

# EZ ZAT



## Assistive Technology (AT) Activities for Children Ages 3-8 with Disabilities

*A Guide for Professionals and Parents*



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**EZ AT—Assistive Technology (AT) Activities for Children Ages 3-8 with Disabilities:  
A Guide for Professionals and Parents**

Thanks to the Simon Technology Center, a project of PACER, for preparing this booklet.

Paula F. Goldberg, PACER Center Executive Director

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# Introduction

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Welcome to *EZ AT*, a guide to help professionals and parents encourage assistive technology (AT) use among children ages 3 to 8 who have disabilities.

AT refers to a wide range of products and devices that help increase or improve a person's ability to learn and participate in life. Whether low-tech or high-tech, AT opens doors of possibilities for people with disabilities.

This guide began in 2006 with an invitation to professionals and parents around the country to submit their best ideas for AT activities. Staff from PACER Center's Simon Technology Center reviewed the submissions, looking for ones that were best practices for children and that most effectively used technology to promote learning and inclusion among all students.

*EZ AT* is the result. We hope that you find the activities helpful in your classroom or home. In 2015, *EZ AT* was updated to reflect current technology.

Children with disabilities have the potential to achieve great things. The more fully children can participate in activities, the more likely they are to reach that potential. The AT activities in this guide can be the bridge to such success.

For more information on the AT Tools listed in this booklet and how to purchase them, please contact the Simon Technology Center at 952-838-9000 or 888-248-0822.

## **About Project KITE**

PACER's Project KITE (Kids Included through Technology are Enriched) trains teams of professionals and parents to use assistive technology at school and home. Its goal is to promote inclusion, active participation in learning, and peer-interactions for children ages 3 to 8 with disabilities. Learn more at [PACER.org/STC/kite](http://PACER.org/STC/kite).

# Activities

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## Animal Book

*by Jean Nelson, AT practitioner, occupational therapist, Plymouth, Minn.*

### **Goal**

Students will learn animal names in their native language and share with peers.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Art/sensory, communication, language arts/literacy, readiness skills/learning, science, social interaction

### **Technology Used**

- Computer or Tablet
- Data projector (optional) or SMART Board
- Internet
- Microsoft® PowerPoint®, presentation tool, or book design application

### **Other Materials Used**

Books with animal names in different languages; pictures of animals

### **Preparation**

Help students find animal names in books or on the Internet. If they already know animal names, help them write the names down.

### **Description of Activity**

Help students create simple PowerPoint® slides with pictures of animals they have found on the Internet. Copy the pictures and paste them into the slides. Add the animals' names in the students' native languages. Students will share their slide shows with classmates.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

- Have students use Speaking Dynamically Pro™, the free Tar Heel Reader website or other communication device, software or app to speak the animals' names.
- Help the child find favorite pets or animals on the Internet, print the webpages, bind them together, and make a book that reflects those interests.



# Bear Bonanza

by Kathy Moe, speech/language pathologist; Marge McArthur, Head Start teacher;  
and Paulette Clarke, special education assistant, White Earth, Minn.

## Goal

Students will correctly identify different types of bears, colors, and clothing.

## Subject Area and Skills Addressed

Art/sensory, choice making, communication, fine motor, music, readiness skills/learning, science, social interaction/turn taking

## Technology Used

- Software program or app that features bears
- Computer or tablet
- Internet
- 4 Message Voice Output Device
- Laminator (optional)

## Other Materials Used

Construction paper; glue; scissors; variety of stuffed bears (black bear, brown bear, panda bear, polar bear, etc.); Velcro®

## Preparation

- Install software if needed or prepare app. You can also find bear sites on the Internet at: [www.nationalgeographic.com/kids/creature\\_feature/archive](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/kids/creature_feature/archive); [www.bearden.org](http://www.bearden.org); [www.exn.ca/bears/bears.cfm](http://www.exn.ca/bears/bears.cfm)
- Record the four verses of “Mary Wore Her Red Dress” into a voice output device.
- Cut out enough construction paper in the shapes of a bear, hat, dress, socks, and shoes so that each student can make a bear.
- Laminate one of each shape and apply Velcro® so that you can dress and undress the bear as a class.

## Description of Activity

Introduce students to the bear theme with three or four different kinds of stuffed bears. Gather the students around the computer or tablets and look at those bears on a program or on the Internet. Use the voice output device to sing along with “Mary Wore Her Red Dress.” You can search the Internet for videos featuring this song. After the students return to their circle, show them the laminated bear, named Mary. Have students pass Mary around the circle; then let each child press a button on the voice output device, dress the bear with the matching article of clothing, and sing with the group. After everyone has had a turn, the students dress bears of their own.

## Ways to Adapt this Activity

- Use a Step-by-Step™ communicator or a device with levels so a student could sing along.
- Use a drawing or stamping program or app and let students draw or stamp bears.
- Make classroom dens with cloth over tables.
- Use the book *Mary Wore Her Red Dress* by Merle Peck if software is not available.

## Brown Bear, Brown Bear

by Charlet Sperbeck, educational speech pathologist, LaCrescent, Minn.

### Goal

Students will engage in reading *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*.

### Subject Area and Skills Addressed

Communication, language arts/literacy, readiness skills/learning

### Technology Used

- Boardmaker™ or other board making tool
- Computer or tablet
- Go Talk™ or other mid tech communication device
- Laminator (optional)
- Printer
- Single message voice output device

### Other Materials Used

*Brown Bear, Brown Bear* by Bill Martin Jr. and Eric Carle; card stock; Velcro®

### Preparation

- Use Boardmaker™ or other board making tool to create an overlay for Go Talk™ with pictures of animals in the story.
- Program Go Talk™ with names of the animals.
- Print and laminate pictures of individual animals and attach Velcro® on the back.
- Record a message such as “Brown bear, brown bear, what do you see?” into a single message voice output device.
- Create a fill-in-the blank sentence worksheet (“I see a \_\_\_\_\_ looking at me”) and place Velcro® on the blank; use laminated pictures of individual animals to complete the sentence.

### Description of Activity

Read the story with the children. Students use their devices to name animals in the story. Have children use the single message device to say the repeatable line in the story. Have children fill in the blank using their animal pictures to complete the sentence.

### Ways to Adapt this Activity

- Use different colored bears to adapt the story, (e.g., “green bear, green bear” or “black bear, black bear”).
- Use the communication device at home and have the child retell the story. Add puppets, stuffed animals, and other materials to create a dramatic play experience.

# Color Bug Sorting

by Kathy Van Velzen, special education preschool teacher, Apple Valley, Calif.

## **Goal**

Students will use plastic bugs to practice counting and identifying colors.

## **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Fine motor, readiness skills/learning, science, social interaction/turn taking

## **Technology Used**

- All-Turn-It® spinner
- Switch device

## **Other Materials Used**

Blue, green, red, and yellow plastic bugs; small blue, green, red, and yellow plates or bowls; a small basket or box for each child

## **Preparation**

- Make a four-color (blue, green, red, and yellow) background for the All-Turn-It® spinner
- Connect a switch to the All-Turn-It® spinner

## **Description of Activity**

The students will use the All-Turn-It® spinner and take turns spinning for a color by pressing the connected switch. The All-Turn-It® spinner will land on blue, green, red, or yellow. Have students or an adult toss that color bug to the student whose turn it is. That student will catch the bug in a basket or box. Have the students take turns and play until all the bugs are in students' baskets or boxes. Give each student four plates or bowls (blue, green, red, and yellow). The students will sort their colored bugs onto the plates or into bowls. Have students count how many of each colored bug they have.

