

Technology to Support Articulation and Language at Home

By Stephanie Devine, MS, CCC-SLP

Over the past year, hundreds of apps have flooded the web market for individuals with special needs. While it is wonderful to have a little something for everyone, it can also become overwhelming for a parent to make an informed purchase based simply on a few screen shots. From a speech therapy point of view, there are a few **Articulation Apps and Language Apps** that I have found to be versatile, effective for home practice, and cost-effective. Here are my top two for articulation and my top two for language.

1. Articulation Station - My top choice for articulation! You will have two choices, the free version or the \$49.99 version. **Open the free version** and you will see the "p" sound brightly lit and the other sounds in the background. The "p" sound is free with the app, and all other sounds

must be purchased separately. Touch the sound that your child is working on and you will be asked, "Would you like to learn more about this sound in our store?" Touch **Yes**, and the price for that sound will appear on the page. Each sound is priced differently. Once

purchased, pictures are provided in the initial, medial, and final word position. Sounds within phrases and stories are also included. There is also a Record button so the child can record and then listen to their production. The pictures are of real objects (not cartoons) which older elementary, middle, and high school students enjoy. There is also a data collection feature for progress monitoring.

2. ArtikPix - ArtikPix is created similarly to Articulation Station in the sense that once you search this app within the app store, you will have two choices for purchase.



Again, select the **free** version and purchase only the sounds you need. Then you can choose to work on flashcards, or play a memory/matching game. Just don't forget to say the picture each time you turn over a flashcard. The images contained on the flashcards are cartoon pictures that may be abstract or "too baby" for some individuals. The record and data collection features are built into this app as well.

3. Sentence Builder - This language application is created by Mobile Education. It's perfect for individuals who have difficulty forming grammatically complete sentences and also want to work on proofreading their work. Multiple users can be assigned to the program, and it includes three separate levels of difficulty so it can grow with the user. The screen shows a cartoon picture with



a section at the top to create a sentence that describes the picture below. Before they press the button to have the computer check their work, I have the child re-read the sentence to make sure it sounds correct. This is a great early proofreading skill for children to begin to develop. If the sentence is correct, a silly character pops up on the screen and tells them, "Good job!" For older children, Mobile Education also created Sentence Builder Teen that has real pictures and higher level vocabulary. In addition to Sentence Builder, Mobile Education has also created Language Builder, Conversation Builder, and many others. Sentence Builder can be purchased on the web market for \$9.99.

4. My Play Home - A fantastic application for the early childhood population. At only \$3.99 this is a steal! The app is set inside a home setting and there are five interactive rooms to explore. Almost everything you touch can become interactive! Have your child describe what he sees in the picture. It is also great for having your child follow directions and building his understanding of spatial concepts. For example, "Put the

[continues]

girl on the chair." Or "Put the cereal under the table." You can also work on sequencing. In the kitchen scene talk and create the steps to making breakfast. In the bathroom scene talk about the steps to get ready for school. If you want to try just a few scenes to test it out, download the free app to gain access to just 2 or 3 scenes.

Using technology will peak your child's interest and increase his/her overall participation in the activity. Talk to your child's therapist about which application may be best for your child.

Apps to Promote Development of Fine Motor Coordination and Writing in Preschoolers

In this world of technology, it can be a challenge to find fun and engaging activities to promote and reinforce the development of fine and visual motor skills for preschool aged children. There are apps available that support age-appropriate development in an engaging and entertaining way. Review the following list for a few of our OT favorites. You can also check out otswithapps.com to view other apps for a variety of age levels.

Name	Price	Description	Target Areas
Preschool Learning Fun (Kevin Bradford)	Free Lite Version \$2.99 for full version (recommended)	8 different games with colors, shapes, and numbers. Kids earn stickers. The app uses positive reinforcement and lively music.	Visual-motor skills Finger isolation
Sky Writers (DANO2, LLC)	\$1.99	Upper and lowercase letter practice with three different levels of difficulty.	Visual-motor skills Early letter formation Fine motor precision
Barnyard Games	Free Lite Version \$2.99 for full version (recommended)	9 different games have suggested ages from 18 months-3+ years. Kids work on exploration through tap, shape/color identification, puzzles, visual memory, and counting activities.	Visual-motor skills Finger isolation Fine motor dexterity Visual memory Visual orientation

Apps are a great way to engage young children and reinforce learned skills, but it is always important to encourage hands-on learning with sensory motor activities such as crafts, play-doh, and play.



Would you like more information on the use of applications for your child with speech or fine motor needs? Please join us for an educational presentation:

Do you have questions or concerns regarding your child's development? Sovereign Pediatric Therapy offers free screenings. Call any office to schedule.

Crystal Lake location: April 3, 2013, 7:00 pm
By Stephanie Devine, CCC, SLP
Call to schedule: 815.477.4788

Naperville location: April 17, 2013, 7:00 pm
By Laura A. Cole, MS, CCC-SLP
Call to schedule: 630.585.7337

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