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Apps and the School Speech–Language Pathologist

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Technology is an ever-increasing component of learning in today's schools. Students in general education and special education can benefit from engaging devices and programs which boost their academic knowledge and are motivational. *Apps* are *applications*, or software programs, that can run on a variety of devices, such as smartphones and tablets. Some Apps are free, and some are for purchase. The user simply downloads an App to his/her device through an online store or marketplace.

Many Apps are educational in nature and offer content for the student and data-tracking capabilities for the instructor. Apps can cover subject-matter material, supplemental learning topics, and specific learning needs (such as sound-production tasks for speech therapy intervention). Many Apps also offer the option to send saved data and notes for a student in order to facilitate communication between parents/caregivers and the educator.

How Can the SLP Use Apps with Students?

The SLP can use technology devices for both assessment and intervention with students, including Response to Intervention. For diagnostic purposes, Apps can be used to track observed behaviors, provide stimuli, and engage students. For intervention, the SLP is able to access numerous programs to meet the needs of diverse learners. Technology can help the SLP provide AAC services to students as well. Some of these App functions include text-to-speech, the ability to store photo libraries, and voice recording.



Types of Devices



- A smartphone is a mobile phone that allows you to make calls as well as perform other functions, such as sending e-mail, viewing files, downloading Apps, and accessing the Web. It is like a mini-version of a home computer.



- A tablet is a device that is like a laptop, but a tablet is more intuitive. It uses a touch screen, so you type using a virtual keyboard. Or, you can buy an add-on keyboard. It also has less memory storage than a personal computer, but it is lightweight in comparison.

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Things to Consider with Apps in Speech/Language Therapy

According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (2011), some of the positives of using Apps in speech/language therapy include having opportunities to:

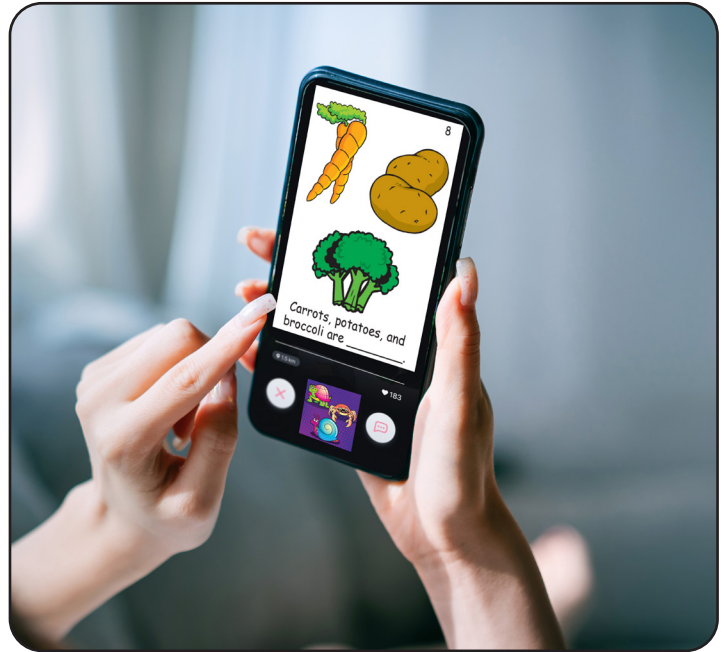


- Engage and motivate students;
- Reduce the time spent preparing materials;
- Engage nonreaders with interactive books;
- Keep all of your materials in one place;
- Monitor progress with accurate data collection and reporting;
- Receive a large amount of content for a low price;
- Get updates in response to customer feedback.

Some of the negatives include that:



- Adding and updating Apps is a continual cost after the initial purchase;
- Redirecting children to other devices can be difficult;
- Choosing therapeutic Apps among so many can be a challenge;
- Using your personal device with students is risky.



Related Handy Handouts®:

- [385 – What is Blended Learning? Incorporating Technology with Traditional Instruction and Assessment](#)
- [400 – You Got Game? Using Technology to Address Individual Learning Styles](#)
- [606 – Screen Time and Development](#)

Resources:

American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. (2011). Applications (apps) for speech-language pathology practice.

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