## **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

- Program communication device or application with the different colors and numbers. Have students “say” the colors and numbers using the communication device.
- Use Kid Pix® Studio Deluxe or another story creation software or app and have students make pictures about insects.

## Dinosaurs Galore!

by Kristi Corens, middle-school science teacher, Bloomington, Minn.

### Goal

Students will learn about fossils and dinosaurs by making their own fossils.

### Subject Area and Skills Addressed

Art/sensory, fine motor, readiness skills/learning, science

### Technology Used

- Battery adapter
- Battery-operated plastic dinosaurs of various sizes
- Switch device

### Other Materials Used

Modeling clay; plastic plants, shells, insects, and other objects that would make good impressions in clay

### Preparation

Attach a battery adapter and a switch to a battery-operated plastic dinosaur.

### Description of Activity

Students will create their own fossils. Explain to students that many fossils are imprints of animals or plants. They were created by the animal or plant stepping, falling, or lying on the wet ground. The ground hardened over a long time and created a fossil. Create fossils with soft modeling clay by allowing the students to move the dinosaurs through the clay using a battery-operated plastic dinosaur attached to a switch. They also can press plastic insects, plant parts, or shells into the clay. Make sure the clay is firmly attached to the table in a thin layer and not too sticky.

### Ways to Adapt this Activity

- Have students draw or use the dinosaur stamp option in Kid Pix® Studio Deluxe.
- Have students play with dinosaur-themed software or app.
- Read dinosaur books to the students such as *Can I Have a Stegosaurus Mom? Can I? Please?* by Lois Grambling, *Dancing Dinos* by Sally Lucas, and *Saturday Night at the Dinosaur Stomp* by Carol Diggory Shields.

# Farm Animals

by Grace Lawson, preschool special education teacher, Rockville, Md.

## Goal

Students will learn the names and sounds of farm animals.

## Subject Area and Skills Addressed

Communication, dramatic play, gross motor, language arts/literacy, science, social/emotional development, social interaction/turn taking

## Technology Used

- Boardmaker™ or other board making tool
- Laminator (optional)
- Computer or tablet
- Printer
- Cheap Talk™ or other recordable communication device or application

## Other Materials Used

Bandana and straw hat; paper; large and small pictures of farm animals; large and small plastic farm animals that correspond to the pictures; red box (large); red boxes (small, one for each child)

## Preparation

- Gather plastic farm animals.
- Print pictures of farm animals using Boardmaker™ or other board making tool.
- Mount the pictures on paper, laminate, and cut out symbols using Boardmaker™ or other board making tool.
- Make a little red box for each child in the class.
- Make an animal overlay for Cheap Talk™ and record animal names.

## Description of Activity

Introduce students to large plastic farm animals and have them sing along to “Old McDonald.” Have each child select one small animal out of the big red box and place it in a little red box. Invite each student to “shake, shake, shake” his or her box and make the appropriate animal noise (“moo, moo, moo”). Then have the students take the animal out of the box and match it to the small picture of the same animal.

Introduce the song “The Farmer in the Dell.” Give one student a straw hat and another student a bandana, to play the farmer and his wife. Then give each child a large picture of one farm animal. Have each student pick another student and say the name of the animal that they are choosing. As the students are selected, they stand together in the front of the room, in a line. They can push the Cheap Talk™ or other recordable communication device when asked the name of their animal. When all the students have had a turn, they will return to their seats.

## Ways to Adapt this Activity

Give each child a Pringles® can with Velcro® glued around the outside. As the class is singing “Old McDonald” (or retelling a farm story), the students take the Boardmaker™ pictures of the farm animals and place them on the can.

## Green Fish, Blue Fish

by Mary Gagnon, early childhood special education teacher, Two Harbors, Minn.

### **Goal**

Students will recognize different colors on the computer, choose the matching colored fish, and place it on a felt board.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Attending, choice making, gross motor, readiness skills/learning, science

### **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Mouse, trackball, or touch screen
- Orange Fish software (Download it from the activity exchange site <http://aex.intellitools.com/search.php>; search for Orange Fish; requires Intellitools® Classroom Suite from AbleNet)
- Switch device

### **Other Materials Used**

Felt board; fish cut out of different colored felt

### **Preparation**

- Install Intellitools® Classroom Suite and Orange Fish program.
- Cut fish out of different colored felt.
- Make felt board.

### **Description of Activity**

The student clicks the mouse (or other access equipment), and the screen says, “I see a red fish.” A red fish swims across the screen. The teacher holds up two felt fish, one red, one a different color, and asks, “Which one is red?” The student chooses the red fish and places it on the felt board. Then the student clicks the mouse and a different colored fish crosses the screen. Repeat the process until all the fish are on the felt board.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

- Have students use a communication device or application that repeats the color.

# Hungry Caterpillars

by Patricia Minardi, special education teacher, Alexandria, Va.

## Goal

Students will increase vocabulary as they identify food and colors.

## Subject Area and Skills Addressed

Attending, choice making, communication, cooking/nutrition, fine motor, language arts/literacy, readiness skills/learning, science, social interaction/turn taking

## Technology Used

- Boardmaker™ or other board making tool
- Cheap Talk 8™ and Twin Talk™ or other recordable communication device
- Computer or tablet
- Digital camera
- Laminator (optional)
- Printer

## Other Materials Used

Craft googly eye balls; empty Pringles® cans; nontoxic green paint; pipe cleaners; pompons; *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle

## Preparation

- Gather Pringles® cans.
- Take digital pictures of the fruits and food used in *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* or find via Google Images.
- Use Boardmaker™ or other board making tool to make an overlay of fruits and food for Cheap Talk 8™ and single pictures of fruits and food for Twin Talk™. Laminate the sheets.
- Make a set of fruits and foods that are in the story (1 apple, 2 pears, etc.) for each child, laminate, and cut into squares.

## Description of Activity

Have students make caterpillars by painting the Pringles® can green, gluing on pom-poms, eye balls, and pipe-cleaner antennas. Cut a hole in the Pringles® top for a mouth (or just remove top). Read *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. Using the laminated set of fruit and foods, the children will feed their “very hungry caterpillars.” They will identify the fruit, the fruit color, how many pieces of fruit the caterpillar ate, etc. Let students use CheapTalk 8™ to identify fruit and pick which fruit comes next. They also will identify other foods the caterpillar ate (pickle, cake, etc).

## Ways to Adapt this Activity

Let the students taste real fruits at snack time. Let them use TwinTalk™ to choose what fruit they would like to taste.

## On the Farm

by Kathy Van Velzen, special education preschool teacher, Apple Valley, Calif.

### **Goal**

Students will identify farm animals and sounds, match animal sounds to animal pictures, and practice taking turns.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Art/sensory, communication, readiness skills/learning, science, social interaction/turn taking

### **Technology Used**

Cheap Talk™ or other recordable communication device or app.

### **Other Materials Used**

Book about farm animals (e.g., *Rooster's Off to See the World* by Eric Carle or *Who Lives on the Farm?* by Lisa Bonforte); butcher paper; crayons; farm animal pictures; nontoxic paint

### **Preparation**

- Find book(s).
- Find farm animal pictures that match the animals in the story.
- Put farm animal pictures into Cheap Talk™ or other recordable communication device or app.
- Record farm animal noises into Cheap Talk™ or other recordable communication device or app.
- Draw a barn and surrounding barnyard on a piece of butcher paper.

