The Makaton Friendly Scheme in the Early Years

Being able to communicate is one of the most important skills we need in life. Almost everything we do involves communication; everyday tasks such as learning at school, asking for food and drink, sorting out problems, making friends and having fun. These all rely on our ability to communicate with each other.

Makaton is a language programme which gives everyone a helping hand to talk. It is proven to develop speech, language and communication skills. Using signs (gestures) and symbols (pictures) a child or adult with learning or communication difficulties can tell someone what they want, make choices and join in.

By becoming a member of the Makaton Friendly scheme you:

- Understand that different people use alternative ways to communicate. They may use speech, signs, symbols or electronic devices to support or instead of spoken language

- Provide a supportive and welcoming environment so that people who have learning or communication difficulties, old or young, can take part in the services that you offer

- Use some Makaton symbols and signs. For example, a café might learn signs like 'hello' and 'drink' or use some symbols on their menu or to show people where the toilets are

- Support people who use Makaton to access services that everyone else can

At The Makaton Charity, we are all about helping people to communicate! The ability to communicate opens up a whole new world of possibilities for people and helps them participate in everyday activities that can often be taken for granted. So, please help us to make sure that everyone is included and show that there are people and organisations that are Makaton Friendly.

Early Years Makaton Friendly Settings

Nomination for the scheme

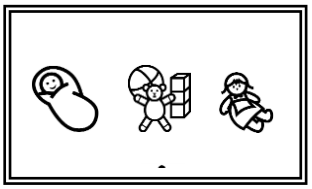
For an Early Years setting to be nominated for the Makaton Friendly Scheme by a Barnet Regional Tutor we would expect that:

Signs:



- ✓ Adults routinely use some Makaton signs, on a daily basis and regularly throughout the sessions
- ✓ Children are able to understand and use some Makaton signs

Symbols:



- ✓ Some Makaton symbols are on display in the setting, on a board or lanyards. (Other symbols may also be used)
- ✓ Children are able to understand some Makaton and other symbols

Staff:



- ✓ There is a **Makaton Lead Practitioner** or **Champion** in place who is trained to Makaton Foundation level and can support other staff in Makaton use in the setting
- ✓ The majority of staff in the setting have attended a Makaton Taster session or workshop, for larger settings at least two staff may have attended Foundation training

Parents and visitors:



- ✓ Parents are regularly informed and updated about how Makaton is used to enhance communication in the nursery and to support the children's understanding and learning.
  Visitors are also aware through for example a 'sign of the week' display board, newsletter or informal conversations

Resources

- ✓ The setting has and uses some Makaton resources to support the use of signing in the nursery such as visual time tables, song and story or activity choice boards, Mr Tumble and 'Something Special' DVDs, puppets, books, materials, posters.





Early Years Makaton Friendly Setting

How to apply:

- Look at the Makaton Friendly Criteria which can be found on the PIT website and the Makaton Charity website
- Speak to your Area SENCO and discuss if you meet the necessary expectations
- Complete the Makaton Friendly Nomination Form which can be found on the PIT website and the Makaton charity website
  (The form needs to be signed by the manager/ owner of your setting and a Regional Makaton Tutor)
- Your Area SENCO will contact Chris or Hilary (Regional Makaton Tutors) so that they can arrange to visit your setting and sign off your form
- Return the form to Makaton with your registration fee.



What happens next?

Once the nomination has been approved, Makaton will contact you to confirm that you have been successful and that a Makaton Friendly pack has been sent to you.
This contains information about Makaton and the work of the Makaton Charity, a window sticker, certificate and signs and symbols for wayfinding.



The Makaton charity has also created a **Makaton Friendly Map** where you can see all the current Makaton Friendly places.



So far there are cafés, donkey sanctuaries and a local post office!
New Makaton Friendly organisations will be pinned to the map as they are approved

(See www.makaton.org.uk for details)