

WHY CHOOSE KEYBOARDING?

1. When writing is illegible, labourious or student has dysgraphia.
2. Assignments are not completed due to fatigue, or slowness in note taking.
3. Workbook organization consistently is a challenge.
4. Volume of work is compromised because writing is a challenge.

The following information provides some basic tips to help your student use keyboarding as a tool successfully.

How will a keyboarding program help?

1. Alleviates legibility problems (letter formation, size, spacing)
2. Improves speed and accuracy when basic keyboarding skills are mastered.
3. Eliminate labourious erasing and corrections that contribute to frustration.
4. Computer skills help with spatial organization.
5. Assists with spelling corrections.

Success depends on:

1. A designated adult to monitor and support the student's efforts.
2. An appropriate keyboarding program needs for the student to be selected.
3. Student's commitment to regular keyboarding practice.
i.e. 15-30 minutes, 3 to 5 times a week.
4. Understanding the use of basic word-processing functions.
e.g. delete, cut and paste.

BASIC SKILLS REQUIRED FOR KEYBOARDING

VISUAL AND PERCEPTUAL SKILLS

- ✓ Grade 3 reading comprehension
- ✓ Ability to read letters between 1/4 and 1/8 inch in size
- ✓ Scanning ability
- ✓ Visual sequential memory – child will need to remember what was previously written
- ✓ Visual memory for copying
- ✓ Ability to recognize and understand symbols

MOTOR SKILLS

- ✓ Enough physical endurance to use hands for 15 minutes at a time
- ✓ Ability to maintain an upright posture
- ✓ Ability to use fingers separately
- ✓ Co-ordination of hand movements

ATTENTION/BEHAVIOR

- ✓ Work independently for 15 minutes
- ✓ Able to ask for assistance when needed
- ✓ Able to do some problem solving on their own
- ✓ Able to take some responsibility for the care of the equipment



If the student does not yet have these skills, work on the pre-requisites before using the keyboarding program

Learn exercises and techniques to prevent injury and muscle strain



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KEYBOARDING PROGRAMS

The following includes some basic qualities to consider when purchasing a typing program.

Attributes to look for:

- Demonstrates home row and proper hand positioning
- Displays on screen keyboard; colour coded
- Provides instructions regarding keyboarding
- Reviews proper posture
- Has separate lesson/practice and testing sections
- Provides clear and consistent feedback; auditory and visual
- Error correction is positive and constructive
- Easily customizable - rate of information, progression to next level, contrast, letter size, etc ...
- Provides rewards or demonstrates progress as student improves

Also consider:

- Technology required; e.g. storage and working memory
- Cost
- Can you and your student/child try it in the store or online before purchasing it

The Occupational Therapists on the Vancouver Paediatric Team and the Rehabilitation Assistant students at Vancouver Community College trialed some typing programs. Below are some comments about a few of them. Be aware this is only a tiny sample of programs that are currently available.

Program Title	What we Like	Where to get it
Typing Pal Junior Win 95 or higher \$34.99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 7 – 14 • Teaches hand position, keystroke and proper posture • Can easily change the rate at which information is presented during lessons • Free trial available upon online request 	Typingpal.com
All the Right Type 3.6 Win 95 or higher Mac OS 8.6+ \$29.95	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For ages 9+ • Available CD ROM or disk • Provides instruction regarding posture, finger placement and keystrokes • Free trial available online 	Ingenuityworks.com
Keyboarding Skills by Diana Hanbury King \$29.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For ages 7 to 18 • Multisensory approach, uses poem to learn key strokes • Is not a computer program but rather booklet - can customize program as necessary 	Artel Educational Resources 5528 Kingsway, Burnaby, BC (tel)604-435-4949
Mavis Beacon Keyboarding Kidz Win XP or higher \$19.99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For ages 7+ • Uses interactive games to teach • Individualized lessons • Contains progress tracking • Printable awards 	Amazon.ca Broderbund.com
Typing Instructor for Kids Platinum Win Vista/7 Mac OS X \$19.99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational - Creative lessons and challenges • Motivating - Earn points, measures progress and saves results • Entertaining - multi level games, fun themes 	Amazon.ca

Program Title	What we Like	Where to get it
Typing Quick & Easy 17 Win 7 \$19.99	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proven teaching methods Fun, colorful Audio instructions Allows background customization options including music 	Amazon.ca
UltraKey by Bytes of Learning Inc. Win 7 or Mac \$49.95	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good for classroom setting – set goals Older children Comprehensive learning management & reporting Monitors patterns of difficulty & provides remedial help 4 interfaces, options to suit special needs 	Bytesoflearning.com
Nimble Fingers Internet needed Free	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has teaching guide for teachers Teaches finger placement and posture Multilevel Touch typing test tips 	Nimblefingers.com
Free Typing Games Internet needed Free	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variety of games to choose from Allows different skill levels and lessons Has a learning section, a playing section and a testing section 	Freotypinggame.net
Typing Adventure Internet needed \$14.95/yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For ages 8+ Free trial period available for parents and schools Contains lessons and levels through adventure exploration Enjoyable, creative 	Typingadventure.com
Dancemat Typing Internet needed Free	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For ages 7-11 Easy to use, visually appealing Animated with audio instructions 4 Levels to choose from Positive reinforcement 	Bbc.co.uk/schools/typing/