### **Description of Activity**

Paint the children's palms the color of their choice, and ask them to press their hands onto the barnyard area of the mural. While the paint is drying, read a farm story and ask questions such as "What sound does the cow make?" The students can respond with their own voices or by pushing the matching picture on the communication board. When the mural is dry, ask the children to draw a face and feet onto their handprints, transforming the prints into roosters or turkeys.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

- Use a communication device to say a repeated phrase in the story that is read aloud.
- Have students explore farm-related Web sites and software.



# Where Do Animals Live?

by Phillips YWCA staff, Minneapolis, Minn.

## **Goal**

Students will learn about animals and where they live.

## **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Choice making, fine/gross motor, science

## **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Internet
- Mouse, trackball, or touch screen

## **Other Materials Used**

Pillowcase or bag; plastic animals; plastic bins (two); a plant; sand or soil; water

## **Preparation**

- Set up equipment and find animal sites on the Internet at: [www.nationalgeographic.com/kids](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/kids); [www.kidsolr.com/zoos\\_animals/index.html](http://www.kidsolr.com/zoos_animals/index.html)
- Put plastic animals in a pillowcase or bag.
- Fill one bin with sand or soil and a plant, and fill the other with water.

## **Description of Activity**

Students pull an animal out of the pillowcase. Then they have to choose whether it is a land animal or a water animal (“Where does the lion live?”). They can play with the animal in the environment that they choose. When the students are done choosing animals, move the group to the computer or tablet. Have students go on the Internet to play games and learn about where animals live.

## **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

- Program a communication device with an animal noise or lots of animal noises. Have students press the button to match the noise with the animal.
- Have students play with battery-operated animals to which switches have been attached.

## A Zoo for You!

by Kathy Van Velzen, special education preschool teacher, Apple Valley, Calif.

### **Goal**

Students will learn about zoo animals and will practice counting, letters, and colors.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Art/sensory, cooking, dramatic play, fine/gross motor skills, music/creative movement, readiness/learning skills, science, social interaction/turn taking

### **Technology Used**

- All-Turn-It™ spinner
- Laminator (optional)
- Switch device

### **Other Materials Used**

Book about zoo animals (e.g., *Animals A to Z* by James Balog; *A to Z* by Sandra Boynton; *Animals A to Z* by David McPhail; *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle); laminated number cards; toy zoo animals (plastic or stuffed)

### **Preparation**

- Gather eight different kinds of plastic or stuffed zoo animals and a different number of each kind. For example, you might have one alligator, two monkeys, three camels, four lizards, etc.
- Create a background for the All-Turn-It™ spinner with a picture of each animal.
- Draw and laminate numbers 1 – 15.

### **Description of Activity**

Read a book about the zoo to the children. Using the All-Turn-It™ spinner, the children choose an animal, then count how many animals of that kind there are and find the correct numeral to represent the number of the toy animals.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

Use Kid Pix® Studio Deluxe and have students use stamps to make zoo pictures on the computer or draw the pictures themselves.

# Back and Forth Journal

by Tina White, parent and parent advocate/trainer,  
The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities, Sebring, Ohio

## **Goal**

Hospitalized or homebound students will stay in contact with the teacher and practice reading and writing skills.

## **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Communication, fine motor, life skills/daily activities, readiness skills/learning, social/emotional development, social interaction/turn taking

## **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Digital camera
- Printer
- Clicker software or Tar Heel Reader website

## **Other Materials Used**

Composition notebook; glue stick; scissors

## **Preparation**

- Use the digital camera to take pictures of daily classroom activities and friends; download photos into the computer.
- Make sure that the child has access to a computer and digital camera at the hospital or at home.
- Talk to teachers and children in the classroom about the traveling notebook.

## **Description of Activity**

Students will use Clicker software or Tar Heel Reader website to journal, add their own digital pictures, print out their entries, and add them to a notebook that can travel between school and the hospital. (This also could be done through e-mail.)

## Grocery Store Game

by Lisa Doyen, educator, Sioux Falls, S.D.

### **Goal**

Students will help with grocery shopping and practice life skills.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Choice making, communication, cooking/nutrition, language arts/literacy

### **Technology Used**

Step-by-Step™ communicator or other recordable communication device or application

### **Preparation**

Record on a Step-by-Step™ communicator or other recordable communication device or application different items the student can ask for in the store.

### **Description of Activity:**

Take the child to the grocery store. Have the child use the Step-by-Step™ communicator to ask where to find specific items (e.g., “Where is the ketchup?” and “Thank you”).

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity:**

Make up picture symbols for food and items in the store. Have the child match the picture with the real item on the shelf.

## Picture This!

*by Cheryl Triplett, parent, Little Falls, Minn.*

### **Goal**

Students will learn how to use a schedule and understand what the next activity will be.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Communication, life skills/daily activities, social/emotional development

### **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Digital camera
- Laminator (optional)
- Printer

### **Other Materials Used**

Clipboard; scissors; Velcro®

### **Preparation**

- Buy a clipboard (preferably one that has a compartment to store the pictures).
- Use the digital camera to take pictures of significant items, activities, and places in the child's environment.
- Download, print, laminate, and cut out the pictures.
- Put Velcro® on the back of the pictures and on the clipboard.

### **Description of Activity**

Put two to three pictures on the clipboard in the order the activities will occur. Point to the pictures from top to bottom and explain the day's schedule. Do not allow the child to touch the clipboard or pictures. This is to prevent confusion with the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) pictures, where the child may make choices.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

Place the picture schedule in a school binder or folder.

## Pointing and Attending

by Cheryl Triplett, parent, Little Falls, Minn.

### **Goal**

Students will point with one finger, sit with hands still, pay attention to an activity, and make a choice when it is their turn.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Attending, choice making, communication, fine motor, readiness skills/learning, social/emotional development, social interaction/turn taking

### **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Songs I Sing in Preschool™
- Touch screen

### **Description of Activity**

Have the child sit at a computer desk with minimal distractions. The software will display choices of familiar children's songs. When the child points to one and touches the screen, the song will play. Work on pointing with one finger instead of the whole hand, assist with hand-over-hand guidance to isolate the pointer finger. Help the child point to all areas of the screen. Tell the child to have "quiet hands" if necessary and provide hand-over-hand assistance with hand folding. This could be used as a way to prevent the child from randomly touching the screen.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

Have the child practice pointing with one finger on a keyboard or switch.

# Time to Get Dressed!

by Kim Woehl, parent and early childhood educator, Wyoming, Minn.

## **Goal**

Students will choose an appropriate outfit for the day.

## **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Choice making, dramatic play, health/safety, life skills/daily activities

## **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Sesame Street® Preschool or the Dress Grover Game on [www.sesamestreet.org/games](http://www.sesamestreet.org/games)

## **Other Materials Used**

Clothing choices for the day

## **Preparation**

- Install software and set up equipment.
- Set out several clothing choices. Include weather-appropriate options, such as a swimsuit and snorkel for a summer day or a jacket, mittens, and hat for a winter day.

## **Description of Activity**

Select the “dress the characters” activity in Sesame Street® Preschool or the Dress Grover Game on [www.sesamestreet.org/games](http://www.sesamestreet.org/games). The child will practice how to choose items of clothing for a particular type of day. Students may then try on the clothing for dramatic play.

