Many children need help to understand what they are being asked to do. We know that being shown an object helps to develop this understanding. Visual cues stay in their sight long after the spoken word has gone.

Being shown an object will help children:
- Make sense of their world
- Link words, symbols and objects to an activity
- Understand what is going to happen

Choose objects which are only used in a certain routine. Eg. use a dummy or teddy to show bedtime, but only if the child would not have this object at other times in the day.

Try to keep objects in a box when they aren’t in use so they are easily accessible for you and everyone else who communicates with your child.

Before taking the child to an activity, give them the object to hold and touch. Allow them to explore it and talk to them about what it means. Then do the activity straight away.

After the activity has finished, put the object away in the box. Draw the child’s attention to the fact the object has gone and the activity has finished e.g. ‘snack finished’.

Remember:
- Use real objects at first as they are easier for children to understand.
- Be consistent in using the object.
- Say the words that go alongside the object and activity as you are doing it.

Suggestions:
- Cup for drink time
- Spoon/bowl for mealtimes
- Pyjamas for bedtime
- Duck for bath time