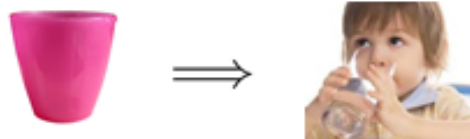


Objects of Reference

An 'Object of Reference' refers to an object that has a particular meaning associated with it. The object should be closely linked to another object, activity, person or event.

For example, a cup can be used to represent a drink. If this item is consistently presented before giving a drink, the child will learn to associate the cup with getting a drink.

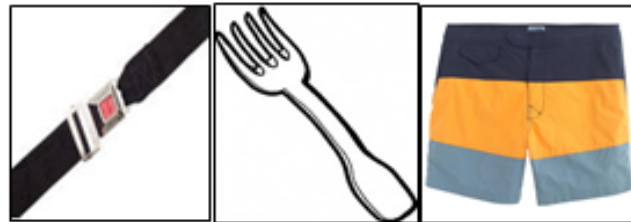


If you are using objects of reference as a means of communication, you need to think about how that object will make sense to the person you are using it with.

Choosing an Object of Reference:

Items are often chosen because of their **sensory properties** (e.g. a piece of scented soap to signify washing) or their **link with the activity** (e.g. a piece of seat belt for going in the car, a swimming costume for going swimming, a fork for dinner).

The object could be a miniature



version of the real object, although this choice may not be suitable for every child e.g. toy car for going in the car.

Try not to use materials that you know your child does not like.

Objects of reference can be used at home to:

⇒ Support understanding of day-to-day activities if the object of reference is presented just before an activity e.g. give your child a fork before they get their dinner they will learn to understand fork=dinner time

⇒ Give extra touch or visual information about what is going to happen

⇒ Support memory by holding the object to act as a reminder

⇒ To communicate - objects of reference that are well known to the individual can be used to make requests/choice. E.g. offer cup for drink and apple for snack