

iPad apps for speech, language and literacy

There are many advantages of using iPads in the educational setting. Let's face it, most children know how to use an iPad while they are still in a pram! However, it can be a mine field out there as far as which apps are appropriate to use.

Here are some advantages of using iPads in the educational setting:

- Progress monitoring – there are apps available that track a student's progress on a goal, enabling the Speech Pathologist, teacher or parent to evaluate how the student is going, celebrate successes and update goals as required.
- Motivation – Students enjoy using iPads as they are fun and engaging. Some studies suggest a higher rate of student involvement in their education activities when technology is used.
- Literacy – A large library of books is available on electronic devices now which can encourage reading and a love of books, particularly if your child is struggling and disinterested in books.
- Support tools – Apps have been developed for students with disabilities such as Autism including schedules and timers to assist them in being able to function in the classroom and at home with changes to routines and transitioning between activities.

When choosing an app for your child or student, keep the following things in mind:

- Choose apps that are age appropriate
- Choose apps that support the particular skill your child is working on. Ideally, find an app that helps your child master skills they are on the verge of developing or practice newly acquired skills.
- Choose apps that encourage social interaction, imagination and creativity. Language is best learnt when a child is engaged in a fun, meaningful interaction.
- Choose apps that support learning at school. Look for apps on topics of interest to your child that make learning fun and engaging.
- Check reviews. Look at independent expert reviews before purchasing and downloading apps to ensure they are appropriate for your child.

Here are just a few apps to get you started:

Receptive language skills:

- *School of Multi Step Directions:* Created by a certified Speech Pathologist for children aged 5-12 to improve auditory comprehension of multi-step directions in the academic context. The app is built around the theme of school and allows children to follow increasingly longer and more complex directions in different classroom settings.

Expressive language skills:

- *Verbs News:* A fun and creative app created by a certified Speech Pathologist for children to learn and practice verbs in four different tenses.

Literacy:

- *Little Learners Love Literacy decodable readers:* These are 'no tricks' books! Once children know 8 letters and sounds they can start reading about Pip and Tim, their family, friends and pets. There are 7 stages with 5 books in each to give lots of reading practice. The stories are engaging and the apps have professional audio in different modes, even allowing children to record themselves read!

*****Any app is more powerful if you engage with your child while they are using it. Get your child talking about what they are doing on the app and why they have to do it a certain way. What are the goals and how do they achieve it.***

References:

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