Factsheet: Apps

Using Apps to support speech, language and communication

What are apps?
Apps are applications that you can download onto devices such as your phone or tablet either for free or at a cost. They may be designed to give information or to provide fun ways for children to consolidate or practise different skills.

Why use them?
- Technology can be very motivating both for young people and those who work with them. Many people are familiar with using devices and downloading apps onto them.
- In comparison to some communication devices iPads/tablets are affordable and easy to get fixed.
- iPads/tablets are fairly robust - especially once special covers are put on them.
- You can use iPads/tablets and apps for:

  1. teaching and learning
  2. developing communication skills
  3. staying organised
  4. social interaction
  5. developing interests and managing emotions

Using technology to support speech, language and communication skills
The Communication Trust has produced some tips and ideas for using technology to help communication.

It is important to remember that when using devices to help with communication that you as an adult sit with the child to support their understanding and use of the learning within the app. There is some useful information about using technology and choosing apps for children with speech, language and communication needs here.

I don't know much about using technology how do I start?

The tips and ideas from The Communication Trust may be a useful starting point.

You can also start by using the camera on your device. You can use photos as a way to start conversations with your child about where you've been, who you've seen and what you've done. Photos can be a useful way of letting your child know where you're going and who you're going to see.

How do I choose an app?

It may be useful to think about why you want an app and what you want it to do. The National Literacy Trust has developed a website that covers choosing apps and finding ones that support your child's learning and development.

My child has speech, language and communication needs how should I choose an app for them?

Have a think about the area of their speech, language and/or communication skills you'd like the app for. You may also find it useful to try some of the links in the 'Find out more' section. You should also try talking to your child's teacher and speech and language therapist to see if they have any suggestions.

Apps available

A list of some available apps to support children's speech, language and communication needs are included below. These apps are not endorsed by I CAN, and the list is by no means exhaustive. However, we do hope that this will highlight the types of apps available and what skills they may help develop.

Supporting young children's language and communication development The National Literacy Trust lists a range of apps. You can search by your children's age, the areas of learning you would like the app to support and price range. CBeebies also have a range of games and apps available.
Supporting a range of language skills These developers have a range of apps available:

SMARTY EARS	A range of different apps to support various language skills including adjectives, sentence building and describing.

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Super Duper Inc Publications	Lots of different apps for practising a range of different language skills.
Speech with Milo:	A range of apps available for developing children's understanding and use of object words, actions (verbs), feelings, prepositions (e.g. in, on, under) and putting ideas together.
Splingo	A range of apps available for developing children's understanding and use of object words, actions (verbs).

Where can I find out about other apps to support children's speech, language and communication?

As apps are constantly being developed, you might also find it useful to look at the following websites for more ideas:Development Autism Research Technology (DART), University of Edinburgh

This covers different aspects of language and communication. Download an appwheel showing different apps with clickable links. It also has detailed reviews of apps.

Bristol Speech and Language Therapy Unit

A useful list of apps by aspect of speech, language and/or communication (e.g.vocabulary, understanding language).

National Autistic Society

Autism speaks

Autism apps - A resource for information about apps

Call Scotland
- Apps related to dyslexia and reading difficulties
- Apps for supporting complex communication needs

Plus other publications on using technology to support communication and learning.

Keycomm - apps for language and leisure

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