

## **Assistive technology tools**

### **Abbreviation expanders**

Used with word processing, these software programs allow a user to create, store, and re-use abbreviations for frequently-used words or phrases. This can save the user keystrokes and ensure proper spelling of words and phrases he has coded as abbreviations.

#### Products to consider

Instant Text, Textware Solutions (<http://www.textware.com/>)

ActiveWords (<http://www.activewords.com/default.html>)

### **Alternative Keyboards**

These programmable keyboards have special overlays that customize the appearance and function of a standard keyboard. Students who have LD or have trouble typing may benefit from customization that reduces input choices, groups keys by color/location, and adds graphics to aid comprehension.

#### Product to consider

Intellikeys (<http://www.infogrip.com/intellikeys-keyboard.html>)

Graphic organizers and outlining

Graphic organizers and outlining programs help users who have trouble organizing and outlining information as they begin a writing project. This type of program lets a user “dump” information in an unstructured manner and later helps him organize the information into appropriate categories and order.

Inspiration (<http://www.inspiration.com/productinfo/Inspiration/index.cfm>)

Kidspiration (<http://www.inspiration.com/Kidspiration>)

Draftbuilder ([http://www.donjohnston.com/products/draft\\_builder/index.html](http://www.donjohnston.com/products/draft_builder/index.html))

### **Assistive technology tools: Writing**

Paper-based computer pen

This technology records and links audio to what a person writes using the pen and special paper. It enables the user to take notes while simultaneously recording someone( e.g., a

teacher) speaking. The user can later listen to any section of his notes by touching the pen to his corresponding handwriting or diagrams.

Product to consider

Echo Smartpen by Livescribe (<http://www.livescribe.com/en-us/solutions/learningdisabilities/>)

**Portable word processors**

A portable word processor is lightweight device that is easy to transport (e.g., from classroom to home). It can be helpful to kids who may have trouble writing by hand and prefer to use a keyboard. Word processing allows the user to edit and correct his written work more efficiently than doing so by hand.

Product to consider

IPad

Chromebook

**Proofreading software**

Students who struggle with writing (e.g., spelling, grammar, punctuation, word usage, and sentence structure) may benefit from software programs (included in many word processing systems) that scan word processing documents and alert the user to possible errors.

Products to consider

Ginger (<http://www.gingersoftware.com/>)

Grammarly (<https://www.grammarly.com>)

**Speech recognition software**

A speech recognition program works in conjunction with a word processor. The user dictates into a microphone, and his spoken words appear on the computer screen as text. This can help a user whose oral language ability is better than his writing skills.

Products to consider

Dragon Naturally Speaking (<http://www.nuance.com/dragon/index.htm>)

Microsoft Windows Vista Speech Recognition

(<http://www.microsoft.com/enable/products/windowsvista/speech.aspx>)

## **Speech synthesizers/screen readers**

These systems can display and read aloud text on a computer screen, including text that has been typed by the user, scanned in from printed pages (e.g., books, letters), or text appearing on the Internet.

### Products to consider

Read and Write Gold (<http://www.boundlessat.com/Learning/Writing/Read-Write-Gold-for-Windows>) (integrates multiple AT techniques)

## **Word prediction software**

Word prediction software can help a user during word processing by “predicting” a word the user intends to type. Predictions are based on spelling, syntax, and frequent/recent use. This prompts kids who struggle with writing to use proper spelling, grammar, and word choices, with fewer keystrokes.

### Products to consider

Aurora Suite (<http://www.aurora-systems.com/pages/professional.html>)

Co:Writer SOLO (<http://www.donjohnston.com/products/cowriter/index.html>)

TextHelp, Read and Write Gold (<http://www.boundlessat.com/Learning/Writing/Read-Write-Gold-for-Windows>) (integrates multiple AT techniques)

WordQ, Quillsoft (<http://www.wordq.com>)

This does not represent a comprehensive list. The inclusion of any product is not intended as an endorsement. The information is provided to guide parents and educators in selecting products to meet children’s specific needs.