## **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

Use Boardmaker™ or other board making tool to create symbols to reinforce clothing choices.

## Touch and Choose

*by Diane Dee-Tourdat, deaf/hard of hearing teacher, Minneapolis, Minn.*

### **Goal**

Student will select one of two favorite activities.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Art/sensory, communication, choice making, fine motor, life skills/daily activities, social/emotional development

### **Materials Used**

Cookie sheet; pictures of favorite activities; tactile materials (bubble wrap, fur, indoor/outdoor carpet, sandpaper, tinfoil, etc.)

### **Preparation**

Put one texture and a picture of a favorite activity on the left side of the cookie sheet. Place a different texture and activity picture on the right.

### **Description of Activity**

Have students feel each side of the cookie sheet. When they feel the first side, say the name of that activity. Repeat on the second side. Let students choose their preferred activity by touching the corresponding side, then let them do the activity.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

- Have the student use two communication switches that state the activity.
- Have the student use scanning and a switch with Speaking Dynamically Pro™ to highlight two choices on the computer.



## Calendar and Weather Time

*by Sabrina Davis, occupational therapist; Brenda Bohn, speech-language pathologist; and Shannon Jorgensen, early childhood special education teacher, Lakeville, Minn.*

### **Goal**

Students will communicate date and weather information to others.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Communication, daily activities, fine motor, social interaction

### **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Mouse, trackball, or touch screen
- Speaking Dynamically Pro™ or similar software program or app

### **Preparation**

- Install software and set up equipment.
- Use Speaking Dynamically Pro™ to customize a calendar with symbols of the month, day, and weather.

### **Description of Activity**

Students use the computer to tell classmates what month and day it is and what the weather is like.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

Have students use scanning and a switch as an access method.

## Come Play with Me

by Maria Nellis, kindergarten teacher, and Patti Rudolph, special education teacher, Orono, Minn.

### **Goal**

The students will choose a playmate.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Choice making, communication, fine/gross motor, social interaction

### **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Digital camera
- Mouse, trackball, or touch screen
- Speaking Dynamically Pro™ or a recordable/customizable communication device or application.

### **Preparation**

- Install software and set up equipment.
- Take digital photos of classmates.
- Use Speaking Dynamically Pro™ to design a communication board with an “I want to play with...” button and a grid with photos of each student.

### **Description of Activity**

The student will touch the “I want to play with...” button on the computer screen. Then the student will touch a picture of the friend with whom he or she would like to play. The student and classmate work as partners on an appropriate activity.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

Have the students use scanning and a switch to choose a partner.

## Morning Message Writing

*by Linda Tefft, occupational therapist, and the New Prague Primary School Special Education Team, New Prague, Minn.*

### **Goal**

Students will improve fine motor skills by putting written information into a daily journal.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Fine motor, language arts/literacy

### **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Printer

### **Other Materials Used**

Mailing labels; notebook for each student

### **Preparation**

- Ensure that the labels are inserted properly into the printer or that the student knows how to do this.
- Teach the student how to create a label from the Microsoft® Word program or pre-set the label screen on the computer for the student.
- Select the right “label option” from the Word program before printing.

### **Description of Activity**

Every morning, ask the students to copy a daily message or write a journal entry in their notebooks. The students can move to the computer and type the text, then print the message on a label, peel the label off, and stick the label in their notebooks.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

- Have the student type the text in a word processor, print the page, and then cut and paste the message in the notebook.
- Have students print on paper that is three-hole-punched and place the page in a binder.

## Snack Time

*by Jessica Hislop, speech/language pathologist, and  
Sara Tinklenberg, early childhood special education teacher, Lakeville, Minn.*

### **Goal**

Students will make a snack choice.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Choice making, cooking, fine/gross motor, life/daily living skills, nutrition

### **Technology Used**

- BIGmack® communicator
- Digital camera
- Printer

### **Other Materials Used**

Bowls (one for each student); tape; two different snacks choices

### **Preparation**

- Take digital photos of the snack foods.
- Print out and tape the photos to the communication device.
- Record a phrase into communication device. Example: “I would like popcorn, please.”

### **Description of Activity**

The students push the communication device to indicate the snack they prefer. The teacher places that snack item in the student’s bowl. The students eat the snack and then make another choice.

### **Ways to Adapt the Activity**

Have the students use a mouse, switch, or trackball to click a picture of the snack on a computer.

## You Can Do It

*by Chris Merriman, speech pathologist, Hopkins, Minn.*

### **Goal**

Students will perform a sequence of movements or activities.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Fine/gross motor, life/daily living skills

### **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Digital camera or tablet camera
- iPhoto™, PowerPoint®, Keynote, or any slide show or book making tool

### **Other Materials Used**

Any materials used in a daily routine (for example, if the routine were washing hands, materials would be a sink, soap, and paper towels)

### **Preparation**

- Take digital photos of each step in the chosen activity.
- Download photos onto a computer and into program/application that will allow a slide show.

### **Description of Activity**

Use the slide show to demonstrate the routine the children will learn. Explain why the activity is important and how they will practice the movements. Let the children practice the routine.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

Print pictures, laminate them, and use them as a book for students who prefer a book format.

## All About Shapes

by Project KITE Participant, Duluth, Minn.

### Goal

Students will practice shape recognition and building with shapes. They will feel, classify, sort, trace, and draw basic shapes.

### Subject Area and Skills Addressed

Art/sensory, choice making, communication, fine/gross motor, readiness skills/learning, social interaction/turn taking

### Technology Used

- Computer or tablet
- Millie's Math House™
- Mouse, trackball, or touch screen
- TalkPad™

### Other Materials Used

Construction paper; crayons and pencils; *Fuzzy Yellow Ducklings* by Matthew Van Fleet; glue; *Little Bear's Shapes* by Jane Hissey; plastic shapes; scissors; shape cards; shape patterns; stencils

### Preparation

- Cut out shapes for students to use or buy pre-cut shapes.
- Attach four different shape pictures to TalkPad™ or other recordable communication device or application.
- Record the four different shape names in the TalkPad™ or other recordable communication device or application.
- Install software

### Description of Activities

- Read *Fuzzy Yellow Ducklings*. Use plastic shapes to build things mentioned in the book.
- Have students use Millie's Math House™ to build mouse houses from shapes.
- Have students make a shape collage by tracing shapes, cutting them out, and pasting them into larger shapes, such as houses.
- Read *Little Bear's Shapes*. Use TalkPad™ with shape names recorded in it.

### Ways to Adapt this Activity

- Feel and find plastic shapes in shaving cream.
- Play a shape fishing game. Put shape cookie cutters in a water table and let students "fish" for them with play fishing rods or other tools.
- Use shape cookie cutters to cut little sandwiches out of bread.

## Artful Communication

by Beverly Burand, speech clinician, LaCrescent, Minn.

### **Goal**

Students will create and use a laminated placemat to communicate during art time.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Art/sensory, communication, life skills/daily activities

### **Technology Used**

- Boardmaker™ or other board making tool or [connectability.ca/visuals-engine](http://connectability.ca/visuals-engine)
- Computer or tablet
- Laminator (optional)
- Printer

### **Other Materials Used**

Art supplies (crayons, markers, etc.); plain paper placemat (or sheet of paper); picture symbols that have to do with art (clay, colors, crayons, glue, markers, paint, scissors, textures, etc.)

