



DREAMMS FOR KIDS

DIRECTIONS

Technology in Special Education

For Parents & Professionals

Vol. 2, No. 10

May 1996

Using Switches

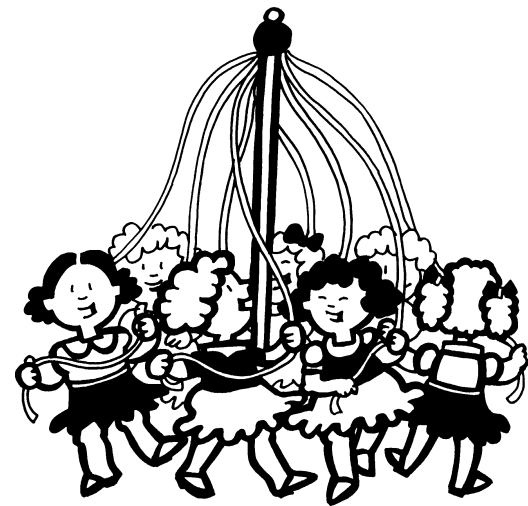
How to Select Battery Operated Toys and Switches

The importance of play for very young children when readying them for technology use cannot be overemphasized. For children who have a physical disability or who are generally uninterested in manipulative toys, battery operated toys that are adapted to work with single switches can be used. Battery operated toys and switches can be the tools for developing play skills with objects and with peers. They also provide children with physical disabilities increased control over the classroom and home environment.

Selecting toys and switches for young preschool-aged children requires that parents, teachers, and therapists consider several important factors. The most important factor is to become an expert. Make a list of your young child's strengths and needs and choose toys which meet your child's requirements. Collect information from parent support groups, toy lending libraries, information centers, manufacturers, and through exchanges with other parents, teachers, therapists, and others.

When purchasing battery operated toys, it is important to remember that there are different kinds of toys. It is important to consider a variety of battery operated toys that reflect a range of sensory inputs. For example, toys with flashing and multi-colored lights provide a visual input; tape recorders, musical, and other noisy toys (e.g., animal sounds, sirens) stimulate a young child's auditory senses. Blowing fans and vibrating toys provide tactile and vibro-tactile input. Toys should also provide for a variety of movement patterns: stationary, horizontal, vertical, and circular

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My Dear Friends,

May 1996

I believe that Spring is the most beautiful time of the year. And I'm sure there isn't any time better than springtime in Florida! The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) was fortunate enough to hold its Annual Convention in Orlando, Florida this past month, and the attendees were presented with four days of the bluest skies in Orlando history! I'm sure many carried mouse ears and sunburns home with them!

The CEC, a private nonprofit membership organization, was established in 1922. CEC is an active network of 59 State/Provincial Federations, 1,012 Chapters, 17 Divisions, and 330 Subdivisions. CEC accomplishes its worldwide mission on behalf of educators and others working with individuals with exceptionalities by advocating for appropriate governmental policies; setting professional standards; providing continuing professional development; advocating for newly and historically underserved individuals with exceptionalities; and helping professionals obtain conditions and resources necessary for effective professional practice.

I have interfaced with the CEC for many years and on many different levels, and have always been impressed with how they have grown to be the size that they are, while remaining sensitive to the needs of those they serve! I'd like to take this time as a parent to thank them for all that they do for my child and the people in his world. And as an Executive Director and editor, I hold them as a model for my young but growing agency.

My kindest regards 'till next month.....

Janet

DIRECTIONS

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

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Switch to Success

Home Automation Newsletter, Vol 2, Issue #8, August 1995

Many people never consider how they access a gadget, appliance, tool or piece of equipment. Switches allow people to turn things on and off. However, many switches on consumer devices do not allow easy access for people who may have physical, sensory or cognitive disabilities. An ability switch allows a person with a disability access to a device they could not normally operate.

There are a variety of ability switches commercially available today that offer a wide array of access methods. Switches can be activated by many methods including touch, sound, eye blink and, proximity.

