

DISCOVERIES



Special needs

This feature is devoted to companies that produce software and hardware for children and adults with special needs. Many names will be familiar and some will be new. If you are attending the Closing The Gap conference, be sure and visit the Exhibit Center and the booths of many of these companies to see the products first hand. Thank you for producing the quality products that we use in our classrooms, therapy sessions and at home.

Ablenet (Ablenet: 800-322-0956, <www.ablenetinc.com>) What a great new literacy tool! Attach your favorite book, record the story page by page, and you have a talking storybook for home or school. It's very easy to set up and record. The story then gets read aloud by pressing membrane switches or with an external single switch that reads one page at a time. There's a head-phone jack for quiet listening, too. Record four different books with each memory module (up to eight minutes of recording time). Get as many memory modules as you want and just switch them to hear different stories. Lets even the youngest children listen to stories independently and at their own pace. This is also great for cooperative play - one child turning the pages and the other pressing his/her switch to "read" the story aloud. Other suggested ideas include creating your own picture book of a trip or classroom activity, describe/record page by page and have children play back the story of their adventure as they look at the pictures.

Cherry Numeric Keypad (Inclusive: 800-462-0930,

<www.inclusivetlc.com>) Have you ever wished that the numeric keypad on your Windows keyboard could be on the left side instead of the right? For example, if you have a user who needs to use Mouse Keys with the left hand? Reaching over the keyboard to the right side causes accidental key-presses that interfere with the mouse actions. The Cherry Numeric Keypad is a perfect solution. Just plug into the PS/2 port and you have a second numeric keypad that can be placed anywhere the user needs it. And it has a keyguard, too. (If you are using a PS/2 keyboard, just plug that into the keypad and both will work together). Now if someone can use his left hand only, he doesn't have to reach over the entire keyboard to reach the keypad. The keypad also has four additional programmable keys. Their default settings are Esc, Control, Alt and backspace but you can program each to be up to 24 characters per key. The Cherry Numeric Keypad can be purchased with or without the keyguard.

Don Johnson Switch Interface Pro 5.0 (Don Johnston: 800-999-4660, <www.donjohnston.com>) This new switch interface connects to the USB port and is compatible with both Macintosh and Windows computers. It's easy to set up - just plug into the USB port and you're ready to go. Up to five switches can be connected at any one time. Switches can be equal to mouse click button, right click, double click, space, enter, tab, back space, up/down/left/right arrows, 1,2,3 or 0 keys. The push-button on the back of the unit controls which rows of connections are active, and separate LED lights show the active setting. The unit also includes a three-foot



By **JOAN TANENHAUS**
COLUMNIST

cable and dual lock heavy-duty Velcro fastener to secure the switch interface to table or computer.

Magnifico Portable PDA Screen Magnifier (Office on the Go Go: 800-679-1909, <www.officeonthegogo.com>) This magnifier provides 2X magnification for your PDA. There are two models: one clips onto any size PDA and the other is free standing and attaches to a base that sits on a flat surface. There are also PDAPaks in three sizes that let you organize and protect your PDA and accessories. All have a 2-way window that lets users access their PDA without taking it out of the case.

Fonts 4 Teachers (Educational Insights: 800-995-4436, <www.edin.com>) Create your own handwriting sheets in manuscript, D'Nealian-style, and cursive with these 31 custom fonts that can be scaled to any size. There are special tracing, lined, dotted, and arrowed fonts, plus phonics (letter with an object that starts with the letter), math (domino, clocks,

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Don Johnston Switch Interface Pro 5.0 is a USB computer switch interface for Macintosh and Windows.



With the AbleNet BookWorm, attach your favorite book, record the story and you have a talking storybook.

time), American Sign Language, and decorative fonts for classroom applications. Both Macintosh and Windows fonts are included, foreign language accent marks, and all can be used with any word processor or application that uses fonts.

Press To Play - Sports (Don Johnston: 800-999-4660, <www.donjohnston.com>) This fourth program in the Press to Play series is a single switch program for Macintosh and Windows and has age-appropriate graphics and sounds for older students needing switch practice. There are four modes: Cause - Effect (press the switch to see an animation); Simple Scan (press the switch to select picture - one picture and blank items); Complex Scan (press the switch when an item is highlighted to get an animation - two or more pictures); and Point (for use with mouse or Touch Window). In Cause - Effect mode, there are two ways to play. With Continuous, one switch press plays the entire animation. With Start-Stop, every time the action stops during the sequence, the user has to press the switch to continue. There are

sequences for tennis, basketball, and racing, all with Speedy in his wheelchair.

