IPAD APPS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

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This is an A-Z guide for 'apps' in special education. I have used all of them - some I have just tested and others I have used in schools. I have tried to categorise them as far as possible and put them in alphabetical order.

Choosing the right apps.

Most people looking for an app turn to iTunes first of all. However, remember that the internet, & particularly 'youtube', are excellent search engines too!

Most of the apps featured in the following pages are either free or low cost. But it's very easy to fill your iPod full of cheap apps, so even though they are cheap make sure you investigate them well before you buy.

The key to a great iPad in education is an iPad which doesn't have too many apps. Too much clutter on an iPad will mean that you will not be able to find things when you really need them. You will be much better off with a small number of apps that you really know how to use.

Assessment Apps.

The iPad is very interesting for assessment, however it needs to be done with care and you must remember that most of the people presently writing apps are not people who create assessments - they are people who create apps. That said, the iPad is becoming a tremendous tool, which in the future will be invaluable in terms of assessment.

	Easy Assessment I have played with this one a little and it could be interesting for collecting data and information about children or students.
	Vision Test This vision test does colour tests and visual acuity,however is not really appropriate for children with more profound and multiple disabilities or autism.
	iSight Test This is the real KAY Picture Test and is a very powerful visual assessment tool - really worth a look.
	Hearing Test This app is by Siemens so is very good however, you have to be able to read to be able to use the hearing test itself.
	Ear Test Designed for people without additional needs. However, with a little imagination this test could be quite interesting to see if you get a response.
	Autism Apps There are way too many to list here, however if you would like to find them get this great app which features lots of apps for autism.
	Autism assessment This is one of the better tests for spotting the signs of autism. It's made up of 72 questions and is quite thorough.

Assessment and Coaching.

The iPad 2 and later has a great still and video camera and there are some video coaching apps available, which are obviously designed for use in sport. However, if you think about these apps a little more laterally, then you'll find that they may be excellent for video assessment, comparison and coaching the people with autism and PMLD, capturing inconsistencies in body movement or visual responses.

	Ubersense This is a very comprehensive video coaching system, but recently I met a teacher who was actually using it very successfully.
	Coach's Eye A little easier than Ubersense, but still has quite a degree of functionality.

Autism Apps.

iTunes has literally thousands of apps for people who have autism. The best place to look for apps is probably the 'autism apps' app. However, I'm sure there will be plenty of other places. People with autism love iPads, however make sure the iPad does not become an obsession or just a reward for good behavior, it's all about communication. As our 'apps and autism' conference (http://www.multi-sensory-room.co.uk/conference-2012/) gets closer we will release papers which will be useful with sensory work and autism.

	Autism Apps This is a great 'app' because it finds autism apps for you!

Babies

We see lots of videos on YouTube of babies playing and learning from iPads, which is wonderful. But when using these apps, make sure that you remain part of the situation. Solitary play is fine for some periods of time but try not to let the iPad become a babysitting device. I also found this website for babies with additional needs - http://babieswithipads.blogspot.co.uk/

	Baby Discover Images Really simple and allows the child to interact with different images using touch. This has a really simple user interface and is easy to use.
	Babies 1 HD. A very lively, quick moving succession of images & sounds to attract & keep babies attention and to develop their visual skills. Look for the full range of 'Sparkabilities' apps in iTunes.
	Sound Touch Select one symbol from twelve on the screen, then listen to the sound it makes whilst looking at a photograph of the noisemaker you've chosen. Again this is very simple and easy to use.
	Baby Milestones First Year A comprehensive guide that nicely outlines babies development during the first 12 months. Each month (birth to 12 months) lists separately the skills that baby may acquire.

There are lots of apps for babies. You will find out in this guide that many of the visual stimulation, hearing and books apps will be fantastic for stimulating babies development.

For example there is a section on faces later on and we know that babies respond to faces extremely well. Many of the 'inclusive' apps will also be really suitable as well. The App Store is awash with apps aimed at babies and pre 5's, so keep looking on 'YouTube' to see what the app actually does because there is a huge variation in app quality. Check out this website with apps for babies http://www.geekmummy.com/favourite-baby-apps/

Books.

There are so many books which could be appropriate for children and students with additional needs. Stories, as we know, can be fantastic not just for early stimulation but for the development of communication. Add to this the interactivity that the iPad offers and this is a fantastic platform for experiencing stories. In this list there are books which will be great for younger and older alike.

	The Wonky Donkey This is a really great book from New Zealand all about a donkey with one eye and three legs. It always gets a fantastic reception on courses and with children alike.
	Thomas and Friends - Day of the Diesels Incredibly well produced wonderful sound and graphics. A massive hit with many boys and girls who have autism.
	Nighty Night HD The graphics are wonderful, the voice is fantastic and this is a very beautiful interactive book for bedtime or for those quiet times. The narration is in an English accent
	Elmer's Special Day The narration is in an English accent. The graphics in the story are wonderfully interactive and the colours used would be wonderful for visual stimulation.
	Elmo's Monster Maker If you are a fan of 'Sesame Street' this is a must! You choose either Elmo or one of his friends and make the face, then do some activities. It's great fun.
	The Cat in the Hat Experience Dr. Seuss's as an interactive storybook app. Once again, an example of how to take a traditional story and turn it into a very well presented app.
	Cozo's Day Off Great for work about space or planets with the younger children, this interactive book is really lovely. Nice graphics and the story is very well told. Some interactivity is limited in the free version.