Before discussing specific switches, let's review switch basics. In order for any electrical device to work there must be a closed circuit. This means there must be an uninterrupted flow of electricity from the power source to the motor, filament, etc. Switches close the circuit in a device and allow it to operate or open the circuit to turn the device off. All switches, regardless of the nature of the external interface, do the same thing: complete a circuit within an electrical device.

There are two basic types of switches: single and dual. The single switch completes one electrical circuit. A single switch may be used to turn a

device on and off directly or to scan through a list of choices on a scanning device (either by activating the switch for each choice or by activating the switch and reactivating it when the scanner reaches your choice).

The dual switch is simply two switches in one (e.g., rocker switch, sip and puff). This allows the user more choices in activating a given device. For example, the user sips on the switch attached to a scanning device to scan through a selection of devices. The user then puffs the switch when the desired selection is reached to turn on the device. Another example is to use the sip mode to take a phone offhook and the puff mode to select numbers to dial.

Neither switch is better. Each type of switch has its advantages. It is important to carefully consider the user's needs before selecting a switch.

Another aspect of switches is what is called a latched and direct switch modes. It is important to understand that these modes are not *directly* related to the switch itself but rather to the device or appliance the switch operates. As stated above, the switch merely opens or closes a circuit.

Many common household appliances use latched mode. Latched mode

provides single-touch, on/off control. The user activates the switch and the device stays on until the switch is activated again. To shut the appliance off, the user activates the switch again. Doing so opens the circuit and the appliance shuts off. A lamp is an example of a device operating with latched mode.

Other devices use direct mode. This mode activates the device only while the user presses the switch. Many ice crushers and blenders employ this type of switch. When using direct mode, the user must keep constant contact with the switch to operate the device. When there is no contact with the switch the device shuts off.

Some switches also have timed modes. The user presets the time duration and the device automatically shuts off when the time elapses. Some examples of devices that use timed modes are clothes dryers, microwave ovens and some cameras.

Any electric device can be adapted to an ability switch interface. Some of the adaptations are simple and can be done at home with inexpensive materials in a few minutes. Others are more complex and may require professional assistance. Fortunately, most Environmental Control Units

Please see *SUCCESS* on Page 8

ATFSCP Notes

The Assistive Technology Funding and Systems Change Project

FUNDING DECISION CASE REPORT

Reported by National Association of Protection and Advocacy Systems (adapted by ATFSCP staff)

RE: Whether the school district must : 1) provide adaptive equipment to allow a student to operate a necessary computer without assistance; 2) provide an aide to allow a student to benefit from a regular classroom.

I. Decision Date: April 7, 1995

II. Critical Issues: Whether the school district must: (1) provide adaptive equipment to allow a student to operate a necessary computer without assistance; and (2) provide an aide to allow a student to benefit from a regular classroom.

SUMMARY

L. is an eighth grade student at Colton Joint Unified School District in Colton, California. She has cerebral palsy and spastic quadriplegia, and uses a wheelchair. Although L. has very limited use of her arms and legs, she can operate a computer with a knee switch. The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) specified the computer and the software necessary for her, but did not list any adaptations to the computer that would enable her to use it without assistance.

The district never invited its Program Specialist to any of the student's IEP meetings, although that individual had expertise in adaptive equipment.

The district allowed long delays in getting the computer and software to

L., and in making it accessible.

Results of IEP meetings held as early as February, 1993, showed that the student would need a computer.

However, the computer did not arrive until January, 1994, and the software did not arrive until later. It was only at that point that the district realized that another device was necessary for L. to independently start the computer.

After several problems occurred in obtaining this device, it was finally delivered and installed in January, 1995. The district then determined that the knee switch would be needed for the student to use the computer. Without the knee switch, L. would need assistance to enter her responses. A knee switch was borrowed in time for the visit by the United States Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR) investigative team in March, 1995.

In addition to the problems with the computer, L. was also denied the services of a necessary aide in her regular classroom programs for the entire school year. L. attended two regular classes each day. Due to various complications of scheduling

and overlapping aides, she received the services of the aide less than half of the time that one was needed.