Simon Sounds It Out Stage 1 and Stage 2 (Don Johnston: 800-999-4660, <www.donjohnston.com>) Simon Sounds It Out Stage 1 and Stage 2 are available on CD-ROM for Macintosh and Windows and provide systematic instruction in the phonetic approach to reading. Simon S.I.O. focuses on beginning and ending sounds, with six activities that teach a few sounds at a time. The words are from high-frequency lists and the Dolch Sight Word List. There are 33 levels of sounds arranged by word families. Students hear and see words over and over again to help comprehension and retention. Accessibility features are built in - scanning for single switch access for those who can't use the keyboard, or use of arrow keys and return/Enter for those who can't use the mouse. For each level, students identify the correct beginning sound in each word; identify the ending sound; identify both the beginning and ending sounds; spell the word; read the word (they can record the word and hear their own recording); and then pick the word that matches the spoken word. Challenge activities occur between sessions and levels. In Speed Challenge, students are shown a word and nine pictures. They must sound out the word and select the matching picture as quickly as possible. In Reading Challenge, they are presented with one or two sentence that include a key word from the level. They can have the sentences read to them if needed, then they record the sentences themselves. A nice feature is the ability to preview all activities and all levels in the Demo Mode. This helps when setting up student profiles. An extensive Options section lets you set level of activity, turn Spell and Recording mode on/off; select scanning when necessary. There are report and print options as well. Teacher Materials include screening tools, off-computer activity ideas, lesson plans, game templates, and reading lists. **Simon S.I.O. Stage 1** includes approximately 120 words in 33 word families such as at, ug, ake, all, ack, eep, ock, unk, ump, etc. with consonant sounds and some blends (sp, bl cl, pr, sm, etc.) and **Simon S.I.O. Stage 2** includes an additional 120 words in 33 word families such as eet, ore, eam, uck, ank, ight, etc. and other blends (br, gr, dr, sl, kn, wr, tw, scr, etc.). This is an excellent program to use with struggling readers. It is age appropriate for all ages.

CO: WRITER 4000 (Don Johnston: 800-999-4660, <www.donjohnston.com>) Co: Writer 4000 is a word prediction program for both Macintosh and Windows designed to help students write complete and correct sentences with fewer keystrokes. It is used together with a word processing program. As the user begins to type a word, Co:Writer offers guesses as to what the word is, based on the letters typed and other factors. If the word is in the list of suggestions, the user can select the word and continue to the next word. If the word is not on the list, the user continues typing until it is or until the word is finished. When the sentence is complete, Co:Writer places the sentence in the word processor program. Students can select words from the predicted list by pressing the spacebar, by pointing and clicking the word with the mouse, by using the arrow keys, by typing in the number of the word, or with scanning. Speech feedback is provided and is available for each letter typed, for words suggested and selected and for complete sentences. Other special needs options to reduce keystrokes include auto-space, auto-caps, and abbreviation-expansion. Grammar-based prediction offers the most appropriate word choices and helps with problems such as subject-verb agreement. Another feature is the Change Endings key; if the word the users wants is not suggested, they can accept a word that is a root word and then alter it by adding word endings by searching for word combinations that extend this word or by adding a suffix. FlexSpell is designed to help beginning writers who are in the phonetic or transitional stages of spelling. It is flexible in its interpretation of what the user is typing, understanding that "bloon" might mean balloon. Different dictionaries are available for different writing levels (advanced, intermediate, beginning, basic, core). There are topic dictionaries included or teachers can create them or download them from www.donjohnston.com. Co: Writer can also accept two or more words as a single dictionary entry and predicts the entire phrase. The manual is excellent and has a great section on Adapting Co:Writer for Special Needs. It analyzes special issues and how to address them. (See review of related materials in Books below.)

Animals Galore (Mayer-Johnson: 800: 588-4548, <www.mayer-johnson.com>) This fun new program features the Picture Communication Symbols (PCS) from Mayer-Johnson and is designed especially

for learners with special needs. Based on the theme of animals, it has four different activities with two levels each. In the Talk activity, children create simple sentences. On Level 1, they are presented with sentences like: I like; I don't like; I have a pet...; and ...are scary. On Level 2, the sentences are: "My favorite animals are..."; "At the beach, I saw a..."; "At the zoo, I saw a..."; "On the farm, I saw a..." and "In the garden, I saw a...". Choices are presented as PCS symbols. Children select the animal from the choice bar to complete the sentence. The sentence is read aloud. Sentences can be printed out, up to 10 at a time. In the Listen activity, children identify an animal according to the noise it makes. On Level 1, the user hears an animal's sound by choosing it. On Level 2, the computer will ask "what animal is this" and play an animal noise. In the Count activity, the user must count out the required number of animals (i.e., put five fish in the sea). Level 1 has numbers from 1-10; Level 2 has numbers from 11-20. In the Match activity, Level 1, players find the matching symbol when given an auditory and visual cue. On Level 2, the player finds the same two symbols from a group of four from the choice bar. No clues are given. Options included in the program are ability to change the background; change the line thickness of the cell border; change the voice; and change the access method (direct, arrow or scan). The manual contains some extension activities and a complete vocabulary list. A great way to reinforce symbol use while also working on expressive language and writing.

Food For Thought (Mayer-Johnson: 800: 588-4548, <www.mayer-johnson.com>) Similar in design to Animals Galore, Food for Thought also has six 2-level activities using Picture Communication Symbols. In Sentence Maker, students make simple sentences about food, using the leading and end phrases. Level 1 includes four sentences, such as "I like...", "I don't like...", "...is yucky", and "...is yummy." A food item is then chosen from three PCS to complete the sentence and to then hear it read back. On Level 2, there are six sentences, the four from Level 1 and "...taste terrible" and "...are delicious" and five choices. In the second language activity, Match Maker, students match symbols using visual and auditory cues or with no cues. There are two math activities. In Count It Out, the student is presented with a number of food items and the task is to count them and select the correct answer from the choice bar. In Level 1, the total number of



Cherry Numeric Keypad and Keyguard (Inclusive) can be attached to any Windows keyboard for placement on the left or any where the user is more comfortable.

items present for counting are from 1-10 and in Level 2, it is from 11-20. In Pack the Shopping, a list of items, like a shopping list, is presented. The student has to count out the correct number of items to complete the list. In Sort It Out, students sort foods and drinks, or fruits and vegetables. There is an errorless activity, Going Shopping, where students catch all the food falling from the top of the screen using the left and right arrow keys to move the girl from side to side (works with scanning too). This program provides another excellent opportunity to learn about symbols, language, and math skills.

