

CDP Update

Feature Devices · Tech Tips · Clinical Practice

Summer 2018

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Communication Device Spotlight

Back to Basics

While, the main focus of the Communication Devices Program is on high tech communication devices, we also offer some very basic systems that may meet the needs of your clients. We have a large array of basic static display devices such as the; Big or Small Step-by-Step (with and without levels), iTalk2, GoTalk Pocket & more. Some of the features of these devices are described below. For further, more detailed information about each device, click the picture to be linked to the manufacturer's website.



Fig. 1. GoTalk Pocket:

- Slim, lightweight
- 1 message, up to 10 seconds of record time
- Picture/Message protected under covered window



Fig. 2. iTalk2 (with levels):

- 2 messages/3 levels, up to 4 minutes of record time
- 2 switch inputs (alt. access)
- Cap covers for symbol/message

Fig. 3. Big Step-by-Step (with levels):

- Unlimited messages/3 levels, up to 4 minutes of record time
- 1 switch input (alt. access)
- Swappable caps (red, yellow, green, blue)
- Cap covers for symbol/message
- "Choose your message" function



Fig. 4. Little Step-by-Step (with levels):

- Unlimited messages/3 levels, up to 4 minutes of record time
- 1 switch input (alt. access)
- Cap covers for symbol/message



** Please keep in mind, your client, or third party funder (other than EIA), may choose to purchase these relatively low costs devices rather than rent them from the CDP on a long-term basis.

Consider these basic devices for clients who:

- Need basic or sequential messages (i.e. greetings, telling jokes, reading a story, etc)
- Need basic systems with easy to change and record messages
- Find large arrays or dynamic systems too complex

Access and Selection Method Spotlight

Light force switches available

For some of our clients with the most significant physical involvement, we need to have access to VERY sensitive switches. CDP has a variety of light force/sensitive switches that we/you can try with clients.

Fig. 1: Ultralight Switch



Fig. 2: Microlight

Some of the most common switches include the **Ultralight** and **Microlight switches**. They both require **very** light pressure to activate, are small, and can easily be positioned wherever they are needed. The main difference between the two is the overall profile. The microlight is slightly higher than the ultralight, meaning that the client may have to move their finger (or whichever body part they are using) through a greater range, to activate the switch.

Another light pressure switch is the **Light Touch or “Brad’s Switch”**. These switches were custom made for CDP by Brad Masiowski at Assistive Technology Products and Services prior to his retirement. These switches are very low profile and require just slightly more force than the ultralight or microlight. This may be good for those client who need a light touch switch, but the above 2 activate too easily for them, OR the overall height/profile is too large.



Fig. 3: “Brad’s Switch”



Two more of our incredibly light force switches are the **MicroSwitch** and the **Finger Switch**. These switches have one very important difference from the above 3, they have a much longer travel distance *before* the switch will activate. This may be helpful for a client that rests on the switch and



Fig. 5: Finger Switch

then only needs a small movement to activate it, or for those with small involuntary movements that would otherwise activate a switch, but because of the length of the lever arm small involuntary movements *may not* be seen as activations.

Finally, we have one **Touch Contact Switch**. This switch does not require any force for activation, just contact, on the small silver disc. This switch is very small, and can be positioned anywhere. One of the other major differences with this switch is that it doesn't offer any feedback (tactile, auditory, visual, etc), while the other switches offer minimal tactile feedback, as well as potentially some auditory feedback.



Fig. 6: Touch Contact

Consider a light-activation switch for those clients that:

- Have very minimal strength and/or ROM at the desired switch site
- Fatigue easily and require a switch that is VERY easy to activate (i.e. conserve energy)
- Require a discrete, and/or small switch

Clinician's Corner - Summer Communication

Tips for Keeping Communication Skills Sharp over the Summer!

Summer can be a time to kick back, relax, and enjoy a lazy day on the dock. It can also be a time where students who use communication devices experience a 'skill slide'. We want to arm you with as many tips and tricks to keep those skills sharp, so students who use AAC are ready to jump back in when September rolls around!



