Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

Computer Literacy

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Learning has changed. School districts are now making the tough decision to have students attend school in person full-time, attend school in person part-time, or continue full-time learning at home. For many students, online learning will still be a part of their education in the upcoming school year, which poses continued challenges regarding computer literacy. Computer literacy refers to the basic knowledge and skills needed to operate a computer. Although many children pick up computer literacy skills quicker than most adults, some children with language and learning deficits struggle with computer basics. This is yet another challenge when accessing a difficult curriculum. Here are some tips when addressing computer literacy with children:

Typing

Typing is essential to operating a computer. Whether a student is finding information in a search engine or writing an essay, typing skills are often called upon when performing classroom assignments. However, many students who struggle with fine motor skills have an added challenge when learning how to type. A simple project could become an uphill battle. To help your child, search "keyboarding practice for kids." This will retrieve a list of fun keyboarding games that help improve typing skills.

Mouse

In addition to typing, using a mouse can present additional obstacles when operating a computer. For both a physical mouse or track pad, right clicking, left clicking, dragging-and-dropping, and scrolling can pose a challenge for small hands. Just like typing, search "mouse practice for kids" to find games that target mouse skills.
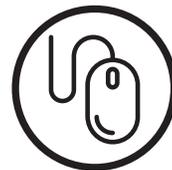
Components of a Computer

What does this button do? What about this one? Review the parts of a computer with your child, including the tower, monitor, speakers, headsets, etc. Some parts, such as knobs and keys that control volume and brightness, are fine to touch. Other parts, such as the power button, should be left alone. Review and reinforce computer rules with your child.

Screen Functionality

For those adults who use a computer every day, navigating interfaces may seem second nature. However, for a child who is only accustomed to using a device like a smart phone or tablet, screens on a desktop or laptop may be confusing. Make sure to supervise your child when starting telepractice or online learning. Explain how to use essential programs (e.g. word processors and search engines), how to close out of screens, minimize windows, etc.

Login Procedures

Following directions can be challenging for those with receptive language deficits, but practice makes perfect. Review step-by-step login procedures with young children and those struggling with sequential directions (e.g. First, go to my.hearbuilder.com; then type your user name…). Bookmark important sites for learning. Prereaders may have added difficulty when typing usernames and passwords. Leave notes and visual reminders for your child that include usernames and passwords.

Email and Teleconferencing Etiquette

Just like learning in person, being polite and following the rules are important in an online classroom. For a child who struggles with social skills, explain the unspoken rules of online communication. For example, greetings andvocabulary will change when addressing a teacher or a classmate. Adding "LOL" might work with a friend but maynot be appropriate when addressing a teacher. Address tone; for example, writing a subject line in all caps will change the tone of the email from friendly to aggressive.

Teleconferencing poses a new set of challenges for students, educators, and parents. It is important for all parties to go over the rules and expectations for an online classroom. Punctuality is still necessary. Learn how to use a mute button. In many cases, teachers and students can see and hear each other, so everyone should act accordingly.

Safety

Although school officials take precautions to protect students learning remotely, online safety is still a concern. Make sure your child is on approved sites. Supervision is key! Check browser histories and have conversations with your child about safe and unsafe online activities. Handy Handout #389 has tips for monitoring your children online. Also, cyberbullying can occur even in an educational setting. For tips when addressing cyberbullying, refer to Handy Handout #545.

Resources:
https://online.maryville.edu/online-bachelors-degrees/management-information-systems/computer-skills-kids/

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