

Spreading the benefits as widely as possible

The Makaton Charity uses a cascade approach to sharing Makaton. This sustainable model ensures that the maximum amount of people can benefit from using Makaton.



Training. We provide training to parents, carers and professionals, via our nationwide network of licensed tutors and trainers. There are currently over 1,000 licensed Makaton Tutors and Trainers across the UK, delivering training to over 30,000 parents, carers and professionals each year.



Resources. We develop and produce a wide range of printed and electronic resources, from nursery rhyme DVDs to vocabulary books covering complex subjects such as bereavement and electronic collections of signs and symbols for computer use.



Information. We work with others to make information accessible. For example, we have worked with Local Councils to translate materials using Makaton symbols, so that Makaton users can vote in local elections, and with housing associations to provide information about the services they offer.



Support. We offer advice and support to families and professionals. For example, our free Family Advisory Service provides information and support to parents and family members of people with a learning or communication difficulty and to the professionals working with them.



Influence. We work in partnership to influence society and empower people. For example, we work with organisations such as The National Portrait Gallery, Her Majesty's Court Service and the BBC to promote communication and make Makaton available so that more people are able to participate.

MAKATON®

What is Makaton?

Makaton is a language programme using signs and symbols to help people communicate. It is designed to support spoken language and the signs and symbols are used with speech in spoken word order.

With Makaton, children and adults can communicate straight away using the signs and symbols. Many people then drop the signs or symbols naturally at their own pace, as they develop speech.

Makaton is highly flexible as it can be personalised to the individual's needs and used at a level suitable for them. For those who have experienced the frustration of being unable to communicate meaningfully or effectively, Makaton can be a revelation and a bridge to greater confidence and self-esteem.

"I love the way that Makaton has enabled my son to develop his speech and make himself understood. It was like a light coming on when he very first used it and was understood."



How is Makaton used?

Makaton uses signs, symbols and speech to help people communicate. Signs are used, with speech, in spoken word order. Using signs can help people who have no speech or whose speech is unclear.

Symbols can be used to support communication in many different ways. Using symbols can help people who have limited speech and those who cannot, or prefer not to sign.



MAKATON® Helping people communicate
The Makaton Charity

The Makaton Charity, Westmead House, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 7LP
01276 606760 • info@makaton.org • www.makaton.org

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Makaton is very flexible and can be used to:

- Share thoughts, choices and emotions
- Label real objects, pictures, photos and places
- Take part in games and songs
- Listen to, read and tell stories
- Create recipes, menus, shopping lists
- Write letters and messages
- Help people find their way around public buildings

Who uses Makaton?

Today over 100,000 children and adults, use Makaton symbols and signs, either as their main method of communication or as a way to support speech.



People with learning or communication difficulties. Makaton is the UK's leading language programme for adults and children with learning or communication difficulties. It is also used by everyone who shares their lives for example, parents and other family members, friends and carers, and education and health professionals.



People seeking to develop their language and literacy skills. Makaton is used for teaching communication, language and literacy skills with children and adults who are at an early stage of communication and language development. This structured approach can also help people who are learning English as an additional language, helping them to communicate straightaway, while also supporting their learning.



Mainstream schools. Makaton is regularly used in mainstream schools, to support all children to develop communication, language and literacy skills. It also supports integration, as children with and without language difficulties can communicate with each other, learn and play together more easily.



People looking after babies and young children. There is a special Makaton Signing for Babies training, available to parents, family members and professionals who wish to sign with the babies and children in their care. Signing while speaking, has been shown to encourage the development of communication and language skills. It can also give carers a greater understanding of a baby's wants and needs, which can help reduce frustration.



All of us. Makaton symbols are widely used in public buildings such as schools, hospitals, courts and libraries, to help people find their way around. So, you may be using Makaton in daily life without even knowing it.

What does The Makaton Charity do?

The Makaton Charity is responsible for developing and sharing the Makaton Language Programme. We give people the means to express themselves, engage with others, be included in everyday life, take part in education, access information and services and ultimately achieve their full potential.

Helping people communicate

“ From being able to communicate her most basic needs as a toddler, Matilda's now a schoolgirl who can tell me about her friendships, her happinesses and sadnesses. It's important stuff. ”

People with learning disabilities or communication difficulties may struggle to make themselves understood - and to understand others.

This can provoke intense frustration, challenging behaviour and isolation and act as a barrier to achievement.

Parents and carers can experience similar feelings of frustration and isolation, wondering how they will ever 'get through'.

Makaton takes away that frustration and enables individuals to connect with other people and the world around them. This opens up all kinds of possibilities.

Have you seen Mr Tumble?

The BBC's award-winning Something Special children's television programme has raised awareness of Makaton among a mainstream audience.

It features a character called Mr Tumble, played by Justin Fletcher, who uses Makaton symbols and signs to support speech throughout each programme.

