

Objects of Reference

What are objects of reference?

Objects that have a specific meaning attached to them. They stand for something the same way that words, signs or symbols do.

What can objects of reference represent?

They can represent anything that words, signs or symbols can. e.g. Drink can be represented by a cup or mug. Swimming can be represented by a towel or costume. People can be represented by something that is always worn by them, such as a wrist band or jewellery. Routines can be represented by objects which are used at specific times of the day such as a spoon for mealtimes.

Why use objects of reference?

To help remember things, to understand things better and to communicate with others.

Which people are likely to benefit from using objects of reference?

Those who are visually impaired, have problems interpreting what they see or lack understanding of spoken or visual communication.

What skills and understanding need to be developed in order to use objects of reference?

The ability to discriminate objects by touch, the appreciation, at some level that an object can mean something and the capacity to remember that a given object has a particular meaning.

How can objects of reference be introduced?

When objects are presented they can be accompanied by a verbal, sign or symbol explanation. For instance present the object (cup),

say 'drink' and immediately give the drink. Repeat as often as necessary for the child to grasp the connection between the object and its meaning. It is likely that the action will need to be repeated many times, over a period of time before the link is made.

Objects of reference may -

Help the child to understand their world better and improve their ability to communicate with others.

In school we have a variety of objects of reference to represent routines, places and subjects. There is a different genre of music played each day in reception. There is a colour and smell attributed to each day and many classes have specific songs to represent the day of the week.

These are the agreed objects of reference we use in school

Drink	Cup
Lunch	Spoon
Bathroom	Soap in glove / pad
Gastro feed	Child's own tube / syringe
Home	Goodbye song / child's own bag
Outdoor learning	Welly / child's own coat
Swimming	Blue towel / child's own kit
Sensory studio	Holographic disc
Soft play room	White ball
Art room	Chunky paintbrush
Music room	Bell
Library	Small board book
Food tech room	Wooden spoon

<i>English</i>	<i>Book</i>
<i>Maths</i>	<i>Triangle shape</i>
<i>Science</i>	<i>Magnifying glass</i>
<i>History</i>	<i>Dinosaur</i>
<i>Geography</i>	<i>Globe</i>
<i>Art</i>	<i>Rainbow crayon</i>
<i>Design technology</i>	<i>Duplo brick</i>
<i>Food technology</i>	<i>Silicone cake case</i>
<i>Music</i>	<i>Small musical instrument</i>
<i>PE</i>	<i>Textured ball</i>
<i>RE</i>	<i>Candle</i>
<i>PSHE</i>	<i>Play figure</i>
<i>Greetings</i>	<i>Song / smell / colour of the day (see below)</i>

Monday - Geranium

Tuesday - Lemon

Wednesday - Mint

Thursday - Orange

Friday - Lavender