



*Combining AAC & Learning
for iPad*

Autism and the iPad: Useful Tips To Help Parents Get Started

Introduction:

The iPad provides a new world of learning and communication possibilities for individuals with autism. New iPad applications allow parents to actively participate and become an integral part of their child's educational development.

However, as a speech-language pathologist, parents frequently ask me:

I Bought an iPad for my child with autism, now what do I do?

These parents have questions about the best ways to use the iPad to provide the most benefit for their child, in addition to having general questions about the iPad itself.

This report provides useful resources, research, and strategies to help parents get started. I will mention several accessories and places for more information about the iPad; I'll provide Internet links at the conclusion of this guide for the accessories and information I discuss, as well as some places to sign up for ongoing information.

So what questions concerning the iPad and my child will I cover?

1. Accessories: How can I help prevent my child from damaging the iPad?
2. Restrictions: How do I prevent my child from accessing Internet sites I don't want them to?
3. Learning: How do I get my child to use the iPad for learning instead of playing games?
4. Apps: How can I organize the applications on my iPad for best use?
5. Generalizing: How can I generalize the skills my child learns with the iPad to the real world?
6. Baselines: How do I know if my child is improving by using the iPad?

6.) establishing a baseline Is my child improving

1. Testing vs training Training-
2. Communication (strategies)
3. Training
4. augmentative and alternative communication

teach before you test- baseline

1. Accessories: How can I help prevent my child from damaging the iPad?



I recommend that once you purchase an iPad you should complement it with a protective case. Accidents happen, but the good news is that cases can help prevent damage. Many specialized cases can be found online along with reviews of the products, and many of them have youtube video product demonstrations to help you choose. These are great resources for parents to help determine which case may be best for their child.

As a additional protection, I recommend considering a warranty outside of Apple's provided customer care plan. Apple does NOT cover accidents. However, some online sources do cover accidents.

2. Restrictions: How do I prevent my child from accessing Internet sites I don't want them to and downloading apps, etc?

With a few clicks, you can restrict your child from:

- surfing the internet
- installing & deleting apps

- accessing email
- viewing youtube videos
- doing other things you don't want them to.

Setting restrictions on your iPad will ensure your peace of mind when your child is using the iPad independent of you.

Here is a simple how to guide to help you get started:

1. From the iPad home screen select **“settings”**
2. Select **“general”** from the settings options and choose **“restrictions”** and set to **“enable”**
3. Select a 4-digit passcode that will act as your password to turn the restrictions on and off. **NOTE** If forgotten, the passcode cannot be retrieved from the device and you will need to re-set your iPad, which will cause loss of data.
4. Make sure you write down the passcode and put it in a safe place for when



you need it

5. You can disable the iPad's functions by simply changing them from on to off-- on allows the function and off disables that function.

Important: If you purchase or obtain (many are free) an additional application for the iPad and want to sync that app to your iPad, your restriction for syncing needs to be set to "On". I made this mistake, and it took a lengthy call to customer service to resolve.

<http://www.ikidapps.com/2010/09/parental-controls-for-iphone-ipod-touch-ipad.html> (prefer a nice format like this)—**NOT SURE WHAT TO DO WITH THIS**

3. Learning: How do I get my child to use the iPad for learning instead of playing games?

Because so many children today are computer savvy, many parents struggle when beginning to use the iPad for learning, that their child associates the iPad with games. Therefore parents may experience difficulty when trying to introduce specific educational learning programs.

To help with this process I recommend using a schedule, and using what I call the **First/Then** concept.

For many children with autism, a picture schedule can help them understand how long they should work on a particular app. You can also set a timer or use a visual timer; these times will help them understand what's expected of them and decrease anxiety during the learning activity. And there are many timer apps for the iPad!

I suggest listing the apps you will be using for learning and activities, printing a picture of the apps on paper and then crossing that app off when the child finishes with it. This feeling of accomplishment is great for child and parent!

Here is an example of a *picture schedule*

I have used

SpeechTree



Word World



YouTube



You'll notice this student has completed the SpeechTree part of the learning time

Using the First/Then Concept with the Picture Schedule

Used in association with the Picture Schedule, The *First/Then* concept helps your child understand what activity they are doing first and then when they are done what rewarding activity they can do next. It's a great teaching strategy that helps reduce unwanted behaviors since they get to do their own activity once their work is completed.

In this example, I worked with a student who associated the iPad with YouTube. As a result, anytime we introduced iPad educational applications, he focused his attention on accessing YouTube rather than the lesson.

To change this behavior I developed a picture schedule so he knew what was expected of him during the session, and used First/Then language to tell him what rewards would come after he completed his work.

- First, we worked on his language skills using the SpeechTree app.
- Next we used the Word World app to spell words.

- Finally, I let him use Youtube to watch his favorite Disney movie trailer, but only after successfully completing the first 2 steps.

The schedule helped reduce his anxiety and better focus his attention to the learning tasks. It was a win-win situation that resulted in a greater motivation to learn.

