References to the Makaton Language Programme in the report from Department for Education Better Communication Research Programme (BCRP)

This paper is provided by The Makaton Charity for Makaton Tutors to provide evidence of the use of Makaton with children with a variety of needs as cited by the Better Communication Research Programme. The findings below could be used in a variety of ways, for example providing information to commissioners of services, as part of the Local Offer, in support of funding applications or on Makaton workshops etc. Tutors are asked to reference The Makaton Charity and the papers cited accordingly.

The Better Communication Research Programme (BCRP) reflects the results of a 3-year research programme designed to investigate:

- the progress of children with speech, language and communication needs over time;
- the support and interventions offered to these children and the evidence base for them;
- the perspectives of parents and children about the outcomes they value.

The BCRP considers the overall implications for policy, practice and research drawing on evidence provided in the four thematic reports and ten technical reports. It is aimed particularly at non-specialist policy makers and commissioners.

Makaton is mentioned in several of the papers.

Technical report DFE-RR247- BCRP13: Exploring interventions for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs: a study of practice

The paper explores the interventions, approaches and activities used by Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) with specific age groups of children and with specific areas of SEN. The information was gathered through questionnaires and interviews from SLTs working in the UK.

Makaton is the second most used programme, as used by Speech and Language Therapists. On average only Derbyshire Language Programme is used more. Makaton can of course be used with DLS.

Makaton is the most used intervention with children 0 -2 years, used by 82% of SLTs;

- 75% of SLTs use Makaton with children aged 2-3 years;
- 56% SLTs use Makaton with children aged 4-5 years;
- 61% SLTs use Makaton with children aged 5-7 years.

Use of Makaton with children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2 year olds</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 year olds</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 year olds</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-7 year olds</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activities used with 0-7 year olds are: Auditory discrimination, other intervention activities, auditory bombardment/ focused audiology stimulation, phonological awareness, barrier games, rhyme awareness, auditory memory, minimal pair discrimination/ production, traditional articulation activities, narrative therapy.

Approaches used with this age group are: Creating language rich environment, modelling, signing, parent child interaction, reading questions, waiting for response, repetition, commentary, reducing distractions, forced alternatives, providing feedback, visual timetables

It can be inferred that Makaton is used to contribute to these activities and approaches although this is not made explicit (Tutors might like to consider this as a small scale research project).

Appendix 5 provides a full list of all intervention programmes mentioned in the interviews. There are 60 programmes listed, including Makaton, and many with which Makaton can be used, for example PECS, TEACCH, etc. PECS is used with children aged 0-3 and with young people aged 15+. Makaton can of course be used with the PECS programme.

Appendix 6: Table A.6 provides a list of the 17 most frequently used interventions by age group, and Makaton is first in this list.

The paper also looks at activities and approaches used with different age groups and with different SEN groups. SLTs work with the following SEN groups:

- Specific learning difficulties
- Moderate learning difficulties
- Severe learning difficulties
- Profound and multiple difficulties
- Physical difficulties
- Behavioural emotional and social difficulties
- Autistic spectrum disorders
- Hearing impairment
- Multi-sensory difficulties

Between 84-100% of SLTs work on Communication, 44-89% work on Language, 47-78% work on Social/ learning outcomes. Makaton can be used to support these SEN groups and outcomes.

Interpretation of the data indicates that Makaton is used to achieve the following outcomes for 0-2 year olds:

**Communication**
- Communication skills
- Parent child interaction
- Pre-verbal skills
- Attention and listening
- Social skills
- Provision of a means of communication

**Language**
- Understanding
- Expression
- Vocabulary

**Social/learning**
- Enjoyment of communication
- Opportunity to communicate
- Parents’ skills
- Relationships
- Inclusion
- Confidence
- Independence
- Teacher skills
- Behaviour
Makaton is used by 75% of SLTs working with children aged 2-3 years. Outcomes targeted by SLTs working with children aged 2-3 years are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
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<td>Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent child interaction</td>
<td>Provision of a means of communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social/ learning Speech
Improved behavior Intelligibility
Improved relationships Phonological awareness
Enjoyment of communication Sound system
Opportunity to communicate Consistency
Parents’ skills Oro-motor skills

Information is also provided for outcomes for children in the 4-5 and 5-7 age ranges.

This paper also talks about the importance of the communication supporting classroom in achieving communication and language skills.

Note from The Makaton Charity: the Charity’s quality standards including Makaton Friendly award, Makaton Centre of Excellence award, and Makaton Quality Mark all recognise commitment in this area. Makaton symbols can be used to support a communication friendly environment, and the charity provides resources and guidance on using symbols for wayfinding and signage as well as an accessible toolkit to help those needing help in adapting their communicative interactions for children.

Technical report DFE-RR247- BCRP10: What Works: Interventions for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs

Workforce development is a crucial element important and key to the delivery of most interventions. This affects their adoption and implementation, their impact on children and young people and ultimately their sustainability.

At a specialist level, Makaton training for staff to use with pupils with SLCN is listed as having a solid evidence base.

The criteria for evaluation of interventions includes having reasonable theoretical underpinning, having good face validity (being easy to follow), being feasible in terms of budget, resources, materials and time, having formal training (meaning it can be replicated), having the flexibility to be used creatively to meet the needs of the children, having formal evaluations.

Makaton training is based on decades of experience of teaching people to sign and to use symbols. That Makaton training is standardised across the UK means that everyone receives the same standard of training, and the same outcomes can be achieved. Makaton is implemented at a targeted level by classroom assistants, teachers and other practitioners.

Technical report DFE-RR247- BCRP12: The preferred outcomes of children with speech, language and communication needs and their parents

This paper explores children’s views on outcomes that they valued. In a discussion about hopes for the future a girl told researchers, via another child interpreting her signing, ‘everyone should be learning to sign’.
Thematic report: The perspectives of children and young people who have speech, language and communication needs, and their parents.

Parents need easy access to information about the developmental indicators of speech, language and communication development and the factors which practitioners recognise as cause for concern.

The Makaton Charity has resources to help parents to identify progress. Makaton Signing for Babies training provides parents and practitioners with information and skills to develop early communication skills as well as signposting them should there be any worries.

Communication is recognised and valued by parents as the fundamental skill that underpins many areas of life, including independence and inclusion. Children themselves highlight their emotional needs, ability to be able to communicate with peers, their confidence and lowering of frustrations.

Makaton provides support for the development of fundamental communication skills in the very early years to the development of language skills.

BCRP: 1st Interim report
Interim report 1 lists Publishing programmes project mapping exercise: interventions reported by interviewees and Makaton is listed. Makaton training listed among the 24 trainings reported.

BCRP: 2nd Interim report
SLTs specify use of a total of 38 programmes, the most common being the DLS (65% SLTs), Makaton (58%), Nuffield-dyspraxia (47%), Core Vocabulary (40%), and Hanen (39%). This is illustrated in Fig 1.

SLTs identified the frequency of use of all programme. The table lists Makaton as 11% rarely used, 23.5% sometimes use, 35.1% use frequently, 58% combines score, as illustrated in Fig 2.