK YOU FOR LISTENING, AND HAPPY SIGNING