### **Preparation**

- Find and print symbols that correspond with art-related words.
- Print and glue symbols around the edge of the placemat.

### **Description of Activity**

Students add their own artwork to the placemat, which is then laminated. Students use their placemats to communicate during art time.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

Use a recordable communication device.

## May I Take Your Order?

by Shannon Schmitz, early childhood special education teacher,  
and Mary Peek, school readiness teacher, Anoka-Hennepin School District, Anoka, Minn.

### **Goal**

Students will practice placing an order at a pretend fast-food restaurant and improve interactions with classmates.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Choice making, communication, dramatic play, gross motor, life skills, social interaction

### **Technology Used**

- Boardmaker™ or other board making tool
- Computer or tablet
- Laminator (optional)
- LITTLEmack™ communicator or other recordable communication device or application
- Printer

### **Other Materials Used**

Fast-food restaurant set-up; plastic food; small scooters or tricycles; string; tape

### **Preparation**

- Design and put together a fast-food restaurant setting in the classroom. It could be comprised of a drive-thru where students arrive on scooters, wagons, or wheelchairs, an ordering window, a kitchen, and dining area.
- Use Boardmaker™ or other board making tool to make labels for menu items and other props.
- Record phrases into the communication device. Example: “What would you like to order?” “I want French fries.”
- Laminate and tape matching Boardmaker™ or other board making tool pictures onto communication devices.

### **Description of Activity**

The students have parking places for their scooters and driver’s licenses on strings (a Boardmaker™ or other board making tool laminated picture that says “driver’s license”). The students drive down the marked driveway and up to the ordering window. Students use a communication device or picture symbols from Boardmaker™ or other board making tool to place their orders. The students behind the counter take orders and make the pretend meals.

### **Other Ways to Adapt this Activity**

Use a touch screen or scanning software at the ordering window.



# Coloring Book

by Lucy DesLauriers, special education instructor, and  
Mary Smith-Dennis, physical/health disabilities teacher and AT specialist, Prior Lake, Minn.

## **Goal**

The students will make their own coloring book.

## **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Art/sensory, choice making, fine motor, social interaction

## **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Kid Pix® Studio Deluxe
- Mouse, trackball, or touch screen

## **Other Materials Used**

Colored pencils; crayons; markers

## **Preparation**

- Install Kid Pix® Studio Deluxe software on the computer
- Set up equipment

## **Description**

The students will make a coloring book on Kid Pix® Studio, print it out, and then color it.

## **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

Have students color the pages on the computer in Kid Pix®.

## Exploring Sounds and Music

by Melissa L. Morgan, co-author, Educational Travel on a Shoestring  
and Homeschooling on a Shoestring, Columbus, Ohio

### **Goal**

Students will distinguish and explore sounds.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Art/sensory, choice making, fine motor, language arts/literacy, music/creative movement, readiness skills/learning, social/emotional development

### **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Mouse, trackball, or touch screen
- Music Ace™ or other software for teaching music

### **Other Materials Used**

A musical keyboard could also be used separately from a computer, for portability.

### **Preparation**

Download Music Ace™ at [www.harmonicvision.com](http://www.harmonicvision.com). Determine the level of sound discrimination with which you wish to start. Tailor the activity to the ability and challenges of the children.

### **Description of Activity**

In Music Ace™, children can use either the mouse or touch screen to explore and distinguish sounds on the “Doodle Pad” activity, making their own song. Children and helpers can take turns making songs out of sounds.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

- Encourage verbal responses in children who are able to take turns making sounds or words.
- Make up nonsense songs by taking turns picking words (or parts of words) to go with the music. Ask “what can we call your song?”
- Use a MIDI keyboard to distinguish sounds and allow children to create their own songs.

## Fun with Food and Nutrition

by Kathy Van Velzen, special education preschool teacher, Apple Valley, Calif.

### **Goal**

Students will learn about different foods and basic nutrition.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Communication, cooking/nutrition, dramatic play, fine/gross motor, life skills/daily activities, readiness skills/learning

### **Technology Used**

- Boardmaker™ or other board making tool
- Cheap Talk™ or other recordable communication device or application
- Computer or tablet
- Printer

### **Other Materials Used**

Colored plates; large salad bowl; plastic fruits and vegetables (assorted); toy cash register; toy shopping baskets or carts; toy store (stocked with empty food containers)

### **Preparation**

- Set up grocery store.
- Make and print a fruit and vegetable overlay for Cheap Talk™.
- Record the names of the fruits and vegetables into Cheap Talk™.

### **Description of Activity**

Set up a store with empty food containers, plastic fruits and vegetables, cash register, and shopping carts. Use Cheap Talk™ with a fruit and vegetable overlay to help students identify produce. After the children have shopped for various items, place the plastic produce in the bowl. Have the children then take the pieces out, name them, and place them on colored plates.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

Place LIT'TLEmack™ communicators or other small recordable communication devices around the store with recorded messages such as, “Tomatoes on sale for 30 cents in the produce section” and “Thank you for shopping at Mrs. T’s grocery store.”

## Green Eggs and Ham

by Kathy Van Velzen, special education preschool teacher, Apple Valley, Calif.

### Goal

Students will learn about eggs and make their own green eggs and ham.

### Subject Area and Skills Addressed

Cooking/nutrition, fine motor, life skills/daily activities

### Technology Used

- Computer or tablet
- Living Books® *Green Eggs and Ham* (optional) or Green Eggs and Ham - Dr. Seuss application by Oceanhouse Media
- PowerLink™ 4 control unit
- Switch device

### Other Materials Used

Butter or margarine; cooking pan; diced ham; eggs (one per child); *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss; green food coloring; paper plates; plastic forks; spatula; stand mixer; stove or microwave

### Preparation

- Gather materials and ingredients for making green eggs and ham.
- Set up the environmental control unit, mixer, and switch.

### Description of Activity

Read or use the CD-ROM or application version of *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss. Discuss where eggs come from and that we do not eat the shell. Talk about the white and the yolk of the egg. Crack the eggs into the mixing bowl and add the ham. Let children take turns using the mixer (run through an environmental control unit and a switch) to scramble their eggs. Add the food coloring and talk about how it makes the eggs and ham green. Cook the eggs and let the children enjoy them. Many children are surprised how much they do like green eggs and ham!

# Community Helpers

by Kathy Van Velzen, special education preschool teacher, Apple Valley, Calif.

## **Goal:**

Students will become familiar with jobs that people have in their community.

## **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Fine motor, health/safety, life skills/daily activities, readiness skills/learning, social interaction

## **Technology Used**

- Boardmaker™ or other board making tool
- Cheap Talk™ or other recordable communication device
- Computer or tablet
- Digital camera (optional)
- Laminator (optional)
- Printer

## **Other Materials Used**

Battery adapters; battery-operated vehicles (cars, fire engines, motorcycles, etc.); community helper dolls or plastic figures (doctors, firefighters, nurses, police officers, etc.); community helper pictures; community helper vehicle pictures; cookie sheets (large); magnet sheets

## **Preparation**

- Create and print a picture symbol overlay with different community helpers on it.
- Record the name of the community helper and the actions they perform into the communication device.
- Find pictures of community helpers and their vehicles in magazines, or take digital photos of local community helpers.
- Laminate pictures and put magnet sheets (available at craft stores) on the backs.

