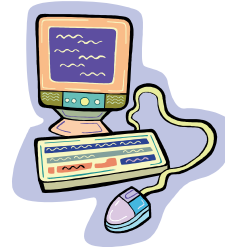




Play for all

Technology and Play

Technology options are used by Occupational Therapists (OTs) at Novita Children's Services in play to assist children with disabilities to access play experiences like their peers. The option of technology is used when a child's physical and or cognitive skills do not allow them to play and manipulate regular toys and games. Technology options can therefore assist in making play activities accessible for children and allow them to have independence with these tasks. Technology options are available for children of all ages and abilities. Simple solutions can be provided (eg modification to a toy so it can be activated by a switch), to more complex solutions (eg computers, software, modified keyboard).



When would Technology be used during play with a child who has a disability?

Technology can be used when a child is unable to use standard off-the-shelf computer software or manipulate toys, puzzles, books etc.

Impact of Disability – Physical limitations can impact on a child's ability to grasp and manipulate regular toys. Regular toys may also not give them the feedback they need to maintain their interest and attention when playing.

Impact on Participation in Activities – Children with disabilities may not progress as fast as children without disabilities and therefore need activities to be modified to assist them learn concepts such as cause/effect and turn taking. The modification of these is possible through technology. They may also not be able to communicate as others do.

Impact of Environment – Access to technology can be impacted by poor positioning or technology choices that are not in tune with the child's needs.



Occupational Therapy Information Sheet

Novita Children's Services
www.novita.org.au

Special Points of Interest

- ☺ The NovitaTech Support Team (STeam) provides an assessment and support service to children with disabilities, their families, educators and therapists in the use of technology at home or in the child's education setting.
- ☺ OTs at Novita can provide assessment and recommendations around technology solutions, in conjunction with education staff.
- ☺ The Novita Toy and Therapy Library has a range of software and peripherals that are available for loan by Novita families.
- ☺ SERU (the Special Education Resource Unit) provides a range of computer hardware and software for students to use in DECS service sites.



Play for all

Strategies to assist with Play using Technology

Reduce impact of limitations by use of the following technology solutions.

1. Adapting toys or software (i.e. keyguards, finger pointer for a keyboard, switch adapted toy).
2. Using alternative software and access options (i.e. alternative mouse, extended keyboards, switch).



Intellikeys—A type of Expanded Keyboard with a programmable membrane. It comes with 6 standard overlays, or by using the appropriate software, you can create your own.

Promote participation by using computer software or toys with a switch or adapted keyboard that assists the child with their learning. Use early learning software to develop early learning concepts and turn taking when used with other children. Use approaches for communication with these activities in conjunction with the child's Speech Pathologist.

Engineer the environment by choosing or custom making technology options to suit the child. This is possible through the use of certain software programs so activities can be made with interesting and meaningful graphics and sounds (I.e. photos of preschool friends or family) to encourage the child to participate in the activities. Also ensure the child is positioned optimally so they can access the technology.

It is important to approach the use of technology positively and not to be overwhelmed. Often, although it takes time to set-up up technology solutions, the benefits far out way the difficulties experienced. Persistence is the key.

Occupational Therapy
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Useful Resources

☺ **Welcome to my Preschool (Video)**
- Novita Toy and Therapy Library.

☺ **NovitaTech Re-gency Park**
www.novitatech.org.au

☺ **Technical Solutions**
www.tecsol.com.au

☺ **Spectronics**
www.spectronicsinoz.com