Take a look at this blog by The Mighty about how to stay fresh with communication over the summer months: <https://themighty.com/2017/07/summer-skills-augmentative-and-alternative-communication-aac/> Her top 4 tips are titled: Get Booked, Get Outside, Get Scientific and Get the Write Stuff!!

I really like how Easter Seals Ontario talks about all students and the "Summer Slide" They provide tips for helping maintain skills for everyone! They take the stance that summer might be an even more successful time to try and improve communication skills as the pace is often slower, with fewer scheduled activities! Scroll down to see tips for Communication: <http://www.easterseals.org/tips-on-improving-skills-over-the-summer/> Their focus is on increasing independence!

In an older, but no less relevant article from the ASHA Leader, SLP Lisa Geary, has tips and suggestions for activities and outings to improve and/or maintain communication skills throughout the summer months! <https://blog.asha.org/2012/06/07/making-the-most-of-summer-fun-language-based-activities-for-children-their-families/>

As PRACTical as ever, one of our favourite bloggers and AAC guru's - Carole Zingari posts about people who use AAC going to summer camp! <http://practicalaac.org/practical/aac-goes-to-summer-camp/> What a wonderful idea. I know our good friends over at OARC have their second annual Camp yAAC happening right away, July 25-27, 2018. I imagine it's full again this year, but keep it in mind for the following years! Check them out here: [CAMP yAAC 2018](#).

If you are one of the lucky ones sitting on a dock, enjoying the beauty of one of Canada's amazing lakes, grab a glass of your favourite beverage and tune into this hour long podcast by Speech Science. Rachel Madel, Lucas Steuber, & Chris Bugaj host Susan Berkowitz on the topic: How can we Support AAC in the Summer. Mostly, they discuss many of the same concerns that we imagine you experience, but throw in a few tips here and there along the way. Catch them on; [Youtube](#) or Podcast on [PodBean](#). If you don't have that hour of luxury to listen to the pod cast, or just want to get to the meat and potatoes, check out some of the tips Susan provides on her blog: [KidzLearnLanguage](#)

ISAAC Canada - Conference in Gold Coast Australia!! July 21-26, 2018

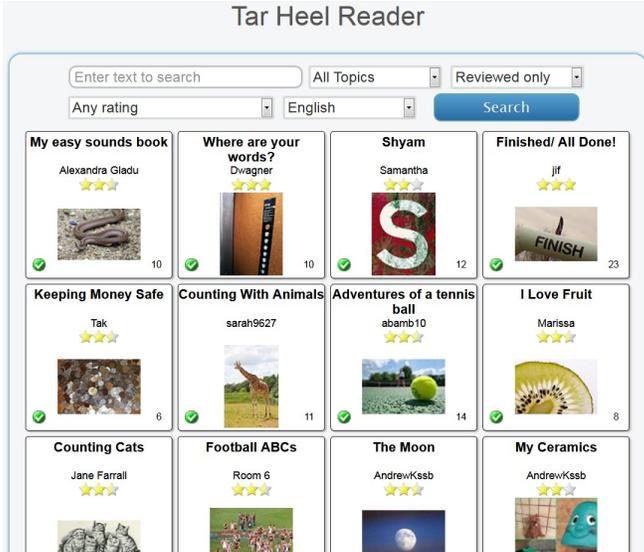
The ISAAC 2018 conference is almost underway in Gold Coast, AU. If you're like us, you're not there, even though you would LOVE to be. Don't fret though! It will come around again in 2020. The location will be announced at this year's conference. We will keep you posted on dates and locations. We would highly recommend this conference for anyone who works in AAC or for clients who use AAC.



Tar Heel Reader

Tar Heel Reader
Books for beginning readers of all ages

Have you heard about Tar Heel Reader before?? Do you use it? Have you contributed by publishing a book? In keeping with our previous pages message about “Tips for Keeping Communication Skills Sharp over the Summer”, one of the suggestions was to access books! Well, what if your client or communicator isn’t able to access traditional books, or wants to access books independently? Tar Heel Reader offers beginner reading books on topics for a large array of ages.



