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Apps for Students with Communication Deficits

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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 speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and parents/caregivers multiple options for targeting communication skills. The lists below highlight some of the different kinds of Apps for speech/language goals. Keep in mind that there are thousands of Apps, so this list is just an overview – Be sure to check often for updates to Apps and new Apps!

The following lists, as adapted from Apps for use in Speech Language Pathology by Jennifer Davis (2011), highlight several types of Apps for meeting a variety of communication needs.

Articulation/Phonology

- Practice sounds in isolation or at syllable, word, phrase, or sentence levels
- Identify phoneme placement (beginning, middle, or end of a word)
- Target phonological processes
- Practice tongue twisters
- Give screeners to track correct/incorrect responses and types of errors

Assistive Technology

- Touch buttons to indicate basic communication needs
- Create pictures, flashcards, storyboards, or visual schedules
- Use pre-loaded pictures for vocabulary, including searches by category
- Add your own pictures
- Use pre-loaded verbal messages; record and store personalized verbal messages
- Store sequenced messages
- Use text-to-speech or speech-to-text functions

Fluency/Stuttering

- Track fluent and disfluent speech
- Track avoidance behaviors
- Give a percentage for stuttering moments

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Language

- Answer/generate WH questions – Who? What? When? Where? Why?
- Create/record sentences and stories
- Identify different grammar forms, such as nouns, verbs, pronouns, and adjectives
- Move objects on the screen to work on basic concept words, such as *next to, above, below, before*
- Find pictures that go together or choose an item that doesn't belong
- Identify an object by its function, such as barking goes with… *dog*

Sign Language

- Learn/review American Sign Language (ASL) signs
- Take a quiz on signs
- Watch videos of signs

Social Skills

- Review/build Social Stories (short stories to help an individual understand appropriate behaviors for social situations)
- Look at photos and answer questions, including identifying facial expressions
- Review steps to social situations
- Teach manners

Voice

- Show decibel (dB) (loudness) levels
- Calculate s/z ratio (sustaining the /s/ sound compared to sustaining the /z/ sound)

Resources:

Davis, J. (2011). Apps for use in speech language pathology. Retrieved from www.speakingofspeech.com

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