

iEmpowerment--iPad Use in the Therapy Environment

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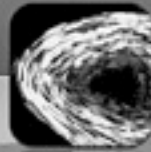
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Bugs & Buttons



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Articulation!



Sono Flex Lite

iPads have become a powerful tool for students with disabilities to access educational opportunities. iPads are being featured more and more on the news, and parents are excited by simple, easy-to-use devices and educational and therapeutic apps. iPads are not the “solution” for all disabilities but can be a valuable resource for reaching our kids with motor, speech, communication, and social skills difficulties.

Information for iPads changes on a daily basis, and prices for apps vary by the hour. Although some of the apps in these handouts have been donated by their companies they are not endorsed by this therapist or her employer. This is simply a list of apps that have been tried by therapists and teachers who have rated them highly.

Why an iPad is a Strong Tool for Children with Disabilities

- It requires only a light touch on a sensitive screen and only a limited range of motion.
- Cognitively, it is simple for our students to use -- just touch and it happens.
- Its simple interface leads to maximum independence
- It is light to carry and hold. It can be mounted in many ways for convenient access.
- Many apps are developed for users with disabilities and for improving developmental skills.
- It offers the ability to change font size and have items read out loud.
- Most of all, it is a “cool” piece of technology that ALL populations love to use, so it is not stigmatizing and it looks much more “normal” than large adapted devices.



The iPad's Limitations

- iPads are fragile and easily broken without the correct protection.
- You cannot change some accessibility options like touch sensitivity or keyboard access.
- Currently some of the stronger augmentative communication systems are not available with full featured apps on the iPad but the apps are quickly becoming more robust.
- Word prediction and voice recognition software on the iPad are not as strong as they are on a computer, and iPad programs do not yet “learn” the user's voice or vocabulary but are still very accurate for individuals with a “typical” voice or moderate spelling errors.
- Long-term use of a keyboard may be difficult without an attached keyboard.



Research on Students with Disabilities and the iPad

Until recently there has not been much research conducted or data released showing the effectiveness of using iPads with students with disabilities, but recently two studies have shown positive results with students with Cortical Visual Impairments (CVI) and students with autism.

A recent study from the University of Kansas about the therapeutic effects of utilizing an iPad with students with CVI has shown that CVI students responded to the iPad and demonstrated significant improvements. Further details about this study are

available at <http://www.news.ku.edu/2011/october/5/ipad.shtml>

Rhonda McEwen at the University of Toronto is currently conducting a study entitled “Mobile Technology for Social and Communication Support Among Students Identified on the Autism Spectrum.” The autistic students’ ability to use symbols to communicate has improved, as has communication with students with a range of disabilities and problems with social skills. Further details about this study are available at <http://individual.utoronto.ca/rmcewen/research.html>



Protect the iPad -- It is fragile! Use a “Bounce-able” case to protect it from a fall.

Use a Ziplock bag, a vacuum-seal bag, or a waterproof case for saliva and water protection. For more ideas go to www.Assistivetechworld.net

How to Make the iPad Easier for Students to Use

- Use the new feature “Guided Access” to lock a student in an app and disable buttons to keep them on track and in the app.
- Use fingerless gloves for any student whose palm often touches the screen.
- Try the iPad in alternative positions such as in a stander, tilted on a stand, or on the floor with the student lying on their stomach.
- Try using a stylus for writing activities; be aware that adaptive mouth-sticks need special adaptation to work with an iPad screen.
- Turn off the screen rotation feature so the screen will not “tilt” on the user.
- Look for apps that allow for the screen to be locked. Many programs for “babies” have made it impossible to accidentally hit the wrong thing and exit a program.
- For students who don’t engage initially, I have turned off the lights in the room to help them focus in on the iPad; then when the lights are on they begin to visually attend.
- Some students are afraid of a touchscreen at first; try starting with something fun and calming at first such as a pond app or an animal app.

How to Make it Easier for You to Use

- Remember, almost all iPhone apps work on the iPad, just bigger. Just click the “2x” button in the bottom right corner of the screen.
- If you have an iPad 2 or above and a projector or a Promethium Board, use an adapter to share and enlarge or use an AppleTV.
- Categorize your apps -- they multiply quickly...
- Keep all the apps you want to use with students on a separate page of the home screen.
- If your iPad is running slowly then close programs to increase working memory.
- Place restrictions on your iPad to keep children from installing or uninstalling apps.

A Few of iPad's Built-in Accessibility Features

For more information on adaptations go to assistivetechworld.net.

VoiceOver

VoiceOver screen reader comes standard on iPad. It's a gesture-based screen reader, and it allows you to enjoy the fun and simplicity of iPad even if you can't see the screen.

With VoiceOver, you use simple gestures to physically interact with items on the screen. Just touch the screen to hear an item's description, then gesture with a double-tap, drag, or flick to control iPad.



Select and Say

Speak Selection lets you highlight text in any application by double-tapping it. Even if you don't have VoiceOver enabled, Speak Selection will read you the highlighted text and give you formatting options like cut, copy, and paste.

Zoom

While many iPad applications let you zoom in and out of specific elements such as images in Mail or web page columns in Safari, Zoom lets you magnify the entire screen of any application you're using to help you see what's on the display. Zoom can be enabled on iPad using iTunes when you're setting up iPad for yourself or someone else, or it can be enabled later using the Accessibility menu in the Settings application.

"The New" iPad Dictation

On an iPad that supports Dictation, you can dictate text instead of typing on the onscreen keyboard. For example, you can dictate a message in Mail or a note in Notes. To use Dictation, iPad must be connected to the Internet.

(product descriptions based on information from Apple.com)

Sponsors

In preparation for this training many companies have been kind enough to donate apps for presentation and trial. Although some of the apps in these handouts have been donated by the companies, they are not endorsed by this therapist or her employer. Below is a list of sponsors that helped make this training possible.



Pocket SLP Apps -- Pocket Pairs and more
Smarty Ears -- multiple apps
Speech with Milo
Gus Communications --Talk Tablet
Tactus Therapy -- multiple apps
Serious Tree -- Speech Stickers
Good Karma -- Visual Planner
Speech-EZ -- Figure Ground Auditory

Injini AAC
Beevisual -- Choice Works
AssitiveWare - Proloquo2Go
Assistive Apps -- Assistive Chat
Silver Kite -- TouchChat