On April 7, 1995, the OCR issued a letter, stating that the Colton Joint Unified School District had illegally discriminated against a student with a disability. This was based on the fact that the district would not give L. the necessary adaptive equipment, which would allow L. to use her computer without an aide's help. OCR decided that the district's actions were illegal, because the district did not consistently give the student an aide for her use in her regular classroom programs.

The district violated both Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - which prohibits discrimination in state and local government programs - and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act - which prohibits discrimination in programs that receive federal funds.

ANALYSIS

OCR decided that the district did not give the student a free, appropriate, public education (FAPE), because it

did not provide the student with an accessible computer. Without an accessible computer, the district was unable to provide the appropriate educational services identified in the student's IEP.

OCR also decided that the district did not ensure that the necessary aids and services were promptly delivered to the student - and that this was a violation of Section 504. The district explained that the delays were caused by coordination difficulties between the school district and other programs. However, OCR decided that responsibility lies squarely with the school district to ensure that all students receive the necessary services and aids promptly.

OCR also concluded that the district violated the law when it did not consistently provide the aide in the regular classroom programs, an undisputed necessary service for this student. OCR determined that, besides ensuring that necessary supplemental aids and services are delivered promptly, the district must ensure that they are delivered consistently. For these reasons, OCR decided that the district was violating both the ADA and Section 504.

**SYSTEMS CHANGE,
ADVOCACY AND IMPLICATIONS**

Section 504 and the ADA require school districts to provide necessary services, aids, and adaptive equipment

to students with disabilities in a timely manner. These should be used by advocates as they work to obtain assistive technology devices and services.

Opinions, such as this one from OCR, provide help to other school districts in interpreting the district's requirements under federal law. Only the Colton Joint Unified School District is required to comply with this opinion. However, if other school districts are failing to provide prompt and consistent delivery of assistive technology devices and services identified in a student's IEP, this opinion shows OCR's interpretation of the districts responsibilities and the conclusions OCR is likely to draw if a similar complaint is filed against another district.

In this opinion, OCR does not break new legal ground. It follows established principles about requirements on the school district. An

OCR investigation can result in a plan that changes the policies and procedures for an entire school district, making assistive technology devices and services available to all students with disabilities.

Cite: Colton Joint (CA) Unified School District, 22 IDELR 895 (OCR '95).

To secure general information on the project, contact: Assistive Technology Funding & Systems Change Project, 1660 L Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036 Tel: (202) 776-0406 Fax: (202) 776-0414 Email: atfscp@aol.com. To secure information & individual assistance on AT funding issues, contact: 1-800-827-0093 (voice) 1-800-833-8272 (TDD), or (404) 919-8305 (fax). □

The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and no official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of the opinions expressed herein should be inferred.

ACTION STEPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Determine what is mandated in your state. ♦ Parents, students, and advocates may want to consider filing a complaint with OCR when undue delay and/or inconsistency in implementing an IEP has the effect of denying services. ♦ Parents, students, and advocates should share this opinion with school districts in similar cases. ♦ To file an OCR complaint you should - on one or two pages - clearly define the problem and ask for the action that you wish to see taken. ♦ Check with other parents and parent groups to see if they are experiencing the same problems. ♦ Meet and develop strategies to work as a group for action (e.g., a group of parents meeting with the Superintendent, meeting with the principal of the school). ♦ Check the government pages in your phone book to find the address and phone number of the Office for Civil Rights in your area. Contact them with your questions and requests for information.

IDEA Passes First Hurdle

In late March, the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee unanimously approved a bill to reauthorize the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The bill introduces new discipline procedures for students with disabilities, enabling schools to more easily remove students with disabilities from their current placement.

The bill allows schools to expel students who bring drugs or weapons to school if the behavior does not result from the child's disability. Further, students who are involved with weapons, drugs, or behavior resulting in "serious bodily injury"

could be suspended for up to 10 days or placed in an alternative setting for up to 35 days while a permanent placement change is considered.

Other significant changes in the Senate bill concern over- and under-representation of students from diverse cultures, mediation, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), and payment of noneducational services to children with disabilities.

Though the bill is out of committee, a major battle could ensue when it hits the Senate floor. Several Senators have promised to introduce

controversial amendments to the bill, which could weaken the legislation and/or delay its final passage.

