



# Parent/Teacher Newsletter

## Helping Hands Keyboarding



Created by: SHIP Occupational Therapists

Community Rehabilitation

Edition 2

SHIP Occupational Therapists give ideas to improve the fit between a student and the tasks they do at home and school. A good match can increase a child's belief in their abilities. This helps them have success on tasks they feel are important. In this month's newsletter, we review strategies for keyboarding.



### How Should Teach Keyboarding?

Kids can have success learning from a teacher and from a computer-based program. Try to have flexibility and do not focus on speed over accuracy.

### When should I start?

Younger children are able to learn to type. However, they take considerably longer to develop the skill. It is more practical to provide instruction to older children (Grades 5-7).

### How often?

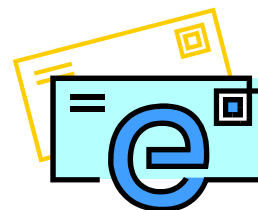
Try to include daily practice of keyboarding skills with sessions lasting 20-30 minutes. Students' skills improve more when they use typing for day to day tasks.

### What typing method is best?

Typing from home row is the optimal method. (Left = asdf, Right = jkl;). In some cases, the "hunt and peck" or 1-finger typing method may be the best way for your child/student to produce legible written work.

### TIPS for TEACHING:

- Set realistic typing goals.
- Teach letter keys in groups (home row, etc.).
- Type words with the new letters learned.
- Challenge students to generate words with one hand.
- Mark home row keys with touch cues ("Velcro", "feely-stickers").
- Provide a picture of the keyboard beside the screen. Prompt your child to look at it instead of the keys.
- Block vision of the keyboard with cardboard or a cloth.
- Make practice fun! Make lists, write emails, develop a joke file, or write in a journal.



### Portable Word Processors:

There are a variety of portable word processors available on the market. They range in price depending on what they can do. The type that is best for a student depends on the classroom environment, available funds and individual student needs.



## Additional Fun Activities!!!

- **Cartoon Completion:** supply a blank cartoon and have the children type in the text for each speech balloon.
- **Mad Libs:** student types a noun, verb or adjective into blanks left in a paragraph to create a funny story.
- **Story Correction:** students are given a story with errors to correct (spelling, spacing and punctuation).
- **Secret Messages:** students type out a secret message and change it to “wing-ding” font. Switch computers with a classmate and read each other’s messages!
- **Clip Art Story:** students choose a picture from clip art and then write a story about it.
- **Rotating Story:** students are given a one-line story starter and then rotate computers. Each child types a line until the story is complete.

## Resources

For a review of typing software programs:  
[www.superkids.com](http://www.superkids.com)

For more information on portable word processors:  
[www.quickpad.com](http://www.quickpad.com)  
[www.alphasmart.com](http://www.alphasmart.com)

For more information on assistive devices and dates for Drop in Demo Days:  
[www.capitalhealth.ca/icancentre](http://www.capitalhealth.ca/icancentre)  
Phone: I CAN Centre (780) 735-6070



## References

- Amundson, S. (1998). *TRICS for written communication*. Homer, AK: O.T. KIDS, Inc.
- Freeman, A., MacKinnon, J., & Miller, L. (2005). Keyboarding for students with handwriting problems: A literature review. *Physical and Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics, 25*(1/2), 119-141.
- Handley-More, D., Deitz, J., Billingsley, F., & Coggins, T. (2003). Facilitating written work using computer word processing and word prediction. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 57*(2), 139-149.
- Computer Skills and Keyboarding Group – A project by ESHIP and the Glenrose Hospital.