## **Description of Activity**

Students can listen to what community helpers do by pressing the buttons on the communication board. Use the magnetic pictures and cookie sheets to match community helpers to their vehicles; match simple words and pictures of the objects; practice prepositional concepts, such as putting the firefighter beside or on top of the fire truck.

## **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

Program a communication device with phrases such as, “I want to play with the school bus.” This can be used in a free play situation or in a structured learning center.

## Familiar Faces and Places

by Shelly Olson, parent, Kimball, Minn.

### **Goal**

Students will recognize familiar items.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Attending, communication, fine motor, language arts/literacy, readiness skills/learning

### **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Digital camera
- Printer

### **Other Materials Used**

Bright colored paper; clear contact paper; markers; photos and magazine pictures; stickers; three-hole punch; three-ring binder

### **Preparation**

- Take digital photos of people, places, or things that are familiar to the child. Download, print, and put them in categories such as colors, animals, or objects.
- Put similar items on facing pages. For example, a page featuring red items might include an apple, a flower, a barn, and a sweater.
- Title each page in clear, bold lettering.
- Put clear contact paper on each page, laminate, or place in a plastic sheet protector, then use a three-hole punch and place the pages in the binder.

### **Description of Activity**

Look through the book together. Let the child explore it independently. Read the book together frequently so the child feels comfortable with it and will start to communicate and interact with the book and others.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

- Separate each page so it doesn't look so overwhelming.
- Make a smaller book.

## Families

by Judy Kackman, early childhood special education teacher, autism specialist, Elk River, Minn.

### **Goal**

Students will learn about diversity in family styles. They will explore similarities and differences in how and where people live.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Attending, communication, language arts/literacy, life skills/daily activities, readiness skills/learning, social interaction/turn taking

### **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Kid Pix® Studio Deluxe
- Living Books® *Just Grandma and Me* (electronic or paper version)
- Mouse, trackball, or touch screen

### **Other Materials Used**

Books about different families, such as *Just Grandma and Me* by Mercer Mayer; clothes from different cultures; crayons and markers; dolls of diverse nationalities; drawing paper; pictures of people from magazines; photos of each child's family sent from home

### **Preparation**

- Install software and set up equipment.
- Gather materials listed above

### **Description of Activity**

Discuss the people in families. Share students' pictures from home. Have students draw pictures of their families. Put doll families together. Use Kid Pix® Studio to draw people on the computer and use stamps of people and faces. Read books about families or have students use Living Books® *Just Grandma and Me* at the computer. Let children dress up in the clothes from other cultures.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

- Have students participate in a "show and tell" about their families, using pictures or having family members visit. Students could talk about their family verbally or by using a communication device.
- Take a field trip to a nursing home to visit the people there.
- Host a "grandparents visit the classroom" day.

## I'm Some Body

by Kathy Van Velzen, special education preschool teacher, Apple Valley, Calif.

### Goal

Students will practice body part names, colors, shapes, and numbers.

### Subject Area and Skills Addressed

Health, readiness skills/learning, science, social/emotional development

### Technology Used

- All-Turn-It® spinner
- Laminator (optional)
- Switch device

### Other Materials Used

Construction paper; craft doll hair; glue; poster paper; scissors; Velcro®; wooden balls; wooden spools

### Preparation

- Draw a large head on poster paper and laminate the page.
- Put Velcro® where the eyes, nose, ears, eyebrows, and mouth should be.
- Cut out, laminate, and add Velcro® to different colored shapes that will go on the large head.
- Make a background for the All-Turn-It® spinner with different face options such as right eye, left ear, mouth, eyebrows, etc.

### Description of Activity

Have the students use the All-Turn-It® spinner to select a face part. The children may choose their favorite shape and place it on the corresponding spot on the face. Let each child take a turn until the face is complete.

### Ways to Adapt this Activity

Read one of the following body-part books and have student use a communication device to participate in saying the repeated lines (e.g. foot, nose, tooth, etc.).

- *The Ear Book* by Al Perkins
- *The Eye Book* by Theo. LeSieg
- *The Foot Book* by Dr. Seuss
- *The Hair Book* by Graham Tether
- *The Nose Book* by Al Perkins
- *The Tooth Book* by Theo. LeSieg



## Let It Snow!

by Kathy Van Velzen, special education preschool teacher, Apple Valley, Calif.

### **Goal**

Students will practice counting, identifying body parts, and naming clothing items as they learn about winter and snowmen.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Art/sensory, communication, dramatic play, fine motor, readiness skills/learning, social interaction/turn taking

### **Technology Used**

- Boardmaker™ or other board making tool
- Cheap Talk 8™ or other recordable communication device
- Computer or tablet

### **Other Materials Used**

Snowman clothing (broom, a carrot nose made from paper and string, hat, mittens, scarf)

### **Preparation**

- Gather snowman clothing.
- Use Boardmaker™ or other board making tool to make and print a communication device overlay that contains snowman articles of clothing.
- Record information into communication device (e.g., “a snowman’s hat goes on his head”).

### **Description of Activity**

Have students take turns being the snowman and let the other children dress them. Have the students say the clothing object and where it goes (e.g., “a snowman’s hat goes on his head”). Students can use the communication device to participate.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

Read a story about snowmen (e.g., *The Little Snowman* by Sheila Black, *Frosty, the Snowman* by Annie North Bedford, or *The Littlest Snowman* by Charles Tazewell). Have students use a communication device to say repeated phrases, help read the story, or answer questions that you ask them.

## Memory Game

by Kelly Gorder, speech pathologist, Anoka, Minn.

### **Goal**

Students will play a memory game and match pictures of classmates.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Communication, fine/gross motor, readiness skills/learning, social interaction/turn taking

### **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Digital camera
- iPhoto™ or other photo editing software
- Laminator (optional)
- Printer

### **Other Materials Used**

Paper or card stock

### **Preparation**

- Install software and set up equipment.
- Take digital photos of each student and teacher.
- Use photo editing software to make two identical card-size pictures of each person
- Print, laminate, and cut apart the pictures.

### **Description of Activity**

Turn the pictures upside down on a table. Have one student flip over two cards. If they don't match, the person flips the cards back over and the next person takes a turn. If the cards do match, the student puts them in a pile by their spot. They take another turn until they turn over two cards that don't match. Have the students count how many correct matches they made. The winner goes first next time.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

Import the pictures to Speaking Dynamically Pro™. Design a matching game that uses scanning. The student could participate with a mouse, trackball, touch screen, or switch.

# This is My Story

by Kelly Gorder, speech pathologist, Anoka, Minn.,  
and Teresa Johnson, paraprofessional, Eden Prairie, Minn.

## **Goal**

Students will share their stories with classmates.

## **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Choice making, communication, language arts/literacy, social/emotional, social interaction/turn taking

## **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Digital camera
- iPhoto™ or other photo editing software
- Laminator (optional)
- Mouse, trackball, or touch screen
- Printer
- Speaking Dynamically Pro™, Keynote, PowerPoint, or other slideshow creating software

## **Other Materials Used**

Card stock or copy paper

## **Preparation Work**

Take digital photos of students and their assistive technology, hearing aids, favorite people, favorite foods, etc.

## **Description of Activity**

The teacher uses Speaking Dynamically Pro™ software to help each student make a book or slide show. The teacher prints and laminates each book. Students then share their stories with the rest of the class.

## **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

- Have students use a switch to change slides.
- Have students with language or speech difficulties use a communication device.

## Acting Out Nursery Rhymes

by Kathy Van Velzen, special education preschool teacher, Apple Valley, Calif.

