

USING A SWITCH IN... Elementary School

1. For Functional Routines

It is important to start developing a repertoire of switch activities that are reinforcing for your student. These activities should include as many of the senses as possible as well as social contact and/or praise from adults or peers. Motivation is the key!!

When switch access is new, opportunities for practice may need to occur both in a resource room/one to one situation as well as in the classroom. For switch use to have the most ongoing meaning, it needs to happen in a functional context as part of a routine that the student does on a regular basis.

2. Integrated Into Daily Activities

Switch use has various functions. It can help to teach the student cause and effect and allow him/her to access voice output devices, take part in individual or group leisure activities and be a helper with a job to do at home, or in the classroom, school or community. Allow peers to try the switch. **It reinforces the use of the switch and places value on technology as the way the student interacts with his/her environment.**

A switch can be attached to almost any electrical device using an AbleNet Powerlink. **Use of these electrical devices in the classroom is intended to enhance a student's learning on their particular goals.** Some electrical appliances that could be used in the classroom include:

blender	juicer	sewing machine
can opener	lamp	scissors
card shuffler	magnifier lamp	spinner – All Turn It
conveyor belt	make-up mirror	stapler
coffee pot	malt machine	stereo
desk lamp	mixer	tape recorder
fan/spinner	organ	toaster
food processor	Paint 'N Swirl	vibrating pad
Footbath	paper shredder	vibrating pillow
hair dryer	pencil sharpener	vibrating slippers
hand held massager	popcorn popper	
ice cream machine	power tools	

3. Battery operated devices

Battery adapters are available for AA, C, D, and A batteries. When ordering adapters, make sure to specify the size needed. A battery eliminator for 9-volt batteries can be obtained from Radio Shack.

These are some tips for purchasing battery-operated toys or appliances (e.g. All Turn It Spinner, fans) for use in a simple technology system:

- Purchase battery-operated toys with an on/off switch and those powered by AA, C or D size batteries.
- If the toy runs on a track the battery compartment and on/off switch must be located on the track rather than on a movable piece.
- Toys that travel and spin are likely to get caught up in the wires of the battery device adapter.
- Consider the age appropriateness of the toys you buy. Very young children typically enjoy many battery-operated toys. However, there is a selection of items that may also be appropriate for creative play for older students.

4. Activities for Using Switches in the Classroom

4.1. Math

- Activate a tape recorder with a pre-recorded tape with math problems.
- Switch activate a tape recorder with a pre-recorded tape with answers to the day's math activity. Students can come to check their work.
- A Litebrite can be illuminated by the student with a switch. Classmates could be responsible for making the pattern: sort the pegs into colour groups, design patterns, make geometric shapes.

4.2. Computer

- Make posters for class presentations or projects. Partner chooses menus and a switch is used to activate menu choice.
- Try interactive switch games. Play with a partner to work on turn taking.

4.3. Science or Social Studies

- Use Paint 'N Swirl to create backgrounds for socials and science projects and displays. The student chooses the colours.
- Recycling: Switch activate a can opener to remove lids from cans for recycle bin. Classmates can bring cans from home. Paper shredders can also be operated with a switch and control unit.
- Use switch operated mix master for play doh or cookie dough to make models for themes (planets, shadow box). The student may make some colour choices.

“Give the steps for a science experiment. Give interesting facts. Ask skill-testing questions.”

- Switch activate a tape recorder with sounds (e.g. animal) for classmates to identify. Sounds can be varied according to the theme.
- Switch activate the tape recorder with a pre-recorded tape with interesting facts about the subject at hand.
- Audio stories with read-along books may also suit science themes.
- Have the student make popcorn with a popcorn popper before a movie.

4.4. P.E.

- Use a pre-recorded tape to control movement to music with a move and freeze game.
- Play background music for warm ups or dramatic dance.
- Instructions or directions for peers to follow for movement activities or games (e.g. move right, move slowly, move high, Crow/Cranes) can be pre-recorded on a switch operated tape recorder.
- Use a BigMack with pre-recorded cheers to cheer for classmates during team sports.

4.5. Library

- Audiocassettes and illustrated books can be controlled with a switch activated tape recorder.

4.6. Language Arts

- For story writing, classmates can read their stories into the tape recorder. Use a switch to play it back to the class for sharing time
- Run a listening center with a switch to check auditory comprehension. Play a short story for three to four students at a time who then have to answer pre-recorded comprehension questions.
- Play pre-recorded comprehension questions. When students finish reading a selection, they go to the student to listen to the questions.
- Use the switch to play a piece of music; classmates then write a story about the music.
- Play pre-recorded news for sharing time. One of the classroom buddies could record news sent in by the student's family.
- Use a switch activated tape recorder with audio library books. Read-a-long books are also available with some audio books.

4.7. Music

- Switch activate a tape recorder with a pre-recorded instrument or piece of music for classmates to identify.

- Play a rhythm on a tape recorder for the group to follow.

4.8. Art

- Use a mix master and switch to mix cookie dough, paper mache or play doh for art projects. Play doh and cookie dough can be molded into thematic objects (dinosaurs, letters, spacecraft).
- Use a Paint 'N Swirl to make abstract designs for classmates. These designs are nice on their own, can be used as backgrounds for other projects or as stationary for: place mats, writing paper, gift or special occasion cards. Cardboard designs could be cut out and coated for brooches, earrings and refrigerator magnets.
- Play background music with a switch operated tape recorder for classmates to do impressionistic painting. Paper can be divided into six compartments. The student can play a short music segment while classmates paint what they visualize or how it makes them feel. Repeat with six different types of music.
- Use a popcorn popper to make popcorn art projects. The student can choose the colours of powder paint to add to the popcorn.
- The student could illuminate a mirror for a face painting session.

5. Daily Living Activities

- Help prepare snack or lunch by operating the blender and/or microwave.
- Operate a food processor to slice vegetables for salad or dinner.
- The student can participate in leisure type activities by playing the radio or tapes.
- Use a communication device (BigMack or Step by Step) with messages when collecting attendance sheets. This might start with only his/her classroom and the one across the hall. Others within the same wing of the building could be added later. The messages could be made by peers and should change frequently to maintain the novelty. The messages could be jokes, statements, social interaction comments. (e.g. "Good morning. Did you watch the hockey game last night?").

These are some suggestions to get you started. Use your imagination and local resources to determine other opportunities. The purpose is to increase the student's opportunities for using the switch to work on his/her individual learning goals in a variety of ways throughout the day.