



# DIRECTIONS

*Technology in Special Education*

Vol. 2 , No. 3

October 1995

## Funding Assistive Technology

### Where Can We Find What We Need ??

New technological developments have raised the expectation that people with disabilities can employ assistive devices to function more independently in their homes and communities, and pursue vocational goals not dreamed of before. Every day people act on this expectation, and DO gain more independence. But, expectations are often dashed or delayed when people seek financial assistance to purchase devices and are faced with a maze of funding sources, eligibility restrictions, paperwork requirements, and rules and regulations governing the funding of such equipment.

Before considering funding sources and how to use them, consumers and their families should take a serious look at what the consumer wants and needs to do independently. This process is a type of task analysis. The activities and need identified will vary with the individual's age, geographic and financial circumstances, vocational goals, and personal desires. Compile a list of activities, and then indicate what assistive technology might be useful in performing specific tasks. A general listing of activities might include the following:

Early childhood and preschool transportation  
Elementary and secondary education recreation and sports interests  
Post-secondary education and training  
Wheelchair and other ambulation aids requirements  
Personal care (dressing, bathing, eating, hygiene, grooming)

Under each of these areas, there may be several specific functional tasks that could be made easier by the use of assistive technology. Be sure though, to consider which tasks truly require a technological solution. Technology is not the answer to every problem! Whatever

*Please see FUNDING on Page 8*



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## Tools for Teachers

### EDUCATOR'S WORLD WIDE WEB TOUR GUIDE

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Find educational treasures instantly with this easy-to-use book & CD ROM package! Over 150 of the most valuable and fascinating educational sites have been packaged into one convenient sourcebook covering eleven subject areas. Each Web site profile includes a large sample screen view, address information, description of the contents, ideas on how to integrate the Web site information into your curriculum, PLUS pointer to related gopher, Web, and ftp (file transfer protocol) sites giving you literally thousands of resources.

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To order this tourguide, or for more information on Classroom Connect's many Internet related products, call them at 1-800-638-1639, or reach them at [connect@wentworth.com](mailto:connect@wentworth.com).

## CONFERENCES

Reprinted from various sources

**Date:** 10/17 10/20

**Event:** Closing the Gap Conference

**Location:** Minneapolis, MN

**Contact:** Closing the Gap, 612.248.3294

**Date:** 10/25 10/27

**Event:** Technology & Learning Conference

**Location:** Atlanta, GA

**Contact:** NSBA, 703.838.6764

**Date:** 10/31 11/3

**Event:** EDUCOM 95

**Location:** Portland, OR

**Contact:** Bill Graves, 202.872.4200

# DIRECTIONS

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Vendors - We welcome product news. Please include pricing and contact name with press releases.

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**Minutes turn to hours very quickly when 'surfing on the web' or chatting on the 'boards'. Try setting a timer so you don't spend your whole paycheck in additional on-line charges!!**

# Accessibility and Windows '95

BY CHESTER HOSMER

## Windows '95

On August 29, 1995 Microsoft Corp. announced that it estimates that more than 1 million copies of Microsoft Windows '95 were sold at retailers during the first 4 days of availability. The previous software sales record took 40 days to reach the 1 million mark. To put this in perspective, Windows '95 receipts doubled those of the *Lion King* in its opening weekend. "I guess its here to stay". So... if you can't beat 'em you might as well join 'em.

Let's find out how Windows '95 make computing more accessible for those with special needs?

It's obvious that Microsoft has considered special needs users when developing Windows '95. They have delivered several key features built into the initial product offering that will serve as the foundation for enhanced accessibility. We'll take a look at some of these features and what they mean to users with special needs.

## Who Are the Users?

Multiple users on a single PC. This option is really for everyone, but it provides a key feature for supporting differing types of users on a single PC. Each user can have a different configuration of colors, font size and types, mouse cursor selection etc. So whenever you log into Windows '95 your custom configuration is activated.

