

Introduction to Makaton

What is Makaton and why is it used?

First created in the 1970's, Makaton is the UK's leading type of communication for adults and children with learning or communication difficulties. Makaton is known for being a simple form of signed communication which has over 1 million users in the UK alone. It is a language programme that combines symbols, signs, and speech to provide different options for people with speech affecting disorders to communicate with. It

allows individuals who may find it difficult to verbalise to communicate what they want, think or how they feel and make themselves understood. Makaton is widely used in mainstream school to support all children to develop their language and communication skills whilst supporting children with and without language difficulties to communicate, learn and play together more easily.



Who uses Makaton?

At present over 100,000 children and adults use Makaton symbols and signs as either their main method of communication or to support their speech. Additionally, many parents, nurseries, mainstream schools, and special educational needs schools utilise Makaton with their children too. It can also be utilised with individuals where English is not their first language to help them to communicate whilst developing their spoken English skills. As Makaton follows the grammatical structure of spoken English it is mostly used within the UK, but since it was created it has now been utilised in more than 40 countries across the world.

How is Makaton different to British Sign Language (BSL)?

Makaton and BSL are similar in which they both use signs and symbols to Aid communication, however Makaton can be also used alongside spoken English where BSL cannot. Furthermore, Makaton is utilised to help people who can hear with learning or communication difficulties compared to BSL which is used as the main source of communication for individuals that are hard of hearing or completely deaf. BSL also uses its own grammar, facial expressions, lip patterns and hand signs which can have regional variations meaning that individuals dependent on BSL may struggle to communicate with others using BSL from different regions of the UK.

How can you learn Makaton?

Across the UK there are more than 1,000 licensed Makaton tutors who deliver training to over 30,000 professionals, carers, and parents each year. There are many different levels to the Makaton training programme. Level one Makaton provides a core vocabulary consisting of 450 words, signs, and symbols. Following this, Level 2 training is recommended to extend and deepen your understanding, introducing the larger open-ended vocabulary within the Makaton language. There is also level 3 and level 4 Makaton courses available for individuals

who want to complete their understanding of the language. Below are some examples of what we use to communicate within our physiotherapy sessions using Makaton.



How much does Makaton training cost and what's included?

To maintain low costs of Makaton training, The Makaton Charity recommends the level of fees that tutors, and trainers should charge. The recommended price for online workshops is £81 per person however face to face prices can vary as trainers sometimes have to add on additional cost for room hire, travel and other necessary expenses. As part of the course, you are provided with your own study materials such as: Makaton symbols and signs, participant manual and a certificate of attendance.

Useful links

Makaton Charity website <https://makaton.org>

Find Makaton training near you

https://makaton.org/TMC/Learn_Makaton/Find_Training.aspx?WebsiteKey=2d2ed83b-15c1-4b7f-b237-8ca41598fd50

Learn Makaton with Mr Tumble https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4pgpsT_iHRk

Introduction to Makaton https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKn3RZDvc_s