New SwitchIt! Programs (Inclusive: 800-462-0930, <www.inclusivetlc.com>) Two excellent new SwitchIt! Programs are now available, for both Macintosh and Windows. These are designed to help switch users develop and demonstrate an understanding of language concepts, as well as develop their ability to use switches. All programs can also be used with a mouse, two switches, a Touch Window or IntelliKeys. **SwitchIt!**

People explores all different kinds of people and the jobs they do. These include policeman, teacher, nurse, fire fighter, supermarket check-out person, and others. **SwitchIt! Weather** explores the theme of the weather and its effects and includes things like snow, rain, wind, ice, rainbows, thunderstorms, etc. Each program has three activities designed to be used at different levels of learning. Flash Cards show pictures, one at a time. Each press brings another picture related to the theme (People: postman, policeman, nurse, teacher, etc; Weather: wind, sun, rainbow, puddles, snow, umbrella, etc.) In Picture Builds, children create a picture, piece by piece. The pictures then animate on completion. You can choose to see the picture all at once or in steps of 3, 5 or 6. There are 13 picture builds in each program. In the Stories activity, the pictures are placed within a story sequence and each press reveals another part of the sequence. For example, in People, the mailman comes to the house, he knocks on the door, the child comes to the door, the mailman gives

her a package, etc. There are 12 stories in each program. You can also print out pictures from both programs at any time. There is a wide range of options. Users can select the concepts and pictures to use, the access (switch, touch window, mouse, IntelliKeys), the number of presses required, whether to have pictures displayed sequentially or randomly, and reward control. You can also set up the programs for different learners and save the settings as Options files that can be loaded for later use. Other excellent programs in the SwitchIt! Series include: **SwitchIt! At Home, SwitchIt! Diggers, SwitchIt! Gadgets, and SwitchIt! Suite.**

Let's Go To Town (Inclusive: 800-462-0930, <www.inclusivetlc.com>) This is a fun new story telling program with choice making and other activities embedded in the story. First, the players catch the bus and then they visit the post office, clothing store, fruit market, ice-cream store, and finally catch the bus to go home. There are nine interactive story pages which encourage decision making and serve as a good context for language development. In between, there are link pages, which do not have interactive activities, but allow for transition from one page to another. You can print out a picture from the program at any time, making it easy to create off-computer reinforcement of concepts. The first page shows two doors and a bus stop. Players can click the sentence to hear the text. They can click either door first to find the children. They must click the other door and then they can click the bus stop sign for the bus to come. Clicking the arrow at the bottom of the page takes you to the next page. In the post office, children press the letter box and watch the children mail a letter. They can click the telephone and someone makes a call. If they click the door, someone comes with a package. At the street crossing, they have to select the button box to make the girl push the button. They select the children to make them cross, but only when the walk sign is on. In the Clothes store, they select an outfit and the girl puts it on. In the boys store, there are three jackets. One is too small, one is too big and one is just right. The boy will try on any one that is selected and show how it fits. They can pick fruit, ice-cream, and pets in other activities. There are many options to choose from. The story can be played sequentially or you can choose only the pages you want and in the order you want. Access is by mouse, keyboard (space or enter will work as the switch), touch

window, single or two switch scanning. If you are using a switch interface, you must select space or the number 1 or 2. The scanning will not work with switch = click. The program can also be used with IntelliKeys (the board is divided vertically for two-switch operation). Text displayed for each page can be full sentences (i.e., "Let's catch the bus") or Short Expressions (i.e. "Bus Stop"). You can also choose color for text and background or select no text.

Creature Chorus Sterling Edition (Laureate Learning Systems: 800-562-6801, <www.laureatelearning.com>) This new Macintosh and Windows version has nine activities that provide opportunities for reinforcing cause and effect, turn-taking and discrete pointing for individuals with severe and profound cognitive impairments. It can be used with mouse, keyboard, single switch, or touch screen. In Activity 1, a creature appears on-screen and the narrator says "Make him do something". When the switch is pressed, the character animates. In Activity 2, a creature appears and begins a continuous animated routine. The narrator says "Make him do something different" When the switch is pressed, the routine changes. In Activity 3, the computer says "Where is everyone?" Each time the switch is pressed, a new character appears. When all of the creatures are on stage, the computer says "Make them sing". Each press has them singing a different song. Activity 4 teaches discrete pointing or beginning scanning. A big red bubble appears in the middle of the screen. The computer speaks "Pop the bubble and see who's inside". When the bubble is touched (or pointed to with mouse), it reappears in a smaller size. Once the bubble reaches its smallest size, it rolls to a different position on the screen. If there is no response or a response outside the target area, the bubble increases in size until it eventually fits the screen. In Activity 5, a creature appears on screen. Students touch (mouse, touch window, scanning) the creature causing him to animate. In Activity 6, two creatures appear on screen and students choose the one they want. It will then animate. In Activity 7, all creatures appear on screen and students pick one to begin an animation sequence. In Activity 8, students press a number button to select a song and begin an animation sequence. In the final activity, a scene is presented with two large clown characters. When different parts of the clown are selected, different animations begin. Creature Chorus has a comprehen-

sive administration system including data collection, and report writer. Student files include biographical information, records of performance and saved reports that summarize performance over a period of time. Individual session notes can be included.

