

## What are objects of reference?

An object of reference is an object that has a particular meaning, e.g. a certain ball represents going out to play, a bubble wand represents come and blow bubbles or a snack box represents come and sit for snack time.



## Objects of reference can be used ...

To help a child **understand what is happening** or is about to happen, e.g. being shown a spade means the child is about to be encouraged to move to the sand tray area.

**To Support a transition** from place to place, your child is indoors and it's time to go outside to the sandpit, so show them the spade to support their understanding of what is about to happen as it happens.

## How to select your objects

An object of reference needs to be chosen carefully and appropriate for the child.

Objects should be chosen for routines that are the most meaningful and motivating for the child.

Objects should be used consistently and will need to be used a number of times before a child will begin to anticipate and predict what it means.

## How to start using objects of reference?

1. You may find it helpful to collect your objects of reference and have them kept in one place, e.g. in a box, basket or on a shelf, somewhere everyone can easily get to.
2. Keep your language as simple as you can, e.g. child's name first "James" "snack time" alongside showing him the object.
3. Allow the child to hold the object and engage with the object whilst moving to the area/activity.
4. Agree with others who look after your child that you use the same words, e.g. decide on "outside" or "playtime", "food" or "snack" and so on. This will help your child to understand language as they see the associated object.