## What We See

Customizable fonts, sizes, colors, and mouse pointers for children with low vision. This feature allows you to select the size of characters, what font type to display, (Arial/ Helvetica would be good choices), and even the size, speed, and characteristics of the mouse. You can even select mouse trails that helps a child see the progression of the mouse as it moves across the screen.

## What We Touch

Microsoft has built Sticky keys, Mouse Keys, Filter Keys, and Serial Keys right into Windows '95. These features assist users that have limited dexterity and control. Sticky keys lets you control whether keys repeat when they are held down too long. Filter keys allow you restrict the users access to only those keys that are necessary and ignores errant key strokes. Mouse Keys allows the user to select keys via mouse selections instead of keyboard clicks. Each of these features make input and control of Windows '95 more flexible and tunable for each user.

## What We Hear

Certainly multimedia computing creates a very exciting, interactive and motivating environment for learning. (please see *DIRECTIONS* August, October & November 1994) How do those users with limited hearing abilities benefit from audio based multimedia? Microsoft has provided SoundSentry and ShowSounds that displays sounds on the screen for those with hearing impairments. This feature enhances and magnifies the video presentation by animating sounds visually.

## What We Read

Microsoft even considered special needs when it came to documenting Windows '95. They provide all documents in text form. This enables them to be read using text readers, printed with braille embossers, and displayed in large text for all those who have difficulty in handling printed materials.

## What Is Coming

In the very near future Microsoft will provide a Windows '95 screen enlarger, a tutorial for blind users, an on-screen keyboard, and a special keyboard layout that will support the *Dvorak* one-handed keyboard.

Please see WINDOWS '95 on Page 9

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# Assistive Technology Funding & Systems Change Project Notes

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## RESOURCES & ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION AGENCIES

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### **Assistive Tech Funding & Systems Change:**

This project is designed to provide families, individuals with disabilities and other interested persons with information and technical assistance on assistive technology funding issues. It is composed of a consortium of six national organizations and spearheaded by the United Cerebral Palsy Associations (UCPA) in Washington, D.C. The number for assistance is (800) 827-0093 (voice) and (800) 833-8272 (TDD).

### **Vocational Rehabilitation:**

Each state has designated an agency to operate the vocational rehabilitation program. If you do not know yours, contact your governor's office, look in the phone directory under state government agencies, or, if all else fails, contact the US Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in Washington DC at 202- 205-5465.

If you are having difficulty in dealing with the vocational rehabilitation system, each state operates a client assistance program (CAP) which works to resolve disputes between the agency and those receiving services. VR personnel should provide you with a reference to the CAP if requested, or the agency's central office should do so. If you are unable to obtain the information contact your state protection and advocacy agency.

### **Special Education:**

The special education program is administered through your local school district. School officials must evaluate any child suspected of having a disability for eligibility for special education services. Contact the administrative offices of your school district for information on special

education services. The phone directory will have most school offices listed with other county offices. If your school district does not respond to your requests, notify the state department of education, preferably its director of special education.

### **Medicaid:**

Medicaid also operates through designated state agencies. The eligibility determination must again be separated from the determination of exactly what medical services an individual will be provided. To locate your local Medicaid agency, contact the state department of health or the department of social services. You also may ask your governor's office or your state legislator for the name of the Medicaid agency in your area.

### **Independent living Centers:**

There are approximately 400 independent living centers around the country. For the name of one nearest you, contact the National Council on Independent Living Centers (703) 525-3406 voice; (703) 524-3407. Most states have a state independent living council (SILC) which can give you a referral.

### **State Tech Act :**

Each state operates a program under the Technology-Related Assistance for Individuals with Disabilities Act who should be able to assist you on problems related to assistive technology. You can locate the program in your state through an independent living center, or by calling your governor's office to determine the agency or organization serving in this capacity. The designation will have been made by the governor. If this fails, the RESNA Technical Assistance Project can provide the name. They may be reached at (703) 524-6686.