"All CEC members and other special education advocates need to be aware that IDEA still needs our support," said Nancy Safer, CEC's Interim Executive Director. "As we grow closer to the final version of the bill, we must ensure our Congressional representatives know which policies are effective and will work to the benefit of students with special needs and the special education field." □

This excerpt has been taken from the CEC Today, April/May Issue, Vol 2, No 9. Contact DREAMMS for Kids, Inc. at 813-781-7711 for a free copy of the full article.

CONFERENCES

Date: May 28-June 1, 1996
Event: American Association on Mental Retardation
Location: San Antonio, TX
Information: 800.424.3688

Date: June 7-12, 1996
Event: RESNA '96
Location: Salt Lake City, UT
Information: 703.524.6686

Date: June 11-13, 1996
Event: NECC '96
Location: Minneapolis, MN
Information: 612.638.8764

Date: June 27-29, 1996
Event: National Down Syndrome Society
Location: Phoenix, AZ
Information: 800.221.4602

Date: July 8-19, 1996
Event: 5th Annual Summer Inst. on Literacy in AAC
Location: Chapel Hill, NC
Information: 919.966.7486

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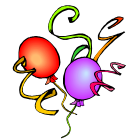
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Putting MAGIC into LEARNING

The CEC, (Council for Exceptional Children) an organization of over 54,000 teachers, administrators, parents and others concerned with the education of children with disabilities and children who are gifted, held their annual convention in Orlando, Florida this past April. I believe that *Putting Magic into Learning* was the most complete and informative educational conference & convention yet!

Mike Farrell, (formerly of TV's M.A.S.H.) a well known human rights activist and advocate began the sessions with his warm welcome and

thoughts on how our strength to advocate for what is right comes from our connectedness with one another and our unity.

With the reauthorization of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) looming out on the legislative horizon, there were many sessions dealing with the legal issues surrounding children with exceptionalities. We found the information in these sessions to be current and pertinent.

Many "strands" were also running

throughout the length of the conference. Strands are a series of 3-6 sequential sessions related to a particular topic. Our interest was naturally in the area of adaptive and assistive technology. We found many informative and worthwhile sessions throughout the week.

The CEC Annual Convention brought a wealth of information to special education stakeholders throughout the country. We can't wait until next year's event! Oh, and by the way.... the Exhibit Hall and the Hands-On Lab were fabulous! □

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beneficial for parents and families for adjustment, networking, resources and support useful for professionals to see what's advertised and the products used by people with disabilities.

- Laura Nelson, OTR



MAINSTREAM provides a great deal of information on equipment options - as well as resource information. The focus on self-advocacy is a good learning tool.

- Darren J. Roberts,
Staff Supervisor

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SUCCESS Continued from Page 3

(ECU) offer an interface between the switch and the device(s) the user may want to control. Furthermore, several companies sell inexpensive products that provide ability switch access for consumer appliances. The switch and the appliance both plug easily into the device allowing the user to access the appliance.

In past issues, Home Automation has reviewed several of these devices (Dec. 93; Jan. 94; Mar 94; Jul 94; Sept 94; Feb 95; Mar 95.)

If you would like additional information regarding switches and switch related products contact the following companies.

**AbleNet, Inc. 1081 Tenth Ave. S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55414. 800-322-0956**

**AdaptTech, Inc. ISU Research Park,
2501 North Loop Dr., Ames, IA 50010.
800-723-2783**

**Jesana Ltd., A Very Special Catalog, PO
Box 17, Irvington, NY 10533. 800-433-
4728**

**TASH, Inc. Unit 1-91 Station Street,
Ajax, Ontario, Canada L1S 3H2. 800-
463-5685**

**Toys for Special Children - Enabling
Devices Inc., 385 Warburton Ave.,
Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706. 800-
832-8697**

Additionally, don't overlook your local stores and mail-order catalogs as a resource. There are many switches available through hardware stores, electronics stores and catalogs. While many of the people working in these environments may not be informed as to disability issues, they can often be helpful with problem solving and may be able to make recommendations for the best switch and how to install it. □

This information has been reprinted/ excerpted with permission from Home Automation, a newsletter of the HomeTech Project of Seaside Education Associates, Inc. To receive this free monthly newsletter, contact the Project at: 800-886-3050.

