

## Using iPads for Children with Down Syndrome

### *Why iPad?*

The iPad is the most popular device in a line of computer "tablets." Tablets are hand held computers larger and more powerful than a cell phone but smaller than a laptop computer. Their main feature is a large touch screen which is the primary way to interact with the device. We are focusing on solely the iPad and no other tablet computers because the iPad is the most popular tablet on the market, is easy for children to use, and offers the most variety of high quality, low cost content for children with special needs.

We believe iPads are useful tools in the development of children with Down syndrome for the following reasons.

- 1) **Education:** Children with Down syndrome tend to learn best visually and through interaction with physical objects. The iPad combines sight, hearing, and touch to help your child learn in the way that he or she learns best.
- 2) **Individualization:** There are a huge variety of programs called "apps" available for use on the iPad. You can find an app for almost any skill you are working on with your child. Many apps are customizable so you can adjust difficulty levels and time limits to avoid frustration and learn effectively.
- 3) **Value:** Although the purchase of an iPad is a major investment, the real value is in the huge selection of free or inexpensive educational apps that your iPad give you access to.
- 4) **Simplicity:** Children with Down syndrome learn best when the technology they are using is simple and easy to understand.
- 5) **Self-Esteem:** The iPad is a device everyone recognizes and relates to. Owning or using an iPad can help your child with Down syndrome feel like he or she is fitting in with other people. It makes a great ice-breaker for social conversations.
- 6) **Proven results:** A recent study showed that computer based applications produced better results in teaching logic and mathematics to children with special needs than traditional methods.

### Useful Apps for Children with Down syndrome

#### Preschool Age (0-4 years)

- 1) Montessori Counting Board (Numbers, \$.99)
- 2) ABC Magnet Alphabet (Letters, Free)
- 3) Dr. Seuss's ABC's (Letters, \$3.99)
- 4) Sign for Me (Sign Language, \$9.99)

- 5) Articulation Station (Speech, Free)
- 6) Special Words (Flash Cards, \$13.99)
- 7) See. Touch. Learn. (Flash Cards, Free)
- 8) Sight Words by Photo Touch (Flash Cards, Free)
- 9) ABC Flash Cards (Flash Cards, \$1.99)
- 10) Story Patch (Customized stories, \$2.99)
- 11) Goldilocks and the 3 Bears (Story, \$.99)
- 12) Injini Child Development Suite Lite (Fine motor language, Free)--update \$29.99
- 13) Preschool Adventure (Various, \$.99)
- 14) My First AAC (AAC, \$24.99)
- 15) Sonoflex Lite (AAC, Free)
- 16) Sounding Board (AAC, Free)

#### **Ages 5+**

- 1) Dexteria (Fine Motor Skills, \$4.99)
- 2) Motion Math Hungry Fish (Math, Free)
- 3) eReadingtoGo! (Reading, Free)
- 4) Verbs with Milo (Language, \$2.99)
- 5) Jolly Holiday (Language, \$.99)
- 6) Talking Tom Cat 2 for iPad (Speech, Free)
- 7) WH Question Cards-Pro (Speech, \$11.99)
- 8) Articulation Station (Speech, Free)
- 9) Special Words (Flash Cards, \$13.99)
- 10) See. Touch. Learn. (Flash Cards, Free)
- 11) Sight Words by Photo Touch (Flash Cards, Free)
- 12) My First AAC (AAC, \$24.99)
- 13) Write My Name (Writing, \$3.99)
- 14) Calm Counter (Behavior, \$2.99)
- 15) Everyday Social Skills HD (Behavior, \$1.99)

## 16) Eye Contact-Toybox (Behavior, \$2.99)

These apps were current as of January, 2013

### **What to look for in a good app for children with Down syndrome...**

LARGE Game Buttons

Fun to Play!

Appropriate Reading Level

Simple Menus

Limited Chances for Failure

Appropriate developmental and maturity level

Rewards correct answers only

No usernames or passwords needed (unless you want to restrict content)

Fast Loading times

### **Every child is different!**

Experiment with different apps and see what he or she likes.

### **Websites to find more great apps**

[www.bridgingapps.org](http://www.bridgingapps.org)

[www.momswithapps.com/apps-for-special-needs](http://www.momswithapps.com/apps-for-special-needs)

[www.lear.org](http://www.lear.org)

The iPad is not a substitute for human interaction. It should be used as a tool to help parents and educators interact with children. Babies can lose their ability to discern emotional cues if they focus too much on objects instead of faces. The emotional and social development of children with Down syndrome is very important and there is simply no substitute for interacting with humans to develop these skills. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting screen time (iPads, TV, movie, video games) for all children to 1-2 hours a day.

**Sponsor**

**Children's Mercy Hospitals & Clinics--Kansas City**

**Down Syndrome Clinic**

2401 Gillham Road

Kansas City, MO 64108

[http://www.childrensmc.org/Clinics\\_and\\_Services/Clinics\\_and\\_Departments/Down\\_Syndrome\\_Clinic/](http://www.childrensmc.org/Clinics_and_Services/Clinics_and_Departments/Down_Syndrome_Clinic/)