



Developing keyboard skills

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Keyboard skills include the effective use of a keyboard to complete tasks. These can be subdivided into:

- Getting familiar with the keyboard
- Locating the correct keys (letter matching) and pressing the keys
- Typing full words

Key board skills are important, as through the use of a keyboard one can 'write' down words without having to use a pen; thus allow people to compile documents and complete any work they might have in the event that they find handwriting too tiring.

Many learners with complex learning and physical disabilities find it very difficult to learn to touch type. The learning process requires a lot of concentration and persistence, as well as good fine motor control. Many of the online typing tutors are designed to develop touch-typing, and this may be difficult to follow for learners with disabilities. For these learners the main aim is to help them to develop good keyboard familiarity and accuracy. Some learners may progress to develop proper touch-typing or an adapted version especially if this is required to achieve increased speed. It is recommended that typing is practiced in small sessions of 10- 15 minutes for at least 4 times a week.

At the beginning it is expected that the learner will take time to explore the keyboard and this may involve pressing the letter keys randomly. They will also work at a slow rate. Their rate will increase through frequent use and practice at the keyboard. Speed of typing will be slower at the keyboard when learners are asked to write sentences as they will be doing more cognitive work - thinking what to say, recalling and deciding how to spell the words. Accuracy is just as important as speed.

Measuring the typing speed

Typing speed can be measured by using the popular sentence '*The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog*'. This sentence is used, as it includes all the letters of the alphabet. Then measure the speed by counting the number of words which they can type in a two minutes and divide by two.

The following game helps to measure the learner speed test <http://www.bigbrownbear.co.uk/typing/speedtest/>

Handwriting

Please remember that it is also important for the learners to keep practicing their handwriting skills when possible. It is recommended that a plan is devised example: handwriting will be utilised to fill in worksheets and maths while typing for creative writing. Discuss with the learners occupational therapist for further information.

Choosing the right keyboard

There are various types of keyboards available on the market. These include the standard keyboard, keyboards with larger letters, colour-contrast keyboards, and also on-screen keyboards (Note: On-screen keyboards can be accessed through a touch-screen or a mouse). Prior to buying a keyboard, please check whether the learner finds it comfortable to use and that the chosen one can be used with your device. The following are some examples:



Teaching strategies






The following are some strategies you can implement to teach keyboard skills:








- Make sure that the learner has good sitting posture and is comfortable using the keyboard. It is important that the feet are well supported
- Encourage the use of both hands when possible
- Value quality over quantity – emphasise correct typing, and not fast typing




- A blank laminated sheet can be used initially to cover most of the letter leaving few letters exposed. This will be useful to help the learner focus and find the letter without getting frustrated.

Below you will find various links to online games which you can use to work on the above-mentioned keyboard skills, in order to help improve a learner's overall keyboard skills. You may start trying to use a standard keyboard and use the following games to help in the teaching of the keyboard skills. If your learner continues to find difficulty to use a standard keyboard or it's difficult to use it due to physical disability, you may contact ACTU for further direction on how to refer your child for a consultation or ask your occupational therapist to refer to ACTU.

A number of these websites also have ads being displayed on the side. We recommend that you download an ad blocker prior to accessing these websites. AdGuard AdBlocker is a type of adblocker which can be downloaded from the chrome web store for free through this link https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/adguard-adblocker/bgnkhnnamicmpeenaelnjhikgbklg/RK%3D2/RS%3D4f_cVKY90pHwoj4tzjSFllTu3s4-

Objective	Name of Activity	Link	Image
1. Keyboard Familiarity: Locating the correct keys (letter matching) and pressing the keys	Letter Pop	https://www.helpkidzlearn.com/	
	Pop up the letter	http://www.bigbrownbear.co.uk/typing/popup/	
	Rocket Junior Keyboard Game	Typing Rocket Junior Keyboarding Game • ABCya!	
	Find the letter	MouseProgram.Com - Practice Using The Mouse on The Computer	<p>Return</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Include symbol keys (requires the Shift key)</p> <p>On your keyboard, press the key shown:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Press 1</p>
	Key Tower	https://www.typinggames.zone/keytower	
	Typing game	http://www.bigbrownbear.co.uk/typing/keyboardgame/	

Objective	Name of Activity	Link	Image
2. Typing full words	Type Toss	https://www.typing.com/student/game/type-toss	
	Keyboard Jump	https://www.typing.com/student/game/keyboard-jump	
	MonkeyType	https://monkeytype.com/ (You have the option to customise the display from the setting menu on the website)	
	Typing Attack	https://www.typinggames.zone/typing-attack	
	Glider Cats	https://www.kidztype.com/glider-cats_ce8b91b16.html	
	Text Type	http://www.doorwayonline.org.uk/	
	Doorway speller	https://www.doorwayonline.org.uk/literacy/	

Objective	Name of Activity	Link	Image
3. Touch typing	Interactive touch typing tutors	https://www.typingclub.com/sportal/program-3.game	
		http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/typing	
		http://www.doorwayonline.org.uk/	

Please note that these sites were all found in November 2021, therefore there is no guarantee that all the sites shall remain accessible following this date. If you note that a number of these sites don't work, please inform us so that we can look for new sites and update the list as needed.

Happy Practicing 😊