On the Tar Heel Reader ['Find a Book'](#) page, you can see there is a basic search engine that allows you to enter search terms, filter based on topic, rating (E - Everybody, C - Caution, which may contain more adult language and themes), and you can also choose your language.

Something I found very interesting while reading about Tar Heel Reader was that AssistiveWare will convert your Tar Heel Reader Books to a Pictello Page! It's very simple: choose the book you want to convert, go to this page here: <http://www.assistiveware.com/tar-heel-reader-pictello-converter>, and send AssistiveWare the link to the book. They will convert it and email you the finished product! That's pretty neat if you ask me!



September will be Proloquo2Go Month on CDP Social Media!

When clients and clinicians head back to school in September, keep an eye on the Communication Devices Program (CDP) Social Media pages for a whole month focusing on Proloquo2Go! You can find us here on **Facebook**: [Communication Devices Program](#), & **Twitter**: [CDPStacey](#).

Here's a little taste of some of the great content coming at you in September; AssistiveWare has put together a wonderful introductory video/webinar about getting started with Proloquo2Go 5. I really like the way they index below the video so that you can get an idea of the content at a glance. If there is a specific topic that you are looking for, you can jump to that time in the video. Click the picture to the right for weblink.

Some of the other great information we have lined up for September includes: Introduction to the Crescendo Vocabulary, Basic Customization of pages/buttons, Grammar features, Modelling, Switch Access, Resources for Bilingual Clients and so much more!



One of **THE** most important parts of using a dynamic communication device is creating a back-up! We can't stress this enough! AssistiveWare has created a video tutorial on how to create a back-up for Proloquo2Go for [iTunes Versions 12.6 and OLDER](#) as well as for [iTunes Versions 12.7 and NEWER](#).

There are multiple ways to create a back-up, we focus on File Sharing through iTunes as this eliminates the use of cloud based servers (which is not secure enough for WRHA privacy standards). The above videos will take you through creating a back-up on the device itself, as well as creating a backup through iTunes Files share (i.e. storing a file directly on a desktop or laptop computer).

Odds and Ends - E-Tran & Alphabet Boards

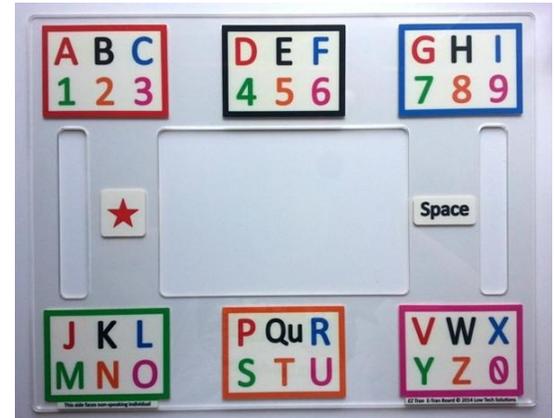
What are they, and where do we get them?



E-TRAN Boards: Many of you are likely very familiar with an *E-Tran* (or eye transfer) Communication Board. This style of low tech communication board allows communicators to make selections using their eyes. They do require a communication partner who is already knowledgeable and/or willing to learn how to use an E-Tran communication board.

The CDP has a limited number of E-Tran boards and therefore we do not typically lend them out on a long term basis to clients that

are not primary CDP clients. With that, we want to make sure that all clinicians and clients have a way to access this equipment, if needed. There are a couple options: you can create the boards yourself, using clear stiff plastic (like plexiglass) and paper or vinyl letters/numbers/messages etc., OR you can purchase them from vendors such as:



Special Needs Computers in St. Catherine's, ON: https://www.specialneedscomputers.ca/index.php?l=product_detail&p=5051

Bridges Canada in Scarborough, ON: <https://www.bridges-canada.com/products/9594-1>

Low Tech Solutions in the USA*: <http://store.lowtechsolutions.org/e-tran-board/>



ALPHABET BOARDS: For clients that have the ability to point/isolate a finger to make selections, the Alphabet Board with Keyguard is another beneficial low tech option. Similarly with the E-Tran board we have a limited supply of these Alphabet Boards as well. We have been able to source a couple of vendors that offer them commercially.