### Goal

Students will use dramatic play and movement to have fun with nursery rhymes.

### Subject Area and Skills Addressed

Dramatic play, gross motor, music/creative movement, social interaction/turn taking

### Technology Used

- Boardmaker™ or other board making tool
- Computer or tablet
- Printer
- Recordable communication device

### Other Materials Used

- The Completed Hickory Dickory Dock* by Jim Aylesworth
- Humpty Dumpty* by Kin Eagle
- Mother Goose* by Walt Disney Studio
- Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* by Iza Trapani
- William Wegman's Mother Goose* by William Wegman

### Preparation

- Use Boardmaker™ or other board making tool to design an overlay for a communication device. The overlay can include pictures of various nursery rhymes or parts of one nursery rhyme.
- Record the rhyme(s) into the communication device in parts or as a whole.

### Description of Activity

Have students choose familiar nursery rhymes to be read to them. Students who are nonverbal may use a communication device to make a choice. Have the children do the movements suggested by the rhymes. When you read the stories, have children participate physically. In “Jack Be Nimble,” for example, have students practice their jumping skills by jumping over a candle. (You can make the rhyme more personal by substituting each child’s name for Jack’s.) In “Wee Willie Winkie,” have the children go upstairs, downstairs in nightgowns. In “Jack and Jill,” have the children practice their rolling skills when Jack and Jill come tumbling down. In “Yankee Doodle,” let children have fun practicing their galloping gait.

### Ways to Adapt this Activity

- Have students take turns pushing the communication buttons while the classmates act out the rhyme. If the rhyme is in parts, they can mix up the order of verses and make their own rhyme.
- Have students draw pictures of favorite nursery rhyme characters on Kid Pix® Deluxe.

# Chicka Chicka Boom Boom Circle Time

by Amy Jurgens, early childhood special education teacher, Fergus Falls, Minn.

## **Goal**

Students actively participate in circle time.

## **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Communication, daily activities, life skills, social/emotional development, social interaction

## **Technology Used**

- Boardmaker™ or other board making tool
- Cheap Talk™ or other recordable communication or reading device, such as AnyBook Reader)
- Computer or tablet
- LITTLE Step-by-Step™ communicator or recordable communication device
- Printer

## **Other Materials Used**

*Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin, Jr. & John Archambault; felt board with a palm tree; felt coconuts; felt letters; plastic palm tree; a real coconut

## **Preparation**

- Cut out a large felt palm tree, felt coconuts, and felt letters.
- Use Boardmaker™ or other board making tool to collect, organize, and print symbols for the communication device (coconut, palm tree, ABC's, etc.).
- Record phrases into the communication or reading device (i.e., chicka chicka boom boom, coconut, palm tree, letters, etc.) and LITTLE Step-by-Step™ (i.e., Daniel, 4 years old, boy).

## **Description of Activity**

Have students sit down for circle time. Call each student up one by one. Ask their name, age, and if they are a boy or a girl. The children may use the communication device (programmed ahead of time) and push it for each answer: "Daniel, 4 years old, boy." Have students find a felt coconut and two felt letters to stick under the felt tree. Show them the real coconut and plastic palm tree. Read *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*. Invite the students to chime in on the repeated phrases. Use Cheap Talk™ so that all students can participate.

## Fun with Vowels

by Renee Lawrenz, parent, Lakeville, Minn.

### Goal

Students will identify the correct short vowel sounds.

### Subject Area and Skills Addressed

Communication, language arts/literacy, readiness skills/learning

### Technology Used

- Computer or tablet
- Kid Pix® Studio
- Laminator (optional)
- Mouse, trackball, or touch screen
- Printer

### Other Materials Used

Fly swatter; paper or card stock

### Preparation

Design, print, and laminate five short-vowel sound cards, one for each vowel. Include a picture of an animal or object whose name represents that sound. For example:

- A with a picture of an ant,
- E with a picture of an elephant
- I with a picture of an inch worm
- O with a picture of an octopus
- U with a picture of an umbrella.

### Description of Activity

Place the laminated cards in front of the children. Review the short vowel sounds of A, E, I, O, and U while pointing to the corresponding card. Explain that students will take turns swatting at the vowel sound they hear when a word is spoken. Begin with the single short vowel sound for A. The child then swats the correct sheet. Offer at least one example of each vowel sound. If the child is successful with the first activity, then add a series of vowel/consonant combinations, such as “in” and “at,” as well as nonsense combinations such as “ut” and “ot.” After one vowel/consonant is spoken, the child swats the correct short vowel letter sheet. When children can identify most vowel/consonant combinations correctly, try consonant/vowel/consonant combinations (such as “cat” and “dog,” or nonsense combinations such as “fid” and “zud”).

### Ways to Adapt this Activity

- Have students identify the correct vowel cards by looking at them, stepping on them, squirting water at them, or blowing bubbles at them.
- Have students use Kid Pix® Studio to draw or stamp items that have a short vowel sound.

# The Gingerbread Man

by Erin Stegelmeyer, early childhood special education teacher, Annandale, Va.

## **Goal**

Students will pay attention and participate in reading *The Gingerbread Man*.

## **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Attending, communication, fine motor, language arts/literacy, readiness skills/learning, social interaction/turn taking

## **Technology Used**

- Boardmaker™ or other board making tool
- Cheap Talk™ or other communication device
- Computer or tablet
- Laminator (optional)
- Printer

## **Other Materials Used**

*The Gingerbread Man* folktale

## **Preparation**

- Use Boardmaker™ or other board making tool to create symbols of actions, characters, and objects in the story (e.g., gingerbread man, grandmother, grandfather, boy, girl, fox, cat, dog, stop sign, running).
- Print and laminate the symbols.
- Record repeated sayings into Cheap Talk™ or other communication device.

## **Description of Activity**

Read the story to the children. Encourage students to help read the repetitive parts of the story, such as, “Run, run, as fast as you can, you can’t catch me, I’m the Gingerbread Man.” Children can participate by using a communication device during these parts of the story. Use the Boardmaker™ or other board making tool symbols to help children recall the story. Have them put the symbols in proper sequence.

## **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

- Match symbols from Boardmaker™ or other board making tool to comparable images in the book.
- Use a switch that can record sequential messages, allowing the children to tell the story.

## Social Stories

by Elizabeth Delsandro, speech language pathologist, Iowa City, Iowa

### **Goal:**

Students will improve positive behavior and social skills.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed:**

Choice making, communication, language arts/literacy, life skills/daily activities, social/emotional development, social interaction/turn taking

### **Technology Used:**

- Digital camera
- Color printer
- Computer or tablet
- Boardmaker™ or other board making tool
- Laminator (optional)
- Microsoft® Word
- Mouse, trackball, or touch screen

### **Other Materials Used:**

Binder; clear page protectors; glue; paper; poster board; Velcro®

### **Preparation:**

- Identify a social skill (e.g., greeting others) the child needs to address.
- Use Microsoft® Word to write a social story picture book. Use the digital camera to include pictures in the book. Print the story, place the pages in plastic protectors, and put them in the binder. Put Velcro® on the plastic where the students will be able to attach picture symbols.
- Use Boardmaker™ or other board making tool to create picture symbols that correspond to things in the story. Laminate the pictures and place Velcro® on the back. Students will attach these pictures to corresponding pages in the social story picture book that the teacher will read out loud.
- Decide on a repetitive line such as, “That’s a great rule!” This line can be said in unison by the students and accompanied with a gesture, such as a thumbs-up sign.