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**Protection and Advocacy Services:**

Each state has a protection and advocacy program for persons with disabilities whose purpose is to provide legal services. In addition, each state protection and advocacy system has special funding to address issues related to assistive technology .If you believe you have a legal problem, you may contact their state offices, which should be listed in the phone directory .If not, you can locate the Protection and Advocacy program in your state, call the National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems (NAP AS) at (202) 408- 9514 voice and (202) 408-9521(TDD).

out about the resources in your area, contact the National Parent Network on Children with Disabilities at (703) 684-6763.

**Regional Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers:**

These centers (DBTAC's) exist in all ten regions of the country to assist individuals and business with ADA compliance. To locate the center covering your state call (800) 949-4232.

**Other Advocacy Resources:**

There may be a number of resources worth consulting. For example an independent living organization who should be able to provide you with the necessary information.

**Parent Information and Training Centers:**

If you have difficulty with special education services, parent assistance and advocacy resources exist. To find

**Editor s Note:** DREAMMS is proud to have recently become an official information dissemination point for the UCP Assistive Technology funding & systems Change Project. It is our goal to provide information from their publications in each issue of DIRECTIONS.

# It's Time for Our Annual Fundraising Drive!

Did you know that more and more and more children are being identified as having special needs? And did you know that DREAMMS for Kids, Inc. and *DIRECTIONS: Technology in Special Education* is supported solely by your tax deductible donations and gifts? Although the advancement of computers and technology provides a basic set of tools or building blocks for education, the assistive and adaptive technologies used in special Education are needed to augment this technical foundation and provide the framework for the bridge to an inclusive and accepting society.

*Won t you please help us to build that bridge by sending a small donation?*



**YES, I WANT TO HELP DREAMMS BUILD THE BRIDGE**

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Clearwater, FL 34612-1223

*Thank You!*

## A CASE STUDY...

### Part 3

#### “Creating a Home Personal Computer Learning Center

Chuck Palmer, Cristin's Dad, presented concepts from this paper at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Symposium on Literacy and Developmental Disabilities, sponsored by the Carolina Literacy Center, and the Talford Foundation, June 18-19, 1994.

Parts 1 & 2 were printed in previous *DIRECTIONS*.

#### Positioning and Set Up

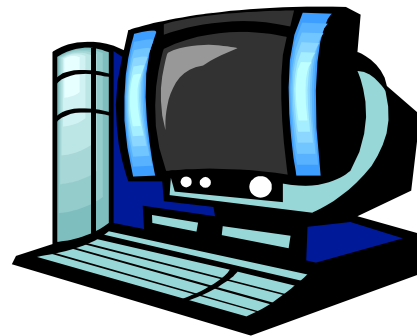
An effective computer learning center might best be described as a computer work station scaled down to the dimensions of the student. Adults would not think of working at a personal computer in a big oversized chair with the monitor raised up high, hyperextending our necks. We should not expect a child to “work” under these conditions either. The UCLA Intervention Center (LAUSD/ UCLA) believes that “it is essential that the child sit in a comfortable, therapeutic position in front of the computer.” The monitor should be at eye level, preventing any hyperextension of the child's neck.

The key components of ideal seating at a computer learning center are pelvic alignment and stability, with head and shoulders aligned over the pelvis. Sitting straight in a properly sized chair, both feet should be firmly (weight bearing) on the floor or foot rest allowing the knees to bend normally. Hands and arms must comfortably rest on the keyboard/mouse work surface with forearms level or slightly tilted up toward the work surface. The upper arm and forearm forms a right angle. Cristin sits on a square of non-skid material placed in a properly sized chair seat. This keeps her firmly positioned in the chair without squirming out of position as can be expected of most young children.

We found the best set up for Cristin's learning center includes a modified toddler chair with a footrest, and a commercially available, adjustable workstation table. A 14" Rifton toddler chair with footrest, raised by 2X4

blocks mounted on the chair legs, provided the proper seating arrangement for Cristin. The chair fit perfectly under a *Smith System* workstation table that adjusts from 23 to 30 inches in height. The height adjustment allows Mom and Dad to use the computer center when Cristin lets us. This set up also allows for a good deal of flexibility as Cristin grows.