Special Needs Computers offers the Frenchay Alphabet Board (AB) here: http://www.specialneedscomputers.ca/index.php?l=product_detail&p=2299

The Frenchay Alphabet Boards (FAB) were developed at the Frenchay Hospital in the UK. These boards are now available with E coli and MRSA resistance built in, and a non-slip antibacterial rubber base. You can choose between 4 FAB keyboard options: pocket sized or tabletop, with QWERTY or AEIOU layouts. They also offer good visual contrast with yellow letters on a blue background



Last but not least, the Candle Spelling Board available from the UK*: <https://www.scandle.org/shop/>

They report that it is completely water proof, has high visibility/contrast with black letters on yellow background, has a built-in key guard, is very light weight (made out of the same material as road signs), and is A5 (5.8" x 8.3") in size. So it's ideal for carrying with you. It's available with CAPITAL or lower case letters.

***Caution! Their may be customs and brokerage fees when ordering products from the US and/or UK* Additionally, there may be other vendors that sell these products. If you are aware of any, please let us know so that we can share with everyone. Thank-you!**

MOT Student Research 2018 - Needs Analysis

CDP was lucky enough to continue our Needs Analysis project with the MOT students in 2018. This year, they built upon a survey that was initially developed by students in 2017, and were able to obtain ethics approval and have 20 clients complete the survey. The idea was to get client feedback about the equipment they were using, as well as whether or not they felt further support from CDP was required. If they felt further support was required, what was it that they were interested in. The following is taken directly from the executive summary as prepared by MOT students: **Nicholas Ducheminsky, Anna Moscinski, & Emilie Shaw**;

“Objectives: Occupational therapy students at the University of Manitoba partnered with the Communication Devices Program for an Independent Study Project, which was supervised by Dr. Jacquie Ripat. The purpose of the study was to administer a survey that aimed to understand client satisfaction with their device and desired ongoing services from the program. The second objective of this study was to evaluate the use of a survey as a means to collect information from participants”.

“Findings: Twenty participants who met the inclusion criteria completed the survey (paper (n=17) and online (n=3)), and 95% had assistance from a proxy. No participants completed the telephone survey option. In terms of demographics 55% of respondents were ages 18 to 35, 15% were ages 36 to 55 and 30% were 55 years and older, which was comparable to the age demographics of clients currently renting an AAC-device from the Communication Devices Program. It was found that 85% of participants used an iDevice to communicate. The majority of participants, 80%, reported being satisfied with using their device. Results show that 75% of participants requested further services from the program. Of those who wanted further services 11/20 participants indicated one-on-one education, 9/20 indicated real life practice and 4/20 indicated group workshops”.

These findings reflect what we imagined to be the desires of our clients. We began to recognize that clients would benefit from further intervention to train and educate them on the proper use of the equipment/AAC system. As noted above, clients wish to see this education in the form of one-on-one training, real life practice and potentially group workshops.

CDP will have to look at our current services and resources to determine how we can best accommodate this important request.

What's New in CDP - Special Edition Update Coming Soon!

What's new? What isn't new?! CDP has gone through quite a lot of change in the recent months. Luckily we have maintained our same staff base though! Keep your eyes peeled for the “Special Edition” of the CDP Update, coming out late summer/early fall. That newsletter will be **the place** to get information about all the changes/updates that have happened in the CDP recently.

Some of the information you can expect includes:

1. Updated forms (referral, ELRA, rental payment)
2. Service category guidelines (for active clients and for those who haven't been referred)
3. Primary clinician responsibilities
4. Links to our new and improved website
5. Process updates (i.e. expanded concept of the Clinic Loan)
6. New form for making device trial requests (feedback so far has been ++ positive, AND constructive)

We hope that you benefit from many of the changes we're implementing, and that you understand some of the others. We continue to strive towards service excellence, and always welcome constructive feedback about our service, our ability to collaborate and any other aspect of our program.