Simple Sentence Structure Sterling Edition (Laureate Learning Systems: 800-562-6801, <www.laureatelearning.com>) This new Sterling Edition helps children master Subject-Verb-Object word order of English. There are four sentence sets: contrasting verbs (10 picture pairs such as The woman is carrying the suitcase/The woman is opening the suitcase); contrasting objects (10 picture pairs such as The mother is holding the baby/ The mother is holding the cat); contrasting subjects (10 picture pairs such as "The cowboy is riding a horse/The girl is riding a horse), and subject/object reversible subject/object (10 picture pairs such as The boy is splashing the girl/The girl is splashing the boy). During training, two pictures appear on the screen and the child is asked to choose the picture that illustrates a particular sentence. Using Optimized Intervention, the program monitors the student's performance and adjusts the program accordingly. There is a comprehensive student file management system that enables you to maintain records of student performance and write reports.

PCS Animations (Mayer-Johnson: 800: 588-4548, <www.mayer-johnson.com>) PCS Animations contains over 500 animated Picture Communication Symbol (PCS) verbs. You can place them in Speaking Dynamically Pro, Clicker, IntelliPics Studio and BuildAbility. Because they come in a variety of formats (AVI, MOV, GIF), they will work with both Macintosh or Windows computers. They can be played once or cycled so they repeat two to three times. The easy-to-follow manual contains tutorials on how to insert the movies into all the above programs. With 500 words, this is a great tool for teaching symbol concepts, language comprehension of verbs, basic concepts such as movement, chores, grooming, communication and both appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

Chatterbuddies Ready for Speech Series: Making The "r" Sound: Chatterbuddies; 866-529-3241, <www.chatterbuddies.com>) This program, for both Macintosh and Windows, was designed by Karen Hodge, a Speech-Language Pathologist. It presents systematic listening skills activities for the "r" sound and is targeted for the preschool population. There are nine activities: players

look for pictures of things that contain the “r” sound; they sort words with the right “r” sound and those with the wrong “r” sound (babbit for rabbit); they listen to a story with lots of words with the “r” sound. They sort words with and without “r” sounds; and sort pictures according to whether the “r” is in the beginning, middle or end. (The pictures do not randomize so the activities are the same each time they are played). There are songs, cute graphics and a Show and Tell section that explains and shows how the “r” sound is made. The program also has a section that lists long and short term educational goals for the “r” sound.

STARBRIGHT CD-ROM Health Programs: (Starbright: 800-315-2580, <www.starbright.org>) STARBRIGHT is a non-profit organization dedicated to the creation and distribution of programs that empower children with serious illness to better manage their disease, and cope with the social and emotional challenges that accompany illness.

The STARBRIGHT Explorer Series, for Macintosh and Windows, has a group of programs on one CD-ROM. In *Spotlight on IVs*, children, ages 6-10, can get information about IVs. They learn why an IV is needed, what it feels like, how it gets attached, and how to cope with the experience. There’s also a movie clip showing what it’s like to get an IV. In the *Sickle Cell Slime-O-Rama Game*, for ages 6-14, children learn how to communicate pain to adults, cope with a pain episode and use pain management strategies. They compare healthy and sickled red blood cells. *Discovering the Secrets of Spinal Fluid*, for ages 10-15, explains about spinal fluid and it’s importance to diagnosis and treatment. They view slides under a microscope and learn other information, like how a spinal tap helps you get better, and why you have to be in such a funny position for the test. *Bone Marrow Aspiration and Biopsy*, also for ages 10-15, teaches about the role that bone marrow plays in the body, what it is made of, and what it looks like under a microscope. Children watch movie clips that show what happens to a bone marrow sample after it reaches the lab and take the *Bone Marrow Quiz* to test their knowledge. In the *Radiology Center*, for ages 6-10, they learn about X-Rays, CT Scans and MRIs. *Blood Tests*, for ages 10-15, tells about blood tests, blood chemistries and blood cultures. It explains about different blood types and their compatibility. Also on the same CD-



In Lexia Reading S.O.S. (Strategies for Older Students), students sort words by word endings.

ROM are *Living With Kidney Disease* and *Cystic Fibrosis*. Excellent for children to learn about their disease or the diseases of others in their families.

STARBRIGHT Asthma CD-ROM Game: Quest for the Code: With this Windows only program, children ages 8-13, learn about Asthma within a game format. Mucus Airgon and his team are trying to convince kids that they can’t manage their asthma. The players have to stop them. Each villain is defeated by showing how to avoid asthma triggers, how to use asthma devices and medications, how to identify myths, and how to explain asthma to friends. There’s a celebrity cast of character voices, along with Parent Resources and an Asthma Glossary. The program can be played in either the English or Spanish version. A great way for children to learn about Asthma.

STARBRIGHT Life Adventure Series: Diabetes CD-ROM: This is an interactive adventure that gives children the chance to learn about diabetes and its management in an entertaining game format. XLYO is a small alien whose spaceship has crashed on earth. To help him, players have to manage their diabetes with a blood sugar meter, insulin, a log book, glucose tablets and more. They play games about food to eat, whether to test or not to test, a concentration game, and more. They can even take a tour inside the human body. Some of the things they will learn include the places on the body that are appropriate to receive an insulin shot;

an appropriate meal for breakfast; foods that have carbohydrates; the importance of testing blood sugar; how to answer questions about diabetes; and so much more. They have to meet surprise obstacles as they play on three levels with fun arcade action and life-like situations. This CD-ROM includes both English and Spanish versions for both Macintosh and Windows computers.