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Where can I find out more?

October 1996
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About the Conference

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For me, the crowning touch of the conference was seeing the interaction between people who used communication devices.

Conference Highlights

Presentations by clinicians, system operators,
and others who will share their success



Sessions for the professional, the system
operator, and for the caregiver



Poster sessions on a wide range of topics



A town meeting to discuss issues important
to persons who use AAC

Minsing choir singing in four-part harmony



Keynote addresses by Gus Estrella (UCPA) and
Karen Erickson, Ph.D. (Center for Literacy and
Disability Studies at UNC)



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SWITCHES Continued from Page 1

movement. Examples include a drumming bear, a walking robot, a fireman going up and down a ladder, and a small train or car track sets. Toys should be chosen that can be easily incorporated into play routines, as well as for their motivation and age appropriateness to the individual child.

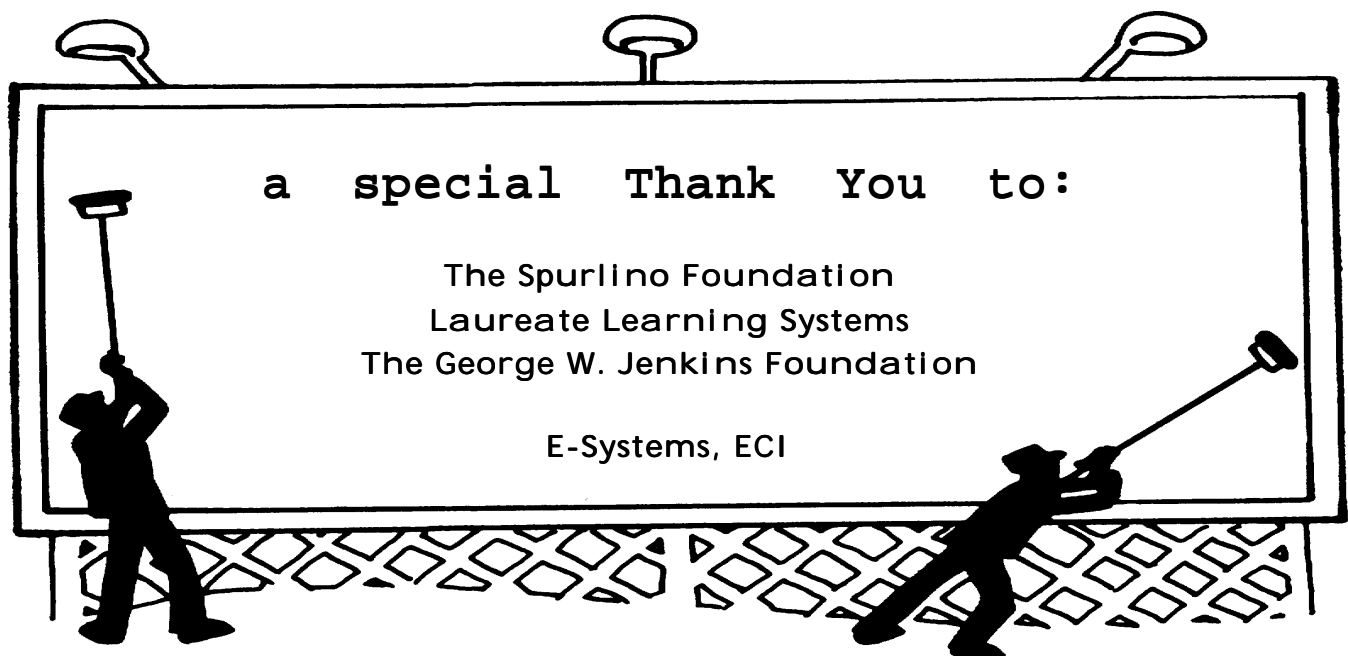
As with the purchase of toys, the teacher, therapist, and parent should acquire a variety of switches that can be used with children on different developmental levels and physical skills. Finding an appropriate switch or switches that match the child's physical requirements is extremely important. The child must have a reliable motor movement that can consistently activate the toy. As the child becomes more capable, the more reliable motor movements available to

activate switches will provide a means of more efficiently interacting with his or her environment. Recent technology has provided a variety of mechanisms for these children to activate toys other than simply using a switch activated by the press of a hand. For example, children can use an eye-blink switch or a puff switch to activate a device. Pressure sensitive switches that require only a minimal amount of movement are now on the market. Voice activation is now also another option.