The monitor height can be easily adjusted with a universal monitor stand or other suitable positioning device. Cristin likes looking directly into the top half of the monitor screen. This seems to be a very comfortable height, and provides for excellent visibility of any graphics action. A properly positioned monitor maximizes Cristin's attention to task and program activity .



An effective learning center environment is critical to keeping the child's attention on task. The work area should be quiet, free of clutter, or distractions, and be lighted properly with low level natural or incandescent light sources. Florescent lighting should not be utilized in the work area. The same work environment that any adult would want if they were working on an important computer application project or design should be provided for the child using the learning center.

#### Alternative Keyboards

Alternative keyboards such as the *Muppet Learning Keys* by Sunburst can be effectively utilized by young

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# CRISTIN ELIZABETH

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By Chuck Palmer, Father of Cristin Elizabeth

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## for Young Children with Developmental Disabilities”

children. Cristin loved using her Kermit Keyboard” as she was learning the alphabet. The large keys arranged in alphabetical order makes letter recognition so much easier. She quickly adapted to the regular keyboard once she knew the alphabet.

### Access Adaptations

Position and interface adaptations to any child with physical, hearing, or visual disabilities are readily available from several vendors. The scope of this article will not describe the many disability adaptations available. An excellent resource guide titled *Computer Resources for People with Disabilities* by The Alliance for Technology Access is available from Hunter House Publishers (also from DREAMMS). Local school districts and area Alliance for Technology Access Centers (phone: 415-455-4575) also provide information and guidance for suitable access adaptations.

### Software ...The Heart of the Learning Center

Hardware is important, but the heart of the learning center is the software that enables the user to interact and learn. With more than 500 possible software titles currently on the market, software selection could take many hours of research to select the most appropriate for young children with special needs. So what should a parent look for in their software selection? Probably not anything different than you would look for in an appropriate classroom environment for young children.

According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) a developmentally appropriate early childhood classroom includes a variety of learning opportunities where children have a choice to select their activities. Learning materials should be real and relevant to the particular age group and correct responses to questions are not the emphasis. Rote drill practice to memorize “right” answers is not ideal. Teachers should provide many opportunities to enhance communication skills through reading and writing, and to exhibit how reading and writing

is useful in everyday life. Emphasis is on writing experimentation, not grammatical correctness in this early age group. Like effective classroom environments, appropriate software promotes positive feelings, a sense of competence, and self esteem. A primary goal of software is to encourage exploration questions, and discovery experiences that excite students (Edmark Corporation, 1992) and builds their self esteem.

There are many things to consider when evaluating program activities for young children. However, the following criteria should be considered when selecting a child’s software portfolio (Buckleitner & Cambridge Development Laboratory):

**Ease of Use:** Software Programs should have simple uncluttered clear menus allowing children to easily choose activities or exit the program. Choices are made with large meaningful icons (e.g., a stop sign or exit). Reading should not be a barrier to the student’s interaction with the software. Minimal directions are necessary since the program structure helps the student into the desired activity .

**Instructional Value:** Ideal software allows a child to explore discovery based activities, and question and answer formats. Effective programs allow the child to find the correct answer by continuing to reduce the possible answers, rather than providing negative feedback. Program activities must be developmentally appropriate for the student.

**Appeal:** Programs should integrate graphics, sounds, and motion effects into the educational theme to keep the interest of the young child. Graphics should be interesting and relative to the student, but clear and uncluttered with no distractions from the task objective.

Please see CRISTIN on Page 9

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# DREAMMS Online

BY CHESTER HOSMER



The world wide web, or WWW is certainly becoming the preferred method of browsing the Internet superhighway. Millions of people use Web browsers each day to enter the highway via multimedia home pages.

So where is the home page for those interested in special education and assistive technology?