STARBRIGHT CD-ROMS are available free of charge to children with serious illness, their families, and healthcare professionals who live in the United States and Canada.

FEAT: Functional Evaluation for Assistive Technology: Marshall H. Raskind and Brian R. Bryant (Psycho-Educational Services: 512-335-1591, <www.psycho-educational.com>) FEAT is composed of scales and forms that help the assistive technology team analyze and determine the most appropriate AT devices to use for an individual to use to accomplish a specific task within a particular setting. The Contextual Matching Inventory lists 44 items that the individual may be expected to do (i.e., listen to lectures, read test questions, take notes, etc.) with places in identify Settings. It also lists additional issues related to contextual matching to the settings identified in the first part. For example, in a school setting, this form could be filled out by the all the individual’s teachers. The Checklist of Strengths and Limitations helps to determine the individual’s strengths and limitations across a variety of tasks (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, writing, math, memory,

organization, physical/motor, and behavior). The Checklist of Technology Experiences is designed to summarize the individual's experience and knowledge with specific assistive technology devices. The Technology Characteristics Inventory lets the AT specialist evaluate specific AT devices for reliability, customizability, appropriateness of visual and auditory features, ease of learning, etc. The Individual-Technology Evaluation Scale and related worksheets guide the team on looking at the match between the device and the individual. It contains items such as degree to which the individual sustained attention using the technology, extent to which the individual was able to resolve difficulties when the technology didn't work properly, perceived cost/benefit ratio, etc. There is also a Summary and Recommendations Booklet. The manual includes a rationale and overview of the FEAT, administration and scoring, interpreting the results, and references.

Lexia Learning Systems: Assessment (Lexia Learning: 800-435-3942, <www.lexialearning.com>) Lexia Learning Systems has developed software to help children and adults learn to read. Based on Orton-Gillingham system, it provides a structured approach to reading. **The Lexia Comprehensive Reading Test** is for grades K-12. It is a comprehensive assessment tool that is administered on a one-on-one basis. It requires that the individual being tested speaks the answers to the questions that appear on the computer screen. The tester presses the space bar to indicate the answer was correct or the N key if the answer is wrong. The first section (Kindergarten Readiness) asks basic questions about name, age, colors and phonemic awareness. The second section evaluates phonemics and decoding skills. There are three levels (1st and 2nd grade, 3rd and 4th grade, and 5th and 6th grade skills. Each level can be tested with real word tests or non-word tests.) The third section tests the student's ability to read the Dolch Sight words in a limited amount of time. The final section uses the Burns/Roe Informal Reading Inventory to evaluate reading comprehension and fluency. An optional oral reading analysis component is also included. Three types of reports can be generated: Individual (a single student's performance), Group (an entire class) and School Reports (an entire school of students by grade). **The Lexia Quick Reading Test** is a series of diagnostic reading tests broken into three levels. Level A tests reading skills

generally taught in 1st and 2nd grade (letter names, short vowel words, long vowel silent "e" words, blends and digraphs, vowel combination words, vowel-r combination words, multi-syllable words, sight words for grades 1 and 2). Level B tests reading skills generally taught in 3rd and 4th grade (suffixes, vowel combination words, open and closed first syllable words, consonant-le words, two sounds of "c" and "g" words, three syllable words, sight words from grades 3 and 4). Level C tests readings skills taught to 5th and 6th grade students. Individual and class reports can be generated, along with Compare Reports that can be used to get a quick look at student progress. Individual Report also suggests learning activities from Lexia's reading programs that would be helpful to the student.

Lexia Early Reading for Ages 4-6 (Lexia Learning: 800-435-3942, <www.lexialearning.com>) This program is designed to help children ages 4 to 6 develop phonological awareness and auditory processing skills critical to the acquisition of word-attack skills. These include understanding of rhyme, the segmentation of words into parts and the blending of these parts back into words. Students listen to verbal computer instructions and click on images with a mouse. It also includes the ability to isolate sounds (phonemes) within words. Level 1 Activities include: Rhyme Time (11 units, increasing in difficulty, from one-syllable words containing three sounds each, to two-syllable words containing a suffix); Sound Match (identifying beginning/ending sounds in words from one-syllable words containing three sounds each to one-syllable words containing four sounds/phonemes including blends); Word Snip (ability to segment words into syllables and sounds (two-syllable compound words to words with three or four sounds/phonemes) and Sound Slice (ability to blend syllables and sounds to construct words, from two-syllable compound words to words with three sounds/phonemes). Level 2 activities increase letter knowledge, introduce basic sound/symbol correspondence, and reinforce listening for beginning/ending sounds (including consonants, vowels, and consonant digraphs).

