

## Quick Tips on Using Apps in Libraries

from the Center for Children's Books' *Closing the App Gap* project

### Why apps?

- Appeal to kids of a variety of learning styles and abilities
- Access to important technologies for kids who don't have it at home
- New media can appeal to kids when their interest in books flags
- Opportunities for productive (and fun!) interaction and cooperation between kids
- Opportunities for multi-level programming to parents and children
- Positioning of librarian as greatly needed mentor for tech use with kids
- Great draw for the library!

See <http://ccb.lis.illinois.edu/research/app-gap-bibliography.html> for an additional bibliography of scholarly and practitioner articles on app and tablet use with young people

### First, catch your apps!

- Choose your app review sources

#### *Resources for App Reviews:*

- Best Educational Apps – Review Sites - <http://www.reviewfordev.com/list-of-review-sites-to-find-the-best-educational-apps-for-kids.php>
- Common Sense Media - <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/app-reviews>
- Best Apps for Kids - <http://bestappsforkids.com/>
- Apps Gone Free - <http://appadvice.com/reviews>
- Appy Smarts - <http://www.appysmarts.com/>
- iPad Kids - <http://ipadkids.com/>
- Best Kids Apps - <http://www.bestkidsapps.com/>
- Mind Leap - <http://www.mindleaptech.com/>
- Kids App Reviews - <http://www.kids-app-reviews.com/>
- 148 Apps - <http://www.148apps.com/category/reviews/>
- iKids - <http://kidscreen.com/category/ikids/>
- LittleeLit.com - <http://littleelit.com/>
- School Library Journal (online and in print) - <http://www.slj.com/category/reviews/apps/>
- The Horn Book (online and in print)
- App Review of the Week: <http://www.hbook.com/category/choosing-books/app-review-of-the-week/> - \_

- Kirkus Reviews (online and in print) - <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/ipad/?availability=recent-reviews&stars=na>
- Publishers' Weekly - <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/digital/Apps/>
- Smart Apps for Kids - <http://www.smartappsforkids.com/>

- **Choose your selection criteria**

Some common criteria:

- developmental appropriateness
- meaningful content
- integration of features
- quality of audio
- clarity of navigation

Our criteria:

- ease of use
- child interest
- age-appropriateness
- levels of difficulty
- customization of settings
- feedback/corrective features
- accuracy of content
- appeals to learning objectives
- diversity of representation

Other possible considerations:

- themes of intended programming
- patron interest and requests
- local/curricular relevance

## **Then, use them!**

Tips:

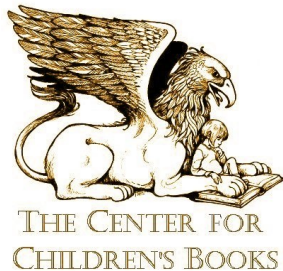
- Kids love interacting with one another while they're using apps
- Kids enjoy adult approval and acknowledgement of achievement (high fives go a long way!)
- The more interactive the app, the longer kids stay with it
- Allow for kids' varied interests, experiences, and preferences
- Children progress quickly from novice to expert when using a well-designed app

- Headphones can minimize disruption with noisy apps (and splitters can allow multiple users to share a single tablet)
- The best results come with apps that provide clear play, respond overtly to users and give feedback for interactions, offer clear objectives, and contain limited distractions

**Additional resources on app use with youth:**

- LittleeLit.com - <http://littleelit.com/> is the hub of ebook and app info as well as reviews
- “Technology and Interactive Media Tools in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8” - <http://www.naeyc.org/content/technology-and-young-children>
- Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children’s Media - <http://www.fredrogerscenter.org/>
- Central Coast Children’s Foundation article - [http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/special\\_ed/documents/apps\\_early\\_literacy.pdf](http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/special_ed/documents/apps_early_literacy.pdf)

See <http://ccb.lis.illinois.edu/research/app-gap.html> for more information about the Closing the App Gap IMLS-funded research and planning grant behind these suggestions.



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