Surfing this month I found a great on-ramp for special education at University of Kansas (<http://www.sped.ukans.edu>). The University of Kansas provides a variety of opportunities for those interested in improving the lifestyles for children, youth, and adults with disabilities. They have discussions on Academic Programs, a Special Education Technology Lab, and Internet Resources on Disabilities. In addition, they have links to many other special education sites including Apple's Computer Disability pages, Alternate Access to the WEB, Assistive Technology On-line, and Dragon Systems.

Under the Resources section they have compiled an excellent set of information concerning mailing lists dealing with disabilities, texts on disabilities, On-line resources specifically about children with disabilities, and a comprehensive list of gopher resources. Check them out and send me e-mail at [DREAMMS@ix.netcom.com](mailto:DREAMMS@ix.netcom.com) and let me know what you find. Happy surfing...and see you next month!

*FUNDING continued from page 1*

decisions are made, high-tech, low-tech, or no-tech, they must be made with the individual's needs, preferences, and tolerance for technology in mind.

While researching the types of devices on the market or under development, collect price information together with a list of manufacturers and distributors. Comparison shopping is important before approaching a funding source. Once a device has been identified, you can begin to concentrate your efforts on the source or sources of funding for the device.

## Selecting Funding Sources

Sources of financial assistance for the purchase of assistive technology are many and varied. Each has different eligibility criteria. Most require that an application for services or financial assistance be completed. All have specific rules regarding what equipment can be purchased. Some sources are: Medicaid, Medicare, private insurance, credit financing, Federal/state Rehabilitation, Special Education, Veterans Administration, Worker's Compensation, and PASS (Plans to Achieve Self-Support).

## Keys to Funding

In summary, the keys to opening the agency doors - and breaking down funding barriers - are knowledge, determination, and preparation. First, identify specific needs, then identify assistive technology that can address the need. Become familiar with potential funding sources, their eligibility criteria, paperwork requirements, and payment policies. Learn to select appropriate funding sources to match the need, and to justify the funding request in terms that meet the agency's goals.

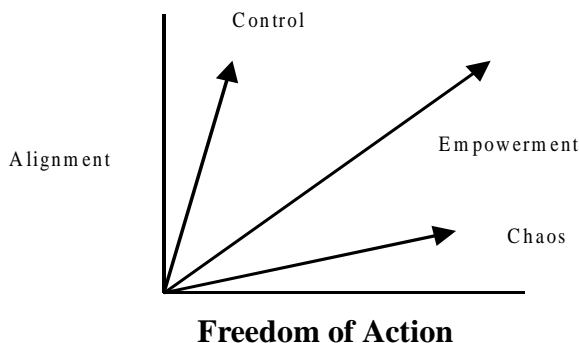
Editor's Note: Reprinted from NARIC resource guide, "Introduction to Funding Resources", July 1992. For a full copy of this document, contact NARIC at 800-227-0216, or DREAMMS for Kids, Inc. at 813.781.7711.

*CRISTIN continued from page 7*

*WINDOWS '95 continued from Page 3*

**Facilitation ...Empowering the Student**

Empowering the student best describes the overall purpose of an effective learning center. The individual learner must have the freedom to choose their activities and responses to enhance their learning experience. However, the facilitator must guide, support, and align the student to the overall development goals in order to truly “empower” the student. The facilitator has to perform a balancing act to truly achieve empowerment. Activities aligned to goals must be balanced with the student’s freedom to act. If a student is perfectly aligned to outcome goals then the facilitator is in total control over the student. On the other hand, if the facilitator allows total freedom to act, then we have chaos. In both extreme situations, effective student learning does not take place. The following figure depicts the empowerment concept graphically (Harris Corp. 1992)



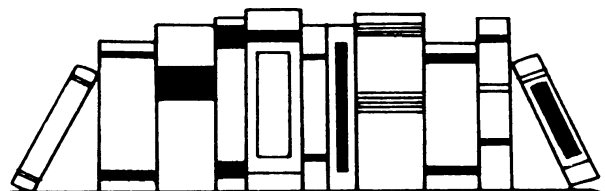
Editor s Note: Don t miss next month s issue Mr. Palmer continues with his discussion of software and facilitation.