Once children have a variety of experiences with toys and switches, they are often better prepared to have more successful interactions, not reactions, to the computer. Young children can be trained in many of the skills necessary for successful use

of computer and augmentative communication technology without the use of expensive or complicated equipment. Thus, when they are physically and developmentally ready to use the available technology, these children will be able to receive the maximum benefits that technology can make in quality of life and the ability to learn and to become as independent as possible. □

Source: Effective Use of Technology with Young Children, Mary L. Wilds, Technical Assistance Center #3, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia; printed in NICHCY New Digest: Assistive Technology, Number 13, 1989. Contact NICHCY (National Information Center for Children and Youth with Handicaps) at 800-695-0285 for a copy of the digest.



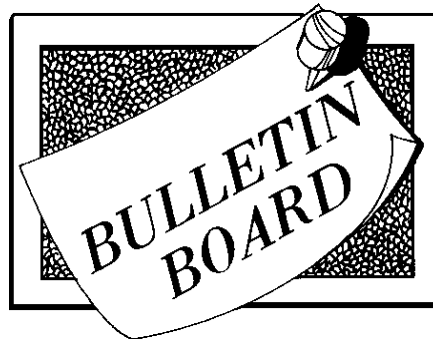
DynaVox 2 & DynaVox 2c

Sentient Systems Technology, Inc. has announced the release of a new line of state-of-the-art augmentative communication devices - *DynaVox2* and *DynaVox 2c*. These units offer the choice of a color display, built-in environmental control capabilities, more communication memory and are lighter in weight than the company's current *DynaVox* product. Additional features include: optional display color, increased portability, environmental control unit, more memory, and expanded communication software.

Sentient has also introducing *DynaVox2* software for DOS and Mac computers. This software will turn a general purpose computer into an augmentative communication device.

These Sentient Systems products are being carried by Adaptive Consulting Services, Inc., an independent augmentative communication consulting firm specializing in communication devices and adaptive devices for computer access and environmental control. Contact them at the following number for more information.

Adaptive Consulting Services, Inc.
253 Merritt Square Mall, Ste 642
Merritt Island, FL 32952
800.515.9169



Set Up AAC Summer Camp!

Prentke Romich Company, Wooster, OH - AAC summer camps are a fun and effective way to help people who cannot speak become more effective with their speech-output communication devices. They provide an opportunity for focused learning, social interaction, and experiences in a new environment. Many people would like to hold one but either don't know what is required or may be intimidated by the process. The newest instructional book from Prentke Romich Company can help.

The Camp Cookbook provides guidelines on how to set up a successful summer camp. It helps camp planners to address organizational and planning issues, as well as basic who, what, when, where, why and how questions. *The Camp Cookbook* is currently available from the Prentke Romich Company for \$15.

Prentke Romich Company
1022 Heyl Road
Wooster, OH 44691
800.262.1933

Unifix Software from Didax

Didax Educational Resources, of Rowley, MA has announced the release of *Unifix Software*. *Unifix* helps children make the connection between concrete hands-on experiences and abstract math concepts. The program was created for use by children with a wide range of abilities. All features are accessed with the mouse or single switch devices. No keyboard skills are required.

Unifix cubes and support materials are already a favorite with special and remedial teachers. Their colorful, tactile nature makes them an ideal resource for creating motivating, structured math activities. *Unifix Software* expands the way that *Unifix* materials can be used with special needs students. Mouse access means that many special needs students are able to use the program.

The program is easily modified by teachers to match age and ability levels of students, and musical notes or sounds can be added to cube colors. The software also has built in access for children with severe physical challenges. A wide range of switch devices can be used.

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