



"Disability Solutions Through Technology"

Kentucky Assistive Technology Service (KATS) Network

1-800-327-5287

Fact Sheet 2 - A Guide to Adaptive Toys in Kentucky

What does an "adapted" toy mean? In order to provide access by a child with a disability, most battery-operated toys can be adapted to use a variety of switches. The type of switch and length of wire is determined by the ability of the child who operates it.

Through the use of adaptive toys, more children with disabilities are being provided the same play opportunities available to children without disabilities. The benefits of play to young children and infants in all stages of development are numerous. They learn to interact with and manipulate their environment, learn cause-and-effect relationships, develop positive feelings about themselves, and develop gross and fine motor skills. Playing with toys can be a strong motivation for all children and can be used to positively reinforce many desired behaviors.

Lending Libraries

There are four lending programs currently functioning in the state. They are: enTECH in Louisville, Bluegrass Technology Center Toy Library in Lexington, Western Kentucky Assistive Technology Toy Library in Owensboro and Redwood Assistive Technology Center Toy Library in Ft. Mitchell. The centers will loan toys to children or youths with disabilities, their parents, teachers or therapist. They will loan to any eligible person in their service area and in special cases statewide

The Enabling Technologies of Kentuckiana (enTECH) in Louisville

The enTECH Toy Library is funded from First Steps, WHAS and other grants. Eligible patrons can borrow up to four adaptive toys for a period of four weeks. The only charges are for late returns and damaged toys and they may be waived if there are extenuating circumstances.

What is Available:

A variety of special switches, switch-adapted toys, and instructional toys are available. In addition, several books about adaptive toys are available for loan.

Where to Go:

enTECH is located in Spalding University, 851 S. Fourth Street, Louisville, KY 40203. For more information, contact either (502) 992-2448 or (800) 896-8941, ext. 2648.

Bluegrass Technology Center (BTC) in Lexington

The BTC Toy Library was started in 1990. The toys and switches in our library have been funded over the years by private individuals and organizations such as: The Fayette Lions Club, WHAS Crusade for Children, Lexington Jr. League, Kentucky Early Intervention System- "First Steps" and Ronald McDonald Charities. Toys are loaned for a month, but this can be adjusted on an individual basis. The only charges are for late returns and damaged toys.

What is Available:

A variety of toys that have been switch-adapted are available. Toys with lights, sounds, and movements are numerous. Many of the toys were adapted for switch use by the University of Kentucky Special Education Department, the Eastern Kentucky University Occupational Therapist Department and other volunteers. The library also contains toys specifically designed for children with visual impairments since it now houses the inventory of the Visually- Impaired Preschool Services.

Where to Go:

BTC is located at 961 Beasley Street, Suite 140, Lexington, KY 40509. For more information, contact either (859) 294-4343 (800) 209-7767 or visit the website at www.bluegrass-tech.org/Lendinglibraries.htm

Western Kentucky Assistive Technology Center (WKATC) in Owensboro

The WKATC Toy Library was started in 1994 from First Steps and KATS Network Funds. Toys are loaned for a month and charges based on toy value are as follows: under \$ 500 = \$10; from \$500 to \$1,000 = \$ 25.00; and from \$1,000 to \$ 3,000 = \$35.

What is Available:

A variety of special switches, switch-adapted toys, and instructional toys are available. Augmentative Communication devices and materials for education are also part of the inventory.

Where To Go:

WKATC is located at 815 Triplett Street, Owensboro, KY 42302. For more information, contact either (270) 852-1491 or (800) 209-6202

Redwood Assistive Technology Center (REDWOOD) in Ft. Mitchell

The REDWOOD Toy Library was started in 1997 from parents' donations, funds from the KATS Network, Cincinnati Association for the Blind and other organizations. Toys are loaned for a month and charges based on toy value are as follows: under \$ 500 = \$10; from \$500 to \$1,000 = \$ 25.00; and from \$1,000 to \$ 3,000 = \$35.

What is Available:

A variety of special switches, switch-adapted toys, and instructional toys are available. Augmentative Communication devices and materials for education are also part of the inventory.

Where to Go:

REDWOOD is located at 71 Orphanage Road; Ft. Mitchell, KY 41017. For more information, contact either (859) 331-0880 or (800) 728-9807 or visit their website at www.redwoodrehab.org/Services/Technology/library.htm

In addition to the loan libraries above, below is a partial list of vendors who manufacture specially adapted toys:

Vendors and other Web Resources

AbleNet
2808 Fairview Avenue North
Roseville, MN 55113
Toll Free - (800) 322-0956
www.ablenetinc.com

Access Quality Toys
2349 Palomar Avenue
Ventura, CA 93001
(805) 987-2530

Discovery Toys
PO Box 5023
Livermore, CA 94550
Toll Free - (800) 341-8697
www.discoverytoysinc.com

Family Resource Services, Inc.
PO Box 1146
231 Columbia Road 61
Magnolia, AR 71753
Toll Free - (800) 234-9025
www.frs-inc.com/

Enabling Devices
385 Warburton Avenue
Hastings-on-Hudson, NY 10706
Toll Free - (800) 832-8697
www.enablingdevices.com

Flaghouse, Inc. - Special Populations
601 Flaghouse Drive
Hasbrouck Heights, NJ 07604-3116
Toll Free - (800) 793-7900
www.flaghouse.com

LeapFrog Main Office - Emeryville
6401 Hollis Street, Suite 100
Emeryville, CA 94608-107
Toll Free - (800) 701-LEAP (5327).
www.leapfrog.com/

National Lekotek Center
3204 W. Armitage Avenue
Chicago, IL 60647
Toll Free - (800) 366-PLAY
www.lekotek.org

The Dragonfly Toy Company
291 Yale Avenue
Winnipeg, MB, Canada
R3M 0L4
Toll Free - (800) 308-2208
www.dftoys.com/

American Foundation for the Blind - A Guide to Toys for Children with Special Needs
11 Penn Plaza, Suite 300
New York, NY 10001
(800) 232-5463
www.afb.org/

Toys Are Us Toy Guide for Differently Abled Kids
PO Box 4422
River Edge, NJ 07661-9894
Toll Free - (800) 869-7787
www.toysrus.com

Toys to Grow On
2695 E. Dominguez St.
Carson, CA 90895
Toll Free - (800) 874-4242
www.toystogrowon.com/

Adapting off-the-shelf Toys

Many off-the-shelf toys can be easily and economically adapted to switch-control. There are a variety of switches available from the above vendors or an electronics store. Some examples are a joystick, large pads, single-switch, sip-and-puff, grip, etc. Although switch-making kits are available, another option is getting someone else to adapt a toy for you. There are several people in the state with experience in adapting toys and other devices. If you have a toy that you would like to have adapted for switch control, please contact any of the centers above and they will be able to help you. The Alliance for Technology Access has an article available on their website for adapting toys. Please visit the site at www.ataccess.org/resources/wcp/enswitches/edefault.html

Additional Resources

For more resources on adaptive toys, please visit the following websites:

- Center for Creative Play's fact sheet on adaptive toys at <http://www.cfcp.org/>
- ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education fact sheet on Toys and Accessories for Children with Disabilities at www.nebraskagifted.org/eric/fact/toys.html
- Technology Integration by Linda Burkhart at www.lburkhart.com/