**What about 3rd party products?**

Microsoft has provided special tools for 3rd party developers that allow them to take advantage of special embedded assistive technology features of Windows '95. Since these tools are available now, we can expect 3rd party developers to release products that exploit these features within 3-6 months.

**Where can I get more Information?**

There is a brochure entitled “Computer Accessibility for people with Disabilities” available through Customer Service, or you can contact Microsoft at 206-882-8080. Microsoft also has a world wide web site (<http://www.microsoft.com>). If you would like the Windows '95 newsletter sent to you electronically, send an e-mail message to: [ENEWS8@MICROSOFT.NWNET.COM](mailto:ENEWS8@MICROSOFT.NWNET.COM). The subject line should be blank and the body of the message should only have the text SUBSCRIBE WINNEWS. This is very similar to joining an Internet list serve (see DIRECTIONS Sept. 95).

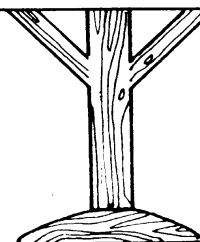


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# DREAMMS Bookstore

## Featured Titles

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This book is about taking disablement out of the experience of children and their families. It focuses on deaf children and uses a valuable combination of what families say and discussions of topical issues about how disabling experiences can be avoided. Parents and children clearly reveal the social barriers to their lives as ordinary families, and have identified ways in which barriers can start to be dismantled. Professionals and students in the field of education, health and social work are challenged to re-examine their own practices and beliefs with a view to maximizing enablement of vulnerable children and their families.

 ***Computer Resources for People with Disabilities-- A Guide to Exploring Today's Assistive Technology-***  
by: **Alliance for Technology Access**

The computer age offers dramatic possibilities for people with disabilities. This new book by the Alliance for Technology Access shows how to use computer technology to achieve goals and change lives. This book is a comprehensive guide to approaching computer innovations. It provides the information necessary for using conventional and assistive technology at work, at school, at home, alongside other people with or without disabilities.

 ***What Teacher's Do: Developments in Special Education--*** by: **P. Garner, V. Hinchcliffe, S. Sandow**

This book is about the lives and work of teachers who specialize in the education of children with learning difficulties in ordinary and special schools. It draws on examples of good practice and reflective thinking from more than fifty teachers and places these in a framework of considered argument. It shows the dedication, effectiveness, and innovative skills of teachers.

## DREAMMS Bookstore Order Form

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\$14.95

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Special Needs in the Classroom, \$24.95

Children with Autism, \$24.95

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Teaching Special Needs, \$25.00

The ADD Hyperactivity Handbook for Schools, \$26.00

The ADD Hyperactivity Workbook, \$16.95

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My Dear Friends,

10/95

The school year is firmly in place by now and I'm sure all the little goblins and ghosts are getting ready for their late October romps! (Don't tell anyone but I LOVE to get dressed up myself... one year I scared this poor little girl so badly that she missed the whole evening!) \_

The month of October also brings our Annual "Build the Bridge" Fundraising Drive! We at DREAMMS rely totally on your support to keep our many programs running and providing assistance and information to kids and families with special needs. Won't you please help us out this year with a small gift! I promise you that it will make a world of difference to our kids!

We are thrilled to be able to offer you the many fabulous books found in our new DREAMMS Bookstore! Each month we will be offering books related to disabilities, special education, and assistive technology from a number of the very best publishing houses from around the world! If you don't see a book listed, give us a call, and we'll see if we can find it for you!

Our Resource Guide release and our new Internet Web Page are just around the corner! Keep a look out for all the exciting tools and services that we'll have to offer this year!

As always my kindest regards..