### **Description of Activity:**

Read the picture-based social story to a small group of students. Let the students place the picture symbols in the book. After the story, ask students to role-play the skill with you. Then, have them role-play with each other. You may want to use a picture-based script or step-by-step instructions to help the students stay on task. Take digital photos during the role-playing activity so the students have a personal connection to working on the specific social skill. Review the activities with the students to reinforce the lesson.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity:**

- Create online review sheets with a graphically supported talking word processor or clicker software such as IntelliTalk II®.
- Create the social story on students’ dedicated communication devices so they can narrate it to others.
- Adapt the PowerPoint® presentation for switch use so that a student who cannot use the standard mouse can participate.



# Super Spelling

by White Earth early childhood staff, White Earth, Minn.

## **Goal**

Students will explore spelling a word in different media.

## **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Art/sensory, fine/gross motor, language arts/ literacy

## **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Kid Pix Studio™ or drawing application like Doodle Buddy for iOS
- Mouse, trackball, or touch screen

## **Other Materials Used**

Chalk and chalkboard or whiteboard markers and whiteboard; spelling dictionary

## **Preparation**

- Install software and set up equipment.
- Choose appropriate spelling words.

## **Description of Activity**

Each student is given a word to spell. When they find it in their spelling dictionary, they write it on the chalkboard and draw a picture. Then the students use Kid Pix Studio™ to draw another picture and write or type their spelling word.

## **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

- Record the word and its spelling on a communication device.
- Set up a scanning sequence so students can use a switch device to pick which picture corresponds to their word.

## Wait 'til You Hear This!

by Tina White, parent and advocate/trainer, Sebring, Ohio

### **Goal**

Students will design an age-appropriate book and read it to classmates.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Language arts/literacy, readiness skills/learning, communication, social interaction/turn taking

### **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Ellison® die-cut machine and templates or pre-cut shapes
- Writing with Symbols Bundle or Communicate, Sym Writer, or Clicker 6

### **Other Materials Used**

Binder; page protectors

### **Preparation**

- Help students with Ellison® die-cut machine to add pictures and letters to their story.

### **Description of Activity**

Students use pictures from the Ellison machine and Writing with Symbols™ to develop a story to share with the class. Each story should be age appropriate and have meaning to the child, such as “My daddy drives a big truck.” It can be written in large font and accompanied by contrasting colored Ellison pictures. Place each page in page protector and put it in the three-ring binder. Have the children read their stories to the class.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

Have the students use Speaking Dynamically Pro™ to tell the stories and advance the pages with a switch.

# Choo-Choo!

by Amy Tompkins, early childhood special education teacher, Anoka, Minn.

## **Goal**

Students will pick a shape and color for the piece they attach to a shape train.

## **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Art/sensory, choice making, fine/gross motor, readiness skills/learning, turn taking

## **Technology Used**

- All-Turn-It® spinner
- BIGmack®
- Switch device

## **Other Materials Used**

Butcher paper; construction paper or pre-cut shapes; marker

## **Preparation**

- Cut out four different shapes from four different colors of construction paper, resulting in 16 pieces. You can use pre-cut shapes if you prefer. These shapes will be the “cars” on the train.
- Make an eight-section grid for the All-Turn-It® spinner with the four colors and four shapes.
- Use the marker to draw a train engine on butcher paper.
- Record “Choo, choo!” into the BIGmack® communication device.

## **Description of Activity**

Students take turns using the All-Turn-It® spinner to pick a color and shape for their train car. The teacher holds up two shapes: one that matches the child’s choice and one that doesn’t. The student selects the right piece, attaches it to the shape train, then presses the communication device to hear the “Choo, Choo!” message.

## **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

- Have students make individual trains with construction paper, glue, and markers.
- Have children use an adapted switch, touch screen, or trackball to match shapes Kid Pix® Studio Deluxe.

## Let's Go! Transportation

by Kathy Van Velzen, special education preschool teacher, Apple Valley, Calif.

### **Goal**

Students will learn about different types of transportation. They also will practice identifying colors and counting numbers.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Readiness skills/learning

### **Technology Used**

- Battery-device adapter
- Battery-operated train
- Laminator (optional)
- Switch device

### **Other Materials Used**

Airport playset; assorted switch-adapted vehicles and accessories (airplanes, boats, buses, cars, fire engines, gas station, road signs, motorcycles, trains, train tracks, trucks)

### **Preparation**

Assemble train tracks (with road signs).

### **Description of Activity**

Let students play with switch-adapted vehicles. Have them practice counting, sorting, and identifying colors of the various toys. Have them match colored airplane hangars and airplanes.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

- Read *The Little Engine That Could* by Walty Piper and record into a communication device, "I think I can, I think I can." Students can participate in reading the book by pressing the button on the communication device.
- Have students make car tracks art. Run toy cars through white paint. Then "drive" the cars on dark colored paper for an interesting effect. Cars with some type of tread on the tires work best. Students can use switch-adapted cars and trucks if they choose.

# Obstacle Course

by Kathy Hanson, early childhood special education teacher,  
and Jane Hendrickson, speech/language pathologist, Iron, Minn.

## **Goal**

Students will independently participate in an obstacle course.

## **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Choice making, fine/gross motor, music/creative movement

## **Technology Used**

- Computer or tablet
- Mouse, trackball, or touch screen

## **Other Materials Used**

Beanbags (small); blue blanket; bucket or other fun container; low balance beam or a length of colored tape; reacher; scooter boards; tunnel (made with chairs and blankets); wheelchair or cart

## **Preparation**

- Set up an obstacle course.
- Select or install a short game on the computer or download an appropriate game application on the tablet device.

## **Description of Activity**

The students complete a series of activities on the obstacle course.

- Station #1: Place beanbags and a fun container on the floor. Students use the reacher to pick up a bean bag and put it in the container.
- Station #2: Students use a wheelchair or wheeled cart to roll themselves along a path.
- Station #3: Students walk or have one wheel of their wheelchair (with assistance) on the low balance beam or colored tape.
- Station #4: Use the blue blanket as a pretend fish pond where the students wait for their turn to “fish” for beanbags or other small objects .
- Station #5: Students take little scooters on a path and through a tunnel.
- Station #6: Students kneel or sit at a computer and play a short game the teacher has already selected.

## **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

At the beginning of every activity, use a recordable communication device that has the instructions recorded. The students can press the button before they do the activity or instead of doing the activity.

## Swing and Go

*by Julie Overboe, early childhood special education teacher, St. Cloud, Minn.*

### **Goal**

Students will use a communication device and participate in body movement.

### **Subject Area and Skills Addressed**

Art/sensory, communication, creative movement, music

### **Technology Used**

BIGmack®

### **Other Materials Used**

Net swing, Velcro®

### **Preparation**

- Obtain swing, communication device, and Velcro®.
- Record the word “Go!” into BIGmack®.

### **Description of Activity**

Using Velcro®, attach a BIGmack® switch to the side of the net swing. The switch is programmed to say “Go!” Stop the swing periodically so the students can press the button to indicate that they want to continue. Let all students use and experiment with the swing and switch.

### **Ways to Adapt this Activity**

Connect an environmental control unit such as a Power Link™ to a switch and any device that children would like to turn on (a radio or fan, for example). Let students practice swinging themselves to the switch to activate the device.





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