

EDUCATION

HELP FOR PEOPLE WITH DOWN'S SYNDROME



**DOWN'S
SYNDROME
ASSOCIATION**

A Registered Charity
No. 1081474

ICT Information Sheet – 2

SUITABLE SOFTWARE FOR UNDER-7s WITH DOWN'S SYNDROME

- **All About Numbers level 1 (Semerc)**
- Albert's paint box (resource)
- **Blob for Windows (Widgit)**
- **ChooseIT- ready made. (Inclusive Technology)**
- **Clicker5 (Crick)**
- **Dazzle Plus (Semerc)**
- **Hands-on Concepts Story kits (Inclusive Technology)**
- **Leaps and Bounds (Semerc)**
- **Talking faces (inclusive technology free download)**
- **Intellipics (Inclusive Technology)**
- **Jigsaw (Topologika)**
- **Kaleidoscope2 (Inclusive Technology)**
- **Living Books with Intellitools (Inclusive Technology)**
- **Microworlds (Semerc)**
- **Millie's Math House (Inclusive Technology)**
- **My Board (inclusive)**
- **Naughty Stories (Sherston)**
- **Sally (Topologika)**
- **Smart Alex (Brilliant)**
- **Speaking for myself plus (Topologika)**
- **Spider and Friends (Inclusive Technology)**

- **SumOne (Resource)**
- **SwitchIT (Inclusive Technology)**
- **Tizzy's Toybox (Sherston)**
- **Touch Games (Semerc)**
- **Beep (Sherston)**
- **Choose and tell- nursery rhymes (Inclusive technology)**
- **Podd (Indigo Learning)**
- **Talking and listening (DSA Free)**
- **Writing with Symbols (Widgit)**
- **Leaps and bounds 1,2 3 (semerc)**

SUGGESTED STARTER KIT

- **Speaking for myself**
- **Talking and listening**
- **SwitchIT**
- **My Board**
- **Clicker 5**
- **A number program**
- **A painting program**
- **A music program**

Contact :

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for further information

Pre School and early years.

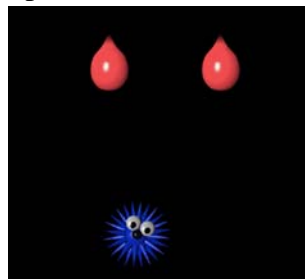
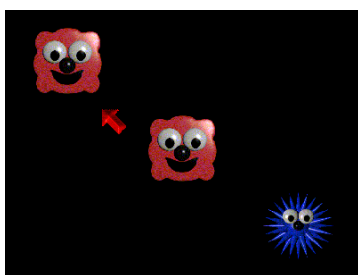
Introducing young children to the computer can be exciting and frustrating. The co-ordination required using the mouse with the hand to move the object on the screen is complex, just watch any adult without difficulties doing it for the first time. As well as the hand to eye co-ordination that is required there are those buttons which have to be pressed at the appropriate time as well, depending on what type of mouse you have there can be up to 5 buttons all performing different tasks. For young children and those with fine motor skills difficulties it's important to find a mouse that fits in the hand and has a minimum of buttons. Ideally the software that you use should allow children to access the activities by a simple alternative method.

There are plenty of companies out there who will sell you a variety of alternatives, touch screen, concept keyboards, roller balls and the like but using an alternative of these kinds may be relevant in a school situation to carry out particular tasks for short periods. Most teachers and parents, however, want to work towards enabling their children to use the same tools as everyone else. These alternative devices can actually create a barrier, not only limiting the amount of software that the child can use, but making it unnecessary to learn the skills that will be of most value to them later on.

Generally speaking it is advisable to ensure that using the 2 largest keys on the computer, the spacebar and return key, can operate the software. Almost all the software listed as "switch accessible" will offer this function, without the need for additional switches and hardware.

Good early year's software, as well as offering an alternative to using the mouse will keep tasks simple and break down key tasks into small, achievable units.

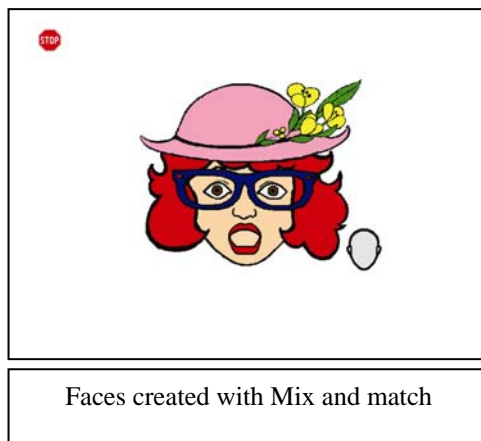
Probably the longest serving and most used programme in the history of early years computing is Blob and although this program is long in the tooth its relevance is still as good today as it was when it was originally written for the old BBC computers. It is now available for the standard windows computer and offers a wide range of exercises and a wide range of options for how to run it. The bright graphics and animations encourage children to develop their skills, while enjoying themselves.