Janet

*p.s. Be sure to stay out of the Halloween candy*

## MARKETPLACE

### ABC FUNWARE

Large buttons, colorful screens, simple straightforward letters & objects! Allows for easy interaction with the computer! Kids love it! Human voice speaks letters and words! Sound card recommended, but not required. PC Windows.

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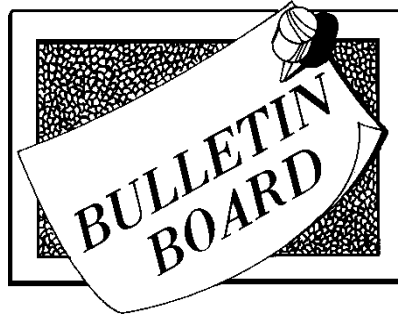
E-Systems, ECI

## Windows '95 Software

Edmark Corporation announced the release of Windows '95 versions of their award winning educational titles *Sammy's Science House*, *Thinkin Things Collection 2*, and *KidDesk Plus*. It also announced plans to release Windows '95 versions of *Thinkin Things Collection*, *Millie's Math House* and *Bailey's Book House* early this fall. Edmark's Windows '95 CD-ROMS will retain backwards compatibility to run with Windows 3.1. School versions of the titles, excluding *KidDesk* will be available on dual platform CD-ROM (Windows/Macintosh) for \$69.95. *KidDesk Plus* will be available on dual purpose CD-ROM for \$34.95. (Edmark Corporation-800.362.2890)

## Closing The Gap

The 1995 Closing The Gap Conference, "Microcomputer Technology in Special Education and Rehabilitation," being held October 19th - 21st, builds on a tradition of providing a comprehensive examination of the most current uses of technology by persons with disabilities and the professionals who work with them. All day pre-conference workshops are scheduled for Oct. 17th & 18th: while presentations and exhibits are scheduled for October 19th through the 21st in Minneapolis MN. For registration information contact: (Closing The Gap - 612.248.3810)



## Access with SAM-JOY Stick

RJ Cooper has announced the availability of their Switch-Adapted Mouse device-joystick (SAM-JOY stick). This joystick operates the cursor , (pointer, arrow) just like a regular mouse. SAM-JOY for Mac (all systems) is a joystick only, while SAM-JOY stick for windows is a joystick with Windows (95, NT, 3.1) driver software. The regular mouse remains connected while SAM-JOY is operational. Cooper has Switch-Adapted these orthopedically - appropriate joysticks, just like his SAM- TRACKballs, so that clicking can be performed through an external switch, by some other body part. Also, the drag function, which was all but impossible for persons with disabilities, is performed by a drag-lock button on the SAM-JOY stick. SAM-JOY stick for either Mac or Windows, as well as SAM-TRACKballs are \$120 and available only through RJ Cooper & Associates. (RJ Cooper & Associates 1.800.RJCooper )

## DIRECTIONS for LIBRARIES

DREAMMS for Kids, Inc. announced the release of *DIRECTIONS FOR LIBRARIES*, the complete library resource version of *DIRECTIONS: Technology in Special Education*. This 2 year subscription to their popular and comprehensive assistive technology based newsletter includes a custom binder, an annual index, and a complete assistive technology resource guide. *DIRECTIONS FOR LIBRARIES* is now shipping and is available for \$39.95 in the U.S., and \$49.95 in Canada. (DREAMMS for Kids, Inc. - 813.781.7711)

## Expanded Keyboards

EKEG Electronics Co. LTD has many differing styles of expanded keyboards available for PCs, Apple models, and Macintosh computers. All computer keyboards are 100% "transparent". That means that they plug into the keyboard socket and will work with EVERY program that has been written for that computer or will ever be written for that computer. No additional hardware or software is required, since all of the SMARTS are inside the keyboards which contain their own microprocessors. The expanded keyboards have 1 1/2 inch square keys which are active over the entire key area. The keys have physical movement and there is tactile feedback. (EKEG Electronics Co. LTD - 604.273.1148)