

## Objects of reference (OOR)

Objects of reference (OOR) are objects that have particular meanings assigned to them. They can represent anything; a word or symbol for example, a **fork** would represent lunch, a **sponge** would represent bath time and a **key** would represent home. They can help a child to develop awareness and understanding of the environment as they signal what is about to happen.

They are multi-sensory, meaning, they can be tactile, visual, or have a distinctive smell, sound or movement.

### What do I need to do?

- Present the OOR when you are moving to a new activity, place or event e.g., keys alongside your verbal communication saying 'Home time'.
- Encourage the child to look and explore the OOR with both hands.
- Allow and encourage the child to hold the OOR whilst moving to the place/activity.
- As soon as the OOR has been presented, ensure that the child is taken to that place/activity.



### Remember...

Using OOR's in everyday situations can reduce a child's level of frustration and confusion about what is happening. They provide the child with a **clear and consistent routine**.

For further ideas check out the videos below.



### How?

**Use the same object, the same word and be consistent.**

### Putting it into practise

- Use the OOR **regularly and consistently** – think about what activities the child does regularly.  
OOR's **should be individual** to the child. When choosing an OOR it is important to **observe the child** and note down how they interact with the environment and what things are important to them.
- **Motivating**- It must be motivating to the child, e.g., if the child becomes animated during a regular game with a parachute, then find an object to represent this.

### ➡ Moving forward...

Try introducing the concept of **Now** and **Next**. This simple visual strategy helps the child understand what is coming next. Use a piece of card, stick a picture of the activity the child is being asked to do on the left and a strong motivator that he can do afterwards on the right.