Lexia Phonics Based Reading for Ages 5-8 (Lexia Learning: 800-435-3942, <www.lexialearning.com>) This program is designed to help students improve basic reading skills by reinforcing phonic elements and sound/symbol relationships. Students listen

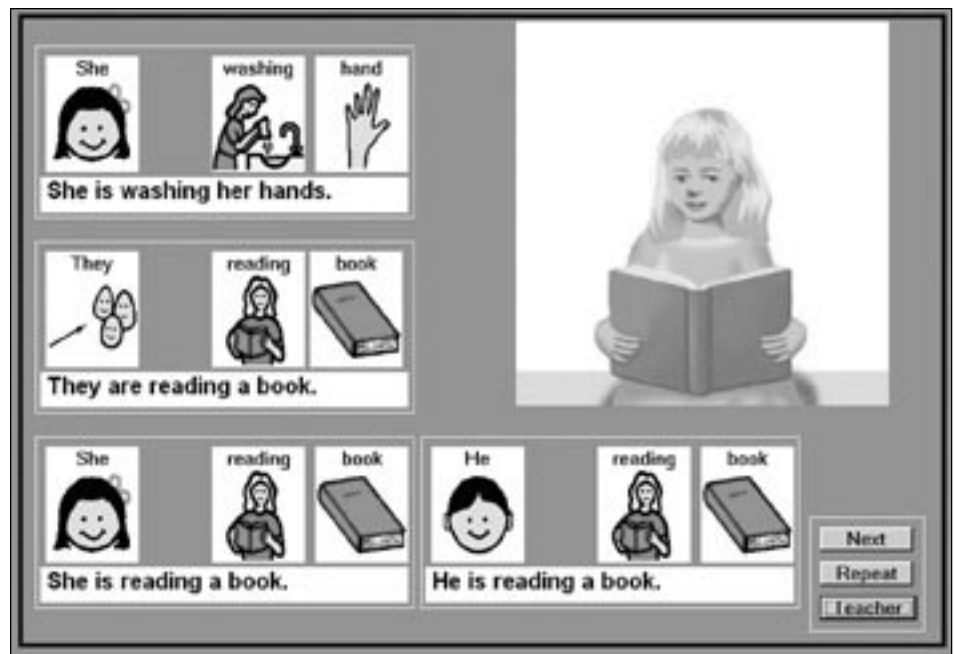
to verbal computer instructions and click on images with the mouse. Level 1 Activities include sorting b,d,p in isolation and in 2,3,4 letter combinations (visual discrimination of reversible letters); sound/symbol correspondence for short vowels; matching pictures to words, phrases and sentences; sound/symbol correspondence for initial consonants; and a reward activity. Level 2 Activities include Change (student click on a letter to spell a new dictate word (i.e., change bun to sun); Spin It (matching words to pictures); Balloons (sorting short-vowel words and long-vowel words); Score (reinforcing the concept of silent-e as a signal for the long-vowel sound); Word Hunt (fill in the blanks with correct words using words containing the concepts already presented in Level 1 and 2); and a Reward Activity. Level 3 Activities include a review of Level 2 concepts; an activity to increase sound segmenting skills (student replaces one letter of a word to spell a dictated word, i.e. change stung to sting, first with difficult short-vowel words, easy long vowel words, difficult short-vowel and long vowel words, and then words containing ck and ke); and more advanced activities stressing sound/symbol correspondence for vowel combinations (ee, ai, oa, oo, ou, aw, etc.); sound/symbol correspondence for vowel-r combinations; constructing and reading two-syllable words in isolation, in sentences and in stories; an activity to reinforce alphabetizing skills using single letters and one using single syllable words; and a reward activity.

Lexia SOS (Strategies for Older Students) for Ages 9-Adult (Lexia Learning: 800-435-3942, <www.lexialearning.com>) This program is designed to help develop word recognition skills generally taught in grades 1 through 7. There are five levels of activities. Level 1 includes activities that reinforce sound/symbol correspondence for short vowels, consonants, consonant digraphs and consonant blends in initial and final positions; visual and auditory discrimination of b,d, and p; and discrimination of medial short vowels. Level 2 Activities include activities that reinforce sound/symbol correspondence for consonants, consonant blends and digraphs, short vowel, and long (silent e) vowels; reinforce automatic recognition of short vowel versus long vowel words; reinforcement of basic sight vocabulary at the first and second grade level; reinforce the construction of two syllable words; and reinforce the application of word attach

strategies to reading in context. Level 3 Activities include activities that reinforce sound/symbol correspondence for vowel combinations (ee, oa, oo, ea, etc.); vowel-r combinations; practice in reading and spelling words with suffixes (s, es, ing, ed, ness, etc.); construction of two-syllable words from word parts; and word attack strategies in reading in context. Level 4 Activities include reinforcing reading of two-syllable words containing six syllable types (open, closed, silent-e, vowel combination, vowel-r and consonant-le); reinforcement of sound/symbol correspondence for hard and soft c and g in one and two-syllable words; practice in the construction of three-syllable words reinforcing word attack strategies to reading in context. Level 5 Activities include reading of two to four-syllable words with prefixes and suffixes; with special accent patterns; with common Latin roots and prefixes related to number and negation and Greek forms.

The interactive activities in all of the above Lexia Reading Programs branch automatically, depending on the student's performance or this feature may be turned off if teachers/parents want to just assign program units or customize further. The school versions have data management and report writing options. Individual reports provide a detailed record of a single student's performance; an Achievement Report provides bar graphs that illustrate the number of units a student has completed in each activity and a Class Report summarizes the most recent use by each student in the class. These are excellent reading programs using a strong phonics based approach. Demo versions can be requested on the Web site.