4. Apps: How can I organize the applications on my iPad for best use?

A good organization system is the key to ensuring all family and team members can locate, access, and share apps that are appropriate for your child.

I work with a student who uses the iPad at school and with his parents at home. At school we tried several different apps to work on improving social and communication skills. We learned the student has greater motivation and success with certain apps than others.

The student's parents tried the same thing at home, but unfortunately it was confusing for the student since the teacher used an app in a certain way at school, while the parent used that app in another way at home or was unable to find the app to teach a certain skill. Together with the parents, we organized the



apps into folders, so that both parent and teacher were on the same page and able to use the same apps, improving the learning process at school and home

I recommend organizing your educational apps into specific folders, organized by areas like:

- Literacy
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication AAC
- Social Skills
- Behavioral Reinforcers
- Learning
- Math
- Handwriting
- Organization

Here is a link from Apple that explains how to easily organize your apps.

<http://www.apple.com/iphone/features/folders.html>.

5. Generalizing: How can I generalize the skills my child learns with the iPad to the real world?

Difficulties with generalization skills are well-known in individuals with autism. They frequently have difficulty transferring the skills learned in one setting to another setting, but this skills transference can be improved through planning and practice. Happily, the iPad provides several apps to practice functional skills learned in one setting to another setting.

Here's an example of how I have used the iPad to generalize skills that my students were working on into real life situations. The student was working on the skills necessary to order food in a fast food restaurant, as his class was preparing for a trip there. By employing a social skills app incorporating video modeling he was able to practice the skills necessary to order food by reviewing a video everyday and on the following week he was able to go and order his food at the restaurant.

Here's a sample of the steps he learned from the video that prepared him to order:

- 1) Wait in line until it's my turn to order my food
- 2) Look at the menu and decide what I want to eat.
- 3) Order my food and drink "I want a cheeseburger, small fries and a Coke"
- 4) Pay for my food

- 5) Take my food
- 6) Sit down at a table and eat my food with my friends.
- 7) When I'm finished eating I need to throw my trash in the trash can.

6. Baselines: How do I know if my child is learning by using the iPad?

Establishing Baselines & Goals

In order for parents to better determine their child's learning progress, I recommend establishing **baselines**, which is what your child CAN do. Next, make a **goal** WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO BE ABLE TO DO.

Be objective as possible in establishing your baselines, and make sure your goals are reasonable, obtainable, and follow a progression. Then a month down the road, see if your child has met that goal. If the child has, their baseline has changed—they are progressing.

As an example, we had a goal for a particular student to learn to identify eight different fruits. His baseline was that he was able to identify 2 fruits (those he preferred, an Apple and an Orange.) After working on identification, we were able to see if he could identify additional fruits. That gave us good information as well as a starting and ending point (ask angela what she means by this.. define better.. e something about understanding to focus on his strengths then the ones he did not know).

7.) How can I help my child in learning progression (better headline)

Teaching apps Vs. Testing apps(sub headline)(angela maybe 1 brief sentence or something about need the correct progression from teaching to testing)

Teaching apps frequently show a skill or item over and over. Many times they state:

- What the item is
- What you do with it.

Testing apps frequently use these carrier phrases(carrier phrases too complex)

- "Find the _____"
- "Show me the _____"
- "Touch the _____"
- "Point to the _____".

Testing apps assume that the child already knows the items/concepts and focuses on testing the skills. Lastly, if the app is a testing app some other things

you want to look for is does it track and store data. This information is extremely important and will help determine if your child is making progress on the goals that you set

Learning From NO (**Better sub headline**)

Another feature I look for in testing apps is how do they respond when a child is incorrect. Many of the students with autism I work with either know an answer or they don't. If they don't know an answer, then they need to learn what it is. Therefore, it's important to see how the app teaches the correct item when they choose an incorrect answer. Speaking of incorrect responses, many of my students become quickly frustrated when they are overcorrected or hear the word "no." If your child becomes easily frustrated in new learning situations you will definitely want to examine the incorrect item prompting format that each app uses.

<http://www.lovaas.com/blog/archives/38-Effective,-Individualized-Behavioral-Treatment-3.-Errorless-Learning-Procedures.html> (angela read insight?) there are some effective ways of errorless learning that fade out incorrect responses until the correct item is chosen (then state WHY this is effective if possible with research to indicate then why it will help parents)

8.) Training- (Need creative headline and sub headline)

(We intend to talk about the importance of using a speech therapist and specialized training.. www.globalaugmentative.com)..

9.) Communication / Augmentative and Alternative Communication

state research about autism and difficulty communicating. research about AAC then focus on speechee. www.soeechtreeapp.com

“Language develops and expands in an orderly fashion. Our devices and systems must allow for this development from the beginning. Typically, children acquire spoken language by progressing from one-word utterances to two-word utterances to simple sentences and so on. Language form, function, and use proceed in a fairly predictable pattern. AAC intervention should begin early, and clinicians should provide support for the way we know language typically develops rather than use devices that generate complete sentences at the onset.” Julie Schers and Pamela Hart Wichita State University The ASHA Leader Vol. 7 No. 16 September. 10, 2002