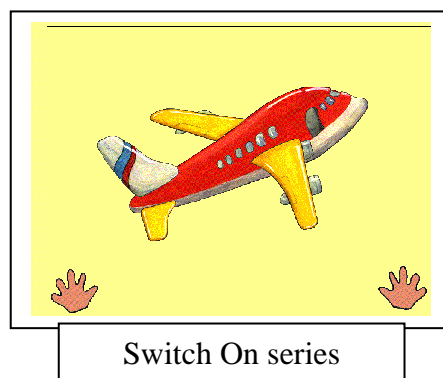
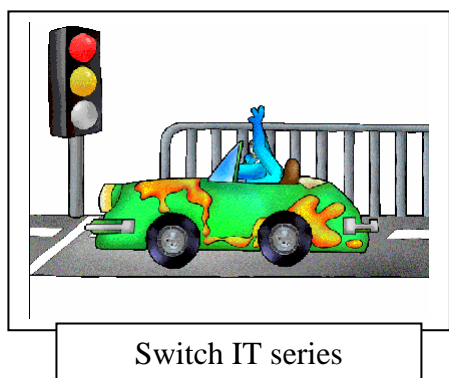
If you choose "keyboard" from the list of options and then choose "spacebar" a whole range of simple exercises can be carried out just by pressing the space-bar.

Simple, visual programmes that explore cause and effect, visual tracking, hand to eye co ordination can be hugely entertaining and beneficial.

The switch suite of programmes has been very popular with almost all the young children that have tried them. Again the 'switches' in the title are not necessary because they can be operated by the space bar or mouse buttons. The new and exciting range of Switch IT software offers a wide range of activities form the simple Switch It pictures are especially useful, with there clear black and white images for those with immature vision or sight difficulties.



Another way that young children can access software programmes without using the mouse is by '**scanning**' through a set of choices, by pressing a key or a switch. One programme that does this effectively is Mix and Match. This simple little programme is extremely versatile and offers choices from simply pressing the spacebar, through using the mouse and. It allows the child the opportunity to create faces from a large combination of features, sex, colour, shape, eyes, noses, ears, hair and even glasses, moustaches and a choice of hats. There have been times, when demonstrating software to kids that this particular programme has had to be removed from the choices because kids have just wanted to keep on playing with all the combinations that can be achieved.



Speaking For Myself Plus

This ever popular early years software for developing **Communication, Cognitive and Reading Skills**, has been updated by Topologica software and the completely new modern graphics, new animations and extra activities and nursery rhymes serve to demonstrate how a good idea can be upgraded to fit into a more technically able world. I helped design the original software specifically for children with Down's syndrome over 7 years ago and it's great to see that it will continue to meet the needs of a wide range of children for a few more years yet.

The software on CD ROM for Windows was designed in collaboration with Down's Ed and provides an extensive range of activities and resources for children at, or working towards, Key stage 1 of the national curriculum and for those with special needs and speech and language difficulties. It is particularly relevant to children with Down's syndrome as it is designed around the concept of **'Teaching Reading to Teach Talking'** and contains simple error free exercises to help develop reading skills and serves as a **simple introduction to using the computer** as an aid to learning, both for teachers and parents. The software contains flashcards which both talk and write the text, and it also offers video clips of the sign for each word used. No more requirement to learn the a whole sign language in order to support the first 20 to 50 words that a child may need to learn as a bridge to using spoken language.

The software also offers a series of everyday storybooks to assist with putting **two words together** and **three words together**. As each page of the story is opened the picture appears, the words are written slowly across the screen, and then they are automatically read out loud. This encourages productive speech and develops early reading skills. (you can also access the relevant Makaton line drawing for each story.)

Speaking for myself also includes a whole series of multimedia interactive exercises to introduce and re enforce basic skills at different levels of difficulty from the simplest error free style to simple choosing, matching, listening, placing objects and sequencing and number order. There are some delightful animated nursery rhymes as well, which can be used as **missing word exercises** to encourage productive speech.

The pack comes with CD, a manual and a set of small colour **flash-cards** from one of the sets which can be used away from the computer, and a colouring book of one of the 'two word' story books. There is a simple printing facility to enable anyone with a printer to print out their own sets of flash cards from any series and all the talking books on the CD and 8 others on different topics can be printed out in colour or black and white to use as reading and colouring books.



Talking Flashcards placement activities and animated nursery rhyme activities,
from Speaking for Myself Plus

For further information contact: educate@downs-syndrome.org.uk