Picture Sentence Key (Mayer-Johnson: 800:588-4548, <www.mayer-johnson.com>) There are two volumes in this series of programs that teach basic sentence structure of "Who" "is doing" "what". The student selects any one of the symbols in the first column (who column). If any other symbol is selected, nothing will happen. When that symbol is chosen, the word appears in the sentence at the bottom of the screen with the symbol above it. The word is spoken if the voice option is on. Then the student selects the "doing" symbol, and the "what" symbol. When completed, the sentence is animated and spoken. In Easy mode, the student just selects a verb and noun (i.e. eating an apple, pouring juice). In Medium, they select "who", verb and noun (the program automatically adds either is or are); and in the Hard mode,



In Picture Sentence Match (Mayer-Johnson), students can learn receptive understanding of whole sentences, using spoken words, written words and symbols.

students pick the who word, the symbol for is or are, the verb and the noun. In Quiz mode, the student must make a sentence that corresponds to the picture. The animated picture is shown first, then the student creates the matching sentence. **Picture Sentence Key** for Windows has five people, six verbs (eat, drink, pour, read, pet, wash) and 19 noun symbols. Picture Sentence Key for Windows Volume II has the same five people with 14 verbs (cleaning, clearing, dusting, feeding, mopping, moving, picking up, raking, setting, sweeping, taking out, vacuuming, walking and watering) and 14 nouns. Both versions have record keeping options.

Picture Sentence Match (Mayer-Johnson: 800:588-4548, <www.mayer-johnson.com>) This is an excellent program for learning receptive understanding of whole sentences, using spoken words, written words and symbols. Students can select from a group of 2, 3, or 4 pictures to match a given sentence or from a group of 2, 3, or 4 sentences to match a given picture. In Easy mode, the sentence/pictures differ on all words (who, doing, and what); in Medium mode, sentences/pictures differ on two words and in Hard, the sentences/pictures differ on only one word. The display can be set to show symbols, symbol names and the sentence; and there are various feedback options. The sentence is spoken aloud but the program contains the option to turn the speech off. In that case, the student must be able to read the words or

interpret the pictures/symbols. Picture Sentence Match can be used with a mouse, Touch Window head-pointing device, or scanning with a switch that simulates a mouse or key entry. There are five people (girl, boy, he, she, they) 20 verbs, and 33 noun symbols that combine to create the same 162 animations that appear in both Picture Sentence Key and Picture Sentence Key Vol. II.

Cinema II: Life Skills (Judy Lynn Software: 732-390-8845, <www.judylynn.com>) This program is a cause and effect, single switch program for Windows, for all ages. It has 75 film clips in 10 different categories: appliances (i.e., closing the refrigerator), clothing (i.e., putting on shoes), health (i.e., shaving), house (i.e., locking the door), food (i.e., eating an apple), jobs (i.e., cutting), kitchen (i.e., pouring), outside (i.e., boat), vehicles, and animals. Each clip lasts 5-10 seconds. When the switch is pressed the first time, the title of the clip is displayed in large letters on the top of the screen and the title is spoken. When the switch is pressed the second time, the film clip plays. Films can be viewed at random or in sequence within categories or in alphabetical order. There are three screen sizes to choose. An excellent program, as is the first in the series Cause & Effect Cinema with 89 clips, in 10 categories (animals, tools, sports, toys, etc.).

MacPac 2 (Technology for Language & Learning, <ForTLL@aol.com>) is a collection of Macintosh Special Education Public

Domain software/shareware on CD-ROM. It contains three CD-ROMs, each with over 650 MB of quality public domain/shareware programs for Special Education. Some of the main categories included are: single switch cause and effect programs, Keyboard Bangers (press any key), programs to help develop mouse and head mouse skills, Symbol Use, Learning Letters, Preschool, Kindergarten, Elementary School programs, Language, Reading, Writing, Spelling, Math, Money, Time, Science, Social Studies, Reasoning & Thinking, Word Games, Concentration, Simon Games, Board/Card Games, Keyboarding, Art, Music, Clip Art, Holidays & Seasons, Teaching Tools, and Utilities. Many programs feature favorite friends, including Barney, Blues Clues, FreddiFish, Madeline, and many others. As a special feature, MacPac2 contains over 100 set-ups for specialized programs like IntelliPics, ClickIt!, IntelliKeys, and Boardmaker. There's an on-screen keyboard, sign language programs, screensavers, ESL programs, and much more. Send a stamped self-addressed envelope to TLL MacPac2 Offer, P.O. Box 327, East Rockaway, NY 11518 to receive a coupon for \$20 off the price for MacPac2. (Note: TLL's Windows collection of public domain/shareware is not available.)

Time to Sing at Christmas (Center for Creative Play: 412-371-1668, <www.time2sing.org> or <www.center4creativeplay.org>) In this collection of classic Christmas songs, the words are sung at a slower tempo so that a child with language or learning problems is more able to sing along. There are 22 Christmas songs on the CD and some of the lyrics have been edited to eliminate difficult sound combinations. The first CD release in the Time To Sing! Series included Wheels on the Bus; I Love You; One, Two Buck my Shoe; Eensy Weensy Spider; Hokey Pokey; If You're Happy and You Know It; I'm a Little Teapot, Baby Bumblebee, Bingo, and more (a total of 26 songs). Other versions will be released in 2004.

Some other Christmas products of interest for children with special needs include:

Kids' Christmas Favorites and Kids' Christmas Carols (1-888-2Madacy, www.Crayola.com) These two CDs, for ages 3 and up, features all the favorite Christmas songs and carols with coloring pages and lyrics included.

Angelina Books (American Girl/Pleasant Company, 800-845-0005,

www.americangirl.com) Angelina Ballerina is little girls' favorite little mouse who lives with her family in England. This series has the following new books, all with delightful Christmas themes: **Angelina's Christmas:** Angelina wants to take Christmas cookies to Mr. Bell, who lives alone. Her cousin Henry has something else in mind for the cookies. Children will enjoy their adventures. **Angelina Ballerina's Invitation to the Ballet:** Angelina receives an invitation and two tickets to the ballet. None of her friends can go with her, but in the end, there's a wonderful surprise that makes everything turn out right. This is an interactive book with six pages that are large envelope-like pockets with invitations, letters, tickets, and a poster inside. **Christmas in Mouseland:** Angelina wants to play the part of Cinderella Mouse in the holiday ballet. When she doesn't get the part, she is upset to learn that the show will go on without her. **Angelina Ballerina's Christmas Crafts:** This book contains 25 crafts projects for girls at Christmas time, including ornaments and recipes. Included also are gift tags and stickers, and a section with tips for parents.

Books:

Teaching Writing with Write:OutLoud and Co:Writer 4000 (Don Johnston: 800-999-4660, <www.donjohnston.com>) This book is designed to provide tools for using Write-Outloud and Co:Writer to help students read and write. It has ready-to-use materials, standards-based, adaptable lessons, and tips for classroom implementation of technology-based literacy interventions. It contains a workbook and a CD-ROM. There are 10 complete lessons, with each lesson containing an Activity Plan (lesson plan and step-by-step tutorial); Activity Text (Write: Outloud passage or examples and Co: Writer 4000 topic dictionary); On My Own (step-by-step tutorial for students); Activity Template (Write: Outloud guided template); How Did I Do (student self-assessment tool); Reflecting on Teaching (teacher reflection tool); More Template Activities (ideas for additional learning activities) and Content-Free Template (prompted template to create more activities). The lessons included are: Writing Descriptive Text, Identifying Main Ideas, Writing Supporting Details, Revising and Editing Text, Journaling in Response to Literature, Writing Sequential Text, Writing Comparative Text, Writing Haiku Poetry, Writing Request Letters, and Writing Jour-

nalism Articles. Each also has a listing of what you can expect students to learn about Write: Outloud and Co: Writer with each lesson. All files are included in the Classroom Activities Resource CD (templates, dictionaries, sample files, photos).

Writing Measurable IEP Goals and Objectives (Bateman, B. and Herr, C.)(IEP Resources:800-651-0954, <www.AttainmentCompany.com>) Here it is – Everything you ever wanted to know about writing IEP goals. Key concepts are reviewed and explained within the context of IDEA regulations: i.e., why “measurable” is an essential characteristic; writing Present Levels of Performance (PLOP), Objective/Benchmarks, etc. The second half of the book includes Sample Best Practice PLOPs, Objectives, Goals. It has 75 sets, including PLOPs, Objectives and Goals for Reading, Math, Written Language, Behavior/Social, Expressive/Receptive language, and others. This book will guide you in writing and using these IEP goals to help the educational process.

Assistive Technology Solutions for IEP Teams (Purcell, S. and Grant, D.) (IEP Resources:800-651-0954, <www.AttainmentCompany.com>) This guide is designed to be easy to use. Curriculum standards within each content area are presented in a chart format which includes: the grade, an analysis of the access issues related to performance of the standard, suggestions for AT solutions and sample IEP goals. It stresses the need to have the assistive technology written as the “tool” to perform the curriculum standard. With this guide, the teacher/therapist will learn to identify the curriculum standard the student cannot perform, the access barriers, and then to customize suggested solutions. There are chapters on reading, writing, listening and speaking. An excellent section is on AT Solutions. It has a listing of Key Words in AT and then each is illustrated and described. For example, under Adapted Handles, it explains What are they?, Can I make it? (showing three different kinds, how to make them out of putty, foam bicycle grips, hair curlers, foam tubing, etc.) Where can I buy them? (with references on where to purchase). Under Word Prediction Program, it explains what it is and describes 12 different word prediction programs. One section has listings of vendors and another has descriptions of some instructional technology products.

Assistive Technology for People with Disabilities (Bryant, D. and Bryant,

B.) (Allyn & Bacon: 617-848-7320, <www.ablongman.com>) This is a textbook that is intended to provide information to educators, therapists, users and families, and rehabilitation specialists about assistive technology adaptations with an emphasis on devices and services. The introduction defines assistive technology and presents a historical and multidisciplinary overview. The Adaptations Framework for considering, selecting and evaluating the use of adaptations is presented. Other topics include assistive technology assessment, assistive technology devices to enhance mobility (wheelchairs, gait trainers, standers, including seating and positioning issues), assistive technology devices to enhance speech communication (augmentative and alternative communication systems, non electronic and electronic devices); assistive technology devices to enhance access to information (computer access, telecommunication, listening and print access); integrating assistive technology adaptations into academic instruction (reading, writing, math, as well as evaluating effectiveness); assistive technology devices to enhance independent living (switches and scanning, environmental control units, mobility). There's a full glossary of assistive technology terms, and a listing of AT vendors. Each chapter has discussion questions and extensive reference lists. Very good book to